



# On the Other Hand, Death

*Richard Stevenson*

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## **On the Other Hand, Death** Richard Stevenson

When the giant Millpond Company finds its plans for a mega-shopping mall stymied by the refusal of an elderly lesbian couple to sell their home, the ladies are subjected to ugly vandalism and frightening death threats. The powerful director of Millpond in turn hires Don Strachey, Albany's only gay detective, to protect the ladies, find the culprits, and clear the corporate name. Strachey accepts with misgivings that deepen rapidly as kidnapping, extortion, and murder darken the lives of Albany's gay community. Fast-paced, deftly plotted, and superbly written, this is one of the best Strachey novels yet.

## **On the Other Hand, Death Details**

Date : Published January 15th 1995 by St. Martin's Griffin (first published 1984)

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Author : Richard Stevenson

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## From Reader Review On the Other Hand, Death for online ebook

**Linda ~ chock full of hoot, just a little bit of nanny ~ says**

Don Strachey uses his powers of snark and observation to help a pair of old women being targeted for hate crimes. Wrapped up in the mystery are some eccentric neighbors, a shopping mall tycoon, one of Don's old lovers and a gay advocate trying to put together a national gay strike. Part-time helper/part-time foil Detective Bowman, who drops homophobic slurs like they're going out of style (hey, it's the 80s and it's New York) but somehow still manages to do his job and take Don seriously.

I thought I had this figured out at one point, but I was so wrong, lol. There are plenty of potential suspects to go around. The snark was off the charts, the characters were fun and well-written, and even Bowman got some ironic chuckles out of me.

Timmy and Don are, well... Don's not the best boyfriend in the world. (These books are NOT romance.) Timmy finally puts his foot down but the conclusion of that was kind of confusing to me. It was left somewhat up in the air.

The formatting is again terrible. There are no page breaks between chapters. It goes into italics for pages or chapters at a time for absolutely no reason, and at one point even switched to a smaller font size. I'm not sure if that's because I got these first few books at Kobo and so they're not Kindle-formatted, or if that's just how the books are no matter where you get them from. But it was annoying.

Oh, and the author does that thing where he constantly shoehorned the title into the dialogued and text, which is a pet peeve of mine.

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**Lena♥Ribka says**

**4,5 stars!**

Started as a simple vandalism on the property of a lesbian couple the story turned into a murder case. I don't want to say more, not to give away too much. It is why to review the mystery books is not that easy. The best - you go there without knowing anything.

But it's the second book in the series and you have to know what you put yourselves into. IMO On the Other Hand, Death is even better than the first book.

My absolute highlight here is OF COURSE **Donald Strachey**.

If you like the story but don't like the main character or don't feel him, then it could be difficult to like the book.

I'll make it short: I LOVE Dan Stachey and thereby I declare myself to a fan of the series.

My favourite kind of mystery -the one that makes me laugh without being ridiculous and loosing a tension in

the storyline.

The one that has characters that makes me want to read about again and again.

Everything just suits here!

- \*a well-plotted mystery

- \*it's highly atmospheric

- \*monogamy against open relationship(in other words Timmy against Don arguments-FUN!)

- \*PI that is never at a loss for words

- \*witty and clever dialogues

- \*great writing

I can't say enough how I'm glad to find the series.

Of course-**highly recommended from a fan of gay mystery to all fans of good gay mystery!**

*P.S Some words to the cover. It's getting better. Comparing to the the first book. But it is still a way to go.*

*Though the cover of the first book, with a dog, could suite better for the second book.*

*THERE IS A DOG HERE.*

*Don't see it as a spoiler!*

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## **ConM says**

Good mystery, with a dry humor that I enjoyed a lot.

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## **Rachael says**

Though my feelings may be somewhat tainted by my love for Chad Allen (who plays Don in the movies) and my longing for this to come out on DVD, I have to say that this is one of my favorite Strachey books. The actual plot, what with the real estate deal and harassment, is not exactly original but is nonetheless solid. It's Don and Timmy, with their sarcasm and quick-witted relationship reminiscent of Hammett, that really entertain me. And this is book, after their relationship and characters are established but before AIDS enters the picture, where we see Don in all his, ahem, glory - plus Timmy's reactions. Fun, frolicksome . . . and other f-words totally apply.

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## **Rae says**

A fast-paced mystery with a likeable narrator, a host of believably eccentric side characters and a great sense of time and place. For a modern reader, this book—set in 1984—feels both like a window into queer history

and surprisingly up-to-date. I enjoyed (except enjoyed isn't really the right word) the interaction between Strachey, the prosaically homophobic police he had to cooperate with, and all the other characters from whom he pulled in favours to solve the case.

This was an impulse purchase in a secondhand bookshop, but I will certainly look out for more Donald Strachey novels in future.

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### **Paul says**

Interesting, a bit dated in its thinking, but fascinating to read. I vaguely remember the film version of this. On to #3

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### **Adam Dunn says**

Great book, the pace here is 10 out of 10. I was flipping pages, very engaged, no way I was going to put this down until I knew who did it. The book is less dated than the first book, better pacing and plot, a great job, I see why they started the movie series with this book.

A couple of quibbles, the boyfriend Timmy could have been a cardboard cut-out. No personality or chemistry with Strachey. Also this is the second book in a row that the culprit is plucked out of thin air, from a mystery standpoint I didn't like that. In the end it was very lightly tied to someone we had heard of, but I really didn't remember who they were.

Also a great title, could have used it in the text of the book!

Still an upswing in the series, looking forward to the next one.

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### **Richard says**

Solid entry in the Donald Strachey series with a nice mystery setup. The story starts out as a simple vandalism case-an elderly lesbian couple is being harrassed with homophobic slurs painted on their property. Purely coincidentally, we're sure, a developer wants to buyout the homeowners in the area to put up a shopping mall and the lesbian couple happens to be the only holdout. Just when you think-am I really about to read a two hundred page novel about vandalism and urban development?, the plot explodes into a mess of kidnapping, extortion, and murder. Stevenson's biggest strength is keeping the feel of the classic Mickey Spillane type P.I. novel, with a modern setting and characters(for it's time-this was written in the 80s, and the politics/gay culture is dated).

Unfortunately, his biggest weakness is the relationship between Strachey and his boyfriend Timmy. They spend the novel fighting about monogamy-Tim appears to want it, Strachey doesn't, but there are hints that Timmy isn't 100% faithful either. Unfortunately the whole plot is left underdeveloped so it's confusing who's doing what, and then the conflict is tied with a nice, and completely unearned, bow at the end. This could have been a great picture of a real issue for many gay couples, instead it's an afterthought left half done. Another weakness can't really be discussed without a spoiler, but let's just say the way one character dies will have you rolling your eyes-really?

Still, it's a fast, exciting read, with sharp dialogue and intricate plotting. Recommended reading for

mystery/PI fans.

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### **Sean Kennedy says**

(3.5 / 5)

The mystery in the second Strachey book is more solid, but I'm still feeling distanced from the characters. Would love to know more backstory.

Also note, this ebook edition is just as badly formatted as the first. I don't know what MLR are doing here.

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### **Neet says**

This is the second in the Don Strachey mysteries and we find our intrepid hired to find out who committed vandalism on an elderly lesbian couples home. A firm that is interested in purchasing the couples home hires Don to see who has been harassing the women. Also, two activists that has been guests at the women's home become targets when one is kidnapped. On the personal front, Tim wants Don (who can't keep it in his pants) to be more committed in their relationship. Monogamy would be the safest route, especially with AIDS on the rise. The mystery kept me guessing and I love Don & Tim! A highly recommended edition to this well written series!

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### **Shaya says**

It was all right. Yay for gay mysteries--I appreciated the setting and historical details. Interesting and well paced, but I wanted more character development.

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### **Jane says**

The case in On The Other Hand Death is another case that will be later referenced in Tongue Tied, but unlike Death Trick, it felt a little flat - or rather the ending felt a flat and that emotional reward wasn't there.

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### **Sheila says**

Book two in the Donald Strachey Mystery series.

I didn't enjoy it quite as much as book one; there's a line between "cheerfully damaged" and "campily self-destructive," and Strachey was on the wrong side of it in this book. But the mystery was interesting, Timmy continues to be my gay fictional boyfriend, and I'm starting to develop just the tiniest bit of appreciation for Strachey's cop nemesis/collaborator, Bowman.

Next up (as soon as I can get back to the library) is *Third Man Out*, and I look forward to seeing how it reads compared to the movie.

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## **Tex Reader says**

### **3.5 of 5 stars – Nice Sequel to the Start of an Entertaining Series.**

I love gay mysteries and romances, and Richard Stevenson does a good job of combining both in one of the more entertaining such series. I liked this for the same reasons I liked each in the series. This sequel was as good as the debut and continued to build the story. With crisp, witty writing, it's a good mystery, set in the energized post-Stonewall era, and brought to life by a colorful, hard-boiled yet likable PI, who just happens to be gay.

Stevenson's style made this a light, entertaining and easy read, with a good plot, pace, tension and just enough details and clues to not slow down the action. I enjoyed the step back in time to the early '80s. This was the kind of historical that, at the time, was written as a contemporary piece, capturing moments of what were then current situations and culture. Among the many time capsule tidbits I enjoyed were the clothes, dated technology, and political, high-spirited post-Stonewall era. And for those interested, it worked well as a standalone, with its own self-contained mystery, while also developing Strachey, his lover and other supporting characters in a way that created a storyline spanning across the series.

What engaged me the most with this story was the character of Don Strachey (who gave his first-person POV), and you'd probably have to like him to like this book. I grew to like him for all his skills, heart and humanness; and it was refreshing that he was not in shame of but was open about being gay. He was hard-boiled, cynically humorous with witty banter, and at times a little off-kilter, including some convenient ethics (imagine: "Mr. PI with the morals of Rhett Butler – and the mustache"). While Strachey was well drawn, the others were not as much. That might be expected with secondaries, but I wished for a little more with some, his lover in particular. Thankfully, a little better drawn, even if a bit stereotypically, was the bigoted, begrudging local police detective who served as a nice foil.

I appreciated that the main focus was on the mystery, with the gay aspect and any romance as a subplot. As Strachey put it, "'I'm a PI, yes, and more or less coincidentally gay.'" So, instead of being an m/m romance, there were actually two mysteries – starting with a lesbian couple being harassed, and later, a murder. These mysteries were good, just a little predictable but still suspenseful, with the case being nicely set up, and ending in a believable solution. Along the way, the investigation had several realistic twists and turns; and I had to smile several times when the title was cleverly played out to show that "on the other hand...", there were other possibilities.

Mixed in with all this was a nice bonus of Strachey's gay life, and I was pleased to see his relationship continuing with his lover, Timmy. It gave Stevenson the chance to explore (and for me to see) the development of a relationship for Strachey. It's an interesting one, reflecting the realities of such things, including working out what kind of a relationship, the struggles, temptations, understanding, and amusing banter between the two. And for those interested, any sex scenes were nicely built but discretely taken offscreen.

Stevenson delivered a second quality story to continue this series, and I look forward to the next one.

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## **Julia says**

I don't know what it is about the end of summer, but that's when I find myself curling up with a mystery. The Strachey books are a perfect fit this time of year for me. The second book in the series has a good mystery that had me guessing a little and there's something really...endearing about a book set (and written) in the days before cell phones and internet searches.

Don and Timothy are one of my favorite fictional couples. Don is probably not the romantic ideal in a lot of ways, but that's part of what I love about him and part of what makes Timothy such a great character. Their interactions and the way they react to one another is fantastic and there's a point in this book where I was sniffling for Timmy and, at the same time, laughing out loud.

Anyone with issues about cheating/open relationships/semi-monogamy might come away hating this book, but I think it's more realistic than the typical HEA. I'm a fan of HEA and undying love and all those great things in romance novels, but this is a mystery with the relationship ups and downs as a sub-plot.

I felt like it dragged in places and I had to push through to get really engaged again, so, overall, I'd give this one 3.5, bumping it up to 4 for goodreads and looking forward to the next one.

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