

Dead in the Water: *Serial killer stalks poker players*

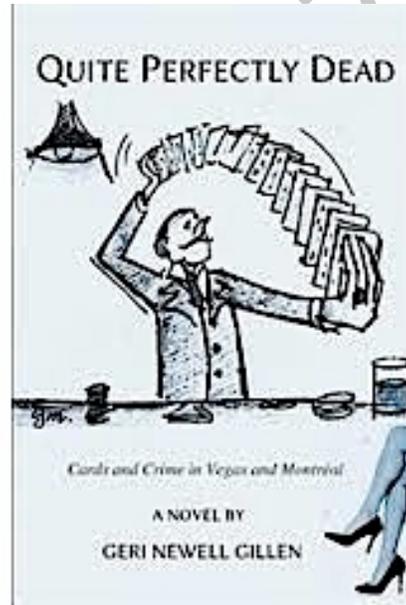
Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

Montreal PI Joe Cameron is an ex-cop with a dark past: working undercover for years, he did more than a few things he's not proud of. When he wound up in hospital with a heart attack and the force offered him the choice between a desk job and retirement, he took the latter. After undergoing his own rehab plan he's clean now and rebuilding his life, carving out a niche as a respected private detective when he gets a call that will turn his life upside down.

Kelly Harper has lost her brother Ryan. He died while visiting Las Vegas, playing in a poker tournament. Apparently he committed suicide after being dropped from the competition. His body was found in his hotel-room bathtub, his wrists slit and a suicide note nearby.

But Kelly is not convinced. She wants Joe to go to Las Vegas and speak with the detectives that investigated Ryan's death. If he's satisfied with their account, she wants him to accompany the body back to Montreal.



When he arrives in Vegas, Joe contacts the Homicide Squad. Detective Rebecca Newcross agrees to meet him at a nearby pub to go over the case. Everything seems above-board, including a suicide note in his own hand, and he returns to Montreal with Ryan's body.

But then events take a turn. Newcross calls with some disturbing information. A toxicology report on Ryan's body reveals the presence of two drugs in his body: Remeron—for which he had a prescription—and Ketamine, a drug primarily used by veteri-

narians, and commonly known as a date-rape drug. When a second death occurs, and the same two drugs are found in the most recent victim, Newcross travels to Montreal to pursue the case. Joe Cameron and Becky Newcross take to each other—until, that is, a third victim is found, this time in Montreal, and one of Joe’s friends on the force points out that Becky Newcross was present in the cities where, and when, each death occurred.

Quite Perfectly Dead is the debut novel of Montrealer Geri Newell Gillen, and it’s an impressive beginning. Gillen has done her homework, and the details lend

authenticity to her depictions of both Las Vegas and Montreal. Gillen’s characters and her use of dialogue are equally convincing, and she proves herself adept at misdirection, creating plot twists that will carry readers to the very end. The supporting characters, such as Joe’s office assistant, Chantal Meauville, nicely round out the tale. Somewhere between a psychological thriller and a police procedural, *Quite Perfectly Dead* will resonate with readers looking for an engrossing and entertaining tale.

Quite Perfectly Dead is published by Deux Voiliers Publishing (2016)

Reviewed by Jim Napier, March, 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

