

Bad City, Bright Lights

Taylor's sequel a winner

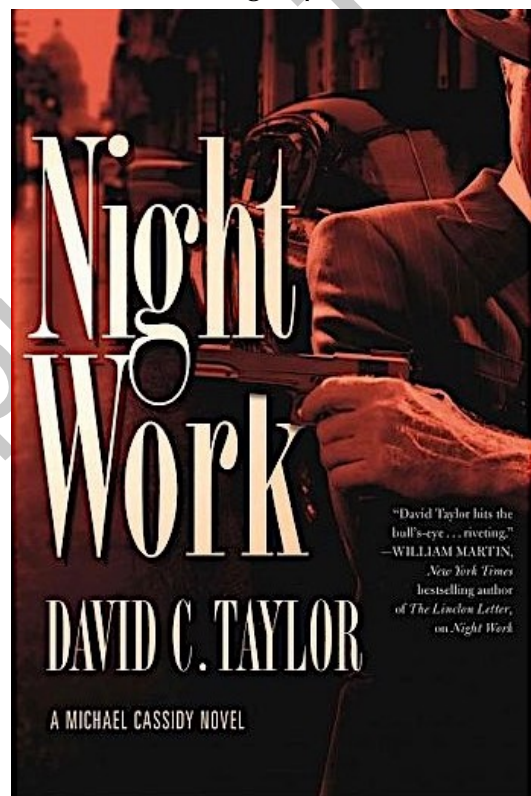
Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

When author David C. Taylor launched his debut novel, *Night Life*, a little over a year ago, I predicted good things from him. It was a stylish noir, set in the McCarthy era, and perfectly captured those troubled times. Taylor wove a compelling portrait of Michael Cassidy, an honest New York City detective up against a powerful adversary, and it was impressive. The sequel, *Night Work*, picks up Cassidy's story four years later, not long after Fidel Castro has successfully invaded his Cuban homeland and established a Communist showpiece a scant ninety miles off America's coastline. He has many mortal enemies, and when he schedules a visit to the headquarters of the United Nations to thumb his nose at capitalist imperialists, Castro's personal safety is put to the test.

Cassidy is dragooned into the security detail charged with keeping Castro alive, but he's not at all sure that the people pulling the strings want him to succeed. And

complicating matters, while in Cuba delivering a prisoner to the



authorities he's run into an old flame from years past, a woman who had been sent by the Russian KGB to make sure he wouldn't interfere with a blackmail operation they'd mounted against some important American political figures. It falls to Cassidy to protect Castro while he assesses just how far he can trust his former lover.

Drawing on the steamy history of the early 1960s, and revealing it through multiple viewpoints, Taylor has delivered a fine, perfectly-paced tale that perfectly captures the drama of an era when superpowers stood toe to toe, and as usual it is left to the little people to make sure the entire world doesn't come unglued, and betrayal by even those most trusted is always a possibility.

As in Taylor's previous novel, his depiction of atmosphere is pitch-perfect:

"They walked out of the park and east on 72nd Street. This was the gold coast of New York, the neighborhoods where the rich lived in limestone and granite towers

with brassbound doors that led to marble-floored lobbies and wood-paneled elevators run by deferent uniformed elevator men who whisked the inhabitants up to the big, airy apartments that looked out over the city high above the smells and noise and the scuffle of the street. Splendid isolation."

And ever the perfectionist, readers will delight in the fact that by the end of his tale the author has tied up all the potential loose ends, while leaving the door open for the next in this lush, riveting series of time-travels back to the America of an earlier, but no less violent, time.

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Since 2005 Jim Napier's reviews and interviews have appeared in several Canadian newspapers and on various crime fiction and literary websites, including his own award-winning site, *Deadly Diversions*. He also published his own crime novel, *Legacy*, in April of 2017. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com

