



A Cure for Night

Justin Peacock

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â€œWhat does that make us?â€ I said. â€œThe nightâ€™s janitors?â€

â€œWeâ€™re absolutely that,â€ Myra said, sipping her cosmo. â€œWhat else do we do but clean up after it? Thatâ€™s why weâ€™ll never run out of work. Not unless someone invents a cure for night.

In Brooklynâ€™s criminal courts, justice often depends on who has the better story to tell.

After a drug-related scandal ejects Joel Deveraux from his job at a white-shoe law firm, he slides down the corporate ladder to the Public Defendersâ€™ office in Brooklyn, where he defends the innocent and the guilty alike, a cog in the great clanking machine that is the New York City justice system. When his boss offers him the second chair to the savvy Myra Goldstein in a high-profile murder case, he eagerly takes it. The defendant is Lorenzo Tate, a black pot dealer from the projects who is charged with the murder of a white college student in a street shooting; and the tabloids have sunk their teeth into the racially tinged trial.

In this twisty and overwhelmingly authentic journey through the real Brooklyn, Justin Peacock paints a portrait of the law as a form of combat where the best story winsâ€”but whoâ€™s telling the truth and whoâ€™s lying are matters of interpretation. And of life and death.

This compelling debut novel announces Justin Peacock as a writer who enters the territory of Richard Price and Scott Turow with a fresh new take on urban crime and punishment.

A Cure for Night Details

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From Reader Review A Cure for Night for online ebook

Thoraiya says

I found this pretty slow and technical to begin with and the writing not overly inspired (junkies are described repeatedly as "waxy and sallow" - if I saw the word "waxy," I knew "sallow" couldn't be far behind!) but as I went on, it became pretty clear that my resistance to reading was part of my hating on the unsympathetic main character. When I realised that was the whole point, and that the tricksy clever author had not only manipulated me to that position but then enjoyed a giggle by making this POV character hate on the aspects of himself that he saw in others, I had to smile. Well played, Peacock. I can confront me a bit of my own human frailty, if I have to. Oh, and thanks for destroying the last vestiges of my faith in the law.

Michael says

Joel Deveraux's girlfriend, Beth is found dead in the bathroom of his law office. Beth died after taking heroine and then chocking on her vomit.

Beth's father is an influencial attorney and claims that Joel turned Beth on to the drugs. Joel isn't found guilty of this but admits to taking drugs himself and as a result, he is fired and his license to practice law is suspended for 6 months.

When the suspension is over, a friend gives him a job in the public defender's office where he is appointed second chair to Myra Goldstein in defending Lorenzo Tate in a murder trial.

How do they defend someone who has confessed to the killing and there is a witness who says she saw him commit the crime?

Tate is accused of killing a college student Seth Lipton. Lipton's roommate tells Joel that the reason Seth was in this drug area was that he was studying sociology and working on his thesis about the structure of drug dealers. In addition, he is supposed to have been under the protection of the dealer Devon Wallace who was also shot that night but not killed.

Everyone lies in this novel and the story is full of very flawed characters. From Joel's use of drugs, to one of his first clients who Joel gets off and then tells Joel that he was really guilty and goes back to selling drugs on the street.

The reason Lorenzo confessed is that he wasn't very smart to begin with and he was interrogated for over 14 hours.

Then we learn that the witness, Yolanda Miller, had been dating Wallace but had a child by Malik Taylor and that Taylor didn't like her having his son when in contact with a major drug dealer.

The writing is clean with little unnecessary descriptions or discussions, almost Hemingway in this regard but the characters are so unlikable that it is hard to enjoy the story. Maybe that is realism but the realistic approach is not enough to save the story even though it has been nominated for an Edgar for the best first novel in the mystery field.

Not recommended.

Beverly says

His debut novel, well-written and engaging story of a junkie lawyer's fall from grace and later work as a public defender.

Jennifer says

Joel's life is nearly destroyed by a drug scandal. He goes from a lawyer in a big firm to a public defender. After a few months paying his dues, his boss assigns him second chair in a murder trial. He is helping to defend a black drug dealer accused of murdering a white college student in the projects. Joel's life and work takes many interesting twists and turns. A good book and I look forward to reading Peacock's next novel.

Patrick Chabannes says

“Je n’étais pas là pour lui raconter que mon client avait un alibi en béton, ni que nous détenions la preuve qu’un témoin mentait. J’étais là pour salir les morts.”

De nombreuses et excellentes critiques outre-Atlantique augmentent l’attente à l’ouverture du premier roman de Justin Peacock, *A cure for a night*, édité en 2008 et traduit pour les éditions Sonatine par Johan-Frédéric Hel Guedj, fin connaisseur de l’œuvre de John Grisham, sous le titre *Verdict* en 2010.

Si les premières pages me déçoivent par leur lenteur et leur confusion, Justin Peacock accélère le rythme avec facilité passant de la description détaillée des procédures pénales à des dialogues percutants et nerveux. Je me laisse entraîner par cette capacité à allonger les phrases, les mots, les descriptions et à la demande de remonter les vitesses de son style dynamique. Étonnant.

Le scénario, bien que prévisible, est bien travaillé et se laisse découvrir par étape avec intérêt. Je dirai même avec curiosité. Cette curiosité du lecteur qui connaissant les coupables attend de savoir comment l’écrivain va lui présenter la chose. Et le moins que l’on puisse dire est que l’on est pas déçu. L’imagination est au rendez-vous.

La comparaison facile avec John Grisham semble acceptée par beaucoup. John Peacock nous fait entrer dans un univers plus réaliste que celui de John Grisham. Différence d’époque peut-être, John Peacock nous plonge dans les arcanes des procédures, nous peints des personnages complexes, questionne la société sur sa justice en restant dans son rôle de romancier.

Méfiant par habitude des machins américains, le style très intéressant, les thèmes bien traités, le scénario travaillé et le suspens présent au service d’une réalité d’une précision parfois digne d’un documentaire, met Justin Peacock au rang des grands romanciers américains.

Nancy says

3.5 stars Joel Devereaux loses his job at a big law firm on a drug charge. He takes a job at the public defenders office and, after a year, serves as second chair on a drug charge. You'll be surprised by the twists and turns of this case.

Glenda Bixler says

A Cure for Night

By Justin Peacock

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“That’s what...criminal law is: it’s how the day tries to correct the night’s mistakes...

“What does that make us? ...night’s janitors?

“We’re absolutely that...a cure for night.” (p. 152)

I think I was most intrigued by the concept of Justin Peacock’s novel, *A Cure for Night*. Consider that the majority of crime is committed during night/dark hours; you quickly realize that, indeed, criminal lawyers could be called the nation’s janitors—or more, its doctors!

Based upon that concept, Peacock takes readers into all facets of various law cases, looking deeply into the lives of many of the main characters. I don’t recall becoming so empathetic toward characters’ lives in other legal novels or, perhaps, I was just more drawn to those created by Peacock. Bottom line--*A Cure for Night* pulled me in and held me until the end...and beyond...

Joel Devereaux began his legal career at one of New York’s most prestigious law firms, earning a six-figure salary that was exchanged for most of his waking hours. That was until he met Beth, a paralegal assigned to one of his cases. Along with fulfilling Joel’s sexual needs, Beth introduced him to heroin. But when Beth OD’d and the death was investigated, Joel was scrutinized and found guilty—guilty enough to lose his position and be placed on probation for retention of his law license.

He was finally able to acquire a new position—as a Brooklyn public defender. While his new boss knew the background that led to his “resignation” from his former position, Joel wondered how long it would be for word to leak out. In the meantime, he was inundated with minor misdemeanor cases, most of which were handled by plea-bargaining.

Finally, after putting in sufficient time, his boss assigned him to assist in a big new murder case. Although Myra Goldstein was not thrilled, she made the best of it, while still letting Joel know that this case was definitely hers! The defendant was Lorenzo Tate, a black drug dealer of marijuana who had never been caught and jailed! The victims were a white college honors student who had been killed while he was talking with a major drug dealer, who had only been injured.

“A criminal trial is a search for the truth, but the defense lawyer isn’t a member of the search party.” (p. 72)

The case is clear-cut from the prosecution's standpoint. He has two major witnesses: Devin Wallace's sister who claimed that Tate was threatening her brother regarding money he owed him. The other claims to have seen Tate run by her the night of the crime, carrying a gun.

For Joel and Myra, they must defend their client, no matter what is or is not the truth. But in doing so, an innocent man is later shot and Joel and Myra face their own deaths, as lies are used to manipulate those involved!

Joel's past use of drugs becomes part of the picture as more than one of his clients become involved in the "whodunit" investigation. And Joel and Myra find that, for this case, justice and truth will not be found, in the courtroom—or, on the streets!

Peacock's debut is a winner from my standpoint. His movement deep into the entire case was a welcome addition. Although there is a feel of *Raising the Bar*, the impact is more slowly developed as discovery is made, and thus momentous as the book's surprise ending comes! Highly recommended by a lover of drama!

G. A. Bixler
For Amazon vine

Steve Dennie says

A Cure for Night, published in 2008 under the Black Lizard imprint, was an intriguing book, and an admirable debut novel by Justin Peacock. It's a murder mystery told first-person by a public defender named Joel Devereaux, who worked for a high-flying law firm before heroin got him fired. Now he's defending common criminals in Brooklyn, New York.

He gets assigned to help Myra Goldstein, a tough, street-smart public defender, with a murder case. A black man, a pot dealer, has been accused of shooting two men—killing a white Jewish college student, and wounding another drug dealer. Because it involves a white man gunned down in the projects, the case is drawing some attention.

Joel and Myra go about their business, talking to the various witnesses and other people involved, building a case to defend their client. There are no big themes—no racial issues, no cover-up by powerful people, no government conspiracy, no Mafia figures lurking in the background. It's just a straightforward, fairly pedestrian procedural. As I progressed through the book, I kept waiting for a Big Theme to emerge, something to justify the book's existence and my continued investment of time in reading it. Yet, I was engrossed.

So what kept my rapt attention? Three things.

-Well-drawn characters, particularly Joel and Myra. Joel's backstory, including his occasional contacts with a friend back at his previous law firm, are quite interesting.

-The relationship between Joel and Myra. It was fun watching these very different people work together. Myra knows that Joel came from a big-money law firm, but doesn't know about his drug history.

-The glimpses into the criminal justice system. I learned a lot about how things work in a big-city public defender's office. It can be messy and ambiguous and infuriating. The known guilty can go unpunished, and the innocent can get a raw deal. Sometimes things are exactly as they appear, sometimes not, but it's hard to tell the difference.

The book's title comes from this exchange between Joel and Myra:

Myra: "That's what the criminal law is: it's how the day tries to correct the night's mistakes. Most of my cases, people have done something they never would've dreamed of doing in broad daylight."

"What does that make us?" I said. "The night's janitors?"

"We're absolutely that," Myra said, sipping her cosmo. "What else do we do but clean up after it? That's why we'll never run out of work. Not unless someone invents a cure for night."

The book ended on a very satisfying note, and though the resolution should have been obvious, it took me by surprise.

David says

I don't usually read police or in this case, lawyerly, procedurals but the fact that it's the first from a Brooklyn DA and people were comparing it to The Wire got me interested. I'd call it Wire-Lite. The language ranges from the down-to-earth-white-folk to the struggling projects. While the varied characters language rings true to some extent it was cliched and too uniform with respect to race. The story was well paced and big props to Justin that every piece of the puzzle always added up here, and made sense... unfortunately, the main characters were not necessarily likable. It did end well... but was not much of a surprise. A good initial try...

Torey says

Ooohhhh.. I liked this one.

Crime novel, dirty lawyers, drug scandals, defense attorneys who make their careers of defending their clients rather than seeking truth, A Cure for Night is a must read!

Our main character Joel is involved in a drug scandal which nearly causes him to lose his licensing as a lawyer. Forced out of his big shot job, he transfers to public defense. Quickly promoted to take the second seat in a murder trial, it would seem Joel gets a second chance for redemption. His partner Myra is an excellent character. The 2 of them seek to defend their client all the while intentionally ignoring the blatant truth that stares them in the face.

Twists and turns that built well into a terrific climatic ending. Recommend for sure. Looking forward to Peacocks future works!!

Brian O'Leary says

Great potential for a first novel.

Nette says

This could have been so good -- it was well written and interesting right up until the author introduced the African-American characters. Every one of them spoke in the same horrible, bogus dialect. (Familiar to those who read the Spenser novels and cringe whenever Hawk opens his mouth.) Yo, Peacock, all black people don't be talkin' like pimps from 1970s blaxploitation movies, ya feel me? Dawg, you got to get yourself a new editor, or read a Richard Price novel, or watch just one episode of "The Wire" to find out that there are all SORTS of black voices, yo.

Chase Hackett says

I loved this from the first sentence. This is a terrific suspense story, and a glimpse of a fairly creepy side of New York I never really wanted to visit, anymore than the ivy-league-lawyer narrator wanted to. That tension between the protagonist and his world made a fascinating framework.

Bonnie Brody says

In this debut novel, Justin Peacock offers the reader an intense courtroom thriller. From page one, the reader gets hooked and stays hooked until the very end. As with the best page-turners, you won't want to put this novel down until you find out what happens.

Joel Devereaux is working at a top-notch, white collar law office in New York City when he decides that he wants to date his legal assistant, Beth. Not only is this potentially unethical, but Beth also has the air of something forbidden; she is an adventurer in life, perhaps on the dark side. Joel soon finds out that Beth is playing with fire, a powdered fire called heroin. While Beth is really into this drug and has already let her professional life flounder, Joel joins her as a weekend partier. He fools himself into believing that because he uses only on the weekend, he's really okay. One day, at work, Beth overdoses and dies. Joel is at the center of the investigation and loses his job. He is given the option of resigning before he is fired and he takes this option. He finds himself at the losing end of a civil lawsuit filed by Beth's father who mistakenly believes that he was the one who got Beth into drugs. Joel loses his license to practice law for six months and finds himself unable to land a job at any reputable law firm. Word travels fast on the grapevine, even in Manhattan. Joel finally secures work as a public defender in Brooklyn. Though he's not there for the idealistic reasons that many public defenders share, he appreciates the work. He's not using heroin any longer but he's not in a good recovery program either.

Joel has been working as a public defender for about six months, primarily doing arraignments, when his boss offers him the chance to play second chair in a murder investigation. This is where things begin to pick up and get really interesting. The reader is privy to intricate courtroom dramas between the public defender's office and the prosecution, between lawyers and clients and between victims and perpetrators. We are shown

the ugly head of racism as it peaks out from every corner, especially in jury selection and in impulsive judgments about clients. The dialogue is very realistic and the lingua franca of the city projects appears to be genuinely portrayed.

Joel is paired up with a senior defender on his team, Myra Goldstein. She is a seasoned six year veteran of the public defender's office - tough, assertive, self-assured. She doesn't see the need to have a second chair but her boss is concerned that she won't have enough time to give to this case. Myra is also working on an appeal for another client who she believes is innocent but has just been sentenced to life in jail. Joel likes to be in the courtroom, an experience he did not have at his posh law office. The murder case also interests him a lot. A jewish student from Brooklyn College has been murdered at the projects. A second man, a black drug dealer, has been shot in the back twice and is alive. The alleged perpetrator, Lorenzo Tate, has been identified by an eye witness but continues to assert his innocence. It is a case with a lot more than meets the eye at first look. Joel learns that it is often not the best case that wins, but the best story. But what is the real story of this case. That's what this book is about.

The title of this book is interesting in itself and forms one of the backdrops for the story. Myra says to Joel that "the day tries to correct the night's mistakes. Most of my cases, people have done something they never would've dreamed of doing in broad daylight". Joel asks Myra if that makes them the night janitors. Myra says "We're absolutely that...What else do we do but clean up after it? That's why we'll never run out of work. Not unless someone invents a cure for night."

While the novel is riveting at times and always a page-turner, the ending is a bit of a let-down. Despite fitting together nicely, I expected more of a drama and revelation than I was given. It seemed a bit too pat and a bit too far-out at the same time. Despite my disappointment with the ending, I could not put the book down until I got there. It had me in its clutches like a pit bull and I lost quite a bit of sleep last night.

I think that Justin Peacock has a good career ahead of him as he polishes his style and continues in this vein. I haven't read such a good courtroom drama since *The Juror* by Dawes or *The Thirteenth Juror* by Lescroat. Peacock has a wonderful way with dialogue that keeps the nail biting going strong. I wanted better physical descriptions of Joel and Myra from the author but I made them up for myself. Peacock knows the courtroom. He understands the confrontations and the ethical dilemmas. He understands addiction and the rationalizations that addicts make to themselves when they're not in full recovery. He knows how to keep the reader turning pages. I look forward to his next book.

Melanie says

Law and Order complete with gangsta language. The law is not black and white, but shades of grey. I finished this book thinking that the end all happened in a drug fuelled rush and that it's not who finds the truth necessarily, but who can tell the best story and the most believable. This may not have been the best story, but I still wanted to find out what happened...a quick read that was a different story, (for me at least).
