



Orange Crush

Tim Dorsey

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The Republicans' "golden boy" -- and a loyal, unquestioning tool of the powerful special interests -- handsome, unthreatening, Florida governor-by-default Marlon Conrad seems a virtual shoo-in for re-election. That is, until he undergoes a radical personality shift during a bloody military action in the Balkans. Now it's just three weeks before the election and Marlon is suddenly talking about "issues" and "reform" as he crosses the length and breadth of his home state with an amnesiac speechwriter and a chief of staff who turns catatonic in the presence of minorities. The governor's new-found conscience might well cost him the election, though. And it appears that pretty much everybody from Tallahassee to Miami Beach is trying to kill him.

Orange Crush Details

Date : Published (first published July 3rd 2001)

ISBN :

Author : Tim Dorsey

Format : Kindle Edition 384 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Mystery, Crime

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From Reader Review Orange Crush for online ebook

Rex Fuller says

The peculiar form of shared lunacy that reading Tim Dorsey's books manifests is progressive and congenial. The more you read the more truth emerges from sarcasm. He says of TV political ads, "The strategy shifted from 'the message' to brand recognition after it was learned that most campaigns were decided during the selection of color scheme, typeface and logo...[C]ampaign workers auditioned fonts and swatches...It was discovered that simple equaled good. A maximum of two colors, and icons less complicated than a trapezoid. Also gone were the slogans. Now just one word, usually nonsense, that bypassed the conscious and treble-hooked the brain stem. Candidates saw their polls rocket." Here the eponymous Orange Crush is a Winnebago hauling the Florida governor's re-election campaign, from Tallahassee to Miami and fishhooking up to Tampa. The press secretary is the now amnesiac Serge Storms, serial killer and lead character of Dorsey's series. Mark Twain said of the political scene, "There is no distinctly American criminal class - except Congress." Dorsey is way funnier.

Bill says

I had mixed emotions about this book. It was consumed as an audio book and I wasn't completely enthralled by the narrator. The story involves a young man named Marlon Conrad who is groomed to be a future governor of Florida. The young man is largely uninterested, disengaged, totally unqualified and allowing himself to be pushed around by his father's contingent of supporters. He was groomed for the job with the expectation that he'd be told what to say and what to do by his powerful and connected backers. As our story begins, Marlon is the Lieutenant Governor.

Things don't go as planned. To polish his resume, Marlon's handlers have him join the National Guard. In past decades, this was a safe bet to avoid combat deployments. The plans go awry when Marlon's unit is immediately deployed to Bosnia (or a nearby country) and plunged into a brutal combat situation. Marlon ends up being perceived as a hero - and his whole attitude and take on life is turned around - dramatically. Shortly after Marlon's dazed return from a terrible combat situation, the current governor dies unexpectedly and Marlon is now governor. He is a changed man and ignores the wishes of his handlers and deep pocket supporters who expect him to behave and do as they say. Things get really zany as Marlon and his entourage - including a serial killer who has lost his memory and often looks at himself in the mirror saying, "who ARE you!?" - hit the road in a campaign event in an eponymous converted motor home called 'Orange Crush'. This reminded me of "It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World". If the reader can get past the non-stop zaniness, it's actually an entertaining read. I got a little tired of it but mostly enjoyed it to the end. Not for everybody, but if you enjoy madcap, slapstick and zany, then this book's for you.

Thomas Todd says

3 1/2 In my opinion this entry from Dorsey didn't rate as high as his others I have read, but it was still worthy of a read as it had several good moments.

Mike French says

If either Dave Berry or Carl Hiaasen had a wacky brother that was kept locked in the basement, he must have changed his name to Tim Dorsey! I enjoyed the roller coaster ride from start to finish about Florida politics and I am sure you will too.

Katy says

Note: Read in 2006, but such a good book I want to make sure this review is seen again!

My Synopsis: Marlon Conrad never had to do any real work in his life, being raised in the traditional Ultra Conservative Way ("*Marlon Conrad learned everything he knew about life from his father . . . Rule Number One: At any given moment, poor people, somewhere, somehow, were screwing them. From this maxim all other rules flowed.*"), until - while running for Lt. Governor - a reporter uncovered the fact that he had not registered for Selective Service. In order to encourage some extra votes, his father decided he should join the National Reserve and set things up so that he wouldn't actually be called to duty. However, in a remarkable chain of events, Marlon was not only called to active duty in the Balkans, but his unit ended up in bloody conflict. Initially refusing to have anything to do with the rest of the men in his unit, Marlon bonded with them one night over a bottle of vodka disguised as Scope that had been smuggled to him, and after they were attacked and most of his unit killed, Marlon returns to Florida a changed man, much to the chagrin and consternation of his former friends. Things just become worse when the governor is killed in a jet crash.

My Thoughts: This book pokes fun at all things government, particularly having to do with the running of a political campaign. Even the characters' names fit in with the satire - Jackie Monroeville is the rags-to-government-crowd girl who is determined to see Marlon's competition (Gomer Tatum) win; Helmut von Zeppelin is the ultimate mega-developer and big-money man that everyone kow-tows to; Gottfried Escrow is Marlon's chief of staff, etc. Tatum challenges Marlon to a "smack-down" on live TV at "*Raw is War!*", to which Marlon remarks, "*So this is where we've evolved,*" only to have his press secretary reply, "*Actually, it can't help but add dignity to the process.*"

Dorsey's descriptions are a form of art, albeit occasionally more in line with surrealism than reality. The timeline tends to jump from past to present, which can be jarring at times, but it all ends up flowing seamlessly together. Marlon buys an RV with the Orange Crush logo and goes on the road, traveling Florida to meet the masses; he ends up having several people decide to kill him (unbeknownst to him), only to meet ignominious ends themselves. A homicide detective from Miami wanders along behind, following the trail of bodies and trading strange wisecracks with the local guys.

Each character that spoke was developed by his or her lines; even if they didn't speak, if they were there long enough, their actions developed them. Mr. Dorsey has a genius for characterization that goes a long way. I also loved that fact that fun was poked equally at all politicians - Albert Fresco, the independent party candidate, when asked what he thought about the need to increase staffing for child protective services, responds, "*No, no, no! I can't be bothered with that pointy-headed issue stuff! I've got common sense and I've had it up to here!... Did I already mention that I'm madder than a sumbitch?...*" while Gomer Tatum readily switches his position on issues whenever he feels it will garner him more votes. Anyone who feels that this book is unfairly slanted against conservatives should take note - it is not, it is slanted against **professional politicians** and at the end, it is all about the attempt of the common man to rise about the pettiness of it all.

Additionally: By the way, do not fail to read the HYSTERICAL piece at the end "A Note on the Type." I usually read the paragraph describing the typeface, so when I noticed how long this was, I was intrigued - don't skip this, you won't regret reading it!

Amy says

This is an incredible continuation of Dorsey's first two books, Florida Roadkill and Hammerhead Ranch Motel. Our favorite serial killer/hero Serge (although incognito) returns with his madman encyclopedic knowledge of Florida lore and several more ingenious variations on how to produce bodies. A slew of new characters are introduced : Babs (the puppet lady with trauma-inducing talents), Helmut von Zeppelin (the evil mastermind behind dirty politics), Jackie (persistent gold-digger), Escrow (twisted politician-in-training), Joe Blow (you know, Average Joe?), and our central character--Marlon Conrad.

Marlon starts off as a bland, illiterate politician. But after a transcendent Saul-on-the-way-to-Damascus type revelation, we witness Marlon's growth to something much more than a crooked politician. We see him gain back his humanity. I'd even hazard to say he's a modern day King Lear.

The real magic of the book lies in its power to have serious issues (corrupt politics) tempered by pure zaniness. The complete joke that is Politics is taken to such an extreme, one can't help but laugh. Although your giggle does die down a bit when you realize that this fiction isn't too far from the truth...keep in mind this book was written *before* the fiasco of the Florida presidential elections.

We do see more of "Roadkill"'s jaunts around the state. It's a great feeling to see different places that you know so well described so accurately in a book. Dorsey mentions the Merry Pranksters (Ken Kesey's infamous troupe) at one point in the book and he's absolutely right. It's got the feel of some people who are out to do good, whether you like it or not!

The only downer, for me, was when I sat back and reflected on the character Marlon. It was the moment I realized that only in fiction could such a compassionate politician dare to exist.

This a superb novel. I cannot rave enough about it. Read the book. Savor the book. Fondle the book. But more important--BUY the book!

Stacy Fetters says

“Capitalists don’t want free trade any more than they want whooping cough. Their nature is to conglomerate, homogenate, vertically integrate and dominate until there is no competition. The rules? Screw the rules! They’ll rig the game, spit on the ball, bribe the refs, tilt the playing field, pork the cheerleaders and kick free enterprise in the nuts.”

When I first saw this cover, one thing comes to mind, REM. And then I thought, wait for just one second, there are two things that pop into my mind. REM and the mofo Philadelphia Flyers!!! This is our fight song! Went into this book with a weird song in my head and the Broad Street Bullies in my heart.

I actually purchased this book over a year ago for my ever growing book collection. I guess I forgot I had this and my husband comes at me shocked. I've read everything else but this and he noticed. He never notices anything else, but this is the one thing he had to mention. Thanks for the guilt!!

This starts off in Dorsey fashion. You have to figure out what insanity those two crazy characters will go through next and who they will drag along with them. This one turns out a little different, but it ends in the same Dorsey style. And when you think you're done, read a little further. You won't be disappointed.

This was quite a slobberknocker, folks!!!

The governor race is on and it's not surprising how we get to an end result. The bumper sticker killer is slaying bodies across Florida and leaving little notes on the bodies with a black marker. But where is our Storms hiding?

Ventriloquist pageant queen, a psycho governor aide, a bunch of whacked out race runners and a military show down lead the way to the winner of a Florida Governor all while leaving a trail of orange crush. A few punches are made, a few shots were blocked and one quiet psycho is under wraps.

I have started reading this books in order. For some odd reason I started with number twelve after I found one of his books at a thrift store. I'm not sure how he keeps his steam up with all the books in this series. They are all fantastic and seem to keep getting better. This one wasn't my favorite, but still highly entertaining and now I need the next one.

Dorsey is an insane genius. I'm jealous!

Jeff Yoak says

I had to give up about half way through. The first Dorsey book I read was When Elves Attack: A Joyous Christmas Greeting from the Criminal Nutbars of the Sunshine State which was completely delightful, but Orange Crush is my third try after that book, and they've all been disappointing. They all have an appearance of Serge Storms, but at the halfway point of Orange Crush, it is only a brief mention, and otherwise it reads like an especially weak Carl Hiaasen novel. I'm just going to have to give up finding something else as good as that first read by Dorsey.

Snotchocheez says

Arguably the worst of Tim Dorsey's first three novels, "Orange Crush" starts out in typical Dorsey fashion, introducing several strange characters, most of them tied in to the 2002 Florida Gubernatorial election. I really enjoyed the first third of the story; the characterizations were tight and was easy to follow...then the main protagonists (a reformed Republican and his entourage) go on a election tour in an RV. That's where the story hits the skids for me. Frightfully dull and contrived. Dorsey keeps repeating the same stale jokes over and over on this trip, which culminates in the two candidates for governor square off WWF-style in a wrestling match (well, sorta).

Dorsey has a keen eye for hypocrisy, and his writing satirizes all that is wrong with the Florida, and the

political system in particular. When he sticks to the formula of having his band of nutzoids interact, his stories work. This one deviated from that formula, and was terribly boring.

Ensiform says

In this meth spree of a novel, Dorsey takes on American politics, as Republican dynasty golden boy Marlon Conrad runs for Florida governor, but turns his campaign around after a soul-changing experience in combat in the Balkans. As his handlers panic and tycoons bluster, several individuals independently strike out to assassinate him. Unbeknownst to, well, everyone, one of Conrad's handlers is serial killer and maniac Serge Storms, currently suffering from amnesia.

This book has many classic twisted Dorsey lines, and it's both a thrilling ride and a searing satire. Compared to his two previous books, it has a few rough patches: Dorsey is at his very best when he's piling hyperbole on hyperbole until it approaches accuracy, skewering the utterly wealthy who lack every shred of human compassion and burn with outrage that other people might have a small piece of prosperity for themselves. This book does have plenty of that, of course: whether it's lawmakers calling a new tax a "community reinvestment fee" or Marlon's handler going catatonic at the sight of black people, this is a pull-no-punches political satire that is both hilarious and, because of how right on the money it is, horribly depressing.

Barbara Nutting says

This one was more scrambled than some of the others - or maybe it was because I was painting my bathroom between chapters???. I am still looking for Coleman???? He's in book one and then not in two or three - I'm just going to keep reading the series to find when and how he raises from the dead!! As far as the Governorship goes in Florida, Serge A Storms would be a better choice than Rick Scott. Scott should make the long walk from Tallahassee to Key West and then just keep on going!!

Jerry B says

Our first Tim Dorsey will be our last. Nothing but a "Carl Hiassen" on steroids, this novel barely qualifies as a crime story -- we don't even remember what the crime was, other than some half-baked sniper attempts. Rather, it is a farce filled with zany character names, absurd action, and silly plot developments, which might qualify at best as a sarcastic look at a Florida gubernatorial election campaign. When do-nothing Lt. Governor Marlon Conrad, who has paid his way into that post, suddenly becomes gov when the incumbent keels over dead, he decides to sign up for the Reserves to counter his lack of military experience. Then he's unexpectedly called to active duty in a war zone in the Balkans, only to see his squad lose most of his buddies in the fight. He comes home a changed man, rents an RV with "Orange Crush" advertising on the side (hence the title), and zooms around Florida trying to do and say the right things. Meanwhile, his competition slams their way to the election with typical propaganda and ridiculous antics of their own.

We need not say more. We don't wish to waste valued reading hours with such comedic pulp fiction, and nearly broke a 30-year habit of finishing every book we start by pitching this one after 90 of its some 350 pages. We're not sure even the Three Stooges would enjoy "Crush".

Eric says

This is another wild and crazy trip through Florida, this time focusing on the 2002 Gubernatorial race. This time out our favorite anti-hero Serge Storms keeps a low profile for the most part as we focus in on the candidates and campaigners involved in this festival of lunacy. Dorsey does an amazing job of building a wild cast of characters and keeping the insanity coming for the length of this novel. Recommended if you've enjoyed the first two books in this series, but would not recommend starting out here.

Jim says

Of the few editions in this series, I have liked this one the best. And it can be read as a standalone without too much trouble, I think. I simply love his satirical funny take on politics and life in Florida. Trump would have ruled Florida in Dorsey's wild world, and I wonder if he doesn't shake his head and say to himself "I created a monster." Readers who like to laugh and have even some knowledge of what it is to be a Floridian should gravitate to and adore these books.

Barbara says

3.5 stars

Political chicanery in Florida takes a hilarious turn in this comic novel.

Florida Lt. Governor Marlon Conrad, who's handsomer than a movie star, is part of a political dynasty that knows how to get the job done - that is, get elected and get rich. Marlon's father, expecting his son to enter politics, taught the boy to take graft from the rich and powerful, disdain the poor and disenfranchised, and fry criminals in the electric chair.....which is generally popular with the public.

Marlon has little interest in his job as Lt. Governor, preferring to play computer fishing games while his aides brief him on important events - using (at most) of 3 or 4 words per topic. Marlon expects to have this cushy position for a few more years, but the sudden death of the Governor makes Marlon the Republican gubernatorial candidate overnight.

Because Marlon never registered for the Selective Service - a big no no that the press will exploit - he has to join the Army Reserves. Marlon's not concerned since his high-level connections will keep him stateside and safe. Well.....things don't work out that way and the Lt. Governor is sent to Kosovo where - against all odds - he bonds with the men in his unit before most of them are killed. Marlon comes home a changed man who actually cares about people.

Marlon is now in the midst of the gubernatorial campaign and - to the horror of his aides - decides to visit the families of his dead army buddies.....in **POOR PARTS** of the state. Even more ominously, Marlon has **STARTED READING NEWSPAPERS** and dismissed his bodyguards, limos, and drivers. Instead Marlon buys an RV with an 'Orange Crush' logo on the side and embarks on a statewide campaign tour, toting his

reluctant Chief of Staff Gottfried Escrow and his enthusiastic Press Secretary Jack Pimento.

Republican bigwigs desperately try to get Marlon to stick with the party strategy: execute someone in the electric chair and pander to the wealthy - especially Helmut von Zeppelin, the state's most corrupt and powerful businessman. When Marlon balks at von Zeppelin's demands the crook gets furious and.....(I don't want to give away spoilers).

Press Secretary Pimento, on the other hand, encourages Marlon to meander around Florida and visit touristy historical and recreational sites. Pimento seems a bit odd in general, and the reader soon learns he's the maniacal serial killer Serge Storm (from previous books) - who's suffering from amnesia.

The story is filled with amusing characters, including: Jackie - a trailer trash gal scheming to be Florida's First Lady; Gomer Tatum - a Democratic gubernatorial candidate who stuffs his face 24/7; Babs - Marlon's ventriloquist fiancé whose 'privates' talk like Howdy Doody; Joe Blow - an 'average citizen' who's driven nuts by the press; Ned Coppola - an ambitious 'filmmaker' who can only manage to sell 30-second political ads; a Brazilian revenge killer who wears a red Miami Heat jacket; Detective Murphy - who's on the trail of the killer; and more.

Some of the funniest scenes in the book are the political debates between Marlon and Gomer, which end up in a televised WWF wrestling match between the two sides (this is as good a way to choose a governor as any I guess. LOL)

The book made me laugh out loud and I enjoyed it.

Thanks to Netgalley, the author, and the publisher for a copy of the book.

You can follow my reviews at <http://reviewsbybarbsaffer.blogspot.com/>
