



## Hollywood Hills

*Joseph Wambaugh*

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## **Hollywood Hills** Joseph Wambaugh

The legendary Hollywood Hills are home to wealth, fame, and power--passing through the neighborhood, it's hard not to get a little greedy.

LAPD veteran "Hollywood Nate" Weiss could take or leave the opulence, but he wouldn't say no to onscreen fame. He may get his shot when he catches the appreciative eye of B-list director Rudy Ressler, and his troublemaking fiancée, Leona Brueger, the older-but-still-foxy widow of a processed-meat tycoon. Nate tries to elude her crafty seductions, but consents to keep an eye on their estate in the Hollywood Hills while they're away.

Also minding the mansion is Raleigh Dibble, a hapless ex-con trying to put the past behind him. Raleigh is all too happy to be set up for the job--as butler-cum-watchdog--by Nigel Wickland, Leona's impeccably dressed art dealer. What Raleigh doesn't realize is that under the natty clothes and posh accent, Nigel has a nefarious plan: two paintings hanging on the mansion's walls will guarantee them more money than they've ever seen.

Everyone's dreams are just within reach--the only problem is, this is Hollywood. A circle of teenage burglars that the media has dubbed The Bling Ring has taken to pillaging the homes of Hollywood celebutants like Paris Hilton and Lindsay Lohan, and when a pair of drug-addled young copycats stumbles upon Nigel's heist, that's just the beginning of the disaster to come. Soon Hollywood Nate, surfer cops Flotsam and Jetsam, and the rest of the team at Hollywood Station have a deadly situation on their hands.

*Hollywood Hills* is a raucous and dangerous roller coaster ride that showcases Joseph Wambaugh in vintage form.

## **Hollywood Hills Details**

Date : Published November 16th 2010 by Little, Brown and Company (first published January 1st 2010)

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Author : Joseph Wambaugh

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## From Reader Review Hollywood Hills for online ebook

### Dean Summers says

This is Joseph Wambaugh's twentieth book. Of the twenty, I have read twenty, and I am eager to read numbers twenty-one, twenty-two, and following. Five of the twenty have been works of "literary journalism," true-crime explorations after the fashion of Truman Capote's "non-fiction novel," *In Cold Blood*. *Hollywood Hills* is among Wambaugh's fifteen works of fiction. Whether fiction or non-fiction, all his books are true to life. And all his books are about cops on "the job."

Wambaugh was himself a cop. He served in the LAPD for fourteen years (1960–1974), rising through the ranks from patrolman to detective sergeant. His first novel, *The New Centurions* (fiction, 1971) is one of the four books of his I rate as literature. (I mean that in a good way!) The other three are *The Blue Knight* (fiction, 1972), *The Onion Field* (non-fiction, 1973), and *Lines and Shadows* (non-fiction, 1984). His books can be profound, trashy, comical, disturbing, irreverent, provocative, incisive, tender, and heart-rending. Come to think of it, each of his books is some mix of all of that.

His four most recent books are works of fiction that comprise a series about the cops of LAPD's Hollywood Division: *Hollywood Station* (2006), *Hollywood Moon* (2008), *Hollywood Crows* (2009), and now *Hollywood Hills* (2010). This series is pure Wambaugh. As with all his books, he puts you in the shoes of a cop, and he allows you to walk around for a little while in the world of cops.

Having walked a mile or so in the shoes of a cop, you won't feel any better the next time a cop writes you a traffic ticket, but afterwards, you might calm down just a little sooner. The next time you hear a report of police brutality, you won't be any less horrified, but you will have a much better understanding of the very human dynamics at work—on all sides. And you might be a little less likely to jump to conclusions. The next time you see a cop in uniform, you won't be any less intimidated. That uniform, which comes with a badge and a gun, is a symbol of power and authority specially designed to intimidate. But you might meet the cop's eyes, and in doing so, you might catch a glimpse of yourself.

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### Jim says

overall a insightful view of the LA cop world - very funny but seems realistic in an overstated way at the same time.

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### crjdoc says

#### Wambaugh hasn't lost a step

As an avid reader of everything Wambaugh has written, I am amazed that he is still the master of the cop novel. From the 70's to the 21st century, he remains the lone author (my opinion) who is able to take the reader deep into the law enforcement subculture, and do so in a way that is both hilarious and poignant. Wambaugh gives us a glimpse into the sometimes mundane, often terrifying, always overwhelmingly

stressful lives of his cops as well as their adversaries. I recommend his novels highly and without reservation to anyone interested in this genre. He is without peer.

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### **Gerald Kinro says**

The main thrust of the story puts a wealthy Hollywood matron's art collection at risk. While she and her film director husband are in Europe, her art dealer and butler steal two of her prized paintings and replace them with imitations. However, two young drug addicts are after the same prize. Things become violent and deadly.

Included are sub-plots involving officers of the Hollywood Station—their wants, needs, and ambitions-- who become involved in of this deadly violence. Wambaugh adeptly weaves these subplots into the story. As with his other books, the author creates humor that the officers need to mask the ugliness that they face. His dialogue is excellent, and he uses his experiences as a Los Angeles policeman to get into his characters' head and reveal their thoughts. The story takes a while to get going, but the characters are interesting and kept me reading. This is my favorite of Wambaugh's "Hollywood" series.

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### **Mary Gramlich says**

Hollywood Hills  
Hollywood Station Series #4  
Joseph Wambaugh  
November 2010 - Little, Brown & Company - Hardcover, 356 pages  
ISBN-13: 9780316129503

This series stays fresh and exciting and this book proves it

Every city has its story and is filled with every manner of character willing to tell you all about what makes them tick, the more personal the better. In Joseph Wambaugh's latest Hollywood Hills series he explores this theory and writes the story from every perspective possible in rapid fire succession. He starts with the police officer who wants to be a movie star, the struggling director that wants to be an Oscar winner, the drug addict trying to figure out how to get the money for the next score, an ex-con working a new angle, the art thief plotting his next idea, all the police officers on the beat dealing with all of this and still getting up the next day to do it all over again.

There are so many people coming and going in this book and the chapters are fast reads and come at you from every point of view. You are interjected with thoughts, feelings and desperate acts that you at times feel you need to be writing the characters down just to keep up but just as you are saying "who is that guy" Mr. Wambaugh pulls everything together so that you know what this character is up to, thinking and figuring out their next move along with them. It is fascinating reading and everyone in this book completes it and without each of them it would not work as well which is something this author is the master of.

Every person has a reason for being in the story and every reader will be mesmerized as they follow the plot of all these lives. As a fan of the police procedural book that Joseph Wambaugh writes this one stands out for

me because he has taken the core characters and expanded them and pulled in new ones in such a way you can't put this book down until you figure out what is going to happen. I am thrilled to have read this and been able to hopefully sell a few copies with this review.

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### **Debra Pawlak says**

I am a huge fan of Joseph Wambaugh and love the Hollywood Station series. This is book #4 and it does not disappoint. The characters are familiar--Hollywood Nate, the handsome cop who moonlights as an actor, Flotsam and Jetsam, the surfer cops, etc. Wambaugh's humor shines through in the various cases that his cops must respond to. At times, it's laugh out loud funny and other times, it's crying out loud sad. Wambaugh can shake you to the core with his descriptions of heinous crimes and two pages later delight you with some unsavory character's shenanigans. At this time, there are only five books in this series and I will be sad when I finish up the last one.

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### **Judi says**

Solid. Engaging. Entertaining. I haven't read any Joseph Wambaugh books in a long time. The narrator on this book is excellent. The character development is spot on Hollywood. I couldn't help but laugh. The story line melds smoothly and progresses right along. A decent read. I may well catch up with the Joseph Wambaugh books that I have missed.

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### **Giovanni Gelati says**

Back in the day I used to read all of Joseph Wambaugh's novels: The New Centurions, The Blue Night, The Choirboys, The Black Marble, The Glitter Dome, The Onion Field (non-fiction). It seems I have missed nine novels since and four non-fiction books. I am not going to list them; you can see them on the inside of the novel, Hollywood Hills when you crack it open. Let's get into the action shall we?

"The legendary Hollywood Hills are home to wealth, fame, and power--passing through the neighborhood, it's hard not to get a little greedy.

LAPD veteran "Hollywood Nate" Weiss could take or leave the opulence, but he wouldn't say no to onscreen fame. He may get his shot when he catches the appreciative eye of B-list director Rudy Ressler, and his troublemaking fiancée, Leona Brueger, the older-but-still-foxy widow of a processed-meat tycoon. Nate tries to elude her crafty seductions, but consents to keep an eye on their estate in the Hollywood Hills while they're away.

Also minding the mansion is Raleigh Dibble, a hapless ex-con trying to put the past behind him. Raleigh is all too happy to be set up for the job--as butler-cum-watchdog--by Nigel Wickland, Leona's impeccably dressed art dealer. What Raleigh doesn't realize is that under the natty clothes and posh accent, Nigel has a nefarious plan: two paintings hanging on the mansion's walls will guarantee them more money than they've ever seen.

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the rest of the team at Hollywood Station have a deadly situation on their hands.”

My little siesta from his work I think worked to my advantage as far as my enjoyment level of this novel.

How can you say that Giovanni, really? Joseph Wambaugh was named Grand Master by the Mystery Writers of America in 2004 so it isn’t that he can’t write. My angst and the reason why I stopped reading his work, I think, comes from the old adage that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Everybody has a style, and I enjoy his style; it is pretty awesome. I just think I got into a rut where everybody wanted to be him, the next Joseph Wambaugh. There is only one that I know of.

Hollywood Hills helped me rediscover my enjoyment for what he brings to the table: witty repartee between his characters, off the wall characters, sub-plots galore, and a way to weave them altogether in a very interesting way. Did I keep up with his literary mimics? No. I don’t remember any of them, but after I cracked this open, the reason why he is The Man in this genre came back pretty quick and hard. Being the OCD reader I am, I have just received a wake-up call that I am not going to miss and backtrack to the novels I have passed on and enjoy them. Don’t be like me, be a choirboy and read Hollywood Hills, it won’t leave you crying in The Onion Field over time lost.

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## **Maddy says**

SETTING: Hollywood, CA

SERIES: #4 of 4

RATING: 2.5

Leona Brueger is a rich widow, and her mansion’s walls are covered with fine art. When she decides to go on a vacation to Italy with her latest lover, B-list director Rudy Ressler, her nearly bankrupt art dealer, Nigel Wickland, comes up with an elaborate plan to steal two of the paintings and replace them with photographic look-alikes. He enlists the aid of Leona’s new butler, Raleigh Dibble, who is an ex-con who is tempted by the hefty pay-off. However, Raleigh never feels completely comfortable about the theft. Due to a series of unforeseen events, the paintings end up in the hands of two young drug addicts who attempt to sell them back to Nigel for a pittance of their true worth.

And that is the plot of HOLLYWOOD HILLS. In addition to the art theft, the book focuses on several police teams working for the LAPD. The first pair are two surfer dudes who have been nicknamed “Flotsam” and “Jetsam” in talk in surfer speak. The second pair are “Hollywood Nate” Weiss, a Jew who is attempting to get into the film industry, and his Mexican partner, Snuffy Salcedo. The third pair is an older cop, Della Ravelle, who is training her partner, Britney Small. The adventures of each of these teams, as well as a few secondary teams, are told in a series of vignettes that are interspersed throughout the narrative. These episodes relate only very tangentially to the main plot.

I assume that the antics of the cop teams are meant to be comedic, but I mostly found them stupid. There’s a situation involving a perp with a penis pump, various outrageous lunatic behavior outside the Grauman’s

Chinese Theater, a Wedgie Bandit and so on. I felt that Wambaugh was aiming at a laugh rather than any development of the plot and characters. Oddly, the two female cops go in the other direction and are extremely earnest as Della provides lessons in being a cop to Britney. Add to that the fact that the plot was very thin and there was no smooth narrative flow, and you can see why HOLLYWOOD HILLS wasn't a book that I particularly enjoyed. However, based on the reaction of members of a mystery discussion group that I belong to, I may be in the minority in feeling that way.

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### **Lisette Brodey says**

I was delighted to win this book in the Goodreads Giveaway. I had never read any of Joseph Wambaugh's Hollywood Station novels and was eager to do so.

Wambaugh weaves the lives of the cops of Hollywood Station into the story. The reader gets a true-to-life taste of the craziness that a Hollywood cop sees in a typical night.

In Los Angeles' Hollywood Hills, there are a string of robberies going on by a teenage group of burglars known as "The Bling Ring." Raleigh Dribble, an ex-con (fraud and tax evasion) takes a job working for a wealthy widow, Leona Brueger, and her fiancée, Rudy Ressler, a struggling B-list movie director, in her house in the Hollywood Hills. While the couple vacation in Italy, Raleigh, who is trying to stay on the straight and narrow, is approached by Beverly Hills gallery owner, Nigel Wickland, who has a surefire plot to make a million dollars. He wants Raleigh to allow him access to photograph two paintings that he will then replace with fakes. He tells Raleigh he has buyers for the originals in Europe and will cut him in on a 50/50 split after expenses.

Raleigh, reluctant to get involved, eventually concedes to Wickland's plan. Meanwhile, a couple of young drug addicts are casing the homes of Hollywood Hills, trying to emulate the actions of the "Bling Ring." when they stumble upon the Brueger home while the painting switch is in action.

Add the painting switch, the young drug-addicted burglars, greed, the motley cast of policemen and women, and the sights and sounds (and humor) of Hollywood, and you get the absorbing story that is Joseph Wambaugh's *Hollywood Hills*

What I especially liked about this book was that I got a great feel for the characters. In other books of this sort that I've read, the characters have not been as distinct as I would have liked, and the stories have been hard to follow. Wambaugh writes a rich, easy-to-follow stories with characters that are unique and memorable. This isn't a literary classic, but isn't supposed to be. It's an action-packed, page-turning story. If that's what you're looking for, I think you'll enjoy *Hollywood Hills*.

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### **Martha says**

I had not read a Wambaugh in many years. I had a little trouble getting into it as it's not the type of mystery I

usually read. The police team in the first chapter were surfers and I felt like I was reading a foreign language ... I'm from the midwest after all! They became 2 of my favorite characters in the book!! I enjoyed how the characters developed through each chapter focusing on them & their interactions with each other. I knew early on what the main crime was going to be, but not how it was to be accomplished. It was obvious, as I think it was meant to be, that all of these characters ... police officers, crooks, drug addicts ... were eventually going to "collide". I thought it was quite a good story & had many very funny moments. I was caught by surprise at a very emotional moment toward the end when I was brought to tears. I did not expect that. Nor did I expect to like this book as much as I did. I recommend it & I will probably read the other books in this series.

I just won this book in a free Goodreads First Reads giveaway. I'm excited to read it. I understand it part of a series, the 4th maybe.

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### **Matt says**

If this series winds up as his swansong, I'm good.

Cheers.

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### **Kemper says**

Have you ever wanted to read a scene in which Superman gets his ass kicked by Marilyn Monroe and Catwoman while the Hulk holds a purse and pleads for everyone to stop fighting? Then this is the book for you.

Breaking up fights among the people dressed up as movie stars and superheroes outside of Grauman's Chinese Theater is just one of the weird and sometimes dangerous situations the cops of Hollywood Station have to deal with. In Wambaugh's fourth entry into the series, there's the usual parade of stupid criminals, idiotic bosses, bureaucratic bullshit, pain in the ass citizens and occasional life threatening situation to keep the police busy. There's also a scheme to switch a couple of valuable paintings for fakes and a couple of oxy addicts who stumble onto the plan and try to cut themselves in on the action.

Wambaugh does his usual good job of mixing funny and tragic stories from the police beat while humanizing both cops and criminals. There's nothing wildly original or different from what he's done in the other three books, but it's another solid story about the reality of police work.

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### **Margie says**

More fun. Love the surfer dude cops and Hollywood Nate. I hope Wambaugh continues this series.

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### **Lee says**

A pretty good book about the exploits of the Hollywood Station of the L.A. PD and what they face during a typical shift. Nice complicated art theft case carries throughout the book along with other items

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