



## Natural Suspect

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What Carl Hiaasen and a host of South Florida's finest authors did for Sunshine State crime capers in the *New York Times* bestseller *Naked Came the Manatee*, William Bernhardt now does for legal thrillers—with the help of a "Dream Team" of today's hottest suspense writers. Like a literary game of telephone, *Natural Suspect* begins with a chapter from Bernhardt. Then each writer contributes a chapter and passes it along to the next. The result is a completely inventive, brilliantly plotted novel of suspense with more twists than a schizophrenic's train of thought. Can you guess who wrote which chapter?

## NATURAL SUSPECT

Arthur Hightower made a name for himself and a vast fortune in the oil business. But when the volatile tycoon decides to disinherit his spoiled children and cheating wife, he makes the biggest mistake of his life-- *and the last*. After declaring his intentions, Hightower turns up on Thanksgiving Day . . . clubbed to death and stuffed in a meat locker, clutching a frozen asset--his wife's precious pearl necklace. Now Julia Hightower stands charged with the cold-as-ice crime of murdering for millions. While the sensational trial has New York in a frenzy, a curious cast of characters face off in and out of the courtroom.

Devin McGee, a small-time lawyer about to hit the big-time defending Julia Hightower-- if her intimate encounter with the prosecutor doesn't catch up with her . . . Trent Ballard, the quirky assistant D.A., who owns a huge pet rabbit and thinks his tryst with Devin will help him get a conviction . . . Patrick Roswell, a wannabe reporter sitting on a scoop that could turn the trial upside-down, unless a scalpel-wielding clown decides to kill the story-- *and Patrick* . . . Sissy Hightower, Julia's sex-crazed, air-headed daughter-in-law, who has a suitcase full of secrets . . . Robert S. Rutledge, a powerful Wall Street warrior with a lot riding on the Hightower verdict-- and a lot to learn about messing with the wrong people . . . and Cordelia, the mystery woman that everyone seems to know.

All are in for the trial of their lives—but who among them is the true *natural suspect*?

*All author royalties will be donated to The Nature Conservancy.*

*From the Hardcover edition.*

## Natural Suspect Details

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Author : William Bernhardt , Leslie Glass , Gini Hartzmark , John Katzenbach , John Lescroart , Bonnie MacDougal , Phillip Margolin , Brad Meltzer , more... Michael Palmer , Lisa Scottoline , Laurence Shames ...less

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## **From Reader Review Natural Suspect for online ebook**

### **Beth says**

Not very good at all. The idea of the book is that multiple authors take turn writing a chapter and by the end of the book, the story is complete. Brad Meltzer was one of the authors. I generally enjoy his books so I gave this one a shot. Bad decision. The story is choppy and the writing is very uninspired.

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### **Ian says**

quick read

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### **Buckeye\_reader says**

I liked how the chapters ended...had to laugh out loud at a couple of them. I can only imagine what the next person thought - how am I going to follow that!

A different read, but still entertaining.

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### **Carol Ann says**

I rate this one R for rubbish. Shame on you Mr. Bernhardt for putting this together.

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### **Sharon says**

This is a great mystery written by 11 different authors! Each writer takes up the story cold right where the last author left off. Without this knowledge, provided right on the cover of the book, it would be impossible to know that the book was written by more than one person. This is a feat in itself; what is even more amazing is the quality and complexity of the mystery itself. I highly recommend this book!.

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### **Pat Welte says**

I really enjoyed reading this book. Different authors wrote one chapter. It was a well-written book, and I could never figure out what author wrote which chapter. It was fast-paced and suspenseful.

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### **Ferne says**

Extraordinary! What an incredible "Collaborative Novel of Suspense" by 11 beloved and best-selling notable authors. I read the description of the novel and was totally intrigued. The book is as amazing as I anticipated and in fact it surpassed any and all expectations! I loved it!!

William Bernhardt conceptualized the creation of a mystery written by multiple authors as he invited 10 of his author colleagues to join the fun! It is also very special to note that the project collaboration was simultaneously devised as a fundraiser and supports a very deserving cause as all author royalties are donated to The Nature Conservancy.

I was so excited to learn that 5 of my favorite authors contributed to this adventurous writing including William Bernhardt, John Lescroart, Phillip Margolin, Brad Meltzer, and Lisa Scottoline. It was also a wonderful introduction to the 6 authors that I now must investigate their independent writing as I so enjoyed their gifts of collaboration and generosity to this project including Leslie Glass, Gini Hartzmark, John Katzenbach, Bonnie MacDougal, Michael Palmer, and Laurence Shames.

I could keep the thesaurus open all night in an effort to try to capture just a snippet of the delight in reading this novel. It's a perfect blend of page-turning, riveting, exciting, unique, suspenseful scenes of courtroom drama, murder and mayhem, and investigative reporting, with humorous lines all mixed into one extraordinary and outstanding novel.

Even if you never read the author's Afterword - Don't miss this one! It shares more details of how the novel came from creation to fruition. My only disappointment is that the web site that was initially created for this title to share which author wrote each chapter no longer seems to be available.

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### **Jen says**

I actually listened to this one. This is a "collaborative novel of suspense" where different mystery writers write a chapter each. It was ok--I definitely enjoyed some chapters more than the other, and I'm not sure the final authors pulled the entire story together as cohesively as possible, but fun listening anyway.

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### **Penny says**

Another "Collaborative Novel of Suspense". The authors' royalties were donated to The Nature Conservancy. I was amazed at how well this book came together. One of the things keeping it "glued" together was each author's sense of humor and their ability to toss a hot potato to the next author on the list. Unlike Naked Came the Phoenix, you are not told which author wrote which chapter so unless you are familiar with each contributing author's style, it seems as if only one person wrote the book. It was fun to read.

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### **Bev says**

Natural Suspect (2001) is a collaborative mystery story devised by William Bernhardt and contributed to by ten suspense novelists--most of whom I had never come across before. I suspect I know why. The Goodreads blurb says that Bernhardt has put together a "Dream Team" of "today's hottest suspense writers" and makes it sound like he and Carl Hiassen (who did the same in Naked Came the Manatee) had come up with a brilliant idea that had never been done before. Hello? Ever heard of folks like Agatha Christie and Dorothy L Sayers and G. K. Chesterton? They and other members of the Detection Club did collaborative mysteries long before Hiassen and Bernhardt even knew how to write (and quite probably before they were even born)--and did them much better.

The best thing about this book is that all proceeds were donated to the Nature Conservatory. That and brief episodes of humor (very brief). The plot is a well-worn one--Head of the Family with Big Bucks threatens to divorce wife and cut everyone out of his will and winds up dead on a big holiday/at a big family gathering (in this case, Thanksgiving). Wife is the prime suspect and winds up on trial. Rest of book is spent making things so convoluted that anybody else might have killed him and no clues really add up and throwing in multiple torture scenes with psycho dressed as a clown (or a ninja or an employee of Footlocker) either really cutting off people's extremities or threatening to as well as an abnormally large rabbit just for fun. I started to give this two stars, but then I realized that there was no way I could rate it higher than the Michael Innes book I just gave one star. So ★ it is.

First posted on my blog My Reader's Block.

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### **Frederick Danysh says**

A self-made oil tycoon is murdered after threatening to disinherit his family. The wife is put on trial. With several different authors writing the chapters in a round robin, the plot is always changing. I found this to be an interesting read, but don't wish to reveal too many secrets about the plot.

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