

RECOMMENDED CRIME FICTION BOOKS

AKA: MYSTERIES AND CRIME THRILLERS

READ AND HIGHLY RATED BY OUR MBC READERS

These are books that our club has read and discussed, *and rated highly*. If you have not read any of these, we feel fairly confident that you will enjoy the book. Of course, the higher our average score for the book, the more confident we are that you'll like the book.

Although we began the practice of asking each reader their "grade" (score, rating, evaluation) by 2008, we didn't start keeping a consistent record of the average scores until 2017.

To understand the scores, know that MBC participants seldom, if ever, score a book higher than 94; and rules prohibit scores lower than 50.

Per Cent Range	100%	100 ↔ 90	89 ↔ 80	79 ↔ 70	69 ↔ 63	62 ↔ 50
		Great!	Good!	Just OK.	Not OK.	Bad!
						
		UP		MID		DOWN
		A+ A A-	B+ B B-	C+ C C-	D	F
Examples translation of letter grades to numerical % ratings		97 95 92 99 94 90	87 85 82 89 84 81	77 75 72 79 74 71	67 65 63 69 65 64	62 60 58 56 55 50

With that in mind, here is *guidance for interpreting the average score for any book*:

- Scores 86 and higher can be considered a positive recommendation, and even more so the higher it is. The list below shows *only* books rated at 86 and higher.

AUTHOR LAST NAME	AUTHOR FIRST NAME	TITLE	Average SCORE	WHEN READ
Baldacci	David	A Calamity of Souls	94	2025-08
Connelly	Michael	The Law of Innocence	94	2025-03
Doiron	Paul	The Poacher's Son	92	2016-08
Krueger	William Kent	The River We Remember	92	2024-07
O'Shaughnessy	Perri	Motion to Suppress*	92	2013-08
Woods	Stuart	Chiefs*	92	2008-06
DuMaurier	Daphne	Rebecca	91	2017-10
Locke	Attica	The Cutting Season	91	2026-08
Moore	Liz	The God of the Woods	91	2026-07
Cosby	S. A.	All the Sinners Bleed	90	2024-06
Finder	Joseph	The Oligarch's Daughter	90	2026-03
Follett	Ken	Eye of the Needle	90	2020-04
Gerritsen	Tess	The Spy Coast	90	2025-06
Krueger	William Kent	Iron Lake	90	2022-08
Massey	Sujata	The Widows of Malabar	90	2022-01
Mukherjee	Abir	A Rising Man	90	2022-03
Osman	Richard	The Thursday Murder Club	90	2024-12

Whitaker	Chris	All the Colors of the Dark	90	2026-01
Baldacci	David	Absolute Power	89	2019-11
Haisson	Carl	Skinny Dip	89	2024-01
Spencer-Fleming	Julia	In the Bleak Midwinter	89	2021-01
Bennett	Michael	Better the Blood	88	2023-10
Boyle	Gerry	Pretty Dead	88	2016-01
Christie	Agatha	The Murder of Roger Ackroyd	88	2017-04
Connelly	Michael	The Late Show	88	2019-02
Cornwell	Patricia	Postmortem	88	2020-10
Donoghue	Emma	The Paris Express	88	2025-11
Ellis	David	The Last Alibi	88	2025-05
Harper	Jane	The Lost Man	88	2025-04
Harper	Jane	The Dry	88	2019-08
Horowitz	Anthony	Magpie Murders	88	2018-12
Leon	Donna	Death at La Fenice	88	2022-09
Pryor	Mark	The Bookseller	88	2024-02
Adler-Olsen	Jussi	The Keeper of Lost Causes	87	2025-10
Cavanagh	Steve	Thirteen	87	2023-09
Coffin	Bruce Robert	Among the Shadows	87	2023-06
Connelly	Michael	Nightshade	87	2026-04
Lehane	Dennis	A Drink Before the War	87	2022-07
Prose	Nita	The Maid	87	2024-04
Cleeves	Ann	The Long Call	86	2022-12
Eco	Umberto	The Name of the Rose	86	2020-01
Griffiths	Elly	The House at Sea's End	86	2024-09
Highsmith	Patricia	Strangers on a Train	86	2021-12
Mankell	Henning	The Man Who Smiled	86	2022-05
Peters	Elizabeth	Crocodile on the Sandbank	86	2021-05
Pryor	Mark	The Blood Promise	86	2025-02
Saylor	Steven	The Throne of Caesar	86	2021-10
Slocum	Brendan	The Violin Conspiracy	86	2025-09
Stevenson	Benjamin	Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone	86	2026-02
Tapply	William	A Fine Line	86	2021-08
Turow	Scott	Presumed Innocent	86	2018-08

* Those 2 scores are listed from before 2014, and that via the “oral tradition.” We have repeated our amazement enough times that I can assert its accuracy.

RECOMMENDED BY VARIOUS MBC MEMBERS

Mainly From The Book Ballots of 2022, 2023, and 2026 - But Not a Winner for that Year
Listed by "Type"

All of these 35 books were recommended by someone in our group!

Ver.5

AUTHOR: In Red means left over from 2023. In Blue means from 2022. Black mainly means from 2026.

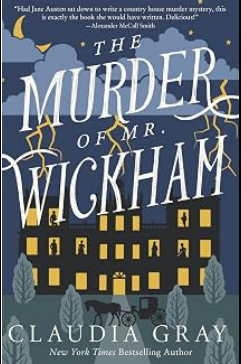
SERIES: If the book is NOT part of a series, it is a stand-alone book, showing this abbreviation: "SA." If the book is one of a series, it will be shown like this: "1/3" (for example) which means that the book is the first book out of three books in the series.

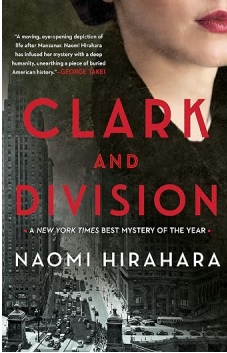
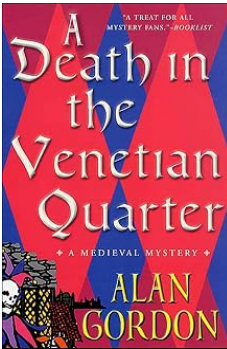
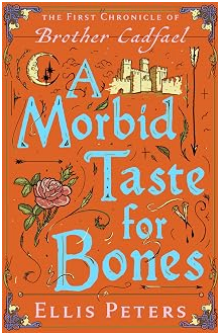
TYPE of CRIME FICTION: The key words will be shown; sometimes it will be multiple key words. Here are some definitions for the types of crime fiction, sorted alphabetically. NOTE: (1) Overlapping or blending of types is common. (2) So far, we don't have recommendations for every type listed here.

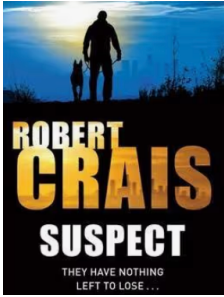
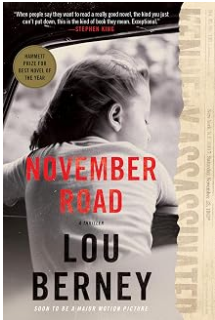
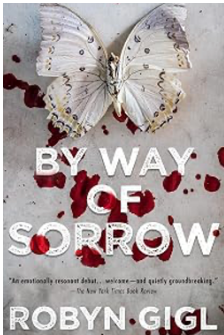
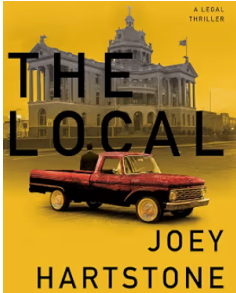
Key Word	TYPE
1. Adventure	Adventure Stories: high stakes searches for lost/stolen/buried treasure, documents, or secrets, etc.
2. Amateur	Amateur Detective Stories: be they storekeepers, knitters, priests, barbers, or barkeeps etc [They may be " cozies " - best typified by the works of Agatha Christie which contain no explicit sex, or excessive gore or violence. Otherwise often called " traditional mysteries. "]
3. Animals	Animal Mysteries: with pets, tracking dogs, race horses, or other animals as an important part of the plot.
4. Classic	Classic Crime Fiction: books & authors that paved the way from 1748 through 1980; cornerstone books in the evolution of crime fiction.
5. Cozies	Cozies are best typified by the works of Agatha Christie which contain no explicit sex, or excessive gore or violence. Most often the lead character is not a professional detective or law enforcement officer, but rather an "amateur" such as a priest, storekeeper, hair dresser, archeologist, etc.
6. Doctors	Medical/Biological Crime Stories: with doctors, coroners, lab techs, or hospital admins, etc.
7. Hard Boiled	Hardboiled is distinct from noir, though they're often used interchangeably. The common argument is that hardboiled novels are an extension of the wild west and pioneer narratives of the 19th century. The wilderness becomes the city, and the hero is usually a somewhat fallen character, a detective or a cop. At the end, everything is a mess, people have died, but the hero has done the right thing or close to it, and order has, to a certain extent, been restored. Noir is different. In noir, everyone is fallen. [Wikipedia]
8. Historical	Historical Mysteries or thrillers: Can also be any other category listed here, but it has taken place in the past. Can focus on significant real people and events, or simply use the everyday backdrop of a historical time and place.
9. Humor	Humorous Mysteries: having quirky characters & laugh-out-loud dialog more frequently than the other 20 mystery types.
10. Legal	Legal or Courtroom Stories: with lawyers, courtrooms, judges, juries, or prosecutors, etc.
11. Literary	Literary Crime Fiction Stories: with complex plots, deep character development, thought-provoking ideas, and/or blurry endings.

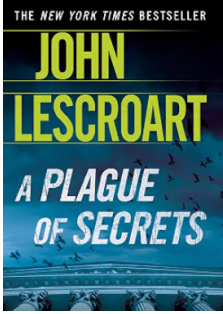
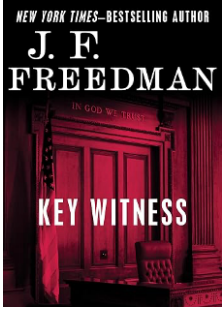
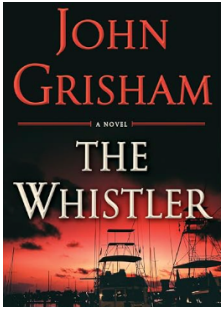
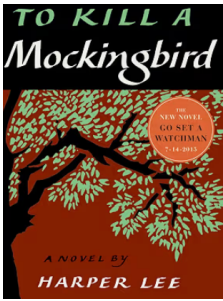
12. Noir	Noir Crime Fiction: marked by darkness in theme and subject matter, generally featuring a disturbing mixture of sex and violence. In noir, everyone is fallen, and right and wrong are not clearly defined and maybe not even attainable.
13. PI	Private Detective (PI) Stories: with anyone who is paid to solve a crime, or find something lost; etc. (If you're not paid, you're an Amateur!)
14. Police	Police Procedurals: with police detectives, FBI agents, sheriffs, or game wardens, etc.
15. Political-Corporate	Political/Corporate Crime or Corruption: with civilians and/or professionals trying to stop an injustice or catastrophe, etc.
16. Psych/Dom Thriller	Psychological / Domestic Thriller: where someone (or all) in the family (or neighborhood, or group of "friends") are suspect.
17. Reporter	Investigative Journalist Stories: with reporters who track down sources to uncover injustice at all costs, etc.
18. Romance	Romance Mysteries: where the mystery plot includes a significant love-story (or fling).
19. Spies	Military/Espionage Action Stories: with big stakes, everyday spies, or big time bad guys, etc.
20. Traditional Mysteries	Traditional Mysteries: Can include one of the many other "types" on this list. But the distinction relates to the <i>moderate</i> degree to which violence or sexual activity is described. It may not be as pure as in " Cozies " - but <i>definitely not</i> as graphic as " Hardboiled " or " Noir ."
21. Villains	Bad Guy Point of View (POV) Stories: with either successful or bungling burglars (heists), assassins, ne'er-do-wells, ex-cons, etc.

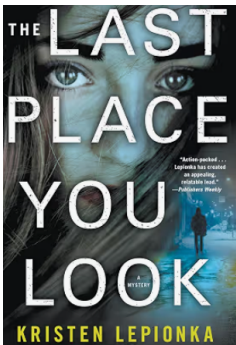
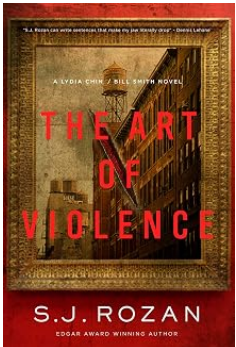
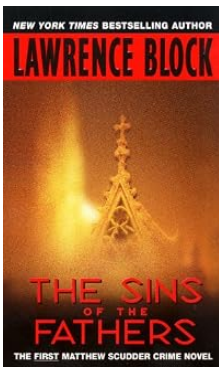
THE 35 RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

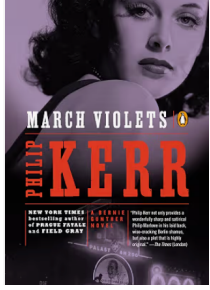
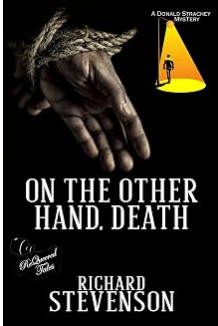
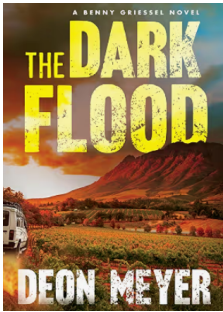
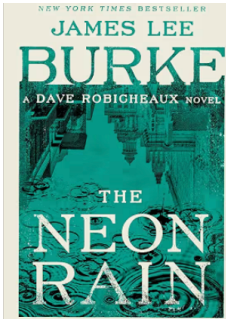
Book #	Publication Date	TYPE [See above]	BLURB
TITLE		Series [See above]	
AUTHOR [See Author color code above]		Setting of Story	
#1 The Murder of Mr. Wickham Claudia Gray	2022 	Amateur Historical 1/2 1830s English countryside	In a whodunit set in Jane Austen's world of fiction, Mr. Wickham—one of literature's most notorious villains—meets a sudden and suspicious end at a party on Emma's estate. Two young adult children of other Austen characters are the amateur sleuths: Jonathan Darcy and Juliet Tilney.

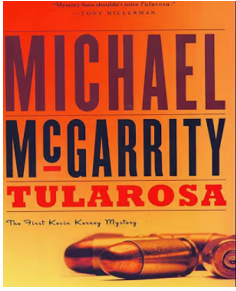
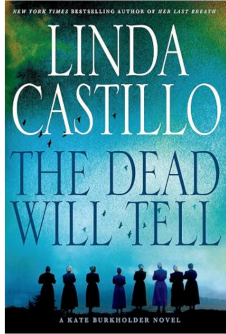
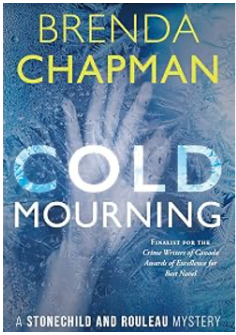
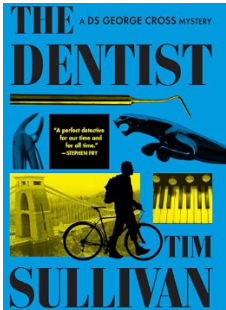
#2 Clark and Division Naomi Hirahara	2021 	- Amateur - Historical - Literary SA Chicago during WW2	Aki Ito (F), just released from the Japanese-American detainment camp at Manzanar in 1944, hopes to meet up with Rose, her older sister in Chicago. Instead, on arrival, she learns that Rose was killed by a subway train - a suicide. Aki does not accept that her sister would die that way and is determined to learn the truth. Clark is a N-S street in Chicago; Division is an E-W street. This is an Amateur sleuth, not a cop or paid investigator story. But I wouldn't call it a cozy either. There is suspense in the book, but not like a thriller. It is more of a thoughtful, well researched, historical and traditional type of mystery. Close to a literary mystery. –Dick
#3 A Death in the Venetian Quarter Alan Gordon	2002 	- Amateur - Historical 3/8 13th Century Constantinople	In 1203, the relative peace of the Byzantine Empire is imperiled when the ships of the Fourth Crusade show up outside the walls of Constantinople. The Crusaders, having sailed out of Venice, are now besieging the city. The jester known as Feste, his wife Viola, and their compatriots within the city are faced with catastrophe as the peace the Fool's Guild has worked so hard to maintain is about to be shattered. With such a disaster looming, the death of one silk merchant in the Venetian Quarter of Constantinople seems insignificant. But powerful schemers at court have taken a special interest in the case and want Feste to investigate the Venetian merchant's death. Feste must quickly uncover what forces were at work when the merchant lost his life.
#4 A Morbid Taste for Bones Ellis Peters	1977 	- Amateur - Historical 1/20 12th Century England	This 12th century mystery series takes place in a fog of civil war, where the English and Welsh were raiding each other's borders. A monk from the Benedictine Abbey at Shrewsbury, Brother Cadfael actually lives his religion, and casts a forgiving eye on the minor peccadilloes of his friends and neighbors. Cadfael is sent with fellow monks to acquire Saint Winifred's bones from her grave, because he is a native Welsh speaker. But on arrival, the monks find the villagers passionately opposed to losing their saint. A murder is committed, and Brother Cadfael must sift through the many possible suspects, both English and Welsh. A favorite of my brother and recommended by Beryl. – Dick

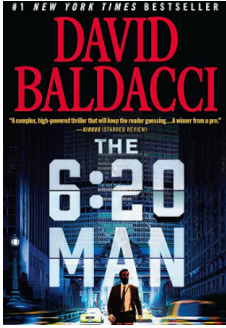
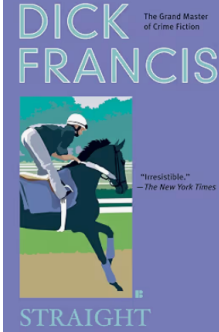
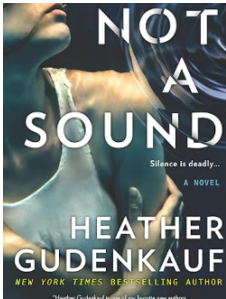
#5 Suspect Robert Crais	2013 	■ Animals- Police Dog SA Los Angeles	Eight months ago, LAPD cop Scott James was injured and his partner Stephanie was killed, leaving him enraged, ashamed, and unfit for duty—until he meets his new partner, Maggie, a German shepherd. Her PTSD is as bad as Scott's, as she survived three tours in Iraq sniffing explosives before losing her handler to an IED. Shunned by colleagues, they try to identify the men who murdered Stephanie. They find it's nothing like what Scott was told, and the journey takes them both through the darkest moments of their own personal hells. Can they overcome their fears to solve the case?
#6 November Road Lou Berney	2018 	■ Historical Literary SA USA, 1963	It's November, 1963, and Frank Guidry, a loyal street lieutenant to New Orleans mob boss Carlos Marcello, is now on the run because he knows too much about the assassination of JFK. There is suspense as he is pursued by fellow gangsters, exacerbated by surprising changes as he meets, assists, and becomes involved with a woman-in-need along the way. This book, a literary mystery, won 9 top awards in 2019 which is highly unusual. I have not read it, and I'm relying on the incredible awards. To me, it does look interesting and worth a read. –Dick
#7 By Way of Sorrow Robyn Gigl	2022 	■ Legal 1/4 New Jersey	Erin McCabe, a NJ criminal defense attorney, takes as a client, a young, Black, transgender prostitute accused of murdering a wealthy politician's son. As she considers all avenues of a defense, she and her client find that their lives are in danger. I've read all 4 books (#2 may be the best). They are a fantastic blend of interesting characters, page-turning suspense, and most importantly - authentic courtroom action and behind the scenes legal maneuvering and negotiating. The author is a very successful NJ attorney and also a transgender woman, so the trans characters come across as authentic and interesting. –Dick
#8 The Local Joey Hartstone	2022 	■ Legal SA Small town Texas	James Euchre is a small town Texas lawyer with persuasive jury skills. He is forced into defending a wealthy Pakistani-American entrepreneur who stands accused of killing a beloved judge -- who was also Euchre's good friend and mentor. Then, the deeper he digs, the more he fears that either an innocent man will be sent to death row or a murderer will be set free. This author was recommended by Ed, and I found it to be a fun read. –Dick

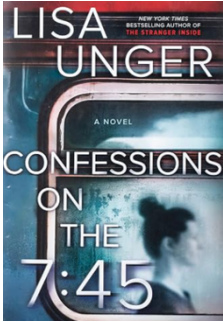
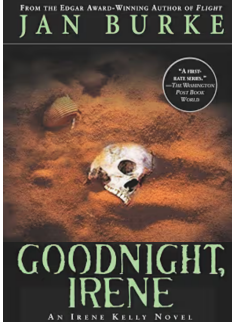
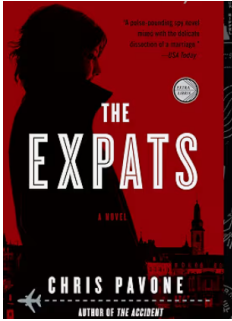
#9 A Plague of Secrets John Lescroart	2009 	■ Legal 15/22 San Francisco	The series features Dismas Hardy, ex-Assistant District Attorney turned defense attorney, and Abe Glitsky, a black, Jewish cop and homicide detective. In this case, Hardy's wealthy socialite client has a business that is not at all what it seems to be, as more people associated with it are murdered. Plagued by lies and deception, there is one terrible secret that defense attorney Dismas Hardy is duty-bound to protect. Even if the price is his client's life. About 15 years ago, I read quite a few of Lescroart's books and really liked them. –Dick
#10 Key Witness J. F. Freedman	1997 	■ Legal SA Chicago	After years at the top of his game, Corporate Attorney Wyatt Matthews has hit rock bottom. Though his bank account is bursting and his law practice is thriving, Wyatt takes no joy in his work. Seeking meaning, he volunteers as a public defender. In one of his first cases, he arranges bail for teen Martin White, charged with armed robbery. At first, he is just another file. But soon, his case will become a crusade. One of my all-time favorite lawyer mysteries –Dick
#11 The Whistler John Grisham	2016 	■ Legal 1/ 2 Florida	A previously disbarred lawyer is back in business, and he claims to know of a Florida judge who has stolen more money than all other crooked judges combined. And not just crooked judges in Florida. All judges, from all states, and throughout United States history. And now he wants to put a stop to it. His only client is a person who knows the truth and wants to blow the whistle and collect millions under Florida law. The case is assigned to Lacy Stoltz, an investigator for the Florida Board on Judicial Conduct. She immediately realizes that the case is deadly dangerous.
#12 To Kill a Mockingbird Harper Lee	1960 	■ Literary ■ Classic ■ Legal/courtroom SA 1950s Deep South	The story is known for Atticus Finch's defense of Tom Robinson, a poor black man, in a false charge of rape, and a stacked deck of prejudicial factors in the trial. Finch, one of the best know protagonists in all of American literature—also the narrator's father, is the moral hero for many. As narrator, his daughter Jean Finch (Scout), is a secondary protagonist calling attention to issues of class, courage, compassion, and gender roles in the Deep South through minor characters and subplots. Time to revisit this classic?

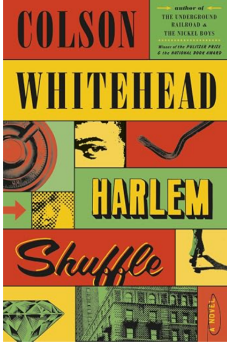
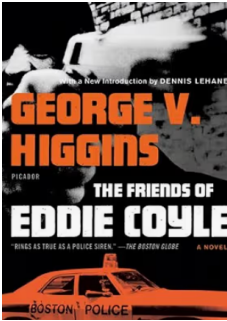
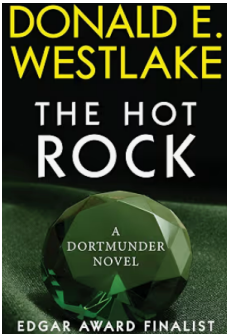
#13 The Last Place You Look Kristen Lepionka	2017  KRISTEN LEPIONKA	PI 1/4 Columbus, Ohio	Roxane Weary is a PI in Columbus, Ohio. She has been asked to look into the murder conviction of a man on death row because the convict's sister says, she has just seen the "dead victim" (a blond woman named Sarah) alive and well. Roxane's father had been a Columbus cop. When she realizes that Sarah's vanishing act is linked to one of her father's unsolved murder cases involving another teen girl, she is drawn in. As her investigation gets darker and darker, Roxane will have to risk everything to find the truth. Lives depend on her cracking this case—hers included. Leslie volunteered to test-read the book and she gave it a solid thumbs-up. –Dick
#14 The Art of Violence S. J. Rozan	2020  S.J. ROZAN EDGAR AWARD WINNING AUTHOR	PI 13/14 New York City	Lydia Chin is a 30-something Chinese American private eye who often works with another PI, Bill Smith, a 40-something Army brat. While a serial killer is stalking and killing women in New York's contemporary art scene, Sam Tabor, formerly convicted of killing but now on parole, contacts Smith for help. Smith has many mental health issues and worries that he could be the serial killer. As Smith and Chin work the case, evidence one way or the other is hard to find. Then more bodies. Is Sam Tabor a serial killer, or just a crazy artist? Carol Mc--- test-read this more recent addition, and gave it "at least a 'B'" - try it for yourself! Or, start with Book #1: China Trade –Dick
#15 The Sins of the Fathers Lawrence Block	1976  LAWRENCE BLOCK THE SINS OF THE FATHERS THE FIRST MATTHEW SCUDDER CRIME NOVEL	PI 1/19 New York City	A pretty young prostitute is dead. Her alleged murderer—a minister's son—hanged himself in his jail cell. The case is closed. But the dead girl's father has come to Matthew Scudder for answers, sending the unlicensed private investigator in search of terrible truths about a life that was lived and lost in a sordid world of perversion and pleasures. Best known for his 19 Matthew Scudder books, Block also wrote another 69 mystery books, of different types, during his lifetime! Look up the author's list of books on StopYoureKillingMe.com
#16 Derailed Mary Keliikoa	2020  MARY KELIIKOA	PI 1/3 Portland, OR	Kelly Pruett, a single mom of a deaf daughter, has inherited her father's PI business along with an unsolved case of a young woman struck by a train. As she gets closer to the truth, her list of sleazy suspects with murderous motives grows. On a crash course with a killer, she must piece together the puzzle of what really happened to the victim that rainy night, before her own fate is sealed and she loses everything.

#17 March Violets Philip Kerr	1989 	- PI - Historical 1/14 Nazi-era Germany	In <i>March Violets</i>, the series opener, we meet wisecracking cop-turned-private-investigator Bernie Gunther who specializes in missing persons, and as the Third Reich's power has grown, Bernie has become a very busy man. But as he takes on cases involving millionaire industrialists, stolen diamonds, and Hitler's most powerful cronies, Bernie finds himself mired in the brutality and corruption of a country on the brink of war. A highly acclaimed historical mystery series. Recommended by Dick
#18 On the Other Hand, Death Richard Stevenson	1981 	- PI - Traditional Mystery 2/16 Albany, NY Some of the books were made into movies. See Amazon Prime under "donald strachey mysteries").	When the giant Millpond Company finds its plans for a mega-shopping mall stymied by the refusal of an elderly lesbian couple to sell their home, the ladies are subjected to ugly vandalism and death threats. The powerful director of Millpond hires Don Strachey, Albany's only gay detective, to protect the ladies, find the culprits, and clear the corporate name. Strachey accepts with misgivings that deepen rapidly as kidnapping, extortion, and murder darken the lives of Albany's gay community. Written at the beginning of AIDS activism, the book is a time capsule of gay life as it existed in smaller cities in America. Recommended by Dick
#19 The Dark Flood Deon Meyer	2022 	Police 8/8 Cape Town, South Africa	Because of events in the previous book in the series, Benny Griessel, an aging, alcoholic police inspector and his partner Vaughn Cupido are banished from their Cape Town, South Africa high-profile squad, to a detective bureau in a "quiet" small suburban university town. Here they perform well on two cases: a missing university student, and a missing billionaire real estate manipulator. Neither case is as boring as they thought. And a great read for us. This is one of the five Barry Award finalists for "Best Mystery or Crime Novel" for 2022. I felt it was as good as a Michael Connelly book. –Dick
#20 The Neon Rain James Lee Burke	1987 	Police 1/23 New Orleans	New Orleans Detective Dave Robicheaux has fought too many battles: in Vietnam, with police brass, with killers and hustlers, and the bottle. Lost without his wife's love, Robicheaux haunts the intense and heady French Quarter—the place he calls home, and the place that nearly destroys him when he gets involved in the case of a young prostitute whose body is found in a bayou. Thrust into the seedy world of drug lords and arms smugglers, Robicheaux must face down the dark underworld and deal with his own bruised heart and demons to survive. Almost as good as Michael Connelly. Try it! – Dick

#21 Tularosa Michael McGarrity	1996 	Police 1/14 Various locations in New Mexico	Retired ex-Santa Fe chief of detectives Kevin Kerney is drawn back into action when Terry Yazzi, his former partner, pleads for Kerney's help. Yazzi's son, a soldier, has disappeared in the barren desert surrounding the White Sands Missile Range. Kerney teams up with the tough-but-beautiful Capt. Sara Brannon, the Army's investigating officer. Together, they uncover a crime far greater than an AWOL soldier: a conspiracy of death leading them to a final, shocking revelation that may cost them both their lives....
#22 The Dead Will Tell Linda Castillo	2014 	Police 6/17 fictional town of Painters Mill, Ohio in a county with the 2nd largest Amish settlement - about 40k people	On a late-night shift, Chief of Police Kate Burkholder is called to the scene of an apparent suicide—an old man found hanging from the rafters in his dilapidated barn. But evidence quickly points to murder and Kate finds herself chasing a singularly difficult and elusive trail of evidence that somehow points back to the tragedy of that long ago incident. When a second man is found dead—also seemingly by his own hand—Kate discovers a link to the horrifying truth of what really happened on a terrible night thirty-five years ago, when an Amish father and his four children perished—and his young wife disappeared.
#23 Cold Mourning Brenda Chapman	2014 	Police 1/5 Ottawa, Canada	Tom Underwood disappears into thin air, with many people wanting him dead, just before Christmas. Officer Kala Stonechild, who has left her Northern Ontario detachment to join a specialized Ottawa crime unit, is tasked with finding Underwood. Stonechild, who is from a First Nations reserve, is a lone wolf, used to surviving by her wits. Her new boss has his hands full controlling her, his team, and an investigation that keeps threatening to go off track. Old betrayals and complicated family relationships brutally collide when love turns to hate and murder stalks a family.
#24 The Dentist Tim Sullivan	2020 	Police 1/8 Bristol, England	George Cross is on the autism spectrum. He struggles with simple daily interactions but his attention to detail and persistence make him successful with a 97% conviction rate. When the body of an elderly homeless man is discovered, George scrutinizes the smallest details, finding a connection to a 15 year old cold case. Despite skepticism from his colleagues, including his partner Josie who as usual is both exasperated by and protective of George, he is determined to solve both cases.

#25 The 6:20 Man David Baldacci	2022 	- Political - Corporate 1/4 New York City	Travis Devine works as an entry-level analyst at the city's most prestigious investment firm to which he commutes daily on the 6:20 am commuter train. When Devine's coworker and former girlfriend is found hanging in a storage room of his office building, the NYPD suspects Devine. Next he is manipulated by others to participate in a clandestine investigation into his firm, where, unknown to him, something rotten lurks. And apart from this high-stakes conspiracy, there's a killer out there with their own agenda, and Devine is the bull's-eye.
#26 Straight Dick Francis	1989 	- Psych Thriller - Domestic Thriller - Traditional Mystery SA England	[Note: Unlike the first 21 Francis standalone mysteries, & despite the cover picture, this story does not have much to do with horses.] Accumulated injuries is putting a halt to Steeplechase jockey Derek Franklin's horse racing career. But that's the least of his concerns when his brother turns up dead, leaving Derek as the sole inheritor of his estate. It doesn't take long for Derek to learn that his brother—a magistrate who imported and sold semiprecious stones—was keeping more than his share of secrets. Now Derek must recover \$1.5 million worth of missing diamonds—and find out who wanted his brother dead.
#27 Not a Sound Heather Gudenkauf	2017 	Psych Thriller SA Anywhere? (The author lives in Iowa)	Amelia Wynn is a sexual assault nurse examiner. She escorts a woman who has been raped and beaten to her car after emergency treatment. A hit-and-run accident leaves the woman dead, and Amelia completely deaf. Despair over losing her job along with her hearing, sends Amelia into a downward spiral of depression and alcohol. Two years later, Amelia is sober and paddle-boarding on a nearby river, where she discovers the body of a fellow nurse she lost contact with after the accident. After discovering the body, Amelia feels anxious shut up in her isolated cabin, and also can't help trying to make sense of the murder, but how much is she willing to risk? Amelia's profound deafness adds an extra element of terror to the story.
#28 The Woman in Cabin 10 Ware, Ruth	2021 	Psych Thriller SA England; on a North Sea cruise ship	Lo Blacklock, a journalist, has been given the assignment of a lifetime: a week on a luxury North Sea cruise with only a handful of cabins. At first, Lo's stay is nothing but pleasant. But as the week wears on, frigid winds whip the deck, gray skies fall, and Lo witnesses what she is sure is a woman being thrown overboard. The problem? All passengers remain accounted for—and so, the ship sails on as if nothing has happened, despite Lo's desperate attempts to convey that something (or someone) has gone terribly wrong... The book will leave readers restlessly uneasy long after the last page is turned.

#29 Confessions on the 7:45 Lisa Unger	2020 	■ Psych Thriller SA New York City suburbs	“The setup nods to the great Patricia Highsmith’s classic thriller <i>Strangers on a Train</i>, but Unger has her own story to tell. <i>Confessions on the 7:45</i> is a master class in suspense.” —Tampa Bay Times Selena Murphy is commuting home on the train when she strikes up a conversation with a beautiful stranger in the next seat. The woman introduces herself as Martha and soon confesses that she’s having an affair with her boss. Selena, in turn, confesses that she suspects her husband is sleeping with the nanny. Then, at Selena’s station, the two women part ways, presumably never to meet again. Then the nanny disappears. As Selena is pulled into the mystery of what happened, she begins to wonder, who was Martha really? She’s hardly prepared for what she’ll find...
#30 Her Last Holiday C.L. Taylor	2021 	■ Psych Thriller SA England	Wellness retreats are supposed to be good for you, aren’t they? That’s what Jenna thought. But is that what happened? Did she commit suicide? Was she murdered? <i>Her Last Holiday</i> is told from three main points of view, as well as telling about past and present retreats, so you get to see what’s happening from all perspectives, how it all connects, and plays out.
#31 Goodnight Irene Jan Burke	1993 	■ Reporter 1/11 Southern California	For thirty-five years the identity of the dismembered woman found under the Las Piernas pier has remained a mystery. What secret did she take to her grave? Southern California reporter Irene Kelly has uncovered a maze of forensic records and confidential files that suggest a motive far more sinister than anyone imagined. The discovery has brought her close to Detective Frank Harriman, and closer still to exposing a killer who will resort to anything to keep his secrets buried -- and Irene silenced forever.
#32 The Expats Chris Pavone	2012 	■ Spy thriller ■ Domestic thriller SA Mainly Luxembourg and other European locations	In Luxembourg, Kate Moore’s days are filled with playdates and coffee mornings, her weekends spent in Paris. But Kate is also guarding a tremendous, life-defining secret—one that’s beginning to unravel her newly established expat life. She suspects that another American couple are not who they claim to be; her husband is acting suspiciously. She is increasingly terrified that her own past is catching up with her. As Kate uncovers the secrets of the people around her, she finds herself buried in layers of deceit so thick they threaten her family, her marriage, and her life.

#33 Harlem Shuffle Colson Whitehead	2021 	- Villains (Heist) - Historical SA New York City, NY	<i>Harlem Shuffle</i> is the story of Ray Carney, owner of a new and gently used furniture store on 125th Street in New York City in 1959. Carney fences the odd item with no provenance that his cousin Freddie or others bring in, but mostly stays on the right side of the law. His wife Elizabeth is expecting their second child and they are mainly content in their small apartment near the subway tracks, despite the disapproval of her parents who live on Striver's Row. In 1959, Freddie joins a crew who plans to rob the Hotel Theresa, Harlem's ritzy hotel, and volunteers Carney as the fence. Carney is dubious, but the money would certainly come in handy, and he doesn't know how to say no to Miami Joe and his gang when they all arrive at Carney's Furniture after hours. The heist is successful, but one of the deposit boxes contained jewelry belonging to the mistress of mobster Chink Montague, putting everyone on Miami Joe's crew in danger, including Carney. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights movement, this powerful novel brings 1960s Harlem to vivid life.
#34 The Friends of Eddie Coyle George V. Higgins	1972 	Villains SA Boston, MA	These are the friends of Eddie Coyle: Jackie Brown, the gun leader; Dillon, part-time contract killer; Jimmy Scalisi, gang leader. All the hoods, gunmen, drivers, thieves and executioners wheeling, dealing, and stealing in the world of Eddie Coyle, a small time punk with a big time problem. Eddie Coyle is convicted on a felony, and he's looking at three years in the pen--that is, unless he sells out one of his big-fish clients to the DA. But which of the many hoods, gunmen, and executioners whom he calls his friends should he send up the river? Told almost entirely in crackling dialogue, <i>The Friends of Eddie Coyle</i> is one of the greatest crime novels ever written.
#35 The Hot Rock Donald Westlake	1970 	- Villains - Humor 1/15 Mainly New York City	The first of the comical crime caper novels that feature ex-convict Dortmunder, a bumbling heist planner. John Dortmunder leaves jail with ten dollars, a train ticket, and nothing to make money on but his good name. Thankfully, his reputation goes far. No one plans a caper better than Dortmunder. His friend picks him up in a stolen Cadillac and drives him away from Sing-Sing, telling a story of a \$500,000 emerald that they just have to steal. Dortmunder doesn't hesitate to agree. The emerald is the crown jewel of a former British colony, lately granted independence and split into two nations: one for the Talabwo people, one for the Akinzi. The Akinzi have the stone, the Talabwo want it back, and their UN representative offers a fine payday to the men who can get it. It's not a simple heist, but Dortmunder could use the challenge.