

A large, dark silhouette of a man wearing a fedora hat, standing with his back to the viewer. The silhouette is centered on the cover and serves as a background for the text. The background color is a gradient of olive green and brown.

NEMESIS

THE FINAL CASE OF

ELIOT NESSE

A NOVEL

WILLIAM BERNHARDT

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *Capitol Conspiracy*

Nemesis: The Final Case of Eliot Ness A Novel, William Bernhardt, Random House LLC, 2009, 0345513061, 9780345513069, 355 pages. In his bestselling legal thrillers, William Bernhardt has explored the dark side of contemporary politics, power, and the law. Now Bernhardt turns back the clock to the city of Cleveland, Ohio, in the fall of 1935. Based on true events and new discoveries about Eliot Ness, *Nemesis* is a brilliantly told story featuring this legendary lawman's fateful duel with a terrifyingly new kind of criminal: America's first serial killer. In Chicago, Eliot Ness had created the Untouchables, the fabled team of federal agents who were beyond corruption and who finally put Al Capone behind bars. Now the headline-grabbing Ness has been moved to Cleveland, where a new mayor desperately needs some positive publicity. The heroic, squeaky-clean Fed is the perfect man to become the city's director of public safety, but by the time Ness starts his new job, a killer has started a career of his own. And this man is as obsessed with blood and mayhem as Eliot Ness is obsessed with justice. One by one, bodies are found, each one decapitated and uniquely dissected with a doctor's skill and a madman's bent. The police are baffled, the population is terrorized, and newspaper headlines blare about the so-called Torso Killer. Though it's not his turf, Ness is forced to cross bureaucratic boundaries and take over the case, working with a dogged, street-smart detective and making enemies every step of the way. The more energy Ness pours into the investigation, the more it takes over his life, his marriage, even his untouchable reputation. Because in Cleveland, there is only one true untouchable: a killer who has the perfect hiding place and the perfect plan for destroying Eliot Ness. From the first primitive use of forensic psychology to a portrait of America battling the Great Depression and a man battling his own demons, *Nemesis* is a masterwork of mystery, murder, and vivid, dynamic historical suspense. From the Hardcover edition..

Death Row , William Bernhardt, 2004, Fiction, 396 pages. When the only surviving witness to a grisly murder turns up dead, Oklahoma defense attorney Ben Kincaid holds little hope of staving off the death sentence against the soft

The Yard Dog A Mystery, Sheldon Russell, Sep 1, 2009, Fiction, 304 pages. The Yard Dog takes place near the close of World War II, when a large number of Nazi POWs were incarcerated in camps scattered across the prairies of the United States. At

The Code of Buddyhood , William Bernhardt, Jan 1, 1993, Education, 338 pages. Ten years after their undergraduate years together, Bobby Beresford and Mark Szasz meet again at a college reunion and are forced to reopen old wounds and confront painful

Capitol Murder A Novel of Suspense, William Bernhardt, 2007, Fiction, 411 pages. When the senior senator from his native Oklahoma is accused of the murder of a female intern, the apparent victim of a ritual killing whose body is found in the tunnels leading

Nemesis , Lindsey Davis, Aug 31, 2010, Fiction, 352 pages. The much awaited latest installment in this New York Times bestselling series brings Marcus Didius Falco back to the city of Rome and its deadly, convoluted intrigues In the

The untouchables , Eliot Ness, Oscar Fraley, 1976, Social Science, 188 pages. .

Moral Executioners , Andy Schoepp, Aug 15, 2009, , 364 pages. LAPD Detectives Michael Darts and Mark Anderson are back in the much awaited, exciting conclusion to The Martial Arts Murders trilogy! In the trilogy's final chapter, the

Chasing Eliot Ness , Michelle Regan, Mar 30, 2010, , 574 pages. Chicago in the 1930s. The time of the Depression. The era of Capone. Just who can you trust if you can't trust Eliot Ness? The beautiful heroine can't tell the good guys from

Perfect Justice: [A Novel of Suspense] , William Bernhardt, 1995, Fiction, 416 pages. Oklahoma attorney Ben Kincaid defends a remorseless white supremacist accused of the murder of a Vietnamese immigrant.

Silent Justice , William Bernhardt, Oct 2, 2012, Fiction, 391 pages. The children of Tulsa are dying, and only Ben Kincaid can bring them justice Leukemia is a terrible disease but also, thankfully, a rare one. So why have eleven children from a

Capitol Conspiracy A Novel, William Bernhardt, Jan 15, 2008, Fiction, 399 pages. Oklahoma defense attorney Ben Kincaid has found himself smack in the middle of more than a few controversies and deadly predicaments and the unexpected leap from his modest

Framed by an older Eliot Ness reminiscing with a biographer in 1957, this uneven imagining of the later career of the famed lawman by Bernhardt (Capitol Conspiracy) takes place mostly in mid-1930s Cleveland. Hired as the city's new safety director, Ness focuses his efforts on cleaning up a town mired in gambling, racketeering and juvenile crime. When dismembered corpses start turning up around Kingsbury Run, a notorious slum, public pressure forces Ness to put his anticorruption plans on hold and turn his attention to catching the Torso Murderer. As more bodies appear, Ness takes drastic steps to smoke out the killer, a gamble that could cost him his career and his life. While Bernhardt's research into Ness's last major case and one of the country's first serial killers is commendable, his heavy-handed prose style turns what should have been a crackling procedural into a plodding melodrama. (Jan.)

Starred Review Bernhardt takes a break from the Ben Kincaid series to tell a lightly fictionalized version of the last major investigation conducted by Ness, the famed treasury agent who put Al Capone behind bars. In the mid-1930s, a killer dubbed the Torso Murderer was on the loose in Cleveland, Ohio, cutting up bodies and leaving them lying around the city. After the police made no headway in their investigation, the mayor put Ness, then the city's public-safety director, in charge of the case, but he was never able to solve it. Now recent developments reveal that he seems to have had a suspect and that the suspect may have been the killer. Bernhardt stays as close to the facts as dramatic license will allow, except that he invents a conclusion that, in his words, is consistent with the historical record, that still allows Eliot Ness to solve his last big case. This is a thrilling novel that is both a fast-paced action-adventure and a character study, a portrait of a resourceful and determined lawman whose political naïveté and straight-arrow demeanor put off many of his colleagues. Fans of *The Untouchables* will get that same period feel from the book as the film version, and it will be a surprise if some clever Hollywood producer doesn't snap up Bernhardt's novel and put Ness onscreen yet again. A rousing success, highly recommended for fans of Max Allan Collins' series starring Ness. --David Pitt --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

My grandfather, George Matowitz, served as Chief of Police during Eliot Ness's tenure in Cleveland. In his excellent book *In the Wake of the Butcher*, local historian James Badal described my grandfather as follows; " Matowitz was a tough, highly competent professional who moved up the ranks and earned his appointment(as Chief of Police)through simple diligence and hard work; he remained in office until 1951, becoming one of the most respected chiefs in departmental history"

This book merits no further discussion. Readers who are interested in the true story are encouraged to read James Badal's book referenced above. Badal is an exceptional writer who devoted years of effort and research to his account which is likely to remain the very best source on these crimes for many years to come.

In 1935, Prohibition may have been over, but there was still some cleanup work to do, and still a lot of illegal booze that made its way into illegal houses of gambling. Riding high on his success at putting mobster Al Capone behind bars, Eliot Ness was assigned a new position --- that of alcohol tax agent in the "Moonshine Mountains" of Ohio. He and his wife moved to Cleveland, where newly-elected Mayor Harold Burton soon recognized the benefits of appointing Ness his Director of Safety to aid in keeping his campaign promises as a Reform Party candidate. Ness enthusiastically jumped in to take care of the traffic woes and police corruption that were nearly paralyzing Cleveland. With his baby face and his Boy Scout manner, he presented the perfect image to the

public. Besides, everybody knew his name and his reputation as a true American hero.

But while Ness was attempting to solve the mayor's problems, a vicious serial killer had started on a spree. Dubbed "The Torso Killer" for his gruesome dismemberments, he left a bloody trail of bodies in his wake. He seemed to be taunting the authorities, and especially Ness, as he dumped torsos and heads of victims in areas that would ensure they would be found quickly. It looked as though Ness had met his match.

Battling this serial killer, the corruption in the police department, the hangover from Prohibition, the miseries of the Depression, a city's desperate need for modernization and a lonely wife threatening to leave him, Ness had his hands over full. His boyish optimism could carry him only so far. To make matters worse, the Torso Murderer, also known as the Mad Butcher of Kingsbury Run, had hit too close to home when he sent postcards to Ness. They contained jeering remarks, a sort of written form of thumbing his nose. [Read more ›](#)

I read this right after reading *Monster of Florence*, another amazing book. This, however, is easily the best true crime novel I've ever read. The characters are very well developed, there is not one single extraneous or superfluous paragraph, it reads quickly, it's exciting, gripping and doesn't seem dated even though it describes an era (recently post-prohibition era Cleveland) from many years ago, Bernhardt provides just enough necessary detail without turning it into a history lesson to make it easy to understand or relate, even if you've never been to Cleveland or don't know much about the 30s. Comparing it to *Monster of Florence* or *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, two of my favorites, this is actually better in my opinion, and I loved those two novels.

I'm a Bill Bernhardt fan, as anyone who has read my previous reviews of his Ben Kincaid series can tell you. But this book is a special kind of jewel. It stands alone and draws you into to a story that is mostly or almost totally real, depending on how you want to take it. Like Eliot Ness, the book does its job with dedication and skill, and cares little about where the trail will ultimately lead. Ness is drawn as a persistent, but flawed character who is only truly alive when he is stretching all of the rules to make the world he lives in safer--by his own definition of safer, of course. You can hate him, idolize him, or complain he's too set in his ways, but you cannot ignore him. Even those who fight him or betray him know that he is someone to respect. I knew nothing of this "last" case of his and learned a great deal about the realities of the mid-1930s from Bernhardt's finely drawn and obviously accurate portrait of Cleveland, Ohio in 1935. His characters deserved my attention and his plot moved at a brisk and compelling pace through a landscape true to its time and circumstances. I love historical fiction as my reviews of William Martin's many fine books discloses. But I now know another favorite author who is as adept in this genre as in the others he's tackled. Let's have more like this, okay Bill?

William Bernhardt, a former trial attorney from Tulsa, Okla., is an accomplished writer of mysteries and thrillers. Everything in his new book, he tells us, is the result of detailed research into the Kingsbury Run Torso Murders in 1930s Cleveland. There's no new information broken about the case, but Bernhardt puts it all together in a fictional narrative with cinematic flare.

Readers who like crime fiction and television cop shows will enjoy their superior knowledge of evidence collection over the creaky, steampunk methods of the post-Depression detectives. Bernhardt's characters on the 1930s Cleveland police force, such as the real-life lead investigator Peter Merylo, have just discovered Sigmund Freud and the practice of "profiling."

Eliot Ness, the real-life lawman who took down Al Capone, is appointed Safety Director of Cleveland, a city that in 1935 is rife with corruption and crime. Although he is determined to fight the organized criminals that run illegal gambling and smuggle hooch from the rural districts, as well as installing traffic lights to reduce the number of traffic fatalities, his activities are thrust into the shade by the Torso Murderer. This vicious madman is America's first known serial killer. Ness succumbs to pressure from a frightened populace and vows that he will catch the killer.

Bernhardt is a skillful writer of thrillers and detective fiction. He creates suspense well and keeps the

reader guessing almost until the end. In the afterword, he states that the minor characters were largely confections of several individuals, and it's clear that he's a little more comfortable writing for those characters he has invented than for the famous Ness himself. It is the hard-working police sergeant, Merylo, who ends up the most sympathetic character in the book, while others remain superficial.

Unfortunately, Ness himself seems not to develop at all, maintaining his stubbornness toward both his work and his personal life, losing our sympathy in long scenes where he is so clueless about the way he behaves toward his lonely wife that it's tempting to skim over those passages and get back to the action.

American Revolution Ancient Egypt Ancient Greece Ancient Rome Ancient World (Other) Arthurian (ca 450-600) Biblical Colonial America Early Medieval (to 1337) Early United States Edwardian English Civil War French Revolution Georgian Gilded Age Great Depression Jazz Age Late Medieval (1338 to 1485) Multi-Period Napoleonic Prehistoric Regency Renaissance Restoration Tudor US Civil War Victorian Viking WW1 WW2

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Once he's jailed Al Capone, what does the nation's foremost gangbuster do for an encore? His rollicking, racket-smashing days in Chicago behind him, Eliot Ness, treasury agent extraordinaire, languishes in Cleveland, restless and underchallenged. When the city fathers suggest that he quit Uncle Sam and sign on as their safety director, he's more than ready. The task? Clean up the police force, clean up the gangs and put a shine on Cleveland's reputation as one of the worst-run cities in the United States. At first, things go well. Ness wastes no time reclaiming some 200 badges from crooked and/or gold-bricking cops. He deals serious blows to big-time gambling. He basks in the return of the glory that was his in Chicago. The press loves him. Kids ask for his autograph, and Ness does little to hide how highly he rates himself as a hero: "Right up there with Charles Lindbergh." But the adulation and self-praise are stopped by the entrance of Andrew W. Andrassy,

or rather his dismembered corpse, followed by a succession of dismembered corpses. Suddenly Ness is dodging brickbats. A terrified city demands that its heralded safety director keep it safe. Ness protests that he's not a homicide detective. Too late: Hubris is hubris. Sticking fairly close to the historical record, Bernhardt (Capitol Conspiracy, 2008, etc.) delivers an interesting rise-and-fall story that would have been more compelling if it were better written.

William Bernhardt is the author of many novels, including Primary Justice, Murder One, Criminal Intent, Death Row, Hate Crime, Dark Eye, Capitol Murder, Capitol Threat, and Capitol Conspiracy. He has twice won the Oklahoma Book Award for Best Fiction, and in 2000 he was presented the H. Louise Cobb Distinguished Author Award "in recognition of an outstanding body of work in which we understand ourselves and American society at large." A former trial attorney, Bernhardt has received several awards for his public service. He lives in Tulsa with his three children.

Cuyahoga County Sheriff Ray Potts looked as though he were about to internally combust. "Do you understand what we're talking about here? There's two of us and a dozen of them. They're heavily armed and they're killers! Frescone has been blamed for at least ten gangland murders. They're transporting illegal hooch worth thousands of dollars and they'll do anything to defend it. These are impossible odds, Ness. Impossible!" Ness glanced at his colleague. In the moonlight, his eyes seemed to twinkle. "Sounds like fun. Ready?"

Ness climbed out of the ditch they were using for cover and headed toward the dock. While he crept forward, he put away his binoculars and unholstered his pistol. He was always more comfortable with a handgun than those bulky machine guns. He'd learned to shoot with accuracy, even from a distance, and he preferred that to the spray-everything-in-sight technique of the tommy gun.

The wind coming off the river chilled him, sending shivers coursing up and down his spine. Seemed no matter how many times he did this, the gnawing in the pit of his stomach, the strange combination of exhilaration and terror, never entirely subsided. Probably just as well. If he ever lost that edge, he might get sloppy. The rest of the world thought he was fearless"well, that was fine. Only he need know better. Only he needed to know that he got scared every time. And it supercharged him like nothing else could.

Ness never wanted to leave Chicago, his hometown, but he was in government service so he had followed orders. After Prohibition ended, he spent about a year working in Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky for the Alcohol Tax Unit within the Bureau of Internal Revenue, chasing down backwoods rumrunners. It was tough work. Things had been simpler in Chicago, when the Volstead Act was still in place. Booze was illegal, period. You saw it, you seized it. And you took the criminals to jail. But Prohibition had been repealed in 1933. Ness didn't object on principle; he enjoyed a drink every now and then. But the new liquor laws complicated his work. He arrested moonshiners, not because they had booze, but because the rotgut they distilled from heaven-knows-what could be dangerous, tainted with leads and sometimes lethal. More important, at least from the standpoint of the federal government, they didn't pay liquor taxes or import duties.

Frescone got his illegal hooch someplace in the blue hills of Kentucky and smuggled it upriver into Chicago. The mob controlled the flow of corn syrup, the easiest and cheapest way to make moonshine liquor, which allowed them to control distribution as soon as the hooch was hatched. He'd been waiting for more than an hour, watching the men unloading casks from the boat and carrying them into a dockside warehouse not far from the Detroit-Superior High Level Bridge. Just a few minutes before, a truck had pulled up, probably to transport the goods to their final destination, one of the Irish gambling parlors that sprang up during Prohibition and remained illegal.

Ness only looked away for a moment, but it was long enough. The goon nearest him lunged forward, swinging. Ness blocked the punch and delivered one of his own to the stomach. The attacker lashed out again, but Ness ducked and the only thing the thug punched was air. Angry, the man rushed forward, arms outstretched. Ness whirled around and reached back over his shoulder, grabbing the man's left hand. With one fluid motion, he pulled the man over and, thrusting upward with his back, flipped him into the air. The man fell in a heap among the casks.

â€œI learned a long time ago that you canâ€™t catch crooks if you canâ€™t trust your own men. Youâ€™ve got to root out the dirty ones and work with whatâ€™s left. The untouchables. The point of this operation wasnâ€™t to seize your booze. Though I will, in time. The point was to find out who the stoolie was. Now itâ€™s clear. It has to be someone inside the county sheriffâ€™s office.â€•

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