

Lone Star Noir

Bobby Byrd (Editor) , John Byrd (Editor) , Johnny Byrd (Editor)

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-- *Library Journal*

"Unsettling and shivery."

-- *Kirkus Reviews*

"Crime, like politics, is local. The folks at Akashic Books understand this . . . "Lone Star Noir" is a solid collection. Heck, it better be -- the state's red clay looks like dried blood. Noir grows out of the ground here."

-- *Austin American-Statesman*

"What makes Texas noir different from any other noir? Is it just that the gumshoes wear cowboy boots? . . . Akashic Books finally turns its attention to the biggest state in the Lower 48, but all that land just means more places to bury the bodies. As father-son editing partnership Bobby and Johnny Byrd observe in their introduction, this isn't J.R. Ewing's Lone Star State. This is the Texas of chicken shit bingo, Enron scamsters, and a feeling that what happens in Mexico stays in Mexico. [...] So what defines Texas noir? Who knows, but you better pray that blood doesn't stain your belt buckle."

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Includes brand-new stories by: James Crumley, Joe R. Lansdale, Claudia Smith, Ito Romo, Luis Alberto Urrea, David Corbett, George Weir, Sarah Cortez, Jesse Sublett, Dean James, Tim Tingle, Milton Burton, Lisa Sandlin, Jessica Powers, and Bobby Byrd.

Bobby Byrd is the co-publisher of Cinco Puntos Press in El Paso, Texas. As a poet, Byrd is the recipient of an NEA Fellowship, the D.H. Lawrence Fellowship awarded by the University of New Mexico, and an International Residency Fellowship.

John Byrd, co-publisher of Cinco Puntos Press, is co-editor (with Bobby Byrd) of the anthology *Puro Border: Dispatches, Snapshots & Graffiti from La Frontera*. He is also a Spanish-to-English translator and a freelance essayist.

Lone Star Noir Details

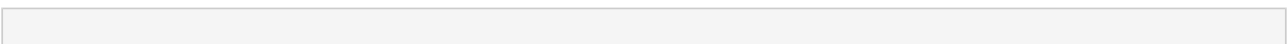
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From Reader Review Lone Star Noir for online ebook

Mary says

As with the other city/state "noir" books this is a collection of stories of varying quality, but all with a noir outlook and a moral outcome not sought. The first story does have the best line I have ever read outside of James M. Cain: "Phelan asked about the girl's rap sheet but the dial tone was noncommittal."

One more thing - there is a map at the front of the book showing the locations in Texas of all the stories. Amazingly, though, an adjacent state to the northeast is labeled Alabama - even I with my east coast bias know that is Arkansas.

Annie Ovens says

This is a great concept and since I live in Texas, I was excited to read this book and look for some familiarity, some landmarks, or street names of the many Texas cities I've been to. You would think that a state known for its size would also be a character in these stories, after all, these stories were written by current Texas authors weren't they? It didn't seem that the great state of Texas played as big as a role as I assumed it would, which is disappointing (to me anyway). Speaking of, I thought several of the stories were disappointing, some were a little disjointed, the writing didn't flow, and I found myself thinking "how did this story make it in the book?" There was one absolute standout, which made the book worth the price; it was dark, nail-biting, and tragic but not necessarily noir. In fact, not many of these stories had a classic noir feel, I was expecting more of a crime drama type and some of these were more on the psychological horror side. Not a bad thing, but a crime drama book with stories that take place across Texas would have been cool. With a title like "Lone Star Noir" I kind of thought it would be all gritty drama with modern cowboys and it wasn't.

Worth the read for short stories by: Claudia Smith, Jessica Powers, and Sarah Cortez.

Kristy says

A fine collection of contemporary crime fiction, all set in the great state of Texas. This is a relatively diverse set of authors for the genre and a nice stretching of what noir-y crime fiction can be. Plus the title is fun to say.

Tuxlie says

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Leah Coffin says

Most of these were pretty good. Except for "Montgomery Clift," which was well-written but made me want to take a shower afterwards. Geeyack. Still, looking forward to the next volume.

Kate says

Some of these are really disturbing (as in I wish I could unread them), and others are more in the campy noir style I like. It's a good mix for the different types of noir fans. Being new to Texas, I thought I might learn a bit about the state - turned out not so much.

Beth says

Disappointing

Chad says

it was ok, very hit or miss, with more misses than hits

Brendan says

A good read over-all, despite an occasional miss.

Favorites:

"Cherry Coke" - Milton T. Burton - Poker games in Tyler.

"Duckweed" - George Wier

"Six-Finger Jack" - Joe R. Lansdale

"Phelan's First Case" - Lisa Sandlin - A p.i. story in Beaumont.

"Six Dead Cabbies" - Tim Tingle - Teens working at Ellington Air Force Base.

All five of these are from the Back Roads section or the Gulf Coast section. The Big City stories kind of seemed low on the Texas factor.

Kerry Pickens says

Really disappointed in this book. Not noir at all, and there are plenty of great writers in Texas. The collection was put together by someone that doesn't understand noir or what makes a story well written.

Sam Sattler says

Lone Star Noir is another short story collection in the Akashic Books series that I first discovered back in 2010. Each collection in this series contains fourteen or fifteen stories that fit comfortably in the genre of noir crime fiction. And, because each of the stories is written by someone from (or very familiar with) the city or region in which all of the stories are set, the collections are long on setting and mood. I have previously read and enjoyed Boston Noir, Mexico City Noir, Long Island Noir, Manila Noir, Prison Noir, and Belfast Noir. And now, I can finally add one of Akashic's Texas books to that list.

I'm a Texas native, and other than a decade during which I lived in Europe and North Africa, I have spent my whole life here. So, speaking from personal observation, I can attest to the validity of editor Bobby Byrd's statement in the book's introduction that "Texas, in all its many places, bleeds noir fiction." Lone Star Noir is, in fact, only one of the Akashic books set in Texas.

As usual in every short story collection I have ever read, Lone Star Noir includes both winners and losers. Some of the stories grab you in the first paragraph – and one or two others might see the reader perplexed even after the last page has been turned. Surprisingly, at least to me, the most disturbing and haunting story in the entire collection was written by a woman.

Claudia Smith's "Catgirl" is set on the beaches near the island city of Galveston, a place where Texas parents take their children for a day or two in the usually warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. For children, it is a small slice of paradise. That however, is not the case for the four little girls who learn about the real world one night from someone they trusted to keep them safe.

Some of the stories are set in the state's largest cities, others are set in what seems to be the middle of nowhere. The San Antonio story, Ito Romo's "Crank," shows what can happen to a big city boy unprepared to visit the meanest of his city's streets – but thinks that he is. And then as if to remind the reader that major crime occurs in the smallest of little towns, there is "Preacher's Kid," a story by Jessica Powers. Also in the mix, is Joe Lansdale "Six-Finger Jack," a fine story about a bounty killing that the killer soon has reason to regret. This one is set in the heart of East Texas, a region Lansdale knows as well as any writer out there.

There are way more hits than misses in Lone Star Noir and, as usual, I'll be keeping my eyes open for other books in a series that has become one of my favorites.

Adam says

James Arthur Crumley, just the best.
Wish he would have authored the rest.

Tiffany says

Hit or miss. Interesting concept. I like the geographical references and organization of the stories, but most of the stories did not capture my imagination.

Michael says

A collection of short stories, noir, based in Texas. This was great. I love the concept. But some of these stories are not that tough. "Oh no, some guy from the suburbs met a meth-head hooker! Ewwww!" Dude obviously didn't even know what he was talking about, probably did some second-hand research. Talked to some people. A few are just nasty for the sake of being nasty without much in the way of style. One in particular I wish I'd never seen. Oh well. My brother Chris and I have many that are true that would put a few of these in the shade. Maybe I will do something about that. I am reminded of the Robert Fate "Baby Shark" books, which I love.

Longhair says

I will confess that when I picked up this book I knew nothing about Noir. I expected a looser language used to convey a somber tone and I did get that, for the two stories I was able to get through. Some of the language was baffling, "he was listening to her, hearing it in the waves of quiet that rolled over him, quiet riding on waves of quiet," p.40. Then it goes to describe a bayou, all this was supposed to set up a sense of tension as the main character was not aware of the man who was set on killing him was already killed by his new receptionist. It baffles me. This sentence is forever burned into my mind like Meyer's own, " 'I know.' I agreed." Mind you it's not as bad as that but it fails at what the author was attempting. First off, quiet on waves of quiet. I have been washed, smacked and engulfed by silence but never experienced it riding on a wave of its self. Allowing for poetic license we'll say silence can be a wave, but why would it ride itself? When has quiet ever layered itself? I believe it was to set up the comparison to the swamp but why a swamp? This man was fearing for his life and now he is picturing a swamp. Is the swamp a symbol of hidden danger and death 'cause the way it was written made me want to spend a quiet afternoon in a boat fishing. A log that you weren't sure of would have done a better job. Then there's the practical side. This takes place in a small room with an open window on the gulf of Texas. If this is a time before traffic became a constant noise then I promise you the wind is blowing and as quiet as they claim it is you could hear the ocean. All the time. But enough with the nick-picking nerdy look at the details. Let's get to the part that made it impossible for me to finish the book. It's unnecessarily sexual. Now the Noir fans have every right to point out that, that's the nature of the beast and I bow to you and your superior knowledge, I always will since I have already admitted to the crimes of ignorance and not even finishing a book which is a collection of story stories by various authors, but I do want to point out a few things. The first story had no place to put in the standard bedroom scene so the writer decided to do a brief, one sentence flashback to when the main character banged a cheerleader back in his high school days. Then to make up, I suppose, the language turns into a leering creeper staring at these high school girls. I don't want to know about their "over loaded bra(s)" or their long legs. None of this is helping with your missing person case you sicko! In fact everything I read after this point had me feel dirty, ashamed to have bought this book and that I needed to go back in time and arrest these people. The next story is about a woman who brought her two young girls and their friends to their beach house where she goes off in the night to get drunk and cheat on her husband, and a few years later while her daughters are still under 18 she brings them along and invites them to join her. It's appalling! It was at this point I didn't want anything more to do with this book.

Fans of Noir might enjoy it, though I warn it's not the best representative of Texas, unless I really didn't learn that much from my time on the coast. Conservative readers, to you I say, read the introduction and then walk away. I wish that's what I did, for the introduction is nice. I freely confess that this is an unfair review and do not wish to stray into new territory without some research before writing public reviews again.

Wishing you all good tea and good reads,
LongHair
