



Geek Mafia: Mile Zero

Rick Dakan

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Key West—southernmost point in the United States, Mile Zero on Highway 1; and as far as you can run away from your past troubles without swimming to Cuba. Key West—originally Cayo Huesos or Isle of Bones, for centuries a refuge for pirates, wreckers, writers, scoundrels, drunks, and tourists. Now home to a Crew of techno geek con artists who've turned it into their own private hunting ground. Paul and Chloe have the run of the sun-drenched island, free to play and scam far from the enemies they left behind in Silicon Valley. But that doesn't mean they can't bring a little high tech know how to the paradise. They and their new Crew have covered the island with their own private Big Brother style network—hidden cameras, RFID sensors, and a web of informers that tip them off about every crime committed and tourist trapped on the island. But will all the gadgets and games be enough when not one but three rival crews of con artists come to hold a top-secret gang summit? And when one of them is murdered, who will solve the crime? Inspired by author Rick Dakan's own eventful experiences in the video game and comic book industries, the Geek Mafia series satisfies the hunger in all of us to buck the system, take revenge on corporate America, and live a life of excitement and adventure.

Geek Mafia: Mile Zero Details

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From Reader Review Geek Mafia: Mile Zero for online ebook

Rick says

I enjoyed this one... not quite as much as the original, but it was a "comfortable" read. Easy fast read, written in a highly digestible style, worried more about telling a good story than being too flowery with words.

(There's a time and place for both, in my opinion)

"Mafia" isn't accurate - these are a team of "geek" cons - Robin Hoods of the digital age.

And you can't help but cheer them on, and feel the rush as they pull off their capers.

-Rick

Steven says

I loved Geek Mafia when it came out, and Mile Zero is, if anything, better than the original. This is a sequel, and while it's not strictly necessary to have read the first book, it will definitely help fill in the characters.

You see, I don't like "surprise reveal" stories. Most mystery and suspense novels squeak by simply by not giving you all the information and making you confused. That is not this novel.

Don't get me wrong - Mr. Dakan has written a rip-roaring adventure tale with more twists in it than a Celtic knot. Hairpin turns, double-, triple-, and quadruple crosses abound. Plots within plots.

But it's all through the eyes and minds of Paul and Chloe, the genuinely likeable main characters from the first novel. And that's what makes this novel so good. Because these characters are so fun and likeable, you *want* them to succeed, and *want* to figure out what the heck's really going on.

And by the time you're done, they'll have completely seduced you, and have you - like me - waiting for the next book from Rick Dakan.

Mark Polino says

I had not read the first book but the premise was interesting. The introduction of the crew and the plot starts out well with small group of good hearted cons. By the end the plot turns into a muddled mess with our "good" guys being outfoxed at nearly every turn and yet still managing to pull it together in the end. By about 1/2 way through I was ready for this book to be done.

Alissa Gabriel says

Loved it! Makes me wish I had persued a life of crime!

HeavyReader says

Cassidy sent me *Geek Mafia* for my birthday. As I was listing it on GoodReads, I found out that there was a sequel, *Geek Mafia: Mile Zero*. I sent it to him and asked him to send it to me when he was finished. He sent it to me, and I read it in a couple of days.

This book is exciting, with many twists and turns that keeps the reader guessing about who did what and why.

Good stuff.

Joel Neff says

One of the best things about Rick Dakan's *Geek Mafia* series is the feeling of being in the club that the reader gets.

Dakan's protagonists are clever, but not perfect, and not above the reader. They create imaginative plans, true, but their skills are more put to the test by adapting to situations after the plan has fallen apart.

The book itself is a quick read; the plot is fast and tight, letting readers into the setting easily and giving just enough clues that the ending is a natural conclusion, rather than a foregone one.

The novel is from a small press, and is also available for free as a promotional tool while Dakan builds his fan base.

Artnoose McMoose says

This is the second of the *Geek Mafia* trilogy, and I found it a little more compelling than the first one, although I still think this one could have used stricter editing--- some scenes went on for too long and there were typos.

Our tech heroes from the first novel have fled to Key West, Florida and spent a year transforming it into their small scam oasis. But when some heavier-hitting crime crews come to town and someone is murdered, they have more than they bargained for.

One thing that bugged me throughout the book was the pronouns used for the character Sandee. The author uses female pronouns for Sandee up until the point that it is revealed that Sandee "is really a man." It's unclear whether Sandee is a drag queen (and would maybe then use male pronouns unless in character) or a transgendered woman who is asked by her crime friends to go "in boy form" when sleuthing around but should still use female pronouns. Instead it seems like the author uses male pronouns for Sandee after the reveal, even when Sandee is "in girl form." Even if Sandee was switching back and forth with pronouns and presentation, I'd be okay with that, but it just seemed that the pronoun was consistent with what the perceived

sex was. This is where I think a more critical editor would have stepped in and asked for some clarity.

Morgan says

Another book I read on tour. Moxie introduced me to this series. It's a lot like candy, feels good while you eat/read it, but leaves you with a weird "why'd I do that" feeling afterwards. Good for reading in a van/train/plane etc.

Candis says

Wow, Dakan's follow-up took me eons to get through!

At this point, I can't really decipher whether my satisfaction hails from the story's arc or simply my completion of it. Don't get me wrong: the writing is strong and the characters are interesting enough to plod the plot along. But the description (wow, wanna see how much of a geek I/they/he/she is? watch as I explain the technical details of gear that is really not all that complex at all -- even to a non-con-artist/hacker). The constant reminders of the gender or race difference of some of the supporting characters didn't help (I mean, really -- how many times do we need to be reminded that the crew's security whiz is "short, stout, Asian"?), nor did the narrative that I'm certain is really little more than a lead-in to the third and final chapter.

All that said, I'll probably read the last in the trilogy. I'm invested enough to want to know what happens to Paul and Chloe (and Bee and Sandee too and even Winston) and do like to see things through...

Thomas says

What I remember most about Geek Mafia, the first book in this series, was how much fun it was. I went into without many expectations, and found it to be entertaining, exciting, and giddy with its own purpose. I remember it being tight and compelling, and even at the time, I hoped that there would be future books in the series, or at least more by Dakan.

Mile Zero is one of those future books, and I'm surprised with how different it feels. The crew from Geek Mafia is now living on Key West, running smaller scams to keep up their lifestyle, and basically living the Key West lifestyle. It's still entertaining, but it lacks that fun factor that the first book had. It has a good chunk of the same characters in it, but somehow they lack depth. The conversations they have seem trite and forced (no joke: a good portion of the dialogue at the beginning of the book is a lot of "Hey, looking good!", "No, man, you're the money!", and "Where's the party?" type of stuff that doesn't add a thing to the story), and as a result, they don't feel fleshed out. In fact, they feel like they're just caricatures of their previous selves. There was an attempt to bring out Paul and Chloe's relationship with a subplot where they argue over the business and their future, but it, too, felt forced.

The story took a little while to get going, as Dakan seemed to have a hard time deciding whether he wanted to give attention to the story or the Key West lifestyle. At the start of the book, the narrative flipped between the two, and I had a hard time getting a handle on where the story was headed. Luckily, the story gained ground, and by the time I was about a third of the way through the book, I knew I was in it for the long haul,

despite some of my reservations. It just wasn't what I was expecting, based on how high my expectations were after having read the first book.

I also got distracted from the story by a few copy-editing issues. I'm accustomed to quotations using double-quotes for the main dialogue, and then single-quotes for dialogue within the dialogue, but this publisher kept using double-quotes. Plus, I'm also accustomed to paragraphs of dialogue not having an end-quote at the end of a paragraph, but then picking up with another start-quote at the next one. It's a good indication of when someone is still speaking, or when one character is speaking a monologue. The publisher didn't use this convention, closing off all paragraphs with double-quotes, and several times in the story, I lost track of who was speaking because I kept thinking someone else was part of the dialogue. Given that the book is basically a heist story, with a lot of people talking at length about how things would go down, it was more than just one occasion where this took me out of the story.

Overall, though, I thought it was entertaining enough to have been worth the read. The idea of following a bunch of techie anti-heroes as they try to make their way through the world is strangely compelling, and I'm looking forward to reading the last book in this series. Based on what I know of it, Mile Zero will segue directly into Black Hat Blues, so for a change, reading the books back-to-back will be more in my favor.

Robo Pete says

Really enjoyed this and as a sequel to Geek Mafia I think it shows an improvement in plotting and style...although I didn't feel it had the same quirky, geeky charm as the first book. While the plot was intricate and the action was cool and stylish there was nothing to specifically mark this out as a "geek" novel, other than a few throwaway pop-culture references. Definitely still an enjoyable weekend read though.

Crabby McGrouphants says

This book marks not just a worthy-sequeldom to the original Geek Mafia, but, an *improvement* in Dakan's skills as a novelist: the sly, subtle things one'd be pained to point to or ask for *before* you see them, but, once accomplished, become an apparent "breadth of scope" that comes with being truly vocated in the field.

As in: (1.) stray character details add up to a composite whole and *aren't* harped on, leading the reader to surmise the larger portrait of the fake person and obtaining a more "true to life" envisioning; (2.) a more-meticulously plotted narrative arc, so that (in *this* case) the days and portions of days flow into each other, corner to corner — not unlike the street corners of the Key West the characters inhabit, jumping around one to the other to the other — and one ends up with a sense of having "traveled" with them, nearly *truly* exhausted, and not merely subject to the Narrative Artist's whim of "And Now, I Say, the Story Shall Go Here!" motivations; and, (3.) most telling (and *crucial*, in this day-and-age!) of no small amount of drawn-from-life "head's-ups" about the World-at-Large, from larger-scale crime organizations to the ins-and-outs of what hackers can (and *can't*) accomplish, from now-equal gender roles and their relationship-shakedown equivalents to, for that matter, *different* sorts of gender roles entirely, Dakan knows his way around a time and place where people aren't just defaulting to vaguely-defined societal roles — and the prices one has to pay to maintain one's liberty, in doing so.

Highly recommended! An exemplary work. (And *fun*, too!)

Jeff Raymond says

Geek Mafia was, in some ways, a revelation. A heist novel for nerds, a genre I have little overall interest in? It was something I got cheap for my Kindle and thoroughly enjoyed enough to recommend to many people, even with its flaws. *Mile Zero* is the sequel, and is unfortunately quite lacking.

The story takes place over a year after the first book with our protagonists in Key West. Still scamming, still getting by, and a lot of other crews are coming around to plan something big. Of course, things can never quite go as planned, and quickly the situation devolves into a dangerous game.

The fun of the first book is mostly missing from this one. That's the biggest flaw. While the fun propelled the first book along, this just feels like more of a semi-aimless slog, which doesn't seem fair. It more or less left a lot to be desired, which is unfortunate given the end result of the first book. A good \$3 read, a good casual Kindle book, but ultimately that's it.

Samantha says

I didn't read the first one, but that didn't take away too much. Fast moving story, hard to put down but a bit frustrating at times. The story seemed rushed at the end, like they were trying to cram as many twists and confrontations as possible into the last chapters. Overall it was cute, though.

Dana says

Just awesome. The characters are great, and the author made them work. I hate how authors tell the reader that their characters are smart, for example, instead of showing it and letting the reader see it for himself. This book (and the first one as well) doesn't have this flaw. As I read it, I got to know the characters with their ups and downs, and saw for myself how witty and manipulative they can be, instead of just being told that they are. One of the characters is known for working his way with words, and instead of showing how that works by how others react to that, I was surprised to see that even I, knowing he is lying, eat his words with a spoon. That's art.
