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Joel Goldman

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The lives of three people collide over mass murder at a Kansas City residence that Special Agent Jack Davis has carefully staked out for weeks. Kate Scranton, whose job is spotting lies for high-priced courtroom lawyers, is convinced that mild-mannered Latrell Kelly knows something about the crime. But Latrell is hiding far more than Kate can guess. And with Jack half-blinded by an imploding personal life, and someone on his own side leaking crucial information, they're headed straight for the ultimate danger zone...

Shake Down Details

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Author : Joel Goldman

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From Reader Review Shake Down for online ebook

Robert Montminy says

Great book! I enjoyed learning about Jack Davis and look forward to reading the latest due out in 2010. Goldman is a shoe-in!

Carol Stevenson says

A good read for a detective story

I just admit that I feel a little guilty about my feelings for this book. The characters are well drawn. The plot works. It's a page turner. After a while though I get tired of the hero's tics. They get in the way of the story. Then I read that the author suffers from something similar. Sorry

Kemper says

When I reviewed Gillian Flynn's *Dark Places* a few months back, I did more than my fair share of bitching about how my hometown Kansas City (and the Midwest in general) rarely has any fiction set here. So I felt kind of stupid when I was browsing a mystery book store a few weeks back and saw a table for local authors and several books by Joel Goldman that were set in KC.

As I was looking them over, one of the clerks told me that Goldman was a local attorney who had written several legal thrillers, then started a new series with an FBI agent. One of his books had been nominated for an Edgar Award, and his newer books had blurbs from some of the top dogs of the crime thriller world like Michael Connelly, Linda Fairstein and Jeffery Deaver. The police procedural is not my favorite style of crime book, but that was enough to get me interested.

The main character didn't grab me at first. Jack Davis is an FBI agent running an operation trying to roll up several of Kansas City's major drug dealers. Like almost all of these types of heroes, Jack is a very good guy that is haunted by a personal tragedy that he unnecessarily blames himself for. Years before, his son was abducted and killed by a pedophile neighbor. Now his marriage has finally collapsed, and his daughter spent years with substance abuse problems although she's finally clean.

Jack also has another problem. He's started getting tremors that are increasingly frequent and violent. It's like he's pissing on an electric fence when in the grips of one of these attacks. He's trying to just hang on long enough to wrap up his case before seeking medical help, but a mentally disturbed man with a grudge against drug dealers shoots and kills one of Jack's surveillance targets along with several other people. There's also reason to think that one of the FBI has turned dirty, and Jack suspects a burnt-out undercover agent who has been dating his daughter against his wishes. Even worse, Jack has a shaking fit at the crime scene in front of everyone, and this instantly gets him put on medical leave.

But Jack can't let it go, and he's soon got a Kansas City police detective helping him along with his new love

interest, Kate. Kate is one of the people working on the new science of using micro facial expressions to tell when someone is lying. (The book *Blink* discusses this concept, and Fox's TV series *Lie to Me* is based on it, also.) Jack's health problems, his messy personal life and the case are about to get all mixed together.

The story took enough twists and turns to keep me guessing. Along with a hero who is liable to start shaking at any moment, there was enough to make this one stand out a bit from the usual crime thrillers of this type. And I absolutely loved all the details that Goldman sprinkled in regarding Kansas City. He manages to work in a bit of interesting history that I didn't know, and his depiction of the city as a mishmash of urban centers and suburban townships scattered across two states was spot on. It was nice reading something by a guy who knows the difference between Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri.

But frankly, Jack is kind of a typical dull good guy lead in a thriller without much personality aside from his shaking, and there are a few too many coincidences in the plot for my taste. Still, it was good enough that I'll probably read at least another one by Goldman.

Sadly, it took me about 100 pages to realize that the title was related to Jack's condition and not just crime jargon. I'm not very bright...

Dave says

I can't say enough good things about this book. It is a top notch crime thriller novel that stands with the best of its genre. Jack Davis is an FBI agent who is newly divorced and suffering from a rare movement disorder that causes him to violently shake at the worst times. During the investigation of a mass murder in a drug infested neighborhood, Davis is at odds with his agency. Nevertheless, he doggedly pursues justice using his own leads and his own intuition. This is a book that captures your attention from page one and never lets go. I give this one the highest possible recommendation.

Sean Peters says

My first read from this author, not my last !

A middle-aged FBI agent dealing with a disruptive disability turns into an unexpected hero in Joel Goldman's latest terrific thriller.

After the brutal murder of Marcellus Pearson, a notorious Kansas City drug dealer, the collateral damage includes his cronies; his young son, Jalise, Jalise's mother (and Pearson's girlfriend); and an older woman who witnesses the killer fleeing the crime scene. The shooter is Pearson's mild-mannered neighbor, Latrell Kelly, a tormented character with more than a few dark secrets behind his soft-spoken ways. FBI Special Agent Jack Davis understands secrets—he has seizures he's been able to hide until the Pearson crime scene makes him erupt into visible tremors.

Jack Davis must take medical leave, but conducts a private investigation that connects to another chilling puzzler involving his missing daughter, Wendy. Is her significant other, Colby Hudson, an undercover and

possibly corrupt FBI agent, responsible? Davis's new girlfriend, jury consultant Kate Scranton, helps him deal with both cases by teaching him how to read faces using the Facial Action Coding System.

Joel Goldman's strength is the characters, the main character Joel Davis is great, not some super hero, an FBI agent with many of his own problems including his health and this book allows time to get to know him, a powerful strong story with a wide variety of great complex characters, hard to guess the guilty parties, so well plotted in this compelling and gripping thriller.

I ask the question, how much of Joel Goldman is in the Jack Davis character ?

A highly recommended author and book, and have number two on my kindle ready to read, and also the others two characters he writes.

Members of my group " A Good Thriller" on goodreads.com, will love this book.

Marti says

Kansas City and the FBI---is where this book takes us. There are drugs and murder with one agent having the shakes. There are some positives--the orphaned dog adopted by the agent for one. Otherwise it is rather bleak.

Chris Birdy says

Lincoln Rimes solves crimes from his wheelchair, and Jack Davis solves them with a neurological condition causing him to shake. The story was difficult to get into with a sick FBI agent who doesn't have a particularly satisfying life: divorced, somewhat estranged from his daughter, and unhappy with his co-workers. As the story develops, it picks up the pace and moves along faster and faster until you've made a crash landing and didn't even know you were near the ground.

Deirdre says

Very readable, with a very likable FBI agent as the protagonist. It held my attention, but I was constantly interrupted because of things that needed to be done. The story takes place in Kansas City, Kansas - or should I say stories? There are several, not the least of which is the main character's own personal story. This is a story about drug deals, murder and bent officers of the law. I will admit that I had the main culprit pinned chapters before the end. That said, I would like to read more of Mr. Goldman's novels.

Jacque says

I've heard Joel Goldman touted as the next John Grisham, and although I don't agree with that, I really enjoyed this book. It had enough mystery, action and suspense to keep me reading well past my bedtime on a couple of nights. The Kansas City area setting with the many references to locations with which I'm quite

familiar added a lot of enjoyment for me, since there aren't a lot of books set here. I had already read and enjoyed the second book in the Jack Davis series, so this one filled in some blanks as well. I'm looking forward to the next one.

Marshall Emm says

Shakedown is a bit over-written in places, especially if the reader knows the territory. For example, "Overland Park was one of the biggest, cramming farmland down its throat and regurgitating rooftops so fast that it wouldn't be long until Denver was just down the street." Well, I live in Denver and we joke about our "new" airport, DIA, being half-way to KS, or taxiing half-way to KS before taking off. It does seem that way sometimes, but once we get to the KS state line we still have 500 miles to go before we see Kansas City.

Some of the plot elements are a bit far fetched-- the divulgence of relevant history at a dinner party just in time to save the day, a 12 story ladder down a vertical shaft when a ten foot ladder to a sloping shaft would have made so much more sense.... Most of all, one man, with the support of his "ex" wife and a little dog, is able to do what the FBI with all its resources can't, all while subject to serious "shakes" at random times which he childishly suffers through without getting the medical or psychiatric attention he needs. NB some of that is explained in an "afterword" but (a) Goldman is NOT a serving FBI agent and (b) the seizures that Jack has are indeed life-threatening.

Shakedown reads like a first effort from a talented writer-- perhaps "later" or other series are better. There was enough story there to keep me entertained, but not enough to make me immediately want more.

Von Glitschka says

Joel handles this genre well. Fun read. Enjoyed it for what it is, but I still prefer his law thriller novels best.

Patricia says

Jack Davis is an FBI agent with a neurological disorder but that's not his only problem. He's in the process of being divorced, loves his grown daughter but hates her boyfriend, and feels guilty that he couldn't save his son who was kidnapped and murdered.

This is the first book in a series but I don't plan to read the others because I couldn't relate to the characters. The blurb about the story was more interesting than the book itself.

No graphic sex or violence

Michael Wood says

Unusual Hero, Unusual Circumstances, Compelling Drama

I was not surprised that this is an excellent novel because I have previously read Joel Goldman's fantastic "Lou Mason" series of five books, and they are the best legal thrillers that I have read. In this case, Goldman introduces us to a 50 year old FBI agent who develops periodic episodes of convulsions. Definitely damaged goods long before this, the FBI agent's 8 year old son had been kidnapped and murdered by a neighbor more than twenty years ago. The resulting feelings of powerlessness and guilt slowly eroded the family until nothing was left. His wife filed for divorce and found her solace in bottles. His daughter has been in and out of recovery from abuse of alcohol and drugs. The FBI agent, like many, just buried his frustration, guilt and pain in his work. Finally, he can no longer hide from himself. And then things go quickly to hell...

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

Jonathan Pettit says

Great solid detective mystery. Lots of action and the "just one more chapter" draw. Jack Davis is an FBI agent working on a drug-related case in Kansas City when he develops a medical condition that causes him to shake uncontrollably and at unpredictable times. He's put on medical leave when the current case gets personal. I enjoy the character of Jack Davis, though some of his decisions about who to tell or not sometimes bothered me, still could fit with his character. Joy and Kate both were good, along with other supporting characters. This is the first novel I've read written by Joel Goodman. I'll be adding him to my list of "to read" other books. Very good narration by Kevin Foley, audible edition.

Ok, so one thing bothered me. Jack gave the murderer his business card with another agents phone number on the back. The suspect called her to ask for Jack's number and she refused to give it out. The suspect had Jack's card already, assuming with the phone number already on it.

Josy says

This was fun! Sometimes a bit OTT but it kept me guessing and I had to continue listening because I needed to know what would happen next. Some things remain unresolved but this is an ongoing series and I'm hoping that they will be addressed in the next book.
