



Capital Punishment

Robert Wilson

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Charles Boxer, ex-army, ex-police and now a high-stakes kidnap recovery specialist, knows only too well how the dark forces in London can reach out and ensnare an innocent victim. After a boozy night out beautiful Alyshia D'Cruz, daughter of Indian tycoon Francisco 'Frank' D'Cruz, gets into the wrong cab home and Boxer is the only man Frank will trust to go down into the criminal underworld to retrieve her. Boxer knows that Frank's crooked business empire has made him plenty of enemies, but despite the vast D'Cruz fortune, the kidnappers don't want his cash. They prefer a crueler, more lethal game and to have any chance of saving Alyshia, Boxer must play it out with religious fanatics, London's home-grown crime lords and Indian mobsters, as his trail crosses paths with a terrorist plot on British soil.

Capital Punishment Details

Date : Published January 17th 2013 by Orion Publishing Ltd (first published January 1st 2011)

ISBN : 9781409143123

Author : Robert Wilson

Format : Hardcover 416 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Mystery, Crime, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review Capital Punishment for online ebook

Ray Palen says

Robert Wilson has risen to fame and much critical claim via the terrific Falcon series set in Portugal. With the release of CAPITAL PUNISHMENT he brings forth a stand- alone novel that will hopefully mark the start of a new series.

Charles Boxer is a unique character. His background consists of ex-military and ex-police experience and now has found his niche as a professional hostage negotiator. He is not without his own demons as he fights to keep down the darkness of his own past before it consumes him. Compounding this is the strange relationship he has with his ex-wife, and current Police Investigator, Mercy and the estranged teen-age daughter, Amy, they are both rapidly losing touch with.

In an effort to keep himself busy --- and possibly redeem himself for his personal failures with his own daughter --- Boxer throws himself full force into his latest assignment. The twenty-one-year-old half Indian/half British daughter of a famous Indian billionaire (Frank D'Cruz) has gone missing and appears to be the victim of a kidnapping. Alyshia D'Cruz went out for a night of drinking and bar hopping with some mates and jumps into a taxi at the end of the revelry to return to her flat. That is the last anyone sees of her.

Her mother, Isabel Marks, is contacted by a mysterious man calling himself Jordan. Unlike most kidnapping situations, Jordan is not asking for money. Frank D'Cruz will only trust Boxer to handle the situation. This case is quite unique as Alyshia's captors seem to only want to engage in wordplay and exchanging of information and insist on only speaking to Isabel. The standard threat of not involving law enforcement is also given and Frank and Isabel are in a quandary as to how to best get their daughter safely returned to them.

Boxer complicates the situation by getting sexually involved with his 'employer', Isabel, and realizes this may compromise the case. He reaches out to his ex-wife, Mercy, of the Metropolitan Police Squad, in an effort to get their support should things get out of control.

It is obvious that the purpose of the kidnapping has something to do with Frank D'Cruz, but he is unable to pinpoint what potential enemy could be behind this act. Boxer and his police contacts conduct an investigation into D'Cruz's ties and the web lies and deceit stretch between London and India revealing a trail that leads to some heavy underground mobsters.

The plot of CAPITAL PUNISHMENT twists and turns while introducing new characters with every passing page. As the true intent of the kidnappers is slowly exposed Boxer and his colleagues come to the realization that this kidnapping may just be a smoke-screen for a far more sinister plot --- possibly one of terrorist origins. Charles Boxer is a refreshingly complex protagonist and definitely worthy of his own series --- a consideration I can only hope Robert Wilson follows through on.

Reviewed by Ray Palen for New Mystery Reader

Manuel Antão says

“Capital Punishment” is a remarkable book by a writer that can write and that will drill holes in your central nervous system.

It’s not that the story is terrifying “it’s not whatsoever. It’s just that it is too real not to call forth the indefinite doubts we all try to ignore about our own sanity.

If you are a crime reader of the commercial paperback variety, “Capital Punishment” is not for you. This will test your mettle and sophisticate your reading. And there’s nothing more I care to tell you. I’m daring you to read this book.

Wilson’s writing makes the usual fare look like pale and poor in comparison.

Only the ending left something to be desired, but that’s the nature of the beast...

Sebastian says

Could have been great, ended up being a mess.

If someone would have told me that I would rate this book 2 stars when I was halfway through it, I would have said they were crazy. At that point, things were looking pretty good. We had a fast-moving plot, with enough intrigue to keep the reader's interest going, and an author that knows how to write and entertain us with the most banal dialogues and events. The main character, Charles Boxer, has a certain depth and his personal life provided the key elements needed for a character in a series.

So what went wrong you ask? Well, the main story, involving the kidnapping of the daughter of an influential billionaire had enough uncertainty and violence to keep us guessing and engaged. But then the author decided to start adding layer after layer to the story. Many characters started appearing, the reasons for actions by these characters started to become contrived and it became impossible to follow the story. There is no way to remember who the characters are and what they role is without grabbing a pad and paper and getting to work. Even if you do this, the plot goes round and round and you will get lost in the labyrinth. We end up with characters that behave erratically, and the motivations behind these actions are unclear and to tell you the truth also unimportant.

The author was able to get me to the point in which I did not care at all about why things happened the way they did, and he did this by trying to include more and more twists and turns and bringing new protagonists out of left field. When the book ended I felt like I had just wasted a whole bunch of time. It is a shame, because Wilson has the ability to write well, he just got carried away with the plot and I do not believe even he knew where he was going with it. As you can imagine, I have no intention of reading the next book in this series. Proof of this is that the author decided to include a cliff-hanger at the end to get people to buy the next book, and it did not affect me, did not even make me mad, I just did not care.

James Thane says

Late one night, a very drunk young woman named Alyshia D'Cruz leaves a going-away party for a co-worker. A friend puts her into a London taxi. But instead of taking her home, the cabbie turns her over to a gang of kidnappers.

Alyshia's father, Frank, was once a very famous Bollywood movie star. Now he's a ruthless businessman with enemies world-wide. He's also extremely wealthy. When Alyshia's mother, Isabel Marks, innocently calls Alyshia to check in, the kidnapper answers Alyshia's phone and tells her that Alyshia is now in their hands and that they will only deal with her. Naturally, Isabel is not supposed to call the cops.

Isabel calls Frank, her ex-husband, and Frank in turn, calls Charles Boxer, a former homicide detective who has now become a kidnap specialist in the private sector. Frank wants Boxer to rescue his daughter and then, incidentally, to kill the people who took her. He's willing to pay very well.

Boxer arrives at Isabel's posh London home, which now becomes his base of operations. Because of the nature of the case, he also quietly alerts the authorities who begin working the case as well. The lead investigator for the Metropolitan Police is Mercy Danquah, who just happens to be Boxer's ex-wife and the mother of their out-of-control seventeen-year old daughter, Amy.

Everyone naturally assumes that the kidnappers are looking for a whopping ransom, especially since Frank D'Cruz is worth billions. But surprisingly, the kidnappers, who seem to know a great deal about Alyshia and her family, say that they are not interested in money. What they *do* want is not exactly clear, but before long, what appeared to be a routine kidnapping is spinning rapidly out of control.

Before all is said and done, the case will spread from Europe to Asia and the cast of characters will include London street thugs, drug dealers on two different continents, secret agents, the Pakistani military and spy services, Indian businessmen, not to mention a couple groups of terrorists, just to name a few. The whole thing is pretty much a hopeless mess and one can only pray that Charles Boxer can sort it out in time.

This book starts out on a very promising note and kept me on the edge of my seat for quite some time. But to my mind, an excellent beginning peters out into a thicket of characters and competing interests so dense that you need a scorecard to keep the players straight. It's also a bit hard to buy into the notion that, of all the people employed by the Metropolitan Police Force in London, the person assigned to the case would be Boxer's ex-wife. And, sadly, the climax seems a bit rushed and rather anti-climactic, especially after such an excellent beginning. Thus three stars for me rather than four.

James says

An above average thriller by Robert Wilson as usual. Charlie Boxer is called in to help on a kidnapping case. While Charlie is a bit annoying, actually the no woman can resist him and the wounded warrior with a heart of gold seem a little silly. Happily though all the other characters while showing up the laziness of his

characterization in stark relief provide more than ample relief and reward. The whole thing capers about in ever more complex circles for some genuinely thrilling moments and a most satisfying food chain bloodbath

Dlmrose says

3.5

Vivienne says

Robert Wilson writes intricate, dense crime plots that combine psychologically-interesting characters with intriguing political machinations. I love his work, and marvel at how he manages to keep such intricate plots together. Capital Punishment is an example of how dense plotting can go horribly wrong. The beginning of the book sets up a fascinating premise - the daughter of a Indian businessman with mob and Bollywood connections is kidnapped in London, and interrogated until she reveals her darkest secret. Then two East End gangsters decide to kill her captors and take the ransom money for themselves. All great fun. Then it goes horribly wrong in the latter half of the book. Countless POV characters appear out of nowhere, including some Islamic terrorists and a Pakistani General. I ended up clueless over who was chasing who, who they all were, and who was responsible for the original kidnapping. The East End gangsters are by-far the most interesting and human characters in the novel, far more than fascinating than protagonist Charles Boxer. Wilson can write wonderful protagonists ranging from Javier Falcon, the tortured Seville detective, to murderous Nazi collaborator Klaus Felson. Charles Boxer is your common 'professional contract killer with a conscience'. It's no surprise that he ends up being sidelined in favour of a lengthy chase sequence in involving the hapless spider-tattooed cockney gangster and his disgraced-nurse mate.

Lusie says

This started very promissing, but then it went down hill. In the second part of the book there were just too many characters. It got hard to keep track of who was who. I also didn't like that there was a subplot which made it confusing. I won't read the next book of this series.

Carl says

Wilson is a great writer. The story of a rich girls kidnap has been done before many times. But it is the backdrop of London and the Indian gangsters that make this story stand out. The heroBoxer is a well fleshed character but even he takes second place to the detailed wring that is able to set the scenes with ease. The art of story telling is in the details and the author has a fine eye for detail and a writing style that incorporates this.

The secondary characters are well fleshed also making the story flow easily.

Well written and exciting with plot twists, a race against the clock to save a an Indian Billionares daughter not only from her kidnappers but from her fathers business deals and all those he had wronged on his way to

the top.

Recommended .

Brenda says

Robert Wilson is a gifted writer and if you have not yet read any of his books you are missing some really good ones! Starting with The Company of Strangers which is set in 1944 war torn Lisbon with a female spy as the lead character, to A Small Death in Lisbon whose main character is a police detective investigating a murder and on to The Blind Man of Seville in which Inspector Javier Falcon must confront his father's past as he solves a most gruesome murder, Wilson has shown that he is a master of the literary character driven mystery/thriller. So, I was really excited to see his new book, Capital Punishment!

Charles Boxer is a kidnap specialist-someone who negotiates with kidnappers on behalf of the families and companies whose loved ones and employees have been abducted. For many years he worked for a large insurance company who insured many large companies' employees, many of whom worked in areas of the world where kidnapping is part of the cost of doing business. Recently, however, he has set up his own firm in London and is trying to make a new start so that he can be closer to his daughter, now a teenager who he hardly knows.

When Alyshia, the daughter of a multi billionaire Indian businessman Frank D'Cruz goes missing after a night out with her friends in downtown London, Frank contacts Charlie fearing the worst. The kidnappers take their time in making their demands and when they finally do, they appear to be uninterested in money but rather seem to have some other agenda, which makes Charlie's job that much harder. As Charlie investigates possible motives for the kidnapping, he becomes convinced that Frank D'Cruz's connections to the Indian mafia, and other criminal elements may be the key to understanding the motives behind the kidnapping. Digging deeper into these mafia connections Charlie becomes aware of the possibility of a large terrorist attack that seems to be somehow connected to Frank's business interests in promoting the Olympic games.

Meanwhile the kidnappers themselves are not as organized as they appear to be and their internal instability has large repercussions on the negotiations. Sensing this instability local criminal elements in London take a keen interest in what is happening, seeing a chance to make some money of their own.

Throughout all of this Charlie attempts to reconnect with his teen age daughter, who barely speaks to him. The complexity of their relationship, his lack of knowledge about her life makes him regret all the years when his job came first rather than being there for his daughter.

This is the first book in a new series, which is great since I liked Charlie. He is a complicated person, who has been very good at his job, but is just beginning to realize that there is more to life than his work and is just now trying to figure out how to form a relationship with someone who doesn't really care whether he is in her life or not. Although the book has many layers and many different characters who come in and out of the story, it was an exciting and satisfying read!

Read more reviews at Brendasbookshelf@wordpress.com.

Joel Dávila says

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Márcia Balsas says

Já eram muitas as saudades de ler um bom policial. Pena Capital foi-me muito recomendado e esperava na estante há demasiado tempo.

Correspondeu exactamente às minhas expectativas, encontrei o esperado estilo sofisticado de Robert Wilson, a sua escrita cheia de classe que eleva o policial para outro patamar. Ler este livro foi um duplo reencontro, por um lado com um género que aprecio e que, por força de outras escolhas de leitura, tenho deixado para trás, por outro com um autor que admiro pela sua escrita envolvente e pela estrutura estudada dos seus romances.

Este não é um daqueles livros que escorre sangue, por isso talvez não seja o mais adequado para os fãs de histórias de psicopatas e serial killers, que procuram aquela adrenalina da leitura no limite. Pena Capital não é um page turner, não consome o leitor enquanto este não o termina. É antes um livro-companheiro a que desejamos voltar para seguir a história com atenção e aproveitar bons momentos de leitura.

Não se pode comparar ao fabuloso O Último Acto em Lisboa, do mesmo autor, que guardo como um dos meus policiais favoritos, nem o pretende ser, a meu ver. São tramas completamente diferentes, igualmente (e extraordinariamente) bem estruturadas. Contudo com propósitos distintos.

Em Pena Capital o leitor entra numa conspiração internacional a que vai puxando os fios a partir do rapto da filha de Frank D'Cruz, um actor/magnata/empresário indiano, e por onde se vai desenrolando um novelo de ligações a terrorismo, fraude e crime, descendo, por vezes, a locais muito negros da alma humana. Charles Boxer é um herói que mantém os leitores com os pés na terra, não tem atitudes de desenho animado e possui tantos defeitos como qualquer ser humano. Com um passado que merece ser descoberto, Boxer tem uma vida familiar desastrosa e profissionalmente é especialista em gestão e resolução raptos e resgates. Cabe-lhe a tarefa de garantir o regresso de Alyshia (a filha raptada) a casa, de preferência viva.

Logo no início Wilson oferece ao leitor português uma passagem (considerável e entusiasmante) numa zona conhecida de Lisboa, dando destaque e talvez uma pequena homenagem ao país que escolheu para viver (pelo menos da última vez que soube ele vivia em Portugal).

Este é o primeiro livro de uma trilogia, a que se segue Nunca me Encontrarão. No fim das quase quinhentas páginas de Pena Capital, e devido ao seu final habilmente suspenso, a vontade de passar ao livro seguinte é enorme. O meu está à espera na estante!

<http://planetamarcia.blogs.sapo.pt/pe...>

Tony says

A great political cum police style thriller. Terrorists, kidnapping, family tensions. And it's one of the few books I've read that keeps the final twist literally till the last sentence. If you like complex thrillers rush to the bookshop. One of the best of its kind.

Renata Carvalho says

A minha estreia com o autor. Gostei muito, tem mt acção, as histórias pessoais das personagens vão-se desenvolvendo ao longo do livro, numa mistura entre o presente e o passado que permite entender melhor o porquê de algumas atitudes das mesmas.

O livro deixa em aberto a continuação da história de algumas personagens num novo livro.

Recomendo

Trish says

This is an interesting novel, if not always for the reasons Wilson hoped. It had me thinking back to my experience reading the new Richard Price novel, *The Whites*. Price admitted that he wrote that novel under the pen name Harry Brandt because, strapped for cash, he needed to write a pot-boiler that would sell fast and well. He wanted to keep his legacy as a literary writer under the name Price intact, but was finding it costing him audience.

Fortunately or not, Price's Harry Brandt novel is a deeply plotted, psychologically dense, character-driven novel not unlike earlier Price novels. He missed his mark. It is emphatically *not* a pot-boiler. Wilson may be feeling some of the same pressures. He seems to be trying something completely different in this first novel of a new series. He calls this work a "thriller" as opposed to characterizations of his earlier work as "crime" or "mystery." I note that thrillers have evolved with the times: plots must be as sophisticated as the world is now, and readers must be willing to put up with what was previously thought to be unreasonable complexity. Life is complicated.

Charlie Boxer is a private security consultant based in London. He is hired to deal with the kidnapping of the daughter of an Indian billionaire business magnate in London just before the Olympic Games. Once word gets out, every far-flung contact of the billionaire is suspected and suspicious: they find themselves looking for their own advantage while looking at allies and enemies within and without their own organizations for perpetrators. The only thing we know for sure is that Charlie Boxer seems out of his depth with both the billionaire and the billionaire's ex-wife.

This thriller actually has very little action and a whole lot of revenge plotting going on. The complexity becomes amusing. Wilson knew very well what he was doing by layering one set of potential kidnappers on the others, along with their attendant informants, security personnel, and hangers-on. The violence is fierce and gratuitous. As the body count mounts, readers might find themselves placing bets on which set of thugs will kill the others and would the overseas set arrive in time to participate in the melee? The whole circus became a murderous joke, all centered about a smart, beautiful 25-year old woman who made mincemeat of the men she encountered. It's a riot, in all senses of the word.

That having been said, there were times when I wondered if I were the only one in on the joke. The first false note—Boxer falling into bed with his client, the wife of the kidnapped girl--had me curious what Wilson was thinking. As the number of investigators and their targets multiplied, I began to think of the whole construction as tongue-in-cheek. Wilson didn't try to obscure the seams. It was a nightmare of connections and hitmen. I began to enjoy the ride to see how it would all unravel.

One character I wanted to survive the damage was Dan, alias for a nurse with an addiction that sent him to jail for a couple years, wrecking his legitimate career but placing him on the payroll of a thug lord. His restraint, sincerity, gullibility, skills, and skepticism made a complex character. A very good series could be made out of his adventures in the underworld. I note we did *not* get a sufficient description of his death.

In what becomes a large piece of the action, an Afghan terror group sidesteps the Indian Mafia (both Hindi *and* Muslim factions), the Pakistani Military Intelligence, and London's drug lords and lowlifes to mix it up with MI5, MI6, the anti-terror units of the military, and the police. When Wilson tells us in his *Acknowledgements* that writing is the most "exquisite torture" but that sometimes one hits a gusher, our smile of recognition hides a wince. Yes, we agree, but perhaps we don't need the *whole* nightmare.

Another thread, if one were needed, is the backstory of Charlie Boxer. He still works with his ex-wife and his daughter is an opinionated teenaged terror at seventeen. Apparently it is this thread that continues in the second novel in this series, *You Will Never Find Me*, due out next month.

Robert Wilson is an author I have followed from Africa to Lisbon to Seville to London. I have enormous respect for his talents. Wilson places the following in the mouth of one of his characters in this novel:

"The sad thing about goodness is that is it's bland. Evil has the power to provoke extraordinary emotions. And we're drawn to the excitement of the extreme, rather than the dullness of the everyday."

Wilson writes thrillers now. He may feel the pull, like Richard Price, of financial considerations, eyeballs on the page, a larger audience. Unless Wilson *meant* to be humorous, I think he missed the mark on this thriller. It was complex--perhaps too much so. It was difficult to suspend disbelief.

Wilson has the talent and experience now to write whatever he decides he wants to write. If he has fun and satisfaction and lack of angst from writing novels like this, I totally understand. I don't want to put the kibosh on a successful literary franchise. But Wilson is one who could go deep, if he wanted, on a literary thriller. I'll probably check in regardless.
