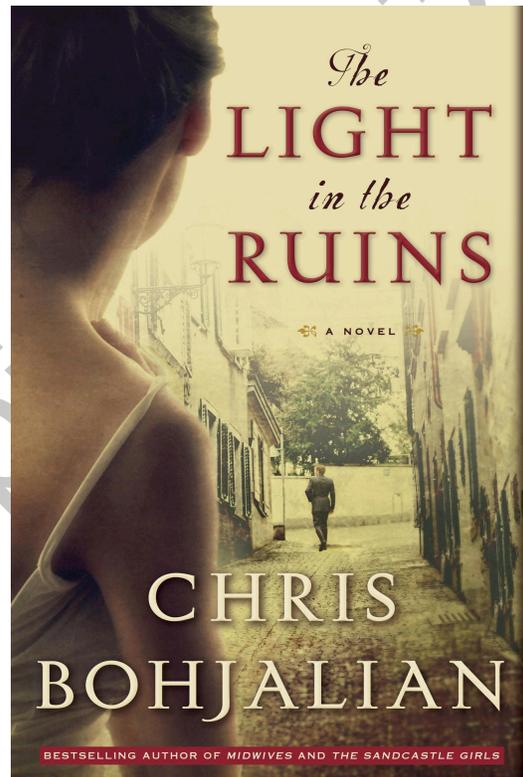


Best of the Best: *Outstanding Crime Fiction of 2013*

Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

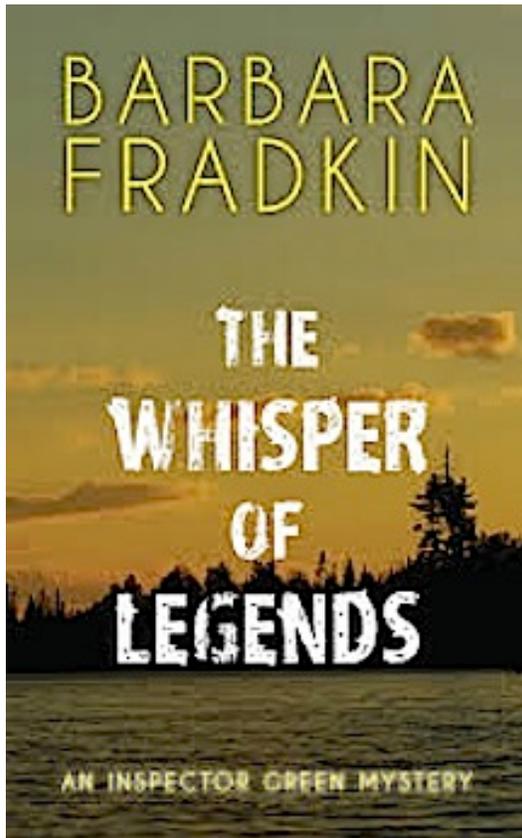
Of the hundreds of crime novels I receive each year, it's fair to say that only a few stick out by the time December rolls around. Here, in alphabetical order by author, I've listed my picks for the outstanding crime novels of 2013. Not all are best-sellers or were written by well-known authors (though most are). Whether your taste runs to historical tales, action-suspense, psychological thrillers, or police procedurals, if you're looking for a fine read, or simply an author that may have escaped your notice, have a look; you won't go far wrong.



The Light in the Ruins,
by Chris Bohjalian
(Doubleday)

Ten years after the end of the Second World War someone is targeting members of an aristocratic Tuscan family. One victim has already been viciously killed, her heart carved from her chest. Detective Serafina Bettini will struggle to understand the events that have led to a series of brutal slayings, and to prevent the killer

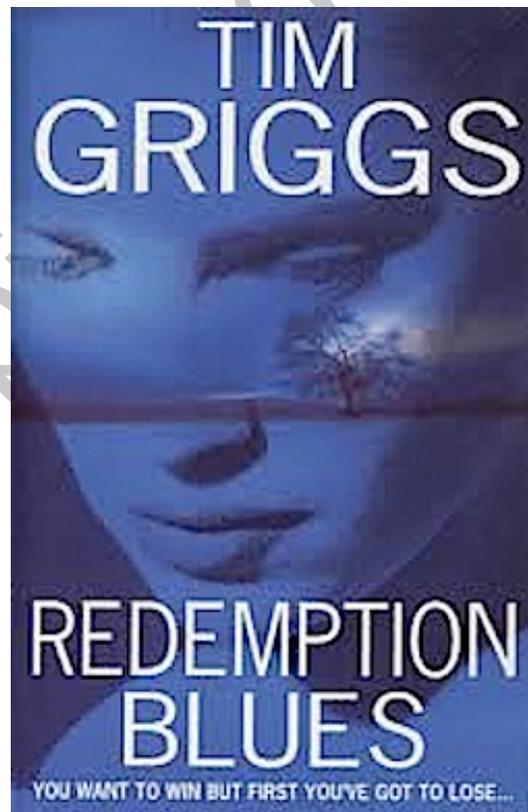
from striking again; and in the process she will be forced to relive her own past during those turbulent times. An atmospheric historical thriller that skillfully explores the conflicting tensions of an occupied people trying to come to terms with events they cannot control, and where their actions can literally make a difference between life and death.



The Whisper of Legends,
by Barbara Fradkin
(Dundurn)

Police Inspector Michael Green finds himself completely out of his element when he learns that his teenage daughter has gone missing in the northern Canadian wilderness. When the local head of the RCMP refuses to launch a search, Green takes matters

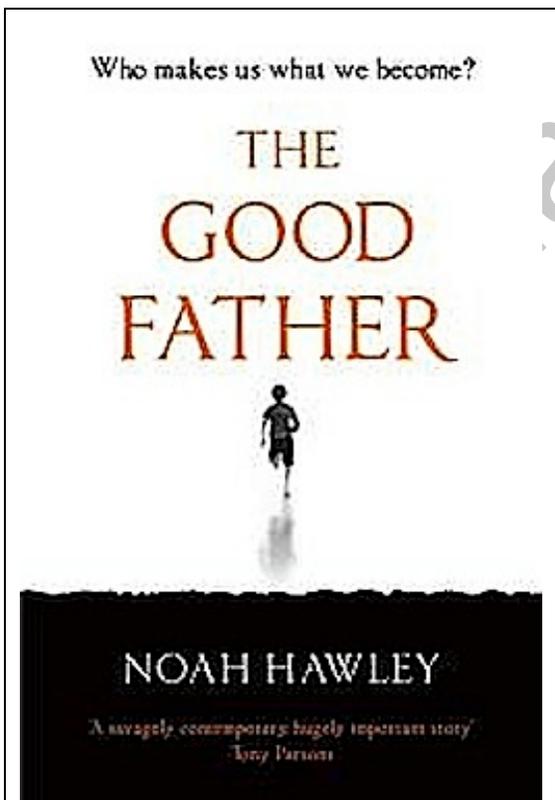
into his own hands. His decision forces him to confront several of his own demons, including fear of flying and trying to cope in a hostile environment the Ottawa-based officer knows absolutely nothing about. Enlisting help from sympathetic locals, Green stumbles on one man's quest that reaches back decades, an obsession that will cost people's lives. Well-researched, well-crafted, and utterly convincing.



Redemption Blues,
by Tim Griggs
(Amazon Digital reprint)

Redemption Blues sold over 300,000 paperback sales in its first incarnation and over a million copies to date. Now revised and reissued, it's the gripping story of Matt Silver, a middle-aged rock star on tour who

decides to abandon drugs and put some order back in his life, beginning with his family. His decision sets in motion a chain of events that begins in tragedy and goes downhill from there. DI Sam Cobb, a near-recluse who is contemplating leaving the force, is drawn into the drama, and tries to help Silver's wife cope in the wake of both his and their daughter's apparent deaths. A poignant and action-based story that will leave readers wanting more; but in a turn that suggests life imitates art, the author died suddenly several weeks ago. His final novel was *The End of Winter*, a Kindle release in September of 2013.



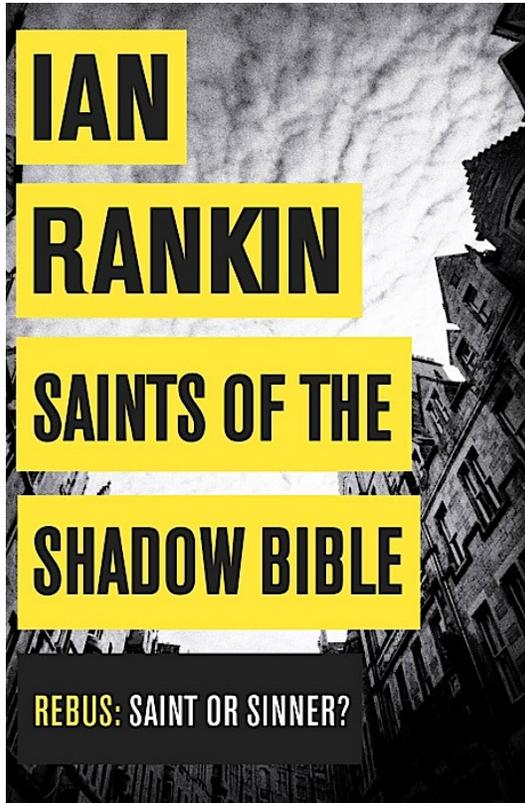
The Good Father,
by Noah Hawley
(Anchor)

Dr. Paul Martin is living a nightmare. His son Daniel dropped out of college and has disappeared for months at a time, only touching base by phone occasionally. One afternoon the family is having a casual conversation when the TV news intrudes: a US Senator and leading presidential candidate has been shot and killed at a political rally in Los Angeles. Within minutes Secret Service officers appear at Martin's door and demand that he come with them. The assassin has been arrested and identified.

It's his son Daniel.

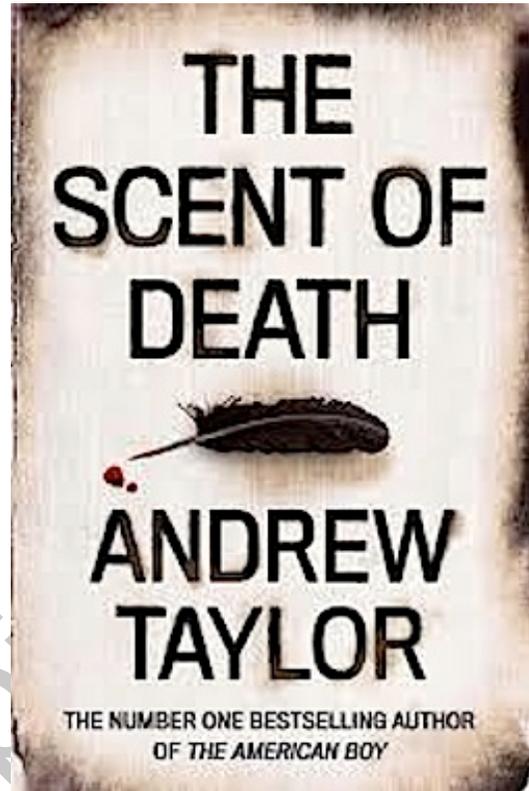
Eloquent in its depiction of a father's agony, *The Good Father* is a powerful and insightful psychological thriller. Author Noah Hawley skillfully explores the impact of a tragedy of historical proportions that no one in the family saw coming, and that turned them, overnight, into national pariahs. Unable to accept his son's guilt, and desperately wanting to believe that he had been at worst a patsy for others, Dr. Allen begins a cross-country odyssey to prove his son's innocence. It is a journey that will cost him his job and test the strength of his marriage, and before it is over the New York-based doctor will prowl the backlands of America where his son spent his final months, in search of answers that his son is unwilling to give.

own head on the line. Fine, nuanced writing by a master of his craft.



Saints of the Shadow Bible,
by Ian Rankin
(Orion)

DI John Rebus is back in harness and investigating a cold case when he's called to the scene of a car crash. Something about it doesn't add up, and Rebus finds himself at odds with the driver's – if she was driving – overprotective father, a man with both powerful connections and a short fuse. Complicating matters, his old nemesis, Complaints Inspector Malcolm Fox is investigating Rebus – or at least his old team. He's been tasked with reviewing a prosecution that went wrong thirty years earlier, and as the only copper from the team still serving, Rebus is caught in the middle, with both his loyalties and his



The Scent of Death,
by Andrew Taylor
(Harper Collins)

Diamond Dagger winner Andrew Taylor has applied his formidable research and writing talents to serve up a compelling tale of greed and violence during the turbulent years of the American Revolution. London clerk Edward Savill travels to New York to verify the claims of dispossessed Loyalists who find themselves on the wrong side during the American War of Independence. When a member of a family he's staying with disappears behind rebel lines, and a body is discovered in the

notorious slums of Canvas town, Savill becomes involved. A fascinating take on ordinary people

caught up in the sweep of events that will shape a new nation.

Since 2005 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, and the *Montreal Review of Books*, as well as on his own award-winning site, *Deadly Diversions*. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com

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