

CWA DAGGERS SHORTLISTS 2017/18

THE CWA DIAMOND DAGGER

The Diamond Dagger recognises authors whose crime writing careers have been marked by sustained excellence, and who have made a significant contribution to the genre.

WINNER: Michael Connelly

THE CWA GOLD DAGGER

Steve Cavanagh - THE LIAR
(Orion)

A perfectly balanced combination of courtroom drama and fast-paced action. Add to the mix strong characterisation and superb plotting for a twisty and absorbing read in which nothing is resolved until the very last page.

Mick Herron - LONDON RULES
(John Murray Publishers)

Manages to be an exciting and cleverly plotted spy story while at the same time a very funny satire on the incompetent British Secret Service.

Dennis Lehane - SINCE WE FELL
(Little Brown)

Tough American crime novelist changes gear and makes main character a troubled insecure woman who kills her husband. Guns give way to deep psychology.

Attica Locke - BLUEBIRD, BLUEBIRD
(Serpent's Tail)

Police attitudes to Texas killings reveal the still rampant racism of the American justice system. Atmospheric, disturbing and beautifully written.

Abir Mukherjee - A NECESSARY EVIL
(Harvill Secker)

The Calcutta Police Force series set at the end of the British Raj continues apace with no diminution in quality of characterisation or plot. An ending that is both surprising and unpredictable.

Emma Viskic - RESURRECTION BAY
(Pushkin Vertigo)

Clever, funny and totally deserving of the plaudits engulfing this antipodean debut. Vividly persuasive characters along with fast-paced, gut-wrenching twists leave the reader craving for the next instalment.



THE IAN FLEMING STEEL DAGGER



Sponsored by Ian Fleming Publications Ltd.

Mick Herron - LONDON RULES
(John Murray Publishers)

A deft and daring combination of comedy and terror in a prescient thriller for the post-Isis, pre-Brexit era. Herron's stable of slow horses are proving to be long-runners of Grand National quality and include the most outrageously entertaining characters in crime fiction.

Emily Koch - IF I DIE BEFORE I WAKE
(Harvill Secker)

Extremely slick and excruciatingly tense debut. A brilliant Hitchcockian premise - a possible murder victim who can't speak or move - provides an original and unforgettable narrator. The writing has perfect control of what the protagonist and reader know and when they discover it.

Attica Locke - BLUEBIRD, BLUEBIRD
(Serpent's Tail)

This thrillingly written examination of racial tensions in the American South is evocative and provocative. The personal jeopardy of the protagonist - a black cop in a white world where it may be dangerous to find the killer - is subtly interwoven with America's racial fault lines past and present. If the distinction between 'crime' and 'literary' fiction is ever killed off, Locke will be a prime suspect.

Colette McBeth - AN ACT OF SILENCE
(Wildfire)

McBeth makes fresh and clever amendments to the long-serving form of the Westminster political thriller. This harrowing and convincing read sees a disgraced former cabinet minister seek to right a public wrong and heal a private family wound. Its authority and quality are among the few things on which our current MPs might agree.

C J Tudor - THE CHALK MAN
(Michael Joseph)

Debutante Tudor makes an indelible mark with this story of sinister line drawings that lead to corpses. Flashing back across three decades, the narrative exposes mysteries and rituals in an English village. Sins of the past and guilts of the present entwine in a chilly and disturbing exploration of childhood secrets overshadowing adulthood.

Don Winslow - THE FORCE
(HarperFiction)

Numerous authors have written about New York City cops, but Winslow makes the territory fresh through his signature deep research and an utterly compelling and engaging anti-hero, Denny Malone, who is both good cop and bad cop in one man. Policing gangs who deal in drugs, guns and money, Malone embodies the problem of what it means to do the right thing in a world of so many wrongs.

THE JOHN CREASEY NEW BLOOD DAGGER

William Boyle - GRAVESEND
(No Exit Press)

Having caused someone's death because of his drinking, a con is released and has to face the anger of the dead man's relatives and cope with his troubled reinsertion into society. An at times bleak Brooklyn-based tale of crime and redemption with acute characterisation and sense of place.

Joe Ide - I.Q.
(Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

A delightful Sherlockian romp through the teeming Los Angeles ghettos, where a brainy black kid becomes a logic-led sleuth for the poor and the downtrodden. Colourful, witty and enlightening, and the emergence of a unique new detective character that has the readers gladly cheering for him from the sidelines.

Danya Kukafka - GIRL IN SNOW
(Picador)

The death by murder of a Colorado high school girl and how it deeply affects the lives of the boy who loved her too much, the girl who envied her and the policeman investigating the case. An emotional psychological thriller that X-rays small town America with a vengeance.

Melissa Scrivner Love - LOLA
(Point Blank)

California gang wars in which the power behind the bloody throne is, for once, a woman, whose control of the macho cliques is a subtle blend of aggression and emotional intelligence. Intense, on a knife-edge and constantly defying expectations. A powerful and surprising debut.

Khurrum Rahman - EAST OF HOUNSLOW
(HQ)

Edgy humour and most topical subjects in this tale of a London suburb minor dope dealer who bites off more than he can chew, and finds himself at the centre of a veritable storm involving jihadists, MI5, a cherished BMW and so much more. A new home-grown voice with an ethnic difference and sensibility.

Emma Viskic - RESURRECTION BAY
(Pushkin Vertigo)

Set in a beautifully evoked Australia, a deaf man pursues the killer of his childhood friend and is forced to navigate by guess work and uncover the many secrets of his boyhood town, with the assistance of a local cop. Exemplary and humane and full of deeply felt anxiety.

ALCS

THE ALCS GOLD DAGGER FOR NON-FICTION

The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work.

Piu Eatwell - BLACK DAHLIA, RED ROSE
(Coronet)

Notorious and almost legendary 1940s LA murder freshly investigated by an author who shines a brighter light than before on police corruption, the lowlife suspects and the probable murderer.

David Grann - KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON
(Simon & Schuster)

A grim and poignant chapter in US history, illuminating the exploitation and murder of members of the Osage tribe during the oil rush of the early 20th century, and the beginnings of the FBI.

Thomas Harding - BLOOD ON THE PAGE
(Heinemann)

Gripping account of the recent and baffling murder of a Hampstead eccentric, and of the subsequent trial in which parts of the evidence were suppressed by government order.

Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich - THE FACT OF A BODY
(Macmillan)

Unusual blend of family memoir together with a deep South murder and trial story centring on abuse and silence as seen across the class divide in America.

T. Christian Miller & Ken Armstrong - A FALSE REPORT
(Hutchinson)

The US hunt for a systematic serial rapist and a story in which the victims are much more than names, as well as an absorbing reflection of the latest forensic techniques and changing police attitudes.

Laura Thompson - REX v EDITH THOMPSON
(Head of Zeus)

Passionate, detailed and persuasive retelling of the Thompson-Bywaters affair in which the author puts the woman at the centre of the story so that she can speak for herself.

THE CWA HISTORICAL DAGGER

A NECESSARY EVIL - Abir Mukherjee (Harvill Secker)

The follow-up to last year's Historical Dagger winner, *A Rising Man*, sees Captain Sam Wyndham and Sergeant "Surrender-Not" Banerjee investigate the assassination of the heir to the throne of the diamond-rich kingdom of Sambalpore.

FIRE - L. C. Tyler (Constable)

The Great Fire of 1666 is the backdrop to a pacey and atmospheric novel of murder, political skulduggery and witty one-liners from investigator John Grey, whose latest case takes him from the smoking ruins of the City of London to the heart of the royal court...

LIGHTNING MEN - Thomas Mullen (Little Brown)

The second instalment of a brilliant series exploring the inherent racism that Atlanta's first black police officers struggled against in 1950 sees white officer Denny Rakestraw join Lucius Boggs and Tommy Smith in facing Klansmen and drug gangs to investigate two murders and a vicious assault.

MONEY IN THE MORGUE - Ngaio Marsh & Stella Duffy (HarperCollins)

Stella Duffy's seamless completion of a typically confounding case for Ngaio (pronounced Nigh-oh) Marsh's detective Roderick Alleyn is a remarkable homage to the Golden Age with a cast of quirky characters and a portrayal of New Zealand during wartime that the judges found fresh and unfamiliar in the field of historical crime.

NINE LESSONS - Nicola Upson (Faber & Faber)

Featuring a fictionalised version of crime writer Josephine Tey, the latest in this series set in the 1930s is an elegant and assured mystery with an audacious plot in which the classic ghost stories of Cambridge don M. R. James may have inspired a series of murders...

NUCLEUS - Rory Clements (Zaffre Publishing)

On the eve of war in 1939, Professor Tom Wilde investigates a conspiracy to steal the top secret work of physicists trying to create the first nuclear bomb at Cambridge's Cavendish Laboratory after one of their finest minds is murdered.

THE CWA INTERNATIONAL DAGGER

ZEN AND THE ART OF MURDER - **Oliver Bottini, tr Jamie Bulloch** (MacLehose)

A very unusual police procedural with the destruction of human trafficking only one of its horrors. Characters devoid of cliché, and exquisite control over what seems a series of loose ends.

THREE DAYS AND A LIFE - **Pierre Lemaître, tr Frank Wynne** (MacLehose)

A crime novel set in petty bourgeois provincial France, focussed on one character with the repercussions of a violent accident blighting a boy's adult life and career. Lemaître keeps the suspense high and the reader empathetic. Frank Wynne's excellent translation never calls attention to itself.

AFTER THE FIRE - **Henning Mankell, tr Marlaine Delargy** (Harvill Secker)

In Mankell's last book the burning down of an island family home upends the life of an elderly recluse, leading to the examination and unexpected development of several relationships. It is a book full of humane reflections upon aging, and loss, and the fine grumpiness that made so many of Mankell's characters recognizable. We'll miss him.

THE FROZEN WOMAN - **Jon Michelet, tr Don Bartlett** (No Exit Press)

Jon Michelet also died this year. His book is a sleek, well-constructed and intriguing thriller-cum-detective investigation; recognizable characters, including bikers, petty criminals, cops, a left-wing lawyer and civilians, including the frozen woman, with excellent descriptions.

OFFERING TO THE STORM - **Dolores Redondo, tr Nick Caistor & Lorenza Garzía** (HarperCollins)

This is the last book in a powerful trilogy, with most of the plot threads brought together with some unexpected results plus the possibility of future developments, such as the reappearance of the monster who is the heroine's mother.

THE ACCORDIONIST - **Fred Vargas, tr Sian Reynolds** (Harvill Secker)

In this, the last of the Three Evangelists' appearances, Louis Kehlweiler (and his frog) solve a complex series of murders. Vargas's English readers, unlike the original French, will recognise Poems on the Underground, begun many years ago to give commuters something to think about and enjoy. Poems on the Metro are the key to the mystery.

THE CWA SHORT STORY DAGGER

THE LAST SIEGE OF BOTHWELL CASTLE

by Chris Brookmyre

Bloody Scotland (Historic Environment Scotland)

This utterly modern siege story is filled with humour, a terrific cast of characters, and a beautiful setting - as well as a signature Chris Brookmyre reference to excrement!

NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESSIT

by Denise Mina

Bloody Scotland (Historic Environment Scotland)

In this sinister tale of a vindictive child, the dread builds, pulling you in so that you can't look away. Its ending will stay with you for some time.

SECOND SON by Lee Child

No Middle Name: The Complete Collected Jack Reacher Stories (Bantam Press)

An excellently plotted familial introduction, with a fascinating insight into Reacher's relationship with his brother Joe - a worthy genesis of Reacher.

ACCOUNTING FOR MURDER

by Christine Poulson

Mystery Tour: CWA Anthology of Short Stories

Edited by Martin Edwards
(Orenda Books)

An affair and a crime are gradually revealed through receipts, invoices and other documents - a unique device deployed to brilliant effect.

SMOKING KILLS by Erin Kelly

THE BODY - Killer Women Crime Club Anthology 2

Edited by Susan Opie (Killer Women Ltd)

Erin Kelly skilfully misdirects the reader in this superb portrayal of a dysfunctional marriage, in which secret smoking is a catalyst for murder.

THE CWA DAGGER IN THE LIBRARY

Nominated by libraries

Edward Marston (aka Keith Miles)

Edward Marston's first historical mystery, **The Queen's Head**, was published in 1988, launching the Nicholas Bracewell series. He has since written many, many books and created several series, including the famous Train Detective novels.

Nicci French

Nicci French is the pseudonym for the writing partnership of married journalists Nicci Gerrard and Sean French. There are twenty bestselling novels by this world-famous duo, published in 31 languages. **Blue Monday** was the first thrilling story in the Frieda Klein series, which concludes with **Day of the Dead**.

Martin Edwards

Award-winning Martin Edwards has written standalones and two series of novels; one set in Liverpool and one the Lake District. He has edited 35 anthologies and published 10 non-fiction books including **The Golden Age of Murder**.

An acclaimed expert on crime fiction, Martin is series consultant to the British Library's Crime Classics.

Simon Kernick

Simon's first novel, **The Business of Dying**, about a cop who moonlights as a hit man, was published in 2002 and described as 'the crime debut of the year' by The Independent. Since then Simon has written a book a year as well as three novellas. He specialises in fast-paced thrillers set over a short space of time.

Peter May

Scottish writer Peter May has won awards in Europe and America. In 2014, **Entry Island** won the UK's ITV Crime Thriller Book Club Best Read of the Year Award. His books have sold more than two million copies in the UK and several million internationally.

Rebecca Tope

Rebecca is author of two major murder mystery series; one featuring Thea Osborne, a house sitter in the Cotswolds, and the other Persimmon Brown, Lake District florist. Rebecca is also 'ghost writer' of the novels based on the ITV series **Rosemary and Thyme**.



YOU ARE INVITED TO THE DAGGER AWARDS DINNER ON 25TH OCTOBER IN LONDON

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