



# Risking Trust

*Adrienne Giordano*

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## **Risking Trust** Adrienne Giordano

Roxann Thorgesson's world is out of control. After her father suffers a fatal heart attack, she must take over as publisher of Chicago's second-largest newspaper. Then her ex-boyfriend Michael Taylor, CEO of his own security company, shows up needing a favor. The last thing Roxann needs is Michael around causing trouble—and potential heartbreak—but he's involved in a scandalous story she can't pass up.

Twelve years ago, Michael walked out on Roxann without explanation. Now he needs her help. Michael's estranged wife has been murdered and he is the prime suspect. He offers something no newspaperwoman could refuse: exclusive access to his headline-making murder accusation, in exchange for her help in uncovering the true killer. When their investigation leads them to a city hall conspiracy, both their lives and their newly reignited flame could be permanently extinguished...

86,000 words

## **Risking Trust Details**

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Author : Adrienne Giordano

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# From Reader Review Risking Trust for online ebook

## MBR says

Believe it or not Risking Trust by Adrienne Giordanno is actually the book that started Adrienne's writing journey and acts as the beginning of the the Private Protector's series. Though this is the third book published in the series, this story actually takes place before Man Law, the first book of the series which made me sit up and take notice of Adrienne's writing style.

39 year old Michael Taylor, CEO of one of the nation's most private and elite security companies finds himself the number one suspect in the murder of his wife Alicia, whom he has been separated from and embroiled in a financially ugly divorce for the past two years. Wanting to prove his innocence in the most public manner possible, Michael approaches Roxann Thorgesson, owner of the Banner-Herald who happens to be his ex-girlfriend from twelve years back.

35 year old Roxann's life has just about spun out of control since the sudden death of her beloved father. Watching Michael stroll into her office and offering her exclusive rights to all his life past and present in exchange for her helping him uncover the real killer seems like the icing on the cake. Though Roxann would love nothing better than to tell Michael to run back to his life and leave her alone like he had done twelve years back without any explanations, the curious nature within her as well as her heart which still remembers the happiness that had been her life when they had been together refuses to let her do so.

Delving into the murder of the woman who had married the man she had wanted beyond anything else and keeping her emotions intact seems to be one of the toughest challenges Roxann has encountered up till now. The close proximity which the investigation puts her in with Michael weakens her resolve not to get involved with the man who had broken her heart and never looked back. As the investigation opens up a can of worms neither expected, so emerges the reasons why Michael had left her which clears up the air for both of them to start over; only if they can find the real killer behind the murder.

Risking Trust is the story that serves as the missing component when I first delved into Man Law. Back then, I had no clue whatsoever that Michael had a story of his own. And I am so very glad that Carina Press decided to publish his story which serves as a really good beginning for the whole series. If you haven't read this series yet, I recommend that you kick it off by starting with this one.

With Adrienne's trademark wit, style and humor, she reels the reader in with this installment as well; none of the cardboard variety characters to be found in her stories, but people you can most definitely relate to which makes her stories unbeatable. She has a way of portraying her characters that is unlike any other and pits them together in the most difficult situations which they work through like heroes and heroines who definitely deserve the happily ever after at the end. Time and yet again, it is the style and prose with which Adrienne delivers her stories that keeps me her #1 fan when it comes to her Private Protector's series.

Michael is the broody, ex-military hero who finds himself living his worst nightmare when the police refuses to investigate any other avenues in the investigation of his wife's murder. His regrets makes him human, his resolve to win back Roxann's affections that makes him an alluring hero!

Roxann is a heroine who makes for a very worthy partner for Michael in every single way. She is the type to stubbornly stick to the side of those whom she loves which makes her unbeatable as a heroine. I loved her style, her sense of humor and the way she fights the panic that threatens to submerge her even if she were to

give an inch.

And that brings me to my favorite character Vic Andrews. Whenever he strolled into the picture in all his come-get-me-now-sexiness, I felt a grin tugging at the corners of my mouth and an overwhelming urge to just sigh and crumple at his feet as one big puddle of goo! Yep, he is that good and I believe even if I had never read or heard of Vic before this story, I would still have ended up half in love with him by the time this one was done!

Combining explosive passion and a story of second chances twelve years in the making, Risking Trust is a novel that stands true to Adrienne's remarkable talent as one of the best RS authors out there

Highly recommended for those who love humor, wit and verbal swordplay in their romantic suspense, there is none who does it better than Adrienne.

**Rating=4.5/5**

Original review posted on MBR's Realm of Romance

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### **Sharon says**

Loved these series of books. My only recommendation would be to read this book 1st, then the next two. This really is book 1, the author stated she had originally intended this to be book 1, but things happened and she ended up finishing this book afterwards. Can't wait for book 4 of this series to come out.

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### **Wendy Soliman says**

A really gripping tale that kept me guessing almost to the last page. Tightly written with lots of surprises along the way and a highly believable plot. Corrupt politicians, what's not to believe!

I've read all three of the books in this series but enjoyed this one the most. Highly recommended.

More of the same, please.

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### **Jonetta says**

#### **Quick summary**

It's been 12 years since Michael Taylor walked away from Roxann Thorgesson, leaving her without explanation. He's now head of a highly successful private security company and she's the publisher of a Chicago newspaper. But, his soon to be ex-wife's been murdered and Michael's now the prime suspect. It's a long shot but he reaches out to Roxann for help in investigating the case to clear his name.

#### **The romance**

Roxann's turned the devastating loss of Michael into an outstanding professional success, even though things on the personal front are lacking. Michael's marriage was a disaster, a serious understatement, so when he

steps back into her life, there's possibility. He had to work hard to regain her trust while still not being forthcoming about his reasons for abandoning her years ago. I must admit I figured out most of it before his big reveal. Even so, these were two very admirable characters who you wanted reunited and I liked the journey a lot. I enjoyed them and all the struggle getting there.

### **The suspense**

Roxann teams with Michael to try to figure out who his wife may have crossed to get her killed. I enjoyed the aspect of investigative reporting being the structure for solving this mystery. It tied in nicely to some other things going on at the newspaper that made the situation even more complex. Again, I figured out the identity of one of the villains but was blindsided by another. The twists and turns to unravel the cases were well structured and interesting.

### **The bottom line**

This is my first book by Giordano and I definitely plan to continue the series. I really liked Roxann, presented as a strong woman who wasn't afraid to take risks professionally and personally. I had to warm up to Michael given his early behavior and loved how he was developed. The story is well written, interesting and emotionally compelling. I liked both the romance and the mystery, making for a strong start to the series.

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### **Misty says**

Michael Taylor made the biggest mistake of his life twelve years ago when he broke up with the only woman he's ever loved. He left Roxann in order to protect her, but now he's paying the price—in more ways than one. Not only did he end up marrying the wrong woman in an effort to get over Roxann, he's now accused of killing her.

Roxann Thorgesson can't get over the fact Michael left her without any explanation. Now he's accused of murdering his estranged wife and wants her help to prove he's innocent. As the new publisher of her deceased father's newspaper enterprise, Roxann has a lot riding on her shoulders, including the paper's reputation. Getting mixed up with Michael could jeopardize everything she's worked for...and break her heart all over again.

This reunion romance was an emotional rollercoaster and a very satisfying read. Michael is a strong, grounded hero, and Roxann is his equal in all ways. Irresistible Force meets Immovable Object describes their scenes together and I enjoyed every step of their journey toward trusting each other again. Even as they work together to prove Michael's innocence, the sexual tension remains high. And when Roxann faces the ultimate betrayal by someone else she loves dearly, she finds out that Michael is the one rock solid gift in her life.

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### **Cynthia D'Alba says**

Although this is the third book released by this author in the Private Protectors series, I would recommend that new readers to the series start with this book. As I understand it, Risking Trust was originally written to be the first book in the series but was delayed for editing and the other two books were released first. While

you can read the books out of order (each book will stand alone), I think having this book set the background and tone for the others is advantageous to grasping the underlying emotions in the books 2 and 3, especially Man Law. In fact, I'll be re-reading Man Law in light of the information contained in Risking Trust.

I won't give you the book blurb (as you can get it anywhere) but I did love the interchanges between Roxann and Micheal. Rich writing. Emotional scenes. The ending came as a surprise as I didn't anticipate the bad guy. If the author laid hints through the book pointing to the bad guy, I didn't get them as it came out of left field, although near the end of the book, one scene in particular did seem to point me in the right direction.

Overall, this has been a wonderful series and I look forward to more from this author.

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### **Judith says**

A complicated and compelling novel that is multi-layered and with enough twists and turns to resemble an English maze. The characters are strong and pronounced and the reader is drawn into the mess of people's lives, the griefs, disappointments, unrealized dreams, old loves, and even the murder of a soon-to-be ex-wife. While it is the third in this series, it is a flashback novel of sorts by the author's own admission. It fills in facts about Michael Taylor's life--the CEO of a security firm that figures prominently in all of Ms Giordano's novels in this series. But it is, in and of itself, a joy to read for romance fiction fans who like the lively spicing of a very good mystery that involves everyone from relatives to government officials. Set in Chicago with that city's legendary bent toward corruption, the reader knows that there is bad stuff afoot from the very beginning. Just one really terrific read.

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### **Hope Frost says**

This is the first book in the Private Protectors series. And before I begin with my thoughts on the book, this book was released 3rd in the series, but is the actual start. If I would have read the other two first, I can't say my thoughts on the book would be all that good. Key players were introduced in this book, and it would be weird to read out of order and not know the story of the leader of the private protection agency.

That being said...I really liked this book. The banter between Roxann and Michael was refreshing. The hurt seemed very real and the pain Roxann was going through about losing her father was heartbreaking. You could tell the author had her own personal experience to lean on and it showed in the writing. I really enjoyed meeting some of the secondary characters such as Vic and Gina and the kids. I was a little upset there wasn't more with Gina's oldest son, it seemed that Michael was a mentor of sorts for him, but after one run away, there wasn't much more said. I felt if the kid was dealing with the loss of his father, Michael would have been more front and center for him. I found this book to be very fast to read, probably because I couldn't put it down. I thought I knew who-did-it early on, but I was very surprised with the ending, which was a bonus for me. Finding out the villain early on in a book is a real turn off for me. Adrienne is a new author to me, but I can honestly say, I can't wait for Vic's book. I would highly recommend this to anyone who enjoys romantic suspense.

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## **Wendy Marcus says**

I loved Adrienne's first two books and I think I loved this one even more. As with the other two, this book grabbed me and I could not put it down. Fast-paced action. Catchy dialogue. A hot hero and strong, spunky heroine. Loved, loved, loved this book and I highly recommend it!

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## **Grace says**

### **Fantastic Crime Drama, romance lacking**

## LOVED the crime drama aspect of this book. It was intriguing and kept me interested throughout. Ergo 4 stars.

For me the romance was off. If a man ditches you with no explanation after planning to spend your life together and marries someone else, he doesn't get to waltz in 12 years later and not only ask for help but another chance! Pfffft. Not bloody likely. Especially after the heroine keeps asking why he left (I deserve to know) and he flat out refuses to tell her. She says then we can't move on and try again....but of course....yep, jumps into bed with him. Other than that stupidity, the heroine is awesome. She's strong, capable and beautiful.

I didn't feel enough remorse from the hero though. Grovelling, apologies, and explanations were in order. Maybe if he had explained immediately or even apologized earlier, but he just took it for granted that she would take him back.

Great mystery, not so great romance.

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## **Iza says**

It was an ok read for me, not bad, but not wonderful. Every time I find myself reading about rich people, I find it hard to relate. And that she falls back into bed with him without even asking him why he left her many years ago ? Couldn't believe it. And the banter that was supposed to sound like foreplay ? I've read better in other books.

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## **Jae says**

Another one to my **LOVVIT** shelf!!!

The plots, characters and dialogues were gloriously awesome. This was my first read by anything AG and I liked her writing styles.

I just lurved how Michael was portrayed as humanely possible and not too alpha-ish. His POVs showed his regret for marrying the wrong woman, his dread for asking the long lost love of his life for help and his fear

of losing her again if he was convicted of murdering his ex-wife were all very heart wrenching. I just lurve a down-to-earth hero.

I am hunting Vic's story next. For a wing man in this book, he was just too HOT (and hilarious) to resist.

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## **Saly says**

### **Rating 4.5**

Risking Law takes us right back to the start I guess as far as the time line goes, we get Michael's story, before he got together with Roxann.

To be honest the Private Protector series has gotten better for me with each book, I thought I loved A Just Deception but this one even changed that. I love a good mix of romance and suspense and this one has that and combine it with a fiery reunion story.

Roxann's life is kind of a mess right now, she just lost her father and on top of dealing with that loss, she also is now in-charge of the newspaper he owned and ran, so she has business problems and is emotionally ravelling, a control freak like her so the last thing she needs in her life is Michael Taylor, her ex-boyfriend who nearly turned her inside out when he left without a word twelve years ago. To a young Olympic winner Roxann, Michael was the one despite the myriad of issue he seemed to have after just getting out from the Army.

Michael Taylor has come far from the man he was twelve years ago, he is successful runs a good security business with his friend Vic, is a almost father figure to his sister's kid, the one thing which sticks in his craw is his soon to be ex-wife who prefers to refer to ex so when he is informed she is murdered right before their hell of a divorce was about to get over, he panics because he knows it will be him the cops will be coming for.

Though he hated what his marriage had become and his wife and her manipulations, he knows he is not guilty and even if it galls him to air his dirty laundry and the terrible shell his marriage was, to save himself he approaches Roxann, to help him out.

Roxann is his one regret, he hated how he ended it with her and she still effects him deeply after all these years but this didn't mean he didn't try to make his marriage work.

Roxann is the perfect control freak when she meets Michael and is less than welcoming of his proposition but she thinks it over and agrees for the newspaper.

But despite vowing to keep it all business, personal feelings and the past trickles in. Roxann still wonders after all these years what happened while Michael doesn't want to get into it now, he wants to make a fresh start with Roxann if possible and is aware that it will take time to open her up since he understands her and her psyche.

The investigation on the other hand is also very engaging along with the tension filled romance, with disturbing facts about Michael's wife coming out that are hurtful and damaging.

I really enjoyed the depiction of Roxann as a professional woman, grieving daughter and someone being pulled on all sides in her life. We see her emotional melt-down, her control, her zest for life and more and she was a freaking great heroine.



Michael too was a great hero but Roxann totally rocked. She took no prisoners and kicked ass. We see Michael's protective instincts, his regret that he didn't fight for Roxann, his fear of going to prison and more. I love a alpha hero who can also be human and display vulnerability.

To be honest, I adored this book and advise Adrienne Giordano is an author to look out for in Romantic Suspense. I am going to wait for her next book anxiously.

*ARC provided by Netgalley.*

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### **Michelle Fayard says**

Roxann and Michael were involved in a serious relationship 12 years ago. Then Michael walked away without an explanation. Now this former Special Forces/PTSD victim runs a security company. And he's just become the lead person of interest in his soon-to-be ex-wife's murder.

Roxann is the one Michael approaches for help.

Roxann's father has just suffered a fatal heart attack, filling her with grief and leaving her with the top spot at Chicago's No. 2 daily newspaper. Her management team doesn't like her leadership style, and they don't support her involvement in the Michael Taylor investigation. Roxann's uncle Max, the superintendent of police, also is giving Roxann grief about her choices.

And apparently someone else is displeased as well, for a few days later the printing press is sabotaged. And that's just the beginning ...

Filled with strong, memorable characters, this fast-moving plot contains plenty of mystery, emotion and heat. It's a keeper.

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### **Rebecca says**

You can also read this review at [Reflections on Reading Romance](#)

Rating: 4 out of 5

I've really been enjoying Adrienne Giordano's Private Protectors series. I'm not usually a fan of romantic suspense, but her books are a lot of fun and full-o-the-smexy! Risking Trust is the third novel published in the series, but it's set before the first novel, Man Law. I absolutely loved the hero of Man Law (see my review), Vic Andrews, and he makes a few appearances to comedic effect in this prequel. I think Man Law remains my favorite of the three, but I love reunion romances, and Risking Trust really hits the mark.

As the novel begins, Roxann Thorgesson's life is suddenly a lot more stressful than it was a month ago. Her father recently died of a heart attack, leaving her in charge of the family owned newspaper, and her ex-lover has just been accused of murdering his wife, Alicia. Michael Taylor and Alicia had been involved in a nasty

divorce for over two years, so when she's murdered, he's the first suspect. When it becomes clear that the police aren't planning on looking any further than Alicia's soon-to-be ex-husband, Michael offers his former lover Roxann exclusive access to his story if she'll have the newspaper investigate the murder. Roxann's reluctant to have anything to do with Michael after he broke her heart 12 years ago, but she realizes that if they can solve the mystery, the paper will have a major scoop. Trouble is, it soon becomes clear that Alicia's murder isn't a random act of violence, and the more they investigate, the higher the cover-up of her death goes. Roxann knows Michael's innocent, but can she prove his innocence before the murderer sets his sights on her?

I love that Ms. Giordano writes such strong heroines. In the prior two books, the heroines had strong personalities, and the heroes loved them because of that strength. Roxann is no exception, and as a former gold medal Olympic runner, she's also physically fit. But Roxann is particularly vulnerable emotionally because of the recent death of her beloved father. She's trying to deal with her grief by focusing on work, but Michael's reappearance in her life creates more emotional distress. Fortunately he quickly proves that he's there to support Roxann in everything, even if he's undergoing a difficult time as well.

Michael is a sexy and appealing hero, and he too has his vulnerabilities. I like that while all three of the male leads in Ms. Giordano's novels are alpha males working in the security business, they still appreciate the strong female protagonists, even if those heroes have their sexist moments. Michael owns his security firm, but he has a lot of respect for Roxann and her career in the newspaper industry. He definitely screwed up when he left Roxann all those years ago, and his marriage was a disaster, mainly because he was still in love with Roxann, but he works hard to redeem himself. He's very swoon-worthy!

As for Michael's almost ex-wife, Alicia, she's a strong presence in the novel. I'm not particularly fond of romances featuring the horrible ex, and frankly Alicia is over the top. Her murder sets up all the action of the novel and reunites the lovers, so she's a necessary part of the novel, but I'm not sure she had to be such a slut for the book to work. This is a personal preference, though, because I've grown tired of this particular trope, so keep that in mind.

My only other criticism is that towards the end it becomes easy for the reader to spot the villain, yet Roxann continually trusts this character. There are obvious reasons why she does so, but a few of her decisions border on too stupid to live, which bothered me. I suspect that the problem is more that the villain is too obvious to us, because given Roxann's emotional state and all that's going on with the murder investigation, it's not hard to see why she would continue to trust that character.

Overall, I very much enjoyed the novel, and I highly recommend it. I hope that the books sell well enough as ebooks that they'll be published in paperback in the future, as Ms. Giordano writes taut thrillers with sexy romance. I'm all in favor of strong female characters, and I've been pleased to find them in her novels.

I received this book for review from the publisher through NetGalley.

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