



Ochoco Reach

J.R. Stewart

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Mike's usual strategy was to gently stir the pot and wait for patterns to emerge, but this case was boiling over from the day Willimina showed up at his office. Freelance investigator Mike Ironwood doesn't hesitate for a moment when a lovely stranger asks him to help her get to the bottom of suspicious happenings on her family cattle ranch. The case is intriguing, and Willimina even more so. Six days in, the case has turned up two dead bodies, an alphabet soup of secretive federal investigators, and a client who just might be The One. That's when things get complicated. When a greedy DEA agent and his complicated and deadly triggerman kidnap Willy, Mike enlists help from his brother and sets out to rescue her from a conflicted cartel jefe. The trail leads them deep into Mexico, but they come home with dangerous unfinished business. Ochoco Reach introduces Mike Ironwood, his special ops brother Daniel, and Bucket, a Catahoula leopard dog who is equally at home herding cattle and pinning bad guys to the floor. Together, they are formidable allies who also seem to attract trouble at every turn."

Ochoco Reach Details

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Author : J.R. Stewart

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From Reader Review Ochoco Reach for online ebook

M. Louis says

Ochoco Reach, by Jim Stewart, is the tale of half-brothers that battle dirty feds, banditos, and the elements. Set in the wilds of Mexico, spectacular Central Oregon, and Portland, Oregon, the brothers rely on more than just their experiences as special force veterans who served in Vietnam. They also draw heavily on their experiences growing up on a ranch with a rich native American influence. In fact Daniel is half Nimi'ipuu, or Nez Perce tribe. Both brothers are connected to the land and hear and rely upon the songs and battle cries of their shared heritage.

But it's more than just a modern day battle between good and evil. Elements of the book reach back to the old west, reminding us of all of the movies and stories we've heard growing up. Plus, as all good books do, there's a very enticing romance element to contrast against the stark violence.

Very enjoyable, 5 stars!

Col says

Synopsis/blurb.....

Mike's usual strategy was to gently stir the pot and wait for patterns to emerge, but this case was boiling over from the day Willimina showed up at his office. Freelance investigator Mike Ironwood doesn't hesitate for a moment when a lovely stranger asks him to help her get to the bottom of suspicious happenings on her family cattle ranch. The case is intriguing, and Willimina even more so. Six days in, the case has turned up two dead bodies, an alphabet soup of secretive federal investigators, and a client who just might be The One. That's when things get complicated. When a greedy DEA agent and his complicated and deadly triggerman kidnap Willy, Mike enlists help from his brother and sets out to rescue her from a conflicted cartel jefe. The trail leads them deep into Mexico, but they come home with dangerous unfinished business. Ochoco Reach introduces Mike Ironwood, his special ops brother Daniel, and Bucket, a Catahoula leopard dog who is equally at home herding cattle and pinning bad guys to the floor. Together, they are formidable allies who also seem to attract trouble at every turn.

My take.....

Having failed to review (maybe too strong a word)..... pen some thoughts on my reading over the past 3 months, I'm struggling to know where to begin now.

Well a couple of months on from reading this one, I remember the characters and the major plot details and the outcome, so I must have had fairly positive thoughts when reading this. (Scored it a 3.5 from 5, just after reading)

I do like PI novels generally, probably more so than mysteries centred-around police officers. This one wasn't too bad. There was an interesting plot concerning our ranch owner Willy who had been receiving veiled threats. Soon after the involvement of Mike this escalated to her kidnap arranged by a love-stricken cartel leader and the participation of a rogue US government agent. Mike Ironwood – a bit of a loved-up

puppy dog himself by this stage, recruits his half-brother – half Native American Daniel to conduct some black-ops of their own south of the border in Mexico and recover Willy.

Plenty to like.....plus points – a decent plot which held together fairly well; several story strands which entertained me – dead bodies, kidnap, a rogue agent, Mexico, drugs, people-trafficking, gun-play and a fairly satisfactory outcome. (Possibly a couple of slightly unlikely coincidences helped us arrive there.)

The relationship between Mike and his half-brother Daniel was entertaining, I liked how they bounced off each other and could trust how they each had the other's back. Mike and his dog also scored higher than me than the love angle between Mike and Willy. I wasn't quite reaching for the sick-bucket as the romance between Mike and Willy developed, but it was slightly irritating. Maybe, I don't like romantic elements featuring so strongly in my books.

Probably not a crime fiction read and maybe less mystery genre than a kind of action thriller. We know what is happening fairly early on and it's a question of correcting the wrong. Overall enjoyable without threatening the top all-time reads list. Would I want to read more from the author? On balance, no. No reflection on him, just I've too many other books that need reading.

3.5 from 5

I received a copy of this one from Jessica @ MBM Book Publicity in return for an honest review. Cheers.

Ochoco Reach was enjoyed over at Crime Fiction Lover – here.
<http://www.crimefictionlover.com/2016...>

There's more about the author over at the publisher's website – word hermit press here.
<https://wordhermitpress.com/featured-...>

Read in April, 2016
<https://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2016/0...>

Bill Mackela says

Ochoco Reach isn't an easy book to classify. There are some of the elements of a typical adventure thriller. The main characters are always in danger and the cast of villains is fairly typical. There are drug cartel bosses and their soldiers who want them captured or dead, crooked law enforcement officers who want to put them in jail or kill them, along with the other assorted bad guys that you run into in a story set near the US/Mexican boarder. But there is something else going on here. This book isn't just a fast-paced action story, it has elements to slow it down. Sometimes it nearly feels like a slow-paced "American Indian becomes one with the land story" blended with a fairy tale and a story of true love. But the danger is always there. You can't forget that.

This story wouldn't work if you didn't really like the four main characters, Willimina Hayes (Willy), freelance investigator Mike Ironwood, his special ops brother Daniel, and Bucket, a Catahoula leopard dog. Mr. Stewart makes these characters feel real. They aren't like anyone you know, but you like them right away. You believe them. You care about them. You want the best for them.

I enjoyed the varied pace of this book. Sometimes it felt nearly too slow, but that was OK. It just let you relax for a few pages. There was plenty of action. The blood and guts were kept to a minimum. There were moments of contemplation and thoughts of what is most important in life; truly connecting with people, the land around you and the animals that live there. Overall a very different book, but well worth reading.

I give Ochoco Reach 4 Stars out of 5 and a Big Thumbs Up! I hope that this is the first book in a long-running series, because I want to read more about these wonderful characters and their lands.

I received a Digital Review Copy from the publisher.

Sumaira says

I was pleasantly surprised with how much I enjoyed this book. Reading a mystery/thriller story was a nice change from my normal favourite genre of Young Adult and Historical Romance. The synopsis intrigued me and the story did not let me down.

Mike is a freelance investigator who is hired by Willimina when bad things start to happen at her ranch. There is an attraction from the start and Mike agrees to help her out. The action kicks off from there and we learn that the case is not simple as they hoped and Mexican cartel could be involved. When the federal agents such as CIA and FBI start to get involved you know there is going to be massive trouble. The action in this book gets you gripped because you want to know what happens. There is romance in the book but it is as a sub plot it not the main focus. The story does not drag at all, though I did have to read one or two paragraphs again as there was so much going on to remind myself what was going on and where.

I liked Mike as a character, he really was a good guy and I liked the way he was portrayed, especially because he felt more human to me. He thought about the people he was killing and consequences, he didn't just do it because he could.

Willimina nickname was Willy. I have to admit I had a chuckle every time I read the name Willy, childish I know. I know it was not intended but I kept thinking of a balding middle aged man...Ahh anyway I digress. She was a well developed character and I liked that she was no shrinking violet. All of the characters in this book were well developed. My personal favourite would be Bucket. The love between Bucket the dog and Mike was so sweet.

This story is told from both Mike's and Willimina's point of view. So we do get to into both characters head to see what they are thinking and understand them better. The change in the point of view is not confusing as the chapters clearly state the person's who point of view it is.

A niggles I had with the book is I have to refer to a dictionary on occasions, as I had never come across some of the words used. This is fine but takes some of the enjoyment away.

Overall I did enjoy this book, the action kept me hooked and I really would like to read a book on other characters featured in the book like Daniel and Jasper.

Like my review? You can find more of them on my blog

Marika Charalambous says

Quite the enjoyable read, a surprising little hidden gem that I actually couldn't put down once I started. I am lately into military thrillers, and this book had a very intriguing ex-military guy as main protagonist, had lots of action, suspense, a light breeze of American Indian spirituality and mysticism and a cute dog which I wouldn't mind having for myself. My only regret - that there is no sequel to pick up.

Anne says

Normally, I don't care much about drug cartel stories. But after reading this dazzling review of Ochoco Reach from Liis, I was thrilled when I got a review request for it!

See, the GR synopsis does a great job at telling the general storyline, but it utterly fails at describing the craftsmanship of the author when it comes to expressing emotions throughout the text. Like Liis says in her review:

"There is so much emotion in this book, it's heartwarming and not at all overwhelming. Jim Stewart has a way with words, a unique way of describing the feels. A unique way of showing the reader the dynamics in between two living beings."

I totally felt the same way about this and couldn't have described it any better myself.

There's a lot of spirituality and food for thought in it. So yeah, drug cartels and DEA; those things are just tools to incorporate action into this book if you ask me.

The writing style is amazing, the main characters well developed. I felt really connected with Mike and I'm guessing this is how a lot of women feel when they're reading a steamy romance novel; I know I'm married and all, but ay papi, I want to have Mike's babies!

He's kind, loving, fair, strong, intelligent, has a tremendous respect for women, and is the best of friends with his amazing dog, Bucket. That he occasionally hears voices in his head or does things that could get him killed, meh, I'd take that for granted.

I loved Willy as well (though in an entirely different way). She's the kind of woman I'd like to be! A smart female ranch owner who's very independent when it comes to men. She has lost her husband, *and* her boyfriend after that, yet never becomes the introvert, depressed lady a lot of women would have.

My heart especially goes out to Bucket, Mike's dog who is just a role model for all other dogs, really. My own dog is very kind as well, but definitely not as smart as Bucket. One of the very few hand signals *my* dog understands is the one where I wave a cookie in the air. Bucket, on the other hand, knows exactly what the situation is like by just giving him a single look.

"I called him Bucket after the hero in Jack London's Call of the Wild and also after Charles Dickens's Inspector Bucket".

My note there was *"How cool is that?!"*. 'Bleak House' is one of my favourite books.

Another thing I noticed when it comes to Mike's take on Bucket is that he looks at his dog in the way John Steinbeck did with his dog in 'Travels with Charley'.

"He was a dog and I treated him as such. Dogs are not little people in fur coats"

This is what I always have to remind myself of when I'm talking to my dog as if he's a little baby. Always making that mental note saying that's not very Steinbeckian of me.

The relationship between Mike and his half-brother Daniel (they share the same father) is wonderfully depicted. Daniel's mother was a native Indian and that really rubbed off on both of the boys. But before you start thinking that their relationship involves too much spiritual vagueness, they are also just brothers when it comes to competitive playfulness and such.

A random note I made at one point was about this conversation between Willy and Mike:

"How tall are you?"

"Six-four, two-twenty..." "but right now I'm probably ten feet tall and weigh maybe a hundred pounds."

For being a girl from the European mainland who only has ever used the metric system, reading about inches, feet, stone, cups and whatnot is always very confusing. I actually have to google things like that while reading, to get a better sense of what characters are doing or look like. I know in this particular scene, Mike's just being a show-off, but still, why can't all authors do this kind of thing when it comes to describing measurements?!

Some more quotes I highlighted because they really show you the real depth to this book:

"In her eyes I saw my own mother and Daniel's mother and the mother of all of us who have been lonely and who have wandered without deep comfort."

On finding your limits:

"I would say it's best if I never really knew" (...where my limits are..). "That way, I can always think of myself as a tough guy ready for anything."

The only reason why I'm not giving this book 5 brownies is because of the sometimes messy storyline when it comes to the action parts. I thought there would be a whole plot twist, revealing the identity of 'the guy on the inside' when it came to the drug cartel business, yet that part was never solved in a satisfying way for me. Sometimes, I got downright confused on who was who and what was happening when it came to the villains. They could use a little more depth, I suppose.

The action scenes in itself were great, though. Blowing up shit to the fullest degree by using grenades and some sort of übercannon really blew my mind (pun intended). I ended up giving this one 4 brownies and a solid recommendation for, well, anyone who likes to read.

A big thank you to Jim Stewart and Jessica Hardesty Norris from Mindbuck Media for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

Jean says

Between 2 and 3 stars actually. Lots of guns and killing, but some good characters. With little or no plot complexity and occasionally hard to follow, this adventure is a physical, mental, and spiritual journey for the main character, Mike Ironwood, a former cop, now private detective. The story is threaded throughout with the theme, "How can you be a nice person who kills people?"

Mike is a member of the 'warrior class,' a 'good guy' who hears voices in his head and kills the 'bad guys' as needed. His psyche is left over from his adrenaline-filled, survival-focused career as a special forces fighter in the Viet Nam War. Mike's half-brother Daniel has a similar make-up and shares Mike's psychological scars from Viet Nam, but he acts with a more shadowy, surreal edge. I liked the often humorous exchanges and unspoken messages between the two brothers.

Mike's challenge, along with surviving, crossing and re-crossing the Mexican border, saving his lady love, and destroying a dangerous drug cartel, is to "deal with not fighting as a way of life. . . to face what gives you the edge in combat," as a doctor later tells him.

The main characters are good, including Willy Hayes, the woman rancher Mike falls in love with when she hires him to investigate a mystery on her Oregon ranch (a mystery that begins the far-reaching adventure from the Ochoco Mountains to San Blas, Mexico.) My favorite characters are Daniel, Mike's half Nez-Perce brother, whose uncanny powers often save the day (or night); and Mike's Catahoula Leopard dog, Bucket. When the journey to rescue kidnapped Willy and oust the bad guys in Mexico begins, Bucket must stay behind on Willy's ranch, and I missed him.

Other animals--wolverines and a fox--are bestowed with anthropomorphic powers and effect some story twists. Minor characters are mostly identifiable but somewhat shadowy or cliched. Much of the killing is graphic, and many kinds of guns are tossed about.

As for confusion in the story, Willy sums it up beautifully: "Why did a government agency kidnap me and deliver me to a Mexican cartel? . . . Why were you (to Daniel) recruited to kill the leader of that same cartel, only to have it called off at the last moment? Why was the raid that blew up half of that villa staged at the very same time? . . . who's pulling the strings here? None of it makes any sense."

In the end, there is a bright horizon ahead for the main characters in Oregon, but one facet left in doubt, possibly enough to prompt a sequel.

The editing and printing of this edition is not good. Many typos occur in the first 100 pages, and there is uneven inking of type throughout the book.

Pamela Beckford says

I read this on the recommendation of a friend - and I was not disappointed. I hope this is going to be a series. I loved that it kept me interested in "what would happen next." There were parts that may have been unbelievable, but it didn't matter because I still wanted to know what was next and how they were going to get out of their next situation.

Julienne says

If you take Ochoco Reach just by it's description it doesn't tell you what is most appealing about the story. Sure, there is a finely crafted plot with twists, turns, danger and conflict that will greatly satisfy any reader of the Detective / Thriller / Crime genres. But what puts this book over the top is the well hewed characters that leap from the page.

At first blush the protagonist, Mike Ironwood is easily known by his archetypes - Veteran/Warrior, Protector, Tough Guy, Detective. Then you are invited to get to know him on a much deeper level as Brother, Son, Lover, Friend and Skeptical Mystic who is also the proud keeper of Bucket his loyal canine companion.

The constellation of characters that surround Mike in this book are equally alive and more than just likeable - you want to meet them for a drink or maybe bacon and eggs with black coffee in a cozy farm house in the mountains.

Mike's half brother Daniel, is also a Veteran/Warrior and the two form a team that is both totally bad @ss and deeply heartfelt. Daniel's Native American lineage & Mike's love and respect for it provides a way into a much larger mystery than what is laid out in the book blurb. The author deftly weaves this larger arc in a way that is poetic and subtle. I highlighted a half dozen sentences that made me pause and contemplate the greater meaning. Does that happen in a crime thriller? Not all that often - and I read a ton of these books.

Willimina aka Willy is Mike's client turned love interest and when she is kidnapped she totally belies the the damsel in distress archetype. She is a full blooded character who meshes nicely with this band of characters and I dearly hope the author keeps them together. (There is a veiled threat there...)

I highly recommend this book so you can come to know these three and the mysterious Elina that form an unpredictable yet utterly inevitable tribe of good people who make hard choices in the face of danger and emotional risk. Each character is a perfect node in this dance of micro-story within a grander story that will leave you wanting more.

Mike Siedschlag says

I won a print copy of Ochoco Reach by Jim Stewart in a Goodreads Giveaway.

Ochoco Reach is a highly entertaining mix (I think the current buzzword is "mash-up") of many sub-genres of the main action/adventure genre.

There are aspects of military, Native American spiritualism, political corruption, and international tension, to name a few. Author Jim Stewart (I have to wonder, any relation?) does an outstanding job of weaving all these threads into the fabric of a story that grabs the readers attention and doesn't let go.

Ochoco Reach is action/adventure to the max. It appears that this may be the first in a series, the cover identifies Ochoco Reach as "An Ironwood Novel". This would definitely be a good thing.

However, I would suggest (respectfully) to the author; Take it easy on this poor guy if you want him to be around for an extended run. Mike Ironwood (our hero) is a hero-warrior in the best tradition, the guy you want on your side to be sure. I know it is part of the great action we read, but, this guy has got to look like a jigsaw puzzle when he takes off his shirt, and it has only been one book!

Ironwood has a dog, Bucket (a Catahoula Leopard Dog, I had to Google it), that rivals Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, and Yukon King combined for intelligence. An awesome sidekick. His other partner, Daniel, his half-brother (and Native American connection) adds a whole different dimension.

It may sound like Ironwood is an over the top character, but not really. He's not as ego driven as other characters in the genre. He is smart and tenacious, a deadly adversary to be sure, but he is also well aware of, and true to, his inherent humanity.

Ochoco Reach is not a one note adventure at all. There are drug cartel baddies, government alphabet organizations (as the author identifies them) both true and corrupt, international activities, shoot 'em up violence and bloodshed a plenty.

There is also romance, compassion, tenderness, and love. Very well balanced. Vengeance is a main aspect of the story, and it is brutal at times, but it is also tempered with our hero's sense of justice.

Over all, Ochoco Reach by Jim Stewart is a great action/adventure, with romance, sex, humanity, morality and honor. Enjoy!

Mike

Audio Audits says

Private eye Mike Ironwood has a formula when it comes to solving cases that come his way. That all goes flying out the window when Willimina (Willy) comes to him for help when mysterious things start happening at her ranch.

It's going to take help from his special ops half-brother Daniel, Willy, who he immediately and happily falls for and his trusty dog Bucket, once Mike gets sucked into this dangerous rabbit hole!

I absolutely loved this story, action, adventure, suspense and romance, and enough American colloquialisms that I'll have my hubby sighing with exasperation when I start whipping them out at random times!

Jim Stewart has a unique way of storytelling, I found his prose at times so beautiful and always engaging. Colin Iago McCarthy did a wonderful job narrating, it's the first audiobook that I've listened to from him, but this style of writing suits his voice to perfection. The audio production was flawless.

This audiobook was gifted to me exchange for an unbiased review!

Phil says

Good pacing and believable characterisation.

Main characters are people you would like to meet. Relationships perhaps a little forced, but they worked. Action is fast paced and believable. Good, strong storyline that develops naturally. Visual descriptions can be "seen" in your mind easily and accurately. Loved the story, the characters and the resolution. Excellent.

Kathleen (QueenKatieMae) says

A friend of mine, knowing I am a rabid Craig Johnson fan, gave me a copy of Ochoco Reach. The fact I live in Oregon where the book is set made it that much more enjoyable. Debut author Jim Stewart has a way with words that is playful and expressive with characters the reader will like.

Taking place in 1995, freelance investigator and salvage consultant (inside joke) Mike Ironwood is hired by a woman who thinks someone has been trespassing on her ranch. What makes this strange is she's been receiving unsolicited, anonymous offers to buy her ranch. Willy, the owner, is intelligent, independent and tantalizingly beautiful to the semi-untamed bachelor, Mike. He prefers the solitary life on his houseboat with his dog, Bucket, his arsenal of guns and a Harley. But, from the first page, the reader recognizes that Mike can be persuaded to rethink the bachelor status.

Heavily borrowing from Johnson (yep, an excellent source to borrow from), Mike is a Vietnam vet with a penchant for following his own rules, doesn't own a cell phone (who does in 1995, I question?) and has an Indian half-brother, Daniel. There are mystical Indian elements throughout the story. And Mike has a wry sense of humor.

The story takes off when Mike starts to discover Willy's problems possibly involve a Mexican drug cartel, certain "alphabet" agents gone bad, and a kidnapping. Mike and his brother, Daniel, take off for Mexico (leaving behind my favorite character, Bucket). There are gunfights and standoffs, good guys and bad guys, and the appearance of sleazy people from both Willy and Mike's past.

I like the story but love the characters even more. Mike is charming and personable with a great running dialogue going on in his head. Daniel is quite skilled when it comes to recon, backup, and sneaking up on his brother. And Willy refuses to be a damsel in distress. I think she even says that. There were a couple of quibbles I had with the story, though. Mike makes the cartel connection really fast after finding a couple of guys casing his houseboat. Almost too fast. There is a big coincidence in the desert. And, the reason for Willy's disappearance is, how do I put this, not the most plausible. In fact, I actually laughed out loud (sorry).

Minor quibbles aside, I truly enjoyed Ochoco Reach and hope the author continues the story of Mike Ironwood and Bucket, the best sidekick ever.

Liz says

Ex-army guys getting shuffled in between Mexican Drug Cartel, DEA and CIA and FBI is a story told many

times. Ochoco Reach, however, has a triple layer of awesomeness to it. What is so special about this book?

Well, take an action story with ex-army guys in their 40s, add into the mix some pretty awesome elements of Native American spirituality, a super-intelligent dog, a wonderfully playful relationship in between brothers and a bit of love. You just can't go wrong.

There is so much emotion in this book, it's heartwarming and not at all overwhelming. Jim Stewart has a way with words, a unique way of describing the feels. A unique way of showing the reader the dynamics in between two living beings.

If I had to pick my favorite relationship out of this book it would either be in between Mike and Bucket (his superstar dog) or in between Mike and his brother from another mother, Daniel. I had so many moments of "Awh, this is so lovely" to "I wish I had a dog like that" to "Maybe I should have become special ops".

Mike Ironwood has been to the Nam, tried to be a cop afterwards which didn't work out because of PTSD and unwillingness to follow orders, because he knows best himself, or rather the sounds in his head know best..! yes.. what? Sounds? He is either crazy or touched by a spirit- you'll figure it out yourself as you read. I'd like to think he is possibly both. His brother Daniel is special ops as well and together they make a mighty team.

Enter Willimina aka Willy... I know, I did a childish chuckle every time I read "Willy".. anyway... she is a ranch owner and through some pretty crazy circumstances ends up being the damsel in distress, which she hates, because she is, after all, a strong independent woman.

Let's talk about the cover... You might think- drug cartel explosive action is illustrated by a desert, a fox and a mountain? Dude, you wouldn't even begin to comprehend how accurate this cover is to the whole earthy story. Treat the aspects of the cover as clues of what is to come in the story, how everything mixes together in Mike Ironwood's voice-filled brain and spills into his life.

I am rating this book with 5 shining, utterly awesome stars based on the fact that I admired how the author wrote about emotions, that there was a good dose of wittiness, playfulness mixed with the seriousness and action.

With thanks to author Jim Stewart and Jessica Hardesty from Mindbuck Media for sending me a copy!

Yvonne (It's All About Books) says

[

When I was approached earlier this month to read and review **Ochoco Reach**, the cover and blurb immediately appealed to me. The mystery/thriller
