



NEIL TURNER

READER'S CLUB

Greetings!

I hope everyone had a good summer (or winter, as the case may be). As you may recall, I took a little time for myself over the summer and am feeling somewhat refreshed, if not exactly back to perfect health. I have a new appreciation for Mr. Potato Head. How cool would it be to just root around in the box for replacement parts as needed??? I'm still dealing with lingering surgery issues and have a new one on the horizon, but that stuff makes for boring reading, so enough said about it. But before we continue, I'd like to offer a heartfelt thank you to everyone for sticking with me during the lull, and especially to the many of you who reached out to express concern and offer encouragement. Very much appreciated! And now, let's talk writing and books! 😊

Things are still a little jumbled in terms of timelines and such, but I've decided to write two novels at once—Tony #11 and a second thriller that is totally unrelated. After an awful lot of research and soul-searching about whether or not I could cook up another viable Valenti novel, Tony will return. The major plot elements are in place and I'm working out a few character matters, but we'll be putting words on the page this month. I have several intriguing ideas bouncing around in my head for the second novel I'll be working on, all of which are fairly advanced in terms of planning. I may approach all of these as stand-alone books, but am also pondering their potential as a trilogy or perhaps a short series. We'll see. More on that as we progress.

Now, if I'm not mistaken, I believe we've fallen somewhat behind with our Reader's Club goodies, and we can't have that, can we? So let's commit to a series of Amazon gift card draws with three winners every month through Christmas, and we'll see what else we can add as we go. We'll call this month's draw IT'S ABOUT TIME to make it as simple as can be. Simply select *reply*, type IT'S ABOUT TIME, and hit send. Good luck.

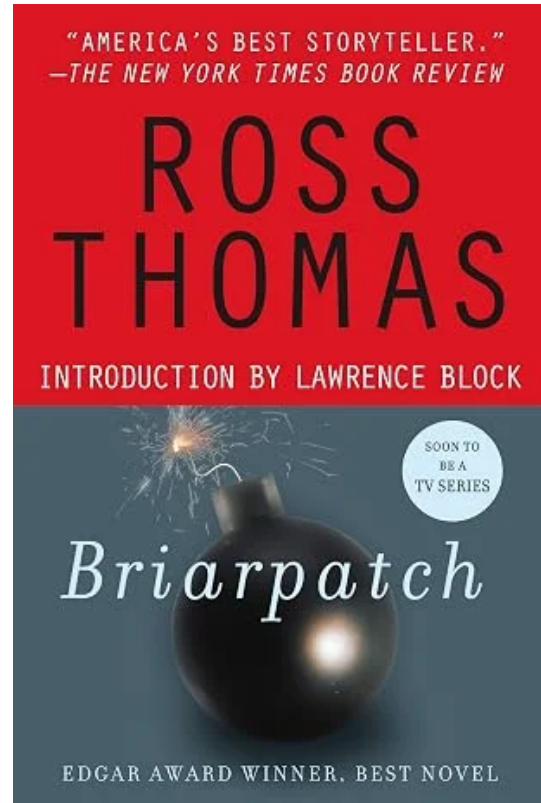
There isn't a whole lot more in the way of news, but we have a few features for you. I'll introduce you to a writer I've recently discovered, go behind the scenes regarding some significant changes I'm making on the business and tech side of things, and we've tucked a little reader survey into this month's edition. I hope you'll share your thoughts with me. And, as always, you can win a free ebook with our monthly Reader's Club Q & A feature. Read on!

Briarpatch by Ross Thomas

What's Neil Reading?

If you enjoy the old noir crime novels of writers such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, you'll enjoy Ross Thomas in terms of a certain writing style, that is wry, a little cynical, and generally unadorned—which is not to say bland, these folks were all terrific writers. The scope of Thomas' novels is somewhat broader, touching on politics considerably more, and the violence quotient is somewhat lower. People do die, of course—these are thrillers!—but not in vast numbers and their deaths are not particularly graphic. Note that these books were written between the mid-1960s and 1980s, so they reflect some of the sensibilities of the time. That is not a criticism, but simply an FYI. Here's my review:

Ross Thomas' works are well known for their exploration and exposure of the underbelly of American society, including crime, politics, and espionage—specifically the CIA. Briarpatch, winner of the 1985 Edgar Award for Best Novel, delves into all three in a single story that demonstrates why Mr. Thomas was an icon of the genre. Briarpatch opens with the murder of Felicity Dill, a homicide detective who dies in a car bombing. Felicity's older brother, Ben Dill, travels back to their hometown from Washington, where he works as an investigator for a Senate committee. The people running that committee ask him to take a deposition from an old friend of Ben's, which opens a can of worms that touches on Felicity's murder and much more. Ben discovers much that points to Felicity being involved in corruption, but answers are elusive and everything pointing to her guilt seems totally out of character. Suffice to say that Ben enters a labyrinth of conflicting tales and



behaviour that place him in mortal danger. The twists and turns are sublime, the writing is masterful, and the character of Ben Dill has layers of complexity and intuition that only reveal themselves over time. Ben is much more than he appears to be, as is most every other character in this book. The biggest mystery to me is why Ross Thomas isn't as well-known as some of his contemporaries. I'm already into my second novel by this terrific writer and am looking forward to devouring his entire catalogue.



Have Your Say

Reader Survey

Aside from the Tony Valenti Thrillers, I'm curious about what else you read. While I enjoy a good thriller, I read widely. How about you? I'd genuinely

like to know.

In terms of what I might write aside from Tony, what would you be mostly like to read if I were to publish a book in one or more of the following genres.

Please select at least one, or send me an email with anything else that interests you.

☐ Legal thriller with new protagonist, new locale, new supporting cast.

☐ Mystery/suspense, leaning somewhat toward thriller (because I can't help myself!)

☐ Political thriller. It would not feature assassins, a celebration of militarism, spy killers, or stories of that ilk. Think institutional and human disfunction and corruption, perhaps some political courage.

Submit

A Peek Behind the Scenes

Beyond the Curtain

Aside from my health challenges, a significant issue I've been facing is the amount of effort that goes into maintaining the business aspects of my writing. I've been studying that and toying around with ways to streamline the process without upsetting the balance I've achieved in the marketing and advertising sphere. I'm also transferring most of my tech tools into open-source alternatives to the big firms, and have been pleasantly surprised by the number of worthy alternatives—now I just have to stitch it all together into a well-oiled machine. Next up is a rebuild of my website. The end result of all this will certainly cost less, and it looks like I won't be sacrificing much, if anything, in terms of efficiencies. Cool beans! So ... new website, new book genre, new business approach ... much of which is in defiance of popular writing business wisdom. What's this? Neil's suddenly some sort of a trailblazer??? Naw, but perhaps a bit of a nonconformist. Now, just in case you think that makes me cool, consider this—at least those of you who are familiar with the old Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer stop animation TV special—I'm every bit as cool a dude as Rudolph and Hermey the Misfit Elf were. For those of you who aren't familiar with the show, trust me, these characters are the antithesis of cool dudes. A final note on changes, this time in regard to audiobooks. Many folks have asked about audiobook releases for the latest two books. I'm exploring production and distribution alternatives for *The Usual Suspect* and *Swamp Justice*. Stay tuned.



Win a FREE ebook!

Reader's Club Q & A

What's on your mind? Ask away! I'll answer one reader question in every Reader's Club Update. If I choose yours, I'll send you a

free eBook copy of one of my novels! Please send your questions via

the Contact page on my website or send an email to info@neilturnerbooks.com. If you send an email, please type Reader's Club Q & A in the subject line. Thank you!

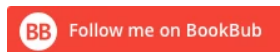
This month's question is a two-parter. Q: Why did you decide to make Tony a prosecutor in *Swamp Justice*? Do you have plans to do so again?

A: As I related above, as the Valenti series grows ever longer, it's a challenge to keep it fresh. Dropping Tony into an unfamiliar location was helpful in that regard, as was having him prosecute a case. I enjoyed the challenge of setting all that up, and doing so in a way that stayed true to Tony's character as something of an underdog fighting the good fight. As much as I enjoyed that twist, I have no plans to go down that road again.

And that's it for this month, folks. Thanks for being a member of our Reader's Club!

Take care, be well, and happy reading (or listening!),

Neil



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