

## Night of the Jaguar: A Novel

*Joe Gannon*

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In Joe Gannon's debut novel, *Night of the Jaguar*, a former Sandinista guerrilla *comandante* turned cop investigates a series of murders that appear to be political executions.

Sandinista Police Captain Ajax Montoya is six days sober and losing his mind. How else to explain his nights waking in bed, his hand wrapped around that bloody-minded stiletto from the old days, or the presence outside his window, a face with no eyes watching him?

How far the heroic have fallen. Ajax was once the gallant *comandante* guerrillero. A hero of the Nicaraguan revolutionaries in their long uprising against the Ogre and his hated National Guard. Back then he'd been the guy who got the bloody missions -- as a lowly grunt with that blade, or the commander of an entire front. Back then he knew what was what and who to trust. But as the clarity of war gave way to the hazy reality of peace, Ajax fared less well. And after he took the fall for an assassination he had no part of, he tumbled into a bottle, and maybe out of his mind.

Now he's a homicide investigator in Managua solving murders and sweating through the nightmares from his guerilla days. When he's called to investigate a robbery turned gruesome murder, Ajax recognizes the marks of a surprising enemy - the CIA mercenary army known as The Contra. This isn't just a random murder; this is an execution, a call to war. Or is it? And why does no one want to know but Ajax? As the bodies pile up and a red-headed gringa who should be his enemy enchants his thoughts, Ajax questions whether he can stay sober, sane, and alive long enough to figure it all out.

## Night of the Jaguar: A Novel Details


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Author : Joe Gannon

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## **From Reader Review Night of the Jaguar: A Novel for online ebook**

### **E.R. Yatscoff says**

Deception, intrigue, and politics in post-Somoza Nicaragua. Ajax Montoya, Nicaraguan cop must negotiate politics, murders, and the revolutionary council as he tries to investigate murders that may be linked to the old revolution days when he was the jaguar, hero of the revolution. Nowadays, Alex is a lowly cop trying to sort out his own life and figure out where the post-Sandinista revo. is going. A good perspective on a time and place rarely written about. A clearance pile book. My own crime novel is set in Mexico and not political.

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### **Quanita says**

I received this advanced copy from Good Reads.

This story takes place during the presidency of Ronald Reagan. It follows Ajax Montoya, once a hero of the Sandinista's, now a police captain trying to stay sober. Solving the murder of a coffee farmer leads Montoya down the convoluted road of political power struggles, greed and many more murders. Gannon keeps you guessing till the last chapter - who really was/is the power behind the scene and what was the real motive that caused the farmer's murder.

Great start for a first time author. I'm looking forward to reading more by Mr. Gannon.

Warning - there is one very graphic sexual encounter - not for children. It does play well within the story.

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### **Shelly Donaghey says**

NIGHT OF THE JAGUAR takes place in the bloody landscape of mid-1980s Nicaragua. The main character is Captain Ajax Montoya of the Policía Sandanista, fighter in and survivor of the revolution. He is a solitary man who reads his thesaurus like a bible and has been sober for almost a week.

He and his new partner, Lt. Gladys Dario, must solve a series of brutal killings. They are gruesome but the true problem to solve is how they link to killings done by State Security almost half a dozen years before.

And there is the hand of the C.I.A.'s Contra Army in all of this.

Further complicating matters is the sheer number of murders in the country and the lack of will to have any justice levied in the whole.

Author Gannon has parlayed his knowledge of history with a scintillating story into an intriguing read with a central character you may not love but who is certainly very interesting.

In some ways this is a very dark Goodreads winner.

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### **Scott Stewart says**

Thanks to the publisher for allowing me to read an Advanced copy to review.

This was a pretty good suspense novel and those that enjoy political intrigue and CIA contracted killings will enjoy this story. Some of you may even draw a comparison to a real event in our history, the Iran Contra Affair, There is murder and thrills, and a very interesting main character, Montoya (who has real personal issues).

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### **Jared Solko says**

Just started reading it! Can't wait to finish and will update my review when complete! Thank you!

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### **Richard says**

On its own terms, as a thriller-diller, this is a terrific read, well plotted, with compelling characters, and moral dilemmas, and thrills galore.

Night of the Jaguar takes place in Nicaragua, mostly in Managua, and the not so distant bush, after the Sandinista Triumph, but during the contra war. All the skullduggery of the period happens in the few weeks of this narrative, and all the players are assembled - revolutionaries, bureaucrats, counter-revolutionaries, security forces, US Senators and their aides, even a whiskey priest, and the eternal peasant - without which no novel that takes place south of the US border would be complete.

Our hero, Ajax Montoya, is a true hero of the revolution who because of his undying idealism never makes it into the upper echelon of victors. Ajax, a recently dry alcoholic, plagued with guilt from a history of revolutionary violence, and a recent screw up, is tossed into a storm of intrigue by trying to be a good cop. Mayhem, and a complicated plot ensue.

If you like Martin Cruz Smith's creature, Arkady Renko, you're bound to love his Nicaraguan counterpart. And I'd bet dollars to pesetas there's a sequel in the works.

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### **Sara says**

Well...some pretty strange things happen in this book. I kept reading because there aren't many books in English set in Nicaragua, and so it was nice to get some more history through the story. But lots of people got killed, and everyone had secrets from everyone else and it just got too crazy at the end.

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### **Becky says**

I won this advanced copy in exchange for an honest review and this book was honestly intriguing, fast paced and thoroughly enjoyable! Before it was over with, Ajax had me singing Alice in Chains' Rooster because he was a tough character and I did not want him to die. There were so many times that you didn't know who to trust and who was this "visitor" that kept showing up pulling strings like a puppet master? And was the specter real or someone sent to drive him further into madness? I would recommend this book to anyone that

enjoyed *The Deception Point* by Dan Brown (the best one of Dan Brown's books as far as I'm concerned) because it has that sort of intrigue and government who to trust. I am looking forward to the next adventure of Ajax! And my father is impatiently waiting for me to pass *Night of the Jaguar* up the driveway to him.

I had entered to win this book not only because I had been interested in the description of the story but in the description of the writer as well. Joe Gannon sounds like someone that would be almost as interesting to meet as Hunter S. Thompson without the concern of drugs and firearms being scattered around within easy reach of the children. It's not often that the bio of the writer plays into my interest in the novel but there is always that once in a blue moon chance.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to read and review this fantastic novel! (The only reason that it did not get the fifth star is because of *The Untamed State* factor. That novel was so powerful that I physically hurt for that main character since then I've been very tight with my 5 stars.)

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### **Susie Sherburne says**

History, politics, mystery, adventure, and sex. Nicaragua in the 80's. A great read.

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### **Cam says**

So-so on the mystery behind a murder on the streets of Managua, but well done on describing Nicaragua after the Sandinista revolution and the impact of Reagan's Cold War Contra support. A burnt-out revolutionary drunkard had been among the vanguard but now is out of the loop and barely holding on to his job as a police detective in the capital. Haunted by one particular killing from his days as a fighter against the Somoza regime, Ajax Montoya gets sober and immediately caught up in more political intrigue as his former colleagues struggle for power. International and regional affairs complicate things as he stumbles on clues about the murder and how they link to his rivals and the affair that triggered his disillusionment with the movement. If you've never thought about Nicaragua in the 1980s, this is an evocative description of the convoluted infighting of a middle-aged communist regime and how even the disillusioned can get pulled back in to no better effect.

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### **Gloria Feit says**

A murder mystery wrapped up in the politics of Sandinista Nicaragua during the 1980's, including the US-sponsored Contra rebels opposing the government, makes for a most unusual setting in this debut novel. Ajax Montoya, a hero who gained a reputation as a leader in the revolution against the dictator Somoza, failed to attain the lofty heights of power some of the other leading revolutionary leaders did after gaining their objective and is 'just' a police captain, fighting his nightmares through alcoholism.

Then Ajax, six days sober, becomes involved in the investigation of the murder of a landowner just days prior to the visit of a US Senator on a fact-finding mission. While the murder was made to look like a robbery gone bad, Ajax and his partner determine it was an assassination. So they begin to probe despite obstacles thrown in their way by their superiors and the ghost that haunts Ajax.

“Night of the Jaguar” is an unusual novel, especially because of its Central American background, which is told so well by the author, who was a free-lance journalist in that country during the Sandinista revolution. Sometimes the thread of the story becomes a bit too complicated and disjointed, but on the whole the plot is maintained at a steady pace. It would appear from the novel’s conclusion that we may be seeing more of Ajax Montoya in a sequel, something to which we can look forward.

Recommended.

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### **Kathy says**

What an amazing setting and time period for a thriller! Do you remember the news being filled with stories during the 1970s and 1980s from Nicaragua, Managua, and the Sandinistas? I do. And author Joe Gannon was right there in the thick of things as a journalist in the 1980s. This is Joe Gannon's first novel and he has brilliantly capitalized on his experiences in Nicaragua to write this thriller.

Haunted by his past, Sandinista Police Captain Ajax Montoya spends his days fighting crime and solving mysteries. What was clear cut in the past during the Revolution is now hazy. The latest murder he is investigating seems to bear the mark of a CIA mercenary army - the Contra. Is this really happening....

Great story...fascinating to go back into recent history...Nicaragua in the 1980s. This will be a refreshing read for many as its setting is fairly unique. Lots of plot twists to keep the reader entranced. Fascinating political thriller. Perfect for fans of James Lee Burke.

Read an excerpt here: <http://us.macmillan.com/excerpt?isbn=...>

For further information: <http://us.macmillan.com/nightofthejag...>

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### **Hallie says**

In “Night of the Jaguar,” Joe Gannon’s debut novel, the setting is Nicaragua in 1986. It opens with a prologue — two cousins recite poetry while camped out after a day of tracking a jaguar in the mountain forest. When they have the misfortune to overhear nearby voices, their fates are sealed. It will take the entire novel for Captain Ajax Montoya to unravel what happened to them and why.

Montoya is a classic noir detective, a hero and a wounded war horse (he’s got shrapnel permanently lodged in his tailbone) who drowned himself in drink after the revolution, was demoted, and now rises again, stone-cold sober, as an instrument of justice and a hero for the people. He investigates a homicide with details that mark it as the work of CIA mercenaries. The trail of clues leads to more dead bodies and into dangerous enemy territory where Montoya is tormented and assisted by demons from his past.

Gannon, who was a journalist in Nicaragua, brings the full horror of the violence of the revolution and ensuing civil war’s atrocities to the pages of this hard hitting, mostly riveting novel. There is a large cast of characters (many with similar-sounding names), and the author’s determination that readers understand the novel’s complex historical backdrop can make it feel, at times, like a history lesson. But more often that

insider knowledge is an asset as the author brings to the pages characters who feel utterly human in Kafkaesque situations that ring with authenticity.

-- Review first published in The Boston Globe

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### **Robert Intriago says**

A difficult book to rate. The murder mystery is interesting but the story is confusing. The author tries to put too much information about the Nicaraguan Sandinista Revolution and the US involvement with the Contras. The information is interesting but the large amount of twists in the story tend to overwhelm you as to what actually is going on and who belongs to what side. The main character is a former Sandinista revolutionary who is now a captain in Nicaragua's police. He is tasked with investigating the murder of a coffee plantation owner. The investigation leads him to come into contact with an American reporter, the Contras and a delegation of US Government officials. The book is well written with some touches of surrealism and a very descriptive sexual encounter.

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### **Michael Bell says**

The challenges that many people face in Latin American countries like Nicaragua are truly reflected in this novel. Ajax Montoya is a former Sandinista police captain who is trying to kick an addiction to alcohol. The murder of a prominent citizen sets into motion a series of investigations that make this a very interesting novel. Energy shortages, American and Russian influences, and a few untimely murders will keep you involved with this book. The ending was awesome.

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