



Capitol Offense

William Bernhardt

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Insane with grief, Professor Dennis Thomas blames Detective Christopher Sentz for the death of his wife and wants to kill him. In fact, Thomas shares his revenge plans with Ben Kincaid. Then someone fires seven bullets into the police officer. Against all advice and going on instinct, Kincaid decides to represent the troubled professor, who faces a charge of capital murder. Meanwhile, Kincaid's personal private detective, Loving, starts prying loose pieces of a shocking secret. Working in the shadows of the law, Loving risks his life to construct an entirely new narrative about Detective Sentz, Joslyn Thomas, and madness in another guise: the kind that every citizen should fear and no one will recognize—until it is too late.

Capitol Offense Details

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Author : William Bernhardt

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From Reader Review Capitol Offense for online ebook

Jerry King says

2009

Grandpa Joe says

I have read one other novel by William Bernhardt - a number of years ago - that I thought dragged a bit and was only so-so. I found this book, therefore, to be a delightful surprise. A good story, a murder mystery, which might or might not be quite so mysterious in terms of who done it - with a surprising amount of humor along the way. Dennis Thomas is accused of murdering a policeman whose inaction caused the death of Thomas' wife. His defense is a temporary insanity plea - a difficult defense to win.

Brian O'Leary says

A great Ben Kincaid book

Sandra says

Good summer read!

Rick Ludwig says

Another wonderful outing with Ben Kincaid and associates. Ben is back in Tulsa, back in the courtroom, and back defending a hopeless case. Being a senator makes things even more difficult if possible. Christina is again his co counsel, Loving is again putting his life on the line to find something to help Ben's case. The difference this time is the nature of the defendant, the nature of the crime, and the unanswered questions when all is said and done. Bernhardt once again keeps us reading at fevered pace to see what will happen next and doesn't ever disappoint. It is exceptionally nice to take a break from Washington and return home, in more ways than one.

Gary E says

Great book!

After 17 novels in a series it is easy to imagine that these are good compelling stories. This one is no exception to the rule. It was one of the better books in the series and I had a very hard time putting it down!

In fact I read this in less than 68 hours or so (a little under 3 days). It is extremely compelling and fast paced.

This series is well worth reading!

James says

The Ben Kencaid books are a light, fun read for fans of legal thrillers. Unlike the protagonists of the gritty, profanity-laced, "realistic" legal novels, Ben's favorite beverage is chocolate milk and his favorite bedroom activity is playing Scrabble. Like the others, he has a tendency to take on "impossible" cases, and as his office manager is quick to point out, unprofitable ones.

In this one, Ben defends an accused cop-killer, one made more sympathetic to the reader by the fact that his wife died an agonizing death because of inaction by the police. Christina and Loving are featured prominently, and Mike to some degree.

As with all lengthy series, don't start with this one - the story is standalone, but get to know the characters and the background by starting at the beginning. And if you liked prior Ben Kencaid stories, you'll enjoy this one.

Lukasz Pruski says

Reviewing William Bernhardt's "Capitol Offense" is not an easy task. This mystery/court drama has so many utterly moronic features that a one-star rating would be overly generous. Yet, it is not completely devoid of interesting stuff. For instance, the opening sentence, "I died three days ago", is pretty neat.

A female doctor in Oklahoma disappears, after having a car accident in a remote area. Her husband tries to have the police look for her, but for seven days he is unable to convince a detective to issue an APB or even to begin a search. After his wife is finally found, too late to be saved, he apparently has plans to kill the detective who indirectly caused her death and consults Ben Kincaid, a senator and a successful lawyer, to arrange a pardon for him for the murder. The whole premise is so idiotic that I was almost ready to stop reading the book, which I almost never do (I have not finished only two books in the last 20 years).

While the author's writing is occasionally so bad that I enjoyed it for entertainment purposes, the court drama part is quite interesting and competently written. Plausibility of the denouement is rather feeble. I enjoyed one passage: "People might not be willing to admit to extreme, even uncontrollable emotions with regard to their spouses. But a kitty was a different thing altogether."

"Capitol Offense" is quite a readable book, but in a wrong way. One wants to turn the pages, without reading them, just to learn the ending.

One and a half stars.

Jenna Walker says

I did not see that coming. I really enjoyed this book. Now I may be a bit biased because I love court room books and there just arent enough out there. I love how they summed it up but not really, and didnt make you angry that they kinda left you hanging. I like the unsure feeling in the book. This was very well written and i loved every second of reading it.. This was one of those books that made me feel like i was watching a movie.

Ronald Howell says

A quick read from Bernhardt, he has a winner in Ben Kincaid.

Joyce says

If there were half stars, I would give this legal thriller another half! A man goes to the Police to report his wife, an Oncologist, is missing and did not come home from work. They refuse to take any action. He comes back day after day and still gets a negative response. Finally, after seven days, he convinces an Officer to take some action. The woman is found in a ravine in her car after three hours of searching. She has been terribly injured in the accident and has been in constant pain since it occurred. She dies of the injuries before reaching the Hospital.

The husband goes to Attorney (and US Senator) Ben Kinkaid to ask about Temporary Insanity and the equivalent in trials. The same night he goes to the Hotel where the original Detective is on a stake out. The Detective ends up dead, shot with the husband's gun. The husband is arrested for Murder One and hires Kinkaid (against the good advice of his wife and law partner) to defend him.

And this is only the start of the novel. The case goes to trial, and what a trial it is. The plot will continue to thicken and add complexity after complexity. The ending will please most... particularly since it leaves you wondering.

Will says

SUBJECTIVE READER REVIEW FOLLOWS:

I grappled with my rating on this book, vacillating between four and five stars, but the kicker for me was Bernhardt's infusion of the metaphysical that made me recognize what a wonderful read this had been. As I invoke reference to Edgar Cayce's readings a lot in my own novels, I found it somewhat refreshing to see a prominent author unafraid to attach mystical explanations for things otherwise unknown. Capitol Offense describes in harrowing detail the internal frustrations and helplessness a defendant experiences when he's the target of a grand conspiracy no one can see but God himself. Dennis Thomas' plight is hopeless, in spite of the fact that he's innocent. Having been the defendant in a felony trial before myself, perhaps I shared a bit of Dennis' paranoia as the trial wove through its inexorable steps, but at least I didn't have to wait three months on death row before my innocence was announced. Capitol Offense is not a thrill seeker's fix, but rather a

harrowing glimpse inside what my sister the trial attorney calls a lawyer's worst nightmare: going to court for a trial. Apparently our judicial system is so fraught with uncertainty once a decision is left to a jury that most attorneys will do anything to plea out a case. From a gambler's perspective it's simple; a 100% knowledge of a plea outcome or roll the dice with a jury. You may feel I had too much in common with the defendant Thomas to judge this book fairly, but I judged it as a reader, and if you like courtroom drama and certain knowledge that YOU are not the only person in the universe that experiences dissociative thoughts, Capitol Offense will be a wonderful read for you--and it turns out wonderfully!

SPOILER PLOT SUMMARY FOLLOWS:

A Case of Temporary Insanity. Dennis Thomas shows up at Ben Kincaid's office asking strange questions about criminal motivations and temporary insanity. That night Tulsa PD Det Christopher Sentz is found dead in a hotel room from seven gunshots and Thomas is found unconscious in the room laying on top of the murder weapon. Thomas had become obsessed with Sentz for his intransigence in opening a missing persons report for Thomas' wife Joslyn, whose barely alive body was found seven days after a suspicious car accident sent her down an embankment covered in bushes. After a tortuous trial in which the DA seems to make all the right moves and Thomas takes the stand in his own behalf, he is found guilty of first degree murder and sentenced to die. Al Loving, the PI dedicated to Kincaid, pushes ahead with the investigation, discovering that the local hospital Joslyn was working at is involved in selling cesium to terrorists. Joslyn had discovered an earlier shipment being loaded out, and Dr Gary Sentz sent his brother Police Det Chris to silence her, running her off the road. After three months the conspiracy is finally uncovered, as the District Attorney himself is found to be the ring leader. Dennis Thomas' sentence is set aside and double jeopardy attached. Thomas walks out of death row a free man as he and Loving embrace Buddhism, finally understanding his wife's last words to him, 'Outwit the stars.'

Dale Harcombe says

My husband brought this book home from the library. But when I read the blurb I ended up reading it first. I have to admit to being a sucker for lawyer books and TV shows. The story starts with a doctor who is involved in a car crash. The car ends up in a place where it is hidden for sight. When her husband Dennis reports his wife Joslyn missing, the police don't want to take any action. Day after day he begs for them to begin a search. In the end he is left to his own searching but finds nothing. Finally he convinces a police officer to do something but by the time they find his wife it is too late. Consumed with rage, Dennis wants revenge of the officer responsible by his inaction. When that police officer ends up dead, Dennis is the prime suspect.

The case goes to trial. Ben Kincaid is his lawyer. Ben has apparently appeared in a number of other novels which I have not read. I liked him as a character and I liked the banter at times between him and his wife and law partner Christina, who believes Ben has taken on an unwinnable case that will hurt his career and chances as a senator.

I powered through this book. I liked the characters except for those the reader is obviously not supposed to like for good reasons. I would be keen to read other books with these characters. The ending is interesting and it may well lead to the next book. I was going to give this four stars but following Veronica, fellow Aussie Goodreader's practice, I have upped it half a star to four and a half stars for managing to tell the whole story without resorting to bad language. This story won't be for everyone perhaps, but I found it a really good read with an interesting story and characters.

Nolan says

This is my first experience with this author, and as usual, I've not behaved well by beginning at the start of this series. And I don't recommend you emulate my behavior with this series. I felt a bit breathless in a spot or two trying to run and catch up as best I could.

Dennis Thomas is undeniably frantic. His physician wife has been missing for days, and while the marriage is far from perfect, he knows she hasn't just driven off into the night. But no one at the Tulsa police department will take Thomas seriously. The chief detective, who has power to open the investigation, refuses. Naturally, Thomas is angry and darkly threatens the cop that there will be "a reckoning." An academic, Thomas clearly isn't all that likely to actually kill the cop. But when his wife is found after being trapped in her crumpled car for seven days, she lives long enough to acknowledge her husband and offer him a final bit of advice.

Not long after her death, the detective who refused to open the investigation is gunned down, and naturally Dennis Thomas is the first person the cops look to as a suspect.

But lawyer and Oklahoma Senator Ben Kincaid is convinced of Thomas's innocence, and against the advice of his lawyer wife, Kincaid takes the case. From here, it's a race against time as Kincaid and his investigators look for clues as to why Thomas's wife had to die and why the investigation was so delayed.

My only quibble with this book was the sometimes heavy pro-Democratic party moralizing that goes on. It wasn't constant or even frequent, but it felt like riding in that car with the mysterious rattle in the dash. It detracts from the experience of the ride, but certainly never enough to make you want to abandon the car.

That said, this is a book and series well worth your time.

Ricardo says

Extremely disappointed by this book from Bernhardt. It felt like he wrote it simply to fulfill a contract saying he had to write a book, no matter how bad it was
