

Size doesn't matter

Crime Novella packs punch, suspense

Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

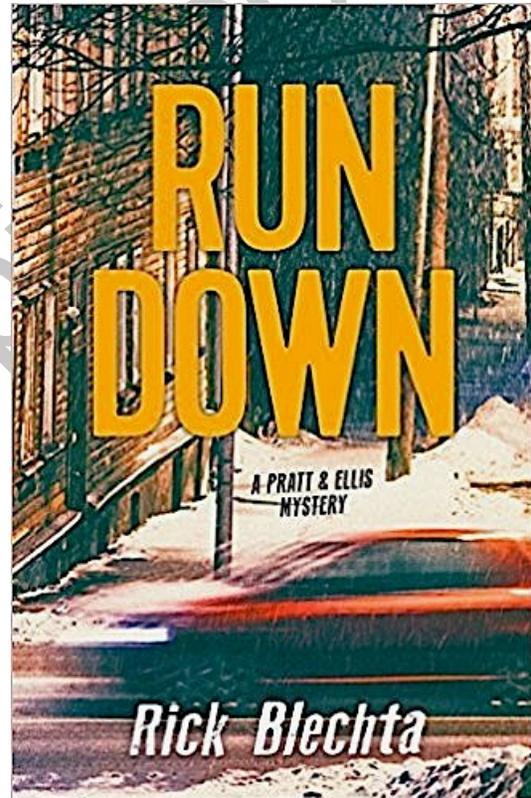
Toronto detectives Merv Pratt and Dave Ellis are handed what seems to be a routine hit-and-run that turns out to be anything but. A young woman named Rebecca Smith has been hit from behind while jogging at night in North Toronto. There are no witnesses.

Ellis and his boss, Inspector "Mac" McDonnell, cannot help noticing the similarity to the case of a man who was killed two weeks earlier. On the face of it the two cases are unconnected. One victim was a third grade teacher, the other a businessman. The only point in common is that both victims were thirty-six; but there is no evidence that they knew each other. Not much to go on.

A routine search of Rebecca's emails turns up a cryptic message: *it's happened. We need to talk n/t.* It's from Curt Dewalt, a co-worker of Rebecca's husband, Darren. But when Pratt and Ellis go to Dewalt's condo to question him they learn he's gone. Before long they learn that the two victims might be tied to a third incident: a man in

Ottawa has also recently died, the victim of a hit-and-run driver.

And he was also thirty-six.



In less than two hundred pages Toronto author Rick Blechta has created a cracking good mystery, one that will challenge and entertain readers until the final pages. Blechta draws on his own considerable knowledge of Toronto and its environs, and not least

his imagination, to fashion a story grounded in people's small-town lives and secretive pasts. Playing out against the high-rise towers of downtown Toronto, *Rundown* is the third novel in the Pratt and Ellis

series, and with eight other novels under his belt, Blechta writes with the assurance and ease we have come to expect from this accomplished author. A fine read.

Previously published on *Reviewing the Evidence*, April, 2017.

Since 2005 more than 500 of Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on such websites as *Spinetingler*, *The Rap Sheet*, *Shots Magazine*, *Crime Time*, *Reviewing The Evidence*, *January* magazine, the *Montreal Review of Books*, the *Ottawa Review of Books*, and *Amazon.com*, as well as on his own award-winning crime fiction site, *Deadly Diversions*. His own crime novel, *Legacy*, is scheduled to appear in the Spring of 2017. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com

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