



Broken Ground

Joe Clifford

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Perfect for readers who appreciate the novels of Dennis Lehane with deeply flawed characters struggling to walk the righteous path.

At an AA meeting, handyman and part-time investigator Jay Porter meets a recovering addict who needs his help. In the midst of another grueling northern New Hampshire winter, Amy Lupus' younger sister, Emily, has gone missing from the Coos County Center, the newly opened rehab run by Jay's old nemeses, Adam and Michael Lombardi. As Jay begins looking into Emily's disappearance, he finds that all who knew Emily swear that she's never used drugs. She's a straight shooter and an intern at a newspaper investigating the Center and the horrendous secret hidden in it—or beneath it.

When Jay learns of a "missing" hard drive, he is flung back to five years ago when his own junkie brother, Chris, found a hard drive belonging to Lombardi Construction. For years Jay assumed that the much-sought-after hard drive contained incriminating photos of Adam and Michael's father, which contributed to Chris' death. But now he believes that hard drive may have harbored a secret far more sinister, which the missing Lupus sister may have unwittingly discovered. The deeper Jay digs, the more poisoned the ground gets, and the two cases become one, yielding a toxic truth with local fallout—and far-reaching ramifications.

Broken Ground Details

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Author : Joe Clifford

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From Reader Review Broken Ground for online ebook

Tiger says

#4 in Clifford's outstanding Jay Porter series set in new Hampshire and we see Jay finally starting to put his life back together. He's going to AA, he owns his own company.....but he just can't resist dabbling in another missing persons case, this one a young woman who has gone missing from a drug rehab facility, which makes no sense, since this is a woman everyone swears has never taken drugs. Well, of course, that leads to Jay knocking heads with several unsavory characters while the local sheriff, as well as Jay himself, question his sanity. And all the while, the aura of his nemesis, the Lombardi brothers, looms ominously over everything. Great book ! Many thanks to Net Galley and the publisher for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Mike Hughes says

keeps getting better and better. this is the best one yet!!

Jennifer Nowak says

I received this ARC from NetGalley and Ocean view Publishing in exchange for an honest review

Broken Ground is the 4th book in Joe Clifford's Jay Porter series and like its three predecessors, it definitely does not disappoint!

Again Jay, who never seems to learn from previous experiences, is caught up in something he shouldn't be while trying to help someone else locate a missing relative.

Clifford's descriptive writing style and in-depth characterization again take you to the book's locale and to feel what the characters are feeling. The story is compelling and ends with a cliff hanger that will make you eagerly await book number 5! I so want to know what will happen to Jay!

Please pick up one of these Jay Porter books, because once you do, you too will be hooked!

Marialyce says

4 keep me going with a wonderful protagonist stars

Jay Porter is a good guy. He might be a bit on the rough side, a recovering alcoholic, a divorced man, and a bit resourceful in using his fists, but deep down, he is a good man. While at an AA meeting, Jay is approached by a woman Amy, who asks for his help because her sister, Emily is missing. Jay is a man who brokers house possessions (in order words cleans out houses of dead people) but also dabbles in finding people who are missing. Jay is reluctant to pursue Emily but agrees and then the mystery of her

disappearance takes on that sinister, bad guys journey through New Hampshire.

This is the fourth book in the series and Jay has had run ins with a powerful family, the Lombardis before and of course this family again seems to be involved in the nefarious goings on and wonder of wonders there is also some political villainy (who knew that could ever happen???) The deeper Jay digs, the more he finds and even sees a connection between his dead junkie brother Chris to the happenings he is so involved in.

Mr Clifford kept the action going and in Jay Porter he has developed a character one can't help but like and hope that if ever needed, Jay would be in your corner.

Thank you to Joe Clifford, Oceanview Publishing, and NetGalley for an early copy of this book.

J. Noalani says

A Fast Paced, Emotionally Intense Novel

Joe Clifford writes with insight, compassion, and at times, acerbic humor about characters who are marginalized in society. In *Broken Ground*, he presents Jay Porter, a flawed protagonist, whose soul is lay bare through the telling of his story at A.A. meetings, his interactions with those close to him, and his own impulsive behaviors. Jay, however, resides in a society shrouded in a veneer of secrecy and corruption, and as such, he stands diametrically opposed to its status quo. Motivated by the disappearance of Amy Lupus's younger sister, Emily, Jay relentlessly peels away the heavy layers of the shroud, and as he does so, the twists and turns in the plot become more menacing and dark. The depth of the characters and the authentic descriptions of wintry New Hampshire engage the reader. A fast paced, emotionally intense novel. I highly recommend *Broken Ground*.

Chuck Barksdale says

Thanks to Oceanview Publishing and Netgalley for providing me a copy of this book in exchange for this honest review.

Broken Ground is Joe Clifford's fourth book about Jay Porter in one of my favorite current series. With his former boss Tom Gable moving to Florida, Porter is now working on his own buying and selling furniture and other items mostly from estate sales. The good news for him is that he's able to see his son more since his ex-wife and her husband have returned to the area. He's also admitting to being an alcoholic -- attending and speaking at AA meetings.

At one of the AA meetings, he meets Amy Lupus, an old high school friend who he doesn't at first admit to remembering. She's aware of his part-time investigator skills and asks Jay to help find her sister Emily, a drug addict who is now missing after admitting herself into a new area drug treatment center. Jay at first tries to avoid helping Amy, telling her of his unlicensed investigator status but she pushes, and he reluctantly agrees.

Jay's investigations lead him into some of his past demons as he realizes that the center was built by the Lombardi brothers. Emily's part-time job as a newspaper reporter and her excellent recent college grades may be an indication that she wasn't a drug addict but going under cover to investigate possible unethical work by the brothers. She had found evidence of toxic soil under the new treatment center that may not have been cleaned up properly before constructing the new center.

Jay struggles with his past but most everyone around him believes he's not thinking clearly since he's always believed the Lombardis were responsible for his brother's death and many other problems of his local town.

Broken Ground is an excellent addition to this series although I felt it wasn't as complete a book as the others and I need more (soon please). I also felt some of the toxic references didn't quite seem correct to me but that's more likely because of my experience as an environmental engineer cleaning up contaminated sites. Fortunately, I read Joe Clifford is finishing the fifth book in the series. This is in addition to the new contract he recently signed with Down and Out Books. Now, I'll be able to read more about Jay Porter as well as other books by one of my new favorite writers.

Mike Bracken says

Author Joe Clifford's Jay Porter has had a tough row to hoe over the first three books in the series. He's lost his family, friends, allies, his wife and son...and yet, somehow Clifford finds a way to make things even more difficult for Porter in Broken Ground, the fourth book in the series.

While some readers ding Clifford's series for featuring an unlikable protagonist who's his own worst enemy, Broken Ground opens with a new Jay Porter. He's still curmudgeonly and often acts against his own best interests, but losing his wife and kid to another man, seeing his best friend die...it's convinced him that maybe it's time to try to change. Porter begins this novel in AA – but we all know it's just a matter of time before he's sucked back into another mystery that will leave him broken and battered by the end of the tale.

Without giving too much away, this latest chapter in Porter's ongoing narrative is perhaps the bleakest yet. Clifford weaves a dark tapestry that deftly ties together narrative strands first hinted at in previous books in a way that's wholly satisfying for longtime readers. We're about to enter the final act of this series – and Clifford has moved all his pieces into position like a chess grandmaster going in for the kill. Good plotting isn't something that gets enough credit these days – particularly in series work, but Clifford gets it – and he's been slowly maneuvering us through this story over the course of four books in a way that's really something to behold. It's been a subtle manipulation (with "subtle" being one of the words you'd probably least expect to hear when describing anything to do with Jay Porter), but now as the strands all tie together...well, it's just really cool to read.

And for all the grief critics and readers give Clifford for Jay being such an unlikable lead, he's the perfect character for this story and world the author has concocted. He's as cold and distant and jagged around the edges as the mountains surrounding his small town – but that's what makes the stories work. He's a product of his environment.

That Jay is sometimes hard to love is undeniable – but Clifford always stays on the right side of the line, never veering completely into caricature. There's a scene late in this novel, where Jay realizes that he's no longer alone because he's chosen to be – but because everyone has essentially given up on him – that humanizes the character in a way lesser authors could never dream of pulling off.

And that's the beauty of this series. Clifford is such a gifted writer that Jay Porter feels real – warts and all. The prose is striking in places, the characters well-drawn, and the tone perfect. The bleak and downbeat tone of the book isn't likely to appeal to readers who love a happy ending (or a good cozy mystery...), but for those of us who like our characters hard-edged and human and our prose lyrical in its construction, *Broken Ground* is like a gift from the crime novel gods.

Dave says

Like Block's Matt Scudder, Jay Porter spends a lot of time in AA meetings now, but this rural noir is a distinctly different animal than a gritty city crime story. It's a cold, bare New England winter. Porter's lost friends to booze, his wife has walked out, and he's eking out an existence in an apartment that ought to be condemned. Half the town thinks he's half-mad and no one seems to believe a word he says. He's the classic pulp antihero out on his own with barely anyone to lean on and maybe a pair of hitmen stalking him unless he's as nuts as everyone thinks and he's just imagining all the big bad conspiracies. Above all, though, what makes this book - and this series - there's three earlier books in the series too, all worth checking out - what makes it tick is that it's got this "Everyman thing" going in the narrative voice and it's realistic. Porter isn't exactly Mike Hammer knocking off bad guys as he walks around the block and Porter deals with child custody issues, survivor's guilt over his brother's death, and endless everyday frustrations. Hard to put down without finishing. Review copy courtesy of Oceanview Publishing.

Bonnye Reed says

GNab *Broken Ground* is one of those fast paced well plotted mystery novels that keep you up at night. Jay Porter catches you first page as he does his 9 month anniversary share and receives his chip at an AA meeting, with a fresh re-introduction to high school hottie Amy Lupus. She needs his help finding her younger sister. But Jay isn't an unlicensed private investigator any longer. If he is going to keep his ex-wife Jenny and 6 year old son Aiden safe since their move back home to Ashton, New Hampshire with her new husband Stephen, he will abide by the advice of local sheriff Rob Turley and confine his interests to his recent buy out of his long-time boss Tom Gable in their estate clearing business, *Everything Under the Sun*. And to keep his nose out of the Lombardi brother's business. If he can stand to do that.

Winter and early spring in mountainous New Hampshire is presented very viscerally. Obviously there are people who relish such bone-chilling beauty. *Broken Ground* was enough of a visual to assure me that I would only want to visit between the covers of Joe Clifford's novels. I am well placed in the mountains of the high plains desert, but I am looking very forward to reading Jay Porter one through three, and hope there will be many more with this interesting, quirky character.

I received a free electronic copy of this novel from Netgalley, Joe Clifford, and Oceanview Publishing in exchange for an honest review. Thank you all for sharing your hard work with me.

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Oceanview Publishing

Reviewed under hard bound - in fact is mobi file.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Compelling!

This is the fourth in Clifford's Jay Porter series and, in each book, Jay seems to have even lower self-esteem and even more righteous rage!

Jay's life hasn't been easy and, based on his experience so far, he holds no hope for a better future; but he is basically a good guy trying to keep his head down and stay out of trouble. The trouble is that trouble follows him like a hungry and stray dog.

When we pick up Jay he has just qualified for his first AA token, having not touched beer for a whole 9 months. He is attending meetings and building up his house clearance business whilst coping with his PTSD following his brother Chris's death. He is also getting over the death of his only friend, Charlie; life isn't exactly rosy but he is heading in the right direction.

Then he meets Amy at a meeting who wants him to find her missing sister, Emily. Jay's forays into private investigation have won him no points with the local sheriff, Turley, and soon he is again stepping on toes.

I actually have a soft spot for Jay, whose problems have not always been of his own making, and who basically wants to make his town a better place. However, his methods are questionable at best and before long his enemies get wind of his enquiries and the death count rises.

Clifford's novels are always fast moving with well-defined plots, interesting characters, and a style of writing which fits the environment of Lamentation Mountain and Ashton town which are depressing places in themselves. You definitely get the feeling that, as long as Jay stays in this hick town, his fortunes cannot improve, and although he feels this himself he is unable to break free from the virtual velcro which binds him.

No disappointments here; Clifford delivers another satisfying volume on the trials and tribulations of Jay Porter, who is, in fact, his own worst enemy.

Pashtpaws

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review

Linda Strong says

Jay Porter is a man beset by demons ... demons that he is doing everything in his power to dispel.

Jay is an alcoholic .. although he's been sober for months. He's lost a lot lately ... his parents, his brother, his wife and son, his job, his best friend who drank himself to death, and two women who couldn't/wouldn't handle his issues.

But he is on the right path. He's started his own business which is doing well. He attends his meetings religiously ... and that's where things get a little crazy.

At an AA meeting, he is accosted by a woman who is also a recovering addict. She asks for Jay's help in locating her sister, who's gone missing. She checked herself into a new rehab center and then disappeared. Since Jay has been involved in some previous missing persons that he's discovered, Amy Lupus turns to Jay.

When he goes to investigate, he finds out things that relate back to the Lombardi family ... influential in their community... but there are secrets that only Jay knows ..which makes him very dangerous to leave walking around. And then things really heat up when Amy's sister is found ... dead of a broken neck.

Who would want Amy dead? What did she know that she shouldn't have? The deeper Jay digs, the more poisoned the ground gets ... and the danger may be closer than he thinks.

Jay is a deeply flawed character, but a good guy underneath the rough exterior. He has a lot of regrets and feels a lot of guilt, but he keeps on the path to recovery ... one day at a time.

There's a lot of suspense, with several suspects to look at ... all with one motive or another ..and who does not like Jay poking his nose in their business.

Although 4th in a series, this easily reads as a stand alone. There's just enough information from previous books so the reader doesn't feel as though he/she is jumping in the middle with no directional help. After reading BROKEN GROUND, it's just whet my appetite to read the others.

Many thanks to the author / Oceanview Publishing / Edelweiss for the digital copy of this crime fiction. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

Reader Views says

Reviewed by Sheri Hoyte for Reader Views (2/18)

“Broken Ground” is the latest book in ‘The Jay Porter Series’ by Joe Clifford. Recovering addict, Amy Lupus, needs help. Her little sister Emily has gone missing from Coos County Center, an addiction treatment and recovery center owned by Jay’s nemeses, Adam and Michael Lombardi. Jay is averse to getting involved in anything having to do with the Lombardi brothers, but somewhat reluctantly agrees to help.

The thing is, Emily Lupus is no junkie – she’s a student, interning at a local newspaper, investigating a toxic secret buried beneath the grounds of the treatment center. With mega bucks at stake, several highly influential people are motivated to keep the dark secret quiet– at any cost. When Jay learns there is a missing hard drive involved, his interest in the matter piques – he knows this case is somehow connected to his brother’s death and will stop at nothing to find the truth. Jay’s already been warned to stay out of the investigating business, but he can’t seem to help himself, and as trouble follows him wherever he goes, his meddling continues to bring disaster to the people who dare to get close to him.

“Broken Ground” is such an amazing read I devoured it in two days. The writing is electric, fresh and contemporary as Clifford draws his readers in with his candid characters, chilling suspense and sinister

plotline. As this is the first book I've read in the series, I realize I am late to the Jay Porter party—but wow—I am now a fan. All said, I can tell you that this story is so well-told that there was absolutely no point in the narrative where I felt I was missing anything. It is a solid standalone novel, but I am inspired to go back and read the rest of the series because it is so good – not to play catch up.

The characters really drive this story. Clifford's intimate relationship with addiction brings an authentic representation of the protagonist and some of the side players in the story. Jay Porter is the first to admit his flaws and it is exactly those flaws that reach out to the reader and demand your devotion. His descriptions of life inside the halls of AA and dealing with the colorful personalities found within the rooms had me howling. From the lady who doesn't have a place to live (or a job, or any money), yet thinks her biggest issue is moving through the grief of her cat (that's been dead for six years), to the old-timer who is a jillion years sober handing out unsolicited advice on what constitutes sobriety when he sees Jay popping anti-anxiety meds, I just couldn't get enough. As well, Clifford also hits on the darker side of addiction and those who succumb to the disease, and pay the ultimate price. These scenes are a thousand times more terrifying than anything that could be imagined, sending chills up my spine every time.

With an intense, creative plot, vivid settings and multi-dimensional characters, readers will be hard pressed to put this book down once they start reading. Jay Porter's revitalized determination for justice at the end of "Broken Ground" promises yet another exciting story to come. Five stars to Joe Clifford for a brilliant, entertaining thriller.

Tim says

I received a copy of this book from the publisher through NetGalley to read and review.

BROKEN GROUND by Joe Clifford is the 4th book in the Jay Porter series, and picks up with Jay at an AA meeting as he gets up the courage to tell his story to the group, but his attention is distracted by a very attractive woman who seems to be eyeing him as well.

Soon after he's finished speaking, she approaches him and talks with him as if she knows him, but also tries to b.s. him at the same time. Amy is the name of the woman, and she pleads with Jay to investigate in order to locate her missing sister Emily, who's allegedly fled a rehab center for substance abuse, and Jay reluctantly agrees to take on the case.

Amy is a girl Jay knew in his high school days, but he doesn't find this out until later, and he remembers he and every other guy having the hots for her, and his attraction to her grows until the two enter into a physical relationship.

Jay finds out that Amy's description of her sister doesn't match up with what he learns from others, and discovers that Emily might be in big trouble for learning about things related to the rehab center, and it's owned by Jay's enemies Adam and Michael Lombardi who were instrumental in the murder of Jay's brother Chris previously.

Several things take place that make Jay aware of the potential dangers to himself, family, and pretty much anyone he communicates with regarding the rehab center, or anything related to the Lombardi family, and once again strains relationships with family, friends & local law enforcement.

Does the missing girl tie in with much more than what's on the surface, and is Jay seeing things others miss, or is his perception influenced by the apparent mania he seems to be in in the absence of alcohol and proper medication for his condition?

Admittedly I had a hard time rating this one, as it was very good at times, and predictable and depressing at others, as well as not having an ending to the book as if it was the season end of a television series that says "to be continued" with nothing resolved whatsoever.

3 stars.

Benoit Lelièvre says

I could scream the merits of Joe Clifford's writing into the void until I lose my voice, but you couldn't possibly understand unless you dedicated yourself to the Jay Porter novels like you would to a television show.

Broken Ground is rewarding in a way the first three novels weren't because it unravels mysteries you weren't sure were mysteries until this point: notably, what is the Lombardi brothers' endgame. It also has Shakespearean edges as Jay Porter comes to term with his fate. Gripping, moving and low-key cerebral.

Joe Clifford is one of the best novelists we have, period. But read the first three before this one. This is the Breaking Bad, Season 4 of novels.

Michael Moore says

That's right. I finished it the same damn day because it was that good. I could not put this book down. I love the Jay Porter series and Broken Ground was my favorite. I identify with the Jay Porters of the world and I can not wait to see what Joe Clifford has in store for him. Do not miss this book, or series for that matter.
