

CWA DAGGERS

SHORTLISTS 2017

The CWA Dagger Shortlists are kindly sponsored by **Hazchem Network Ltd**, the UK's only palletised distribution network for dangerous goods, and by **CrimeFest**, the international crime writing convention, which will be held 17-20 May in Bristol in 2018.



THE HAZCHEM NETWORK

THE CWA DIAMOND DAGGER

WINNER 2017: ANN CLEEVES

THE CWA DAGGER IN THE LIBRARY

WINNER 2017: MARI HANNAH

THE CWA GOLD DAGGER

THE BEAUTIFUL DEAD (Bantam Press) by Belinda Bauer

From her first book, the award-winning **Badlands**, onwards, Belinda Bauer has demonstrated two notable characteristics: a plucky willingness to take the crime novel into completely unexpected new territory, and a surefire grasp of exactly what it takes to unsettle the reader. In **The Beautiful Dead** she's on typically scabrous form.

DEAD MAN'S BLUES (Mantle) by Ray Celestin

In **Dead Man's Blues** Ray Celestin has produced a dazzling successor, more than living up to his award-winning debut, **Axeman's Jazz**, set in New Orleans. A riveting treat of a read is to be enjoyed in this super-charged and brilliantly imagined evocation of gangster and jazz-rich 1920s Chicago with Pinkerton detectives Talbot and Davis.

THE DRY (Little, Brown) by Jane Harper

Almost everyone has something to hide in **The Dry**, Jane Harper's Australian-set humdinger of a debut. With razor-sharp characterisation she skilfully peels back the layers of secrets and lies within a drought-ridden farming community - a perfectly-paced page-turner.

SPOOK STREET (John Murray) by Mick Herron

Mick Herron's idiosyncratic writing is something unique in his genre, which is, one might venture, the spycraft of le Carré refracted through the blackly comic vision of Joseph Heller's **Catch-22**. Herron's trips to the outer reaches of British espionage already have a cult following, and this latest entry, as ever, is priceless.

A RISING MAN (Harvill Secker) by Abir Mukherjee

A rich seam of humour is found in **A Rising Man** by Abir Mukherjee where brilliant interplay between characters alongside a cleverly constructed plot peppered with plenty of red herrings convincingly brings Colonial Calcutta to life. A beautifully crafted and assured debut.

THE GIRL IN GREEN (Faber & Faber) by Derek B. Miller

After his award-winning debut, **Norwegian by Night**, Derek B Miller has delivered a blistering and powerful successor in **The Girl in Green**, set against the backdrop of war-torn Iraq. This is a thought-provoking tour de force with unforgettable characters - one not to be missed.

THE CWA IAN FLEMING STEEL DAGGER

Sponsored by Ian Fleming Publications

YOU WILL KNOW ME

(Picador)

by Megan Abbott

Social and parental ambition becomes deadly in this tense title about obsession, jealousy and the quest for perfection in the compelling setting of a small town high school gymnastics team. Abbott's writing is completely believable, expertly twisting expectations to deliver an engrossing psycho-drama of a thriller.

THE KILLING GAME

(Bookouture)

by J S Carol

Cunningly structured Hollywood hostage drama that boldly explores how the spheres of showbiz and terrorism overlap in their hunger for fame and news coverage. Carol's world is peopled with troublingly realistic characters and disturbs in its portrayal of moral ambiguity. The cinematic pace never slows; totally absorbing.

WE GO AROUND IN THE NIGHT AND ARE CONSUMED BY FIRE (Myriad Editions) by Jules Grant

An unflinching, hard-hitting and at times startlingly tender gangster novel set in Manchester. Powerfully written and convincingly representing its women characters, with flawless attention to the narrative voice of the two leads. A fascinating and refreshingly original gangster story, brimming with energy.

REDEMPTION ROAD

(Hodder & Stoughton)

by John Hart

Hart builds a convincing and complex picture of an American community in crisis, pulsing with atmosphere and throbbing tension. Offbeat and uncomfortable in its reflection of society and urgent but insightful in its dealings with contemporary race relations, this is a truly modern thriller steeped in suspense.

SPOOK STREET

(John Murray)

by Mick Herron

The most vividly written spy fiction since le Carré, written in a distinctive and idiosyncratic style blending bitter comedy with moments of chilling unease. Pleasingly unique, with intelligently drawn characters plunged into a world where the mythical past of spycraft meets bleak, blunt reality.

THE CONSTANT SOLDIER

(Mantle)

by William Ryan

Lyrical and yet gripping writing exploring guilt, fear, identity and how people act in time of war. Evocative period detail with a range of superbly etched characters full of depth, heart and honesty. Ryan's story is beautifully written and achieves an impressive thoughtfulness in the midst of a necessarily harrowing WW2 narrative.

THE CWA JOHN CREASEY (NEW BLOOD) DAGGER

THE PICTURES

(Point Blank)

by Guy Bolton

A Hollywood cop compromised in the past as a fixer for the big studios is drawn into the twilight world of period La-La Land when a producer for *The Wizard of Oz* is found dead, and the case has to be hushed up. The investigation soon becomes very personal. A wonderful evocation of the dark side of a Golden Age.

RAGDOLL

(Trapeze)

by Daniel Cole

A gruesome murder sets William 'Woolf' Fawkes, a cop with a troubled past, and his team on a breathless search for a particularly cruel but cunning perpetrator who taunts them in imaginative ways. Clockwork plotting and a relentless pace makes this a major page-turner.

DISTRESS SIGNALS

(Corvus)

by Catherine Ryan Howard

A debut psychological thriller with the power to move and disturb. When a screenwriter's girlfriend doesn't return from a trip to Barcelona, he is determined to find her despite the police establishing she is not who she pretended to be. A clever puzzle with a powerful human touch.

SIRENS

(Doubleday)

by Joseph Knox

A poignant tale of a disgraced undercover policeman and his investigation of the Manchester drug scene and the broken but often beautiful women who navigate in its midst, this debut from a local bookseller has pathos to spare and a grim view of the hopelessness that pervades our world.

GOOD ME, BAD ME

(Michael Joseph)

by Ali Land

A fascinating tale of the mother/daughter relationship between two fractured protagonists, this novel excels at sowing seeds of discomfort and compulsively keeping you glued to the page. Disturbing, ever unpredictable and gripping and an exceptional psychological thriller.

TALL OAKS

(Twenty 7)

by Chris Whitaker

A quirky portrait of small town America with echoes of both *Twin Peaks* and *Fargo*, this tale moves between tragedy and humour at the turn of a page. The disappearance of a small child and the way it affects the myriad characters ranging from the distraught mother, the investigating cop and a gallery of outsiders is innovative and moving.

THE CWA GOLD DAGGER FOR NON-FICTION

A DANGEROUS PLACE

(The History Press)
by Simon Farquhar

Under a cloak of anonymity, John Duffy and David Mulcahy stalked vulnerable women in a descending spiral of rape and murder. The author is the son of one of the key detectives on the case, and brings a very personal perspective to this gripping account.

CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR: A TRUE STORY OF PRISON LIFE IN CASTRO'S CUBA

(Weidenfeld & Nicolson) by Stephen Purvis

One Briton's story of how he survived in the world of Cuba's prison system showing how justice is arbitrary in a people's republic. Not just a jail tale but a portrait of a Kafkaesque system in the tropics.

THE SCHOLL CASE: THE DEADLY END OF A MARRIAGE

(Text Publishing) by Anja Reich-Osang

How the murder of a woman after nearly 50 years living in a hidden dysfunctional marriage shattered a small town in Germany: the human side of crime.

THE WICKED BOY: THE MYSTERY OF A VICTORIAN CHILD MURDERER

(Bloomsbury Publishing) by Kate Summerscale

What happened to the Victorian boy who killed his mother throws light not only on the Victorian system of crime and punishment but also on the wider society of the late 19th century. Summerscale's researches uncover a surprising ending.

A PASSING FURY: SEARCHING FOR JUSTICE AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II

(Jonathan Cape) by A. T. Williams

A compelling examination of how the war crimes trials at Nuremberg and elsewhere were imposed across the chaos and ruins of the Third Reich, interwoven with the author's own travels, investigations and reflections.

ANOTHER DAY IN THE DEATH OF AMERICA

(Guardian Faber Publishing)
by Gary Younge

Spread across eight states over 24 hours, detached reportage tracks the complexities of a nation's obsession with the gun, showing the often invisible toll of the US Second Amendment at ground level.

ENDEAVOUR 

THE CWA ENDEAVOUR HISTORICAL DAGGER

ENDEAVOUR 

Sponsored by Endeavour Press

THE DEVIL'S FEAST (Fig Tree)

by M. J. Carter

After a gruesome death at the Reform, London's grandest gentleman's club in 1842, Captain William Avery is persuaded to investigate. He discovers a web of personal and political rivalries simmering behind the club's handsome facade, particularly concerning resident chef Alexis Soyer, whose culinary brilliance is only matched by his talent for self-publicity. Without the help of the absent Jeremiah Blake, Avery must work out if the first death was a dress rehearsal for something much more sinister before it is too late.

THE ASHES OF BERLIN (No Exit Press)

by Luke McCallin

When a man is found slain in a run-down tenement, Gregor Reinhardt investigates for Berlin's civilian police force, while having to answer to the Allied powers ruling different parts of the city in 1947. After discovering a serial killer is on the loose and that one of the victims was the brother of a Nazi scientist, Reinhardt realises his hunt could cost him everything as he comes under scrutiny from a group of Germans wanting to continue the war and the Soviets, while racing against time to catch a killer trying to avenge past wrongs.

THE LONG DROP (Harvill Secker)

by Denise Mina

This intriguing mix of true crime and fiction uses real historical detail and court records, combined with the author's imagination to recreate a wintry night in Glasgow in December 1957 when businessman William Watt was seen meeting notorious criminal Peter Manuel and spending a night drinking with him in bars and clubs across the city. Manuel, the focus of ITV drama *In Plain Sight* last December, was later convicted of killing Watt's family. By filling in the gaps in the night they met, Mina reveals shocking details about both men and what they could have discussed.

A RISING MAN (Harvill Secker)

by Abir Mukherjee

Former Scotland Yard detective Captain Sam Wyndham starts a new life in Calcutta in 1919 desperately seeking to escape the horrors of the Great War. Yet before he can even acclimatise, he is appointed the head of a new CID and tasked with investigating the murder of a senior British official. With the aid of Indian-born Sergeant "Surrender-Not" Banerjee, Wyndham embarks on a journey into the dark underbelly of the British Raj to find the killer.

BY GASLIGHT (Point Blank)

by Steven Price

When the body of a woman believed to have jumped into the Thames is discovered on Edgware Road and her head is pulled from the dark muddy waters of the river 10 miles away, William Pinkerton vows to solve her mysterious death in an attempt to find a thief who always escaped his father, the founder of famed Pinkerton Detective Agency. This starts a sweeping historical epic that travels from London in 1885 to diamond mines in South Africa and America during its Civil War, before returning to London for a gripping finale.

THE CITY IN DARKNESS (Constable)

by Michael Russell

Detective Inspector Stefan Gillespie is called to an isolated mountain town in Wicklow, Ireland, in December 1939, after a postman disappears and is believed dead. The local guards in Laragh, close to where Stefan's wife Maeve drowned in a lake years earlier, are hiding something. When his investigation reveals a link between the missing man and his wife's death, he travels to Spain in the aftermath of its bloody civil war to find information that will allow him to return to Dublin to find the truth he craves.

THE CWA INTERNATIONAL DAGGER

A COLD DEATH (4th Estate) by Antonio Manzini, Tr Antony Shugaar

This is Manzini's second novel to be translated, in-the-genre and none the worse for that. His tough-guy detective is less the intuitive maverick cop than a poor boy making good as a detective officer in a new and freezing-cold area of Italy, which requires a whole new take on footwear. Good on class within the police.

A FINE LINE (Bitter Lemon Press) by Gianrico Carofiglio, Tr Howard Curtis

A cerebral, complex and deeply committed examination of morals and ethics that manages to entertain as well as challenge the reader; it has been described as a 'cri de cœur'.

BLOOD WEDDING (MacLehose Press) by Pierre Lemaître, Tr Frank Wynne

If you can call anything Lemaître writes apprentice work, this is, well, an early experiment with the suspense subgenre. Lemaître offers the reader a seemingly confusing jigsaw that comes together at the sharp end.

CLIMATE OF FEAR (Harvill Secker) by Fred Vargas, Tr Siân Reynolds

On initial publication in France in 2010, this book, now appearing as an earlier story in the Adamsberg series, was not well received. With the advantage of time, its remarkable structure shines with its complexities and very odd oddities, some on two legs. On four, it has an outstanding cat.

THE DYING DETECTIVE (Doubleday) by Leif G W Persson, Tr Neil Smith

After a number of Backstrom adventures, what a pleasure to reach back in this series, and reflect on the gifts, various, of Persson's earlier cast of mature characters. I quote Henry Reed's parody of T. S. Eliot, 'As we get older, we do not get any younger'. We do not, but perhaps we can remain ourselves until the end.

THE LEGACY OF THE BONES (HarperCollins) by Delores Redondo, Tr Nick Casiter & Lorenza Garcia

Like its predecessor, this is rather strange and wonderful, set in an area of Spain that retains a certain mystery due in part to its being a dark valley in a large national park in which several languages (including Basque) are spoken alongside Spanish, and which still enjoys superstitions that have disappeared elsewhere. This is murder with a seriously creepy difference.

THE CWA SHORT STORY DAGGER

THE ASSASSINATION by Leye Adenle in **Sunshine Noir** (White Sun Books) Edited by AnnaMaria Alfieri & Michael Stanley

In an interesting twist on the "corrupt politician" narrative, Adenle cleverly paints a picture of a man with many deserved enemies, all fighting to be the one to take him down, with an almost witty twist to the tale.

MURDER AND ITS MOTIVES by Martin Edwards in **Motives for Murder** (Sphere) Edited by Martin Edwards

Brilliantly misdirecting the reader, and deploying excellent use of true crime, this riveting short story finishes with a delightfully sinister flourish.

THE SUPER RECOGNISER OF VIK by Michael Ridpath in **Motives for Murder** (Sphere) Edited by Martin Edwards

A fresh and interesting take on the unexplored theme of super recognisers, with a neatly drawn-in twist. An excellent contribution to the popular genre of Icelandic crime thrillers.

WHAT YOU WERE FIGHTING FOR by James Sallis in **The Highway Kind** (Mulholland Books) Edited by Patrick Millikin

A noir tale of past history, dark deeds where the past can come back to haunt you. With a nod to Jim Thompson and the author's own iconic novel **Drive**.

THE TRIALS OF MARGARET by LC Tyler in **Motives for Murder** (Sphere) Edited by Martin Edwards

From one of the best first paragraphs ever written to its abrupt and unexpected final sentence, **The Trials of Margaret** is a drily funny reminder of all the small inconveniences that murder brings.

SNAKESKIN by Ovidia Yu in **Sunshine Noir** (White Sun Books) Edited by AnnaMaria Alfieri & Michael Stanley

A clever subversion of the "scheming younger wife" story. The tension between the narrator and the wife builds in this deft and claustrophobic story until its inevitable and explosive finish.



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE DAGGER AWARDS DINNER ON 26 OCTOBER IN LONDON

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