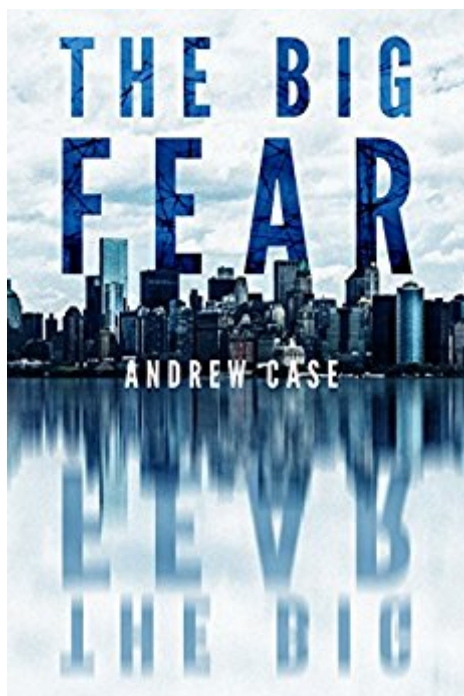


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The Big Fear (Hollow City Series Book 1)



Synopsis

It's August in New York, and the steaming garbage littering the streets isn't the only thing that stinks. Civilian investigator Leonard Mitchell can keep his job as the new head of the Department to Investigate Misconduct and Corruption only by successfully prosecuting veteran cop Ralph Mulino. Mulino shot an armed man on a dark night; he didn't know the man was a fellow cop. Now, to keep his badge and his freedom, he has to make his case to the investigator. But the gun Mulino saw in his victim's hand has disappeared. As Mitchell digs deeper into Mulino's claim, it becomes clear that the misconduct and corruption infecting New York City go far beyond the actions of one allegedly dirty cop. Murder and sabotage force Mulino and Mitchell into an uneasy partnership to uncover the truth and protect the city they are both sworn to serve. Assuming, of course, they can stay alive |

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Customer Reviews

Good light read. Interesting. The author creates visual scenes and suspenseful predicaments. That

said, the drawbacks keep this novel from being one of those barn-burner suspense novels. First, the characters were a little thin. Beyond that, it was hard to tell at first whether the main character was the detective or the man investigating him. The reader's attention is stretched a little too thin. I think the novel could have been better by fusing the two, perhaps into the character of the detective and making him just a little more hard boiled. The same could be said of the multiple bad guys: too many, too thin. The plot was a little too predictable aside from the late plot twist that just seemed a little bizarre to me. But a good, light read if you have some time to kill on the airplane or something.

I don't normally heap praise on first time novelists or their efforts. In this case though, Andrew Case deserves the accolades. Mr. Case has plenty of experience, being a very successful writer for stage and screen as well as a recognized expert on law enforcement oversight and misconduct. So, in deciding to read this debut novel, I felt confident that the writer's effort would yield a very workmanlike book. I was, however, more than just a little surprised when I realized that this effort was one of the best "debut" novels I have ever read. That said....NO SPOILERS HERE!!! I am a fan of police procedurals as well as intriguing mystery, and suspense novels. This effort starts out like so many others, with multiple plot twists that send the reader off on tangents, often times in a direction that leads nowhere. But then it becomes more... much more. Dark, gritty, suspenseful. The characters are well developed and the plot is tightly woven around them. Two grown men who you would think would be able to work together toward a common goal, instead are somewhat naturally averse to doing so. This seems a reasonable position when you realize that they are adversarial by virtue of their respective job descriptions. Where most police forces utilize an internal review process that involves members of the force tasked with monitoring and investigating possible criminal misconduct (Internal Affairs..), this police force uses a civilian investigative team. When Mulino (a very experienced officer 53 years of age..) is subject to an investigation, his path inevitably crosses with Mitchell, the civilian lead investigator. When Mitchell himself becomes the target of a criminal plot and is injured, they are forced to put aside their animosity and work together for the good of the department and the city. As the book progresses, the reader is treated to a very intelligent and resourceful criminal element that seems to always be one step ahead of the police. The denouement rapidly builds toward a clash of wills that seems to be leading inexorably toward sabotage. The question remains... Can it be stopped in time to avoid the damage without sacrificing everything....? As police procedurals go, this one is gritty, It looks deep behind the scenes of the police force and uncovers graft, lies, and deceit. It is not all about chasing down the bad guys, although that certainly happens too. Instead it is about the underlying character flaws that seem to

haunt police forces across the nation. No matter where you are, there will always be someone who is trying to take advantage. Corruption, while not visible, can still be there. In today's seemingly constant revelatory fashion, this debut novel takes on these issues in a manner that sheds light on the people and not just the criminal element. This is a GOOD book. Especially for a debut novel (heck, for experienced crime novelists too...). Recommended

UPDATE: I've not seen this before, but it tends to confirm my point - each of the six Kindle First selections this month is in one of the top six positions of Kindle Bestsellers. The Big Fear is number one as I write this. Remarkable accomplishment to each of the six writers! I had a great challenge in choosing my Kindle First read this month. Nearly every title appealed to my interest, tugging at me just as a little pup or kitten at the nearby shelter gives me those eyes and whimpers of, "Pick me, pick me." Ultimately, though, I ruled out the fantasy novel, in part because the current Presidential Election campaign is plenty fantasy for me. I finally chose The Big Fear, because it seems to be rooted in the issues of our time and takes place with two, seemingly, great characters. Yet, when I found it available, its sales rank was dismal. A paltry ranking of 1,040,314. Frankly, thought I, despite professional rave reviews, perhaps this is going to be a dud. So, did it whet my appetite for suspense and drama? Did it have the feel of authenticity that evokes my deepest emotions and political interest? ---- Yes, but read on to learn more if you like. Length: Print, 274 pages; Audible, 8 hours 25 minutes. Q - Target Audience/Genre: A - This is a Suspenseful Police Procedural. Q - What was the Rank on the date this review was published? A " 637. Q - How was this book obtained? A " Kindle First purchase using my Prime account. A great way to get a book a month before it releases and for free. Q - Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? A " Yes. It is a debut novel. Q - Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? A " No. Q - Is this a fast, easy read or is it more of a leisure read? A " A fast-paced leisure read with much the same page-turning demand that I found while reading Serpico some forty years ago. The key difference is this is a novel that is so authentic, it feels like nonfiction. Serpico was a nonfiction book that felt like fiction due to great creative writing skills of the author. Q - What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? A " Plain English with almost no foul language. Surprisingly few, and no f-bombs. Q - My biggest pleasure or disappointment? A " I felt as if I were the cop who had made some decisions that were coming back to haunt me. Questions like, "By playing according to the rules of my colleagues and the street, have I gotten myself into a mess of trouble, hounded by some Johnny-come-lately who is only trying to make a name for himself by daring to

crap all over my history of success? What I'm trying to say is that this novel clearly engaged me on a scale much as did *Shane* or *Old Yeller* when I was quite young. In short, I felt I was Detective Mulino. To give a feel for the editing, and the style and flow of this work, I am posting two brief excerpts below. Please that one of them comes from quite early in the book. I rarely, almost never, excerpt from so early. I did so with this because it so struck me as authentic and humorous that I found myself highlighting it. At that point, I realized it needed to be included in the review. Oh, and this chapter is building to a stunning climax, so it should be borne in mind that the quality of the writing is representative of the writing style of this author.

Excerpts

Excerpt 1

Mulino had got his own badge the old way, by arresting people who had actually committed crimes. Once there were plenty of them too; you couldn't stumble through Highbridge without observing a hand-to-hand, you couldn't spend the day in East New York without someone brandishing a gun. And the more you locked them up, the more they kept coming. It had all changed when crime started to go down. Suddenly the department was only judging you on how many stops you made, no matter if the guy was carrying a nine or a joint or a bag of groceries. Data-driven policing. It had seemed to Mulino that the stats had been in decline even before the push to do more UF-250s had come out. But no one cares what the foot soldiers think. Crime was down and stops were up so everyone just figured there was a connection. Mulino had made his numbers, hit detective, and landed at the Organized Crime Control Bureau. He had thought he would be free of the game there, listening to wiretaps and busting capos. But it had been the same routine as the beat: as soon as one mope hands a dime bag to another, that's a crime ring. The teenagers in One Police Plaza had issued their edicts, and so the word was out to OCCB: round up as many petty dealers as you can, and don't worry about which ones are in charge. Making detective had been like winning a pie-eating contest where the prize was more pie. And even now his phone would wake him from a deep sleep while guys who had joined the force just two years earlier were collecting his salary's worth of pension and living all summer at Aqueduct. Farther from the shore, the water grew still, and against the dim lights on the horizon, he could see the outline of the massive ship, its bolts knitting shut the huge panes of steel. It was hard for Mulino to believe that anything so heavy could stay afloat at all. The cops' small boat bobbed in the water, but the waves could not disturb the cargo ship. It was weighed down by thousands of railcar containers, each painted a different dismal shade of orange, green, or yellow, a futile effort to bring cheer to the whole sagging enterprise. In the dim light, no moon, the only glow from the city maybe a mile behind them, the ship was a silent monster, already slain, waiting to be buried. The kid cut the motor. Mulino stood, shook off the nausea from his ride, and looked up. He stretched his arms; his

back was beginning to feel better. He slipped his finger inside his collar and loosened it a bit. The tie had already proven to the sergeant everything it was going to prove. He wanted to make sure his blood would flow, that he could breathe unrestricted. Because you never know.

Case, Andrew (2016-04-01). The Big Fear (pp. 3-5). . Kindle Edition. Excerpt 2

“What can I do for you, Detective?”

“The guy at the door wasn’t wearing a badge or a uniform, but with some guys you can just tell. The jacket that doesn’t quite go with the pants. The pants that were bought two belt sizes ago. The twenty-dollar haircut that he spent half an hour trying to make look nice for the occasion. Behind him, an obvious lackey. They come in pairs.”

“Yeah, Leonard Mitchell? DIMAC commissioner?”

“Acting commissioner. I’m kind of busy.”

Across the floor, the desk, the table, all confidential NYPD documents. If the guy tried to come in the room, Leonard would really have to ask for ID. The man gestured to himself and the one over his shoulder at once.

“Detective Harrison. And this is Officer Ricci. He’s with Warrants?”

“Police are used to showing up and telling you what to do. When they start off by asking questions, or worse yet, introducing themselves with a question, it’s never good. Usually it means they’ve been sent to you under duress, to run some menial assignment they think is beneath them. Or they are delivering bad news. Or both.”

There was another person behind Harrison. A lanky uniform guy barely twenty years old, his face still red from teenage acne. Over six feet tall but would fall on his face if the big one slapped him on the back. Five years of eating like a cop would cure that. The NYPD does not settle for donuts, what with the junk food of the world on every corner. It feasts instead on Jamaican beef patties, General Tso’s chicken, Cubano sandwiches, and Dominican pork knuckles. The kid would beef up soon enough. Shy too, standing tentative at the office doorway, afraid maybe he’d get a shock if he stepped in front of the detective.

“Warrants, huh?”

Leonard looked over the skinny kid. Maybe he was assigned there, but he wasn’t with them. Warrants officers started their day at four, ferreting out guys who had skipped their arraignments. One guy would stand at the front door of an apartment and pound the hell out of it while the partner stood behind the building looking at the fire escape, waiting for a panicked criminal to jump out in his skivvies so they could cart him back before the judge. When you put in for warrants, the first thing they test you for is if you can scale an eight-foot fence in a second and a half. The kid may have passed that one, but Leonard didn’t have much hope for his prospects.

“I hate to intrude on you and I know the situation is . . . sensitive.”

The detective had that slow, fumbling way of trying to sound like he cared. It came off like he was sleepwalking through his job until the matinee started at Shea.

“But I’m here to show you this.”

The detective pulled out a piece of paper that

had been folded, folded again, and then crumpled into a ball. Case, Andrew (2016-04-01). The Big Fear (pp. 94-95). . Kindle Edition. Bottom Line: I so enjoyed this debut novel that no matter how good the other Kindle First selections, I have no regrets about choosing The Big Fear. This is the best police procedural I've read since The New Centurions. Comments regarding your opinion of this book or of my review, whether favorable or unfavorable, are always welcome. If you buy the book based on my review and become disappointed, especially, I do want to know that and I want to understand how I can improve as a book reviewer. Just please be polite. Thank you.

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