ANIL AGGRAWAL'S

Internet Journal of Book Reviews

A sister journal of AAIJFMT · Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology

VOL. 1, NO. 1 · JANUARY – JUNE 2002

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Buried Evidence

THE BOOK

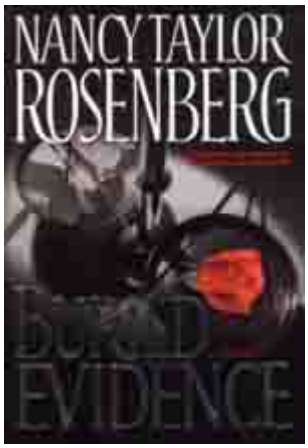
Pages 359
ISBN-10 0-7868-6619-5
Price $24.95

HOW TO CITE

Dam S. Review of *Buried evidence, by Nancy Taylor Rosenberg (2000)*. *Anil Aggrawal's Internet Journal of Book Reviews*. 2002;1(1).

TOUR DE FORCE

Buried evidence *by* Nancy Taylor Rosenberg
Hyperion, 77 West 66th Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10023-6298: 359 Pages: ISBN 0-7868-6619-5: Price US $24.95, Canada $34.95



With *Buried Evidence*, Nancy Taylor Rosenberg scores another pulsating unputdownable legal thriller that is certain to take her readers to the edges of suspense and the nail-biting end. This new fast-paced novel, filled with her trademark intrigue, complex characters and a mind-boggling storyline would whet and satisfy not only her dedicated fans but also the first-time readers of Ms Rosenberg. Her fourteen years of experience as a court investigator and law enforcer is all too

apparent in *Buried Evidence*, which weaves a remarkable story of treachery, betrayal, and human emotion against the realistic backdrop spanning several counties, and law enforcing agencies.

The protagonist of the book, tall and lissome district attorney Lily Forrester is introduced right at the beginning as a no-nonsense public prosecutor with an idealistic approach for law and lawbreakers. She doesn't allow her own less-than-perfect personal life to interrupt her attention and single-minded dedication to build up a strong case against Henry Middleton, with which the book opens, who is charged with an attempt to murder his eight-year-old daughter who suffers from a rare genetic disorder. Shortly before the attempted poisoning, the girl had been insured for a million dollar. The motive behind the crime seems well defined enough. Being a mother and having lost the custody of her only daughter, Shana-to her estranged husband-Lily feels an outrage within her at the atrocity of the accused towards an innocent and defenseless child. She takes on the crusade of nailing Henry Middleton with more than professional zeal. For her it becomes more of a personal crusade against all those guilty of child abuse.

Lily Forrester's plight seemingly becomes more complex when she learns that the counsel for the defense is none other than her former lover, Richard Fowler, who is a brilliant lawyer by his own rights. Though Lily had presumed that she did not have any reminiscent feelings for Richard, the first encounter at the courthouse sets her pulses racing and she realizes much to her dismay that Richard had once again successfully managed to ruffle her poise and control with his rustic charm and sheer presence. Unwittingly she agrees to meet Richard outside the court and by the end of the day all their old passion and romance had kindled anew to a feverish pitch, though they behave sensibly as matured adults and decide to keep the matter under check, more because they represented the opposite camps in the court. But Lily is uncertain that how long would she be able to hold back her feelings from Richard who has always remained in her life, despite her best efforts to wipe his memory away. Though still very much in love with Lily, Richard had not been entirely faithful and even had a live-in relationship with a woman of extraordinary sexual prowess, who had begin to tire him with her monotonous approach to life and her morbid intention of marrying him.

Nancy Taylor Rosenberg



Nancy Taylor Rosenberg, the author, a fourteen-year veteran of law enforcement, has worked for the Dallas Police Department, the New Mexico State Police, the Ventura Police and the Ventura County Probation Department, where she was a superior court investigator. She has written six New York Times best-selling novels. She lives in Southern California. You can visit her website at http://www.nancytrosenberg.com.

While Lily is embroiled in her case, eighteen-year-old Shana is finding life hard and difficult to control with her alcoholic father, John Forrester. He is an out-of-work real estate broker blaming his ex-wife for all their problems and constantly attempts to poison Shana's mind against her mother. Dispatched on a late-night errand for ice cream by Shana, John borrows her car and dashes out of the house in a foul mood. While parking the car he hits and kills a young boy unintentionally. John flees the place like a paroled convict and fails to notify the police of his misdeed. Unknowingly he drops behind his wallet on the curb, where he had hit the victim, as an evidence of his presence at the scene of the crime. The case takes a nasty turn since the victim's flesh and blood traces are also found on the rear bumper of the car, which is registered in Shana's name, and the victim studied in the same college as her. The police suspects that Shana had intentionally killed the boy for some indecent liaison and the father is trying to save her by claiming that it was he who was driving the car. John is taken into custody for abetting a murder. Meanwhile a ghost from the past resurfaces in Shana and Lily's life when the former believes that her childhood rapist, who was out of prison on probation, was intent on raping her again. She notices a stranger outside the house and warns her mother that the rapist was back. This incident introduces the readers to the most catastrophic and traumatic incident of Lily and her daughter's life, since a little over six years ago both of them had been brutally raped by a single man by the name of Marco Curazon. Both of them suffered from nightmares about the incident and were trying hard to cope up with the post trauma, when their carefully preserved life falls apart with John's arrest on charges of drunken driving and killing.

Unaware of John's fate, Lily forges some breakthrough witnesses and evidence against Middleton, when she gets a sinister call from John informing her that he was in jail and she better bail him out or else he would unmask her criminal past to the world. Acting under severe desperation and

seeking to avenge her and Shana's rape, she had mistakenly eliminated a mobster six years back who resembled the rapist to a remarkable degree. Disguised as a male, no one had ever suspected that Lily was the killer and the police were rather relieved about the whole thing, and they had pegged the event as another fallout of a common gang war. The truth was known only to John, and to some degree suspected by Richard Fowler. Knowing her despise for him, John resorts to blackmailing Lily into getting her to pay his bail. Lily is once again driven to the brinks of sanity with everything coming back in a rush. Her primary concern becomes Shana, whom she must get into a safe haven, away from the rapist and also from her father. Richard as always is the only beacon of sanity amidst all the turmoil to whom she can cling. They also discover their old mutual love and confess the same to each other.

> *...While Lily is battling to guard her daughter's life and her own sanity, with mental and physical support from Richard, John plans to testify against her and reopen the murder case that hadn't been solved till date. He hopes to get away under the witness-protection program with a new identity elsewhere...*

While Lily is battling to guard her daughter's life and her own sanity, with mental and physical support from Richard, John plans to testify against her and reopen the murder case that hadn't been solved till date. He hopes to get away under the witness-protection program with a new identity elsewhere. He discloses the names of the then investigating officers and other relevant facts that can have Lily arrested and prosecuted. Desperate to save her daughter and her own life, Lily manages the one hundred thousand-bail amount for John and he returns to an empty house since Shana had started living with Lily at Santa Barbara. Though without any documentary evidence but convinced nevertheless of Lily's guilt, the Ventura Police department summons Lily for investigation. At this juncture the police discovers John's mutilated body from the garage, just when Shana and her friend had returned to fetch some of her clothes from the house. Once again Shana is taken into custody as a suspect. The police also suspects Lily for the murder of her husband to prevent him for testifying against her.

Both Lily and Shana undergo a desperate mental trauma as Lily becomes more convinced that she should appear before the DA and confess to her killing the mobster six years ago. Shana and Richard advise her against it to prevent destroy their lives further. Richard tries to assure Lily that he would surely get her acquitted even if the Ventura Lower Court found her guilty enough to be tried by the superior court. Under severe mental duress Shana decides to make a last minute attempt to save her mother and appears before the Ventura DA and confesses that it was not her mother but she who had done the killing six years ago, accepting too that it was a case of mistaken identity and that she had killed the wrong person, a felon none the less. On learning of the same, Lily feels that now her case had weakened further considerably and even Richard would not be able to help her out much. But unknown to her, a secret benefactor takes some highly unethical but moral steps to ensure that the prosecution does not have enough evidence against her to get a guilty verdict at the lower court. Meanwhile a detective inspector finally apprehends the rapist as he lay waiting at Lily's apartment to kill her and Shana. The forensic report proves beyond any reasonable doubt that it was he who had brutally killed John Forrester and he is put behind the bars for life.

On the final day at the Municipal court the judge dismisses the case as based on insufficient evidence against the defendant. The novel concludes on a fairy tale note as Lily and Shana joins

Richard and his son into a happy family reunion. The hint of probable matrimony between Lily and Richard linger into the reader's mind as fresh morning dew after a stormy night.



-Satyabrata Dam
Satyabrata Dam is a leading crime fiction writer. His book "Eyewitness and other tales of detection" published by Minerva Press has been hailed as a landmark in Crime fiction.

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-Editor-in-Chief

of Volume 1, No. 1 (January - June 2002)

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