



Detective

By Arthur Hailey

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Detective By Arthur Hailey

Hours before he is due to set off on a long-delayed and much-deserved vacation with his wife and son, Det.-Sgt. Malcolm Ainslie takes a phone call he would have been better off ignoring. The caller is the chaplain at Florida State Prison, delivering a message from Elroy Doil, the serial murderer Ainslie helped put on the prison's death row. On the eve of his execution, Doil has asked to make a confession. But there is a condition: he will deliver it only in person to Ainslie.

Ainslie has no choice. Doil was convicted of a double murder, but he was suspected in ten more. No homicide detective could turn down the opportunity to close ten murder cases in a single night. What Ainslie learns from the condemned man, however, propels the ex-priest-turned-cop into an investigation that reaches into the most elite levels of his own department and the Miami city government. And it tests as never before his skills as a cop and his character as a man.

Master storyteller Arthur Hailey is legendary for the scrupulously researched authenticity and electrifying realism of his novels, for taking readers inside the places where men and women endure and sometimes crack under the pressures of jobs that shape our lives and world. Bristling with the sights, sounds, and true-to-life details of a contemporary urban homicide division, and with all the narrative suspense that has made him one of the best-selling fiction writers of our time, *Detective* is the novel Arthur Hailey was destined to write.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Miami police detective Malcolm Ainslie, a former Catholic priest, is summoned to hear the confession of Elroy Doil, a serial killer he helped put away, hours before Doil's scheduled execution. Ainslie has always had doubts about Doil's involvement in the murder of City Commissioner Gustav Ernst and his wife, whom Doil insists he didn't kill, though he is happy to take credit for all the other murders he was charged with (and a couple he wasn't). This novel by the author of famed potboilers like *The Moneychangers* moves slowly and predictably from here, with Ainslie in charge of a new investigation of the Ernst murders. The characters are flat and uninteresting and the writing so poor as to make slogging through this dull story painful indeed. Not recommended.

-?Elizabeth Mellett, *Brookline P.L., Mass.*

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From [Booklist](#)

Miami police department detective Malcolm Ainslie is almost out the bureau door when he takes one last call. It's the chaplain at Raiford Prison. Elroy Doil, a convicted serial killer awaiting execution, wants Ainslie, a former Catholic priest, to hear his final confession. Doil admits to another 10 murders, but he insists he didn't kill city commissioner Ernst and his cop daughter. In spite of Doil's obvious madness, Ainslie believes him and sets about to answer the obvious question: If not Doil, who? The investigation has to start with surviving daughter Cynthia Ernst, Ainslie's former lover and now a superior officer within the department. Hailey, who lives on the best-seller lists, is likely to find himself there once again with this engrossing thriller. There's nothing fancy here, just Hailey doing what he does best: develop a topical plot; move it forward with identifiable, carefully drawn characters; and present a satisfying, logical, and exciting conclusion. Highly entertaining fare. *Wes Lukowsky*

From Kirkus Reviews

Hailey (*The Evening News*, 1990, etc.) makes a welcome return to form with an effectively twisty thriller. On the eve of his execution, serial killer Elroy Doil calls in Malcolm Ainslie, the priest turned Miami detective who put him on death row. In a last confession, the doomed man (suspected of fourteen ritual homicides but convicted of only four) confides that, while he committed most of the murders, there are two victims on Ainslie's list that he did not kill. Although happy to clear the books of many gruesome slayings, the cleric (a scholar whose knowledge of the Book of Revelations led him to Doil) is disturbed enough to reopen the case. The odd casualties out are the politically powerful parents of Cynthia Ernst, until recently an aggressive, ambitious policewoman with whom Malcolm (despite being happily married and the father of a small child) had a torrid affair. Patiently sifting through mounds of evidence old and new, he's eventually able to prove the headline-grabbing butchery of the couple was indeed a copycat murder. He also has enough on his erstwhile paramour to get her indicted. This outcome could prove politically as well as personally embarrassing, since vengeful Cynthia has taken her late father's seat on the city's board of supervisors and used her clout to block Malcolm's promotion from sergeant to lieutenant. How Hailey resolves these conflicts while ensuring that the guilty pay makes for a suspenseful windup as effective as it is cynical. There's also a credible turn at the close as the less than saintly Malcolm weighs a career switch. A police procedural plus, powerfully infused with southern Florida's violent neo-Cuban ambience, and a work that could earn the veteran author a host of new fans. -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Copeland:

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Eric Hodges:

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