

Figures don't lie —*but liars can figure*

Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

From the pen of Montreal writer Robert Landori comes an international thriller based on the secretive world of international banking. It is a cautionary tale that might well convince you that keeping your assets in a sock under your mattress is preferable to entrusting them to the shadowy figures in faraway tax havens who prey on people's greed and gullibility. As the author himself points out, it could (and likely does) reflect reality.

On a Sunday night in the Grand Caymans Jack Brennan is summoned to a meeting of bankruptcy liquidators and a high-ranking police official, where he learns that the Overseas Bank of Grand Cayman is unable to meet its debts and must, therefore, be placed in trusteeship. It is a large organization, numbering over 10,000 employees, and among the creditors who have their life savings invested in the bank is the police commissioner himself.

As one of the trustees, Brennan's task is both formidable and complex. Only two weeks earlier his uncle, the US Secretary of the Treasury, had briefed him on a special assignment: to trace the laundering of illicit drug

money held by the Chicago Mafia through Grand Cayman on its way to Columbia, and to provide the information to the US government. Given the banking laws preserving secrecy in Grand Cayman, divulging this information would be a criminal offense, with Jack facing prison if his actions should be exposed.



intersecting with Jack's personal life is Frau Doctor Elize Hammerle, who

serves as auditor of the *Pro Nobis* Foundation, a financial conglomerate that has a net market value of more than 150 million dollars invested in nearly two dozen enterprises in North America and Western Europe. *Pro Nobis* is headed by Doctor Helmut Struder, the grandson of the founder of the banking firm of Moretti & Cie. At a meeting of the *Pro Nobis* board, it is revealed that not one, but two of the foundation's directors are retiring. Enrico, another member of the Moretti family and the board, suggests that rather than find qualified replacements it might be simpler to reduce the number of Board positions from seven to five. Doctor Hammerle does not miss the fact that such a move would give the existing members of Moretti & Cie effective control of the Foundation's decisions, and thus its assets.

As Jack Brennan reviews the records of the failed bank he notices that many of its creditors, although dispersed around the world, can be

readily identified. By law, each will be entitled to refunds for any money deposited after the date of bankruptcy. But one account bothers him: it is sizeable, amounting to over 100,000 dollars, and so far the identity of the owner cannot be determined. More importantly, when he does succeed in identifying the owner of the account Jack Brennan will be faced with solving a puzzle requiring him to solve four equations, and will be drawn into a journey that will take him back in time to the Second World War, threatening both his career and his life.

For most of his professional life Robert Landori was a senior public accountant and a trustee in bankruptcy based in the Caymen Islands, and he has drawn extensively on his own expertise in framing this intricate and spellbinding tale. Readers who are drawn to finely-crafted puzzle thrillers will find much to engage them in Landori's latest, *Four Equations*.

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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, 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*. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com