

Deadly Differences

Crime novel explores the politics of hate

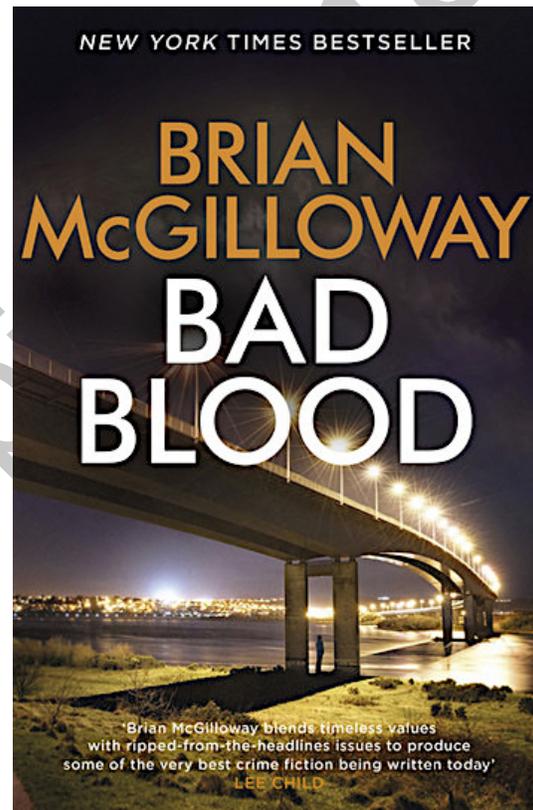
Suspended Sentences

by Jim Napier

Derry, Northern Ireland, 2016: fiery pastor James Nixon is inciting the local population with sermons condemning homosexuality. Fanning the flames the upcoming referendum on Brexit has further polarized the population, and anti-immigrant sentiments are running high, the whole forming a volatile mix that threatens to lead to violence.

When the home of a family of gypsies in Derry is defaced with racist slogans, DS Lucy Black is dispatched to deal with the case. But before they can make much headway she's called away to a nearby park, where a young man has been found beaten to death. There's no ID on the body, but on the back of the victim's hand is an admission stamp for a local club, one that caters to gays.

Pastor Nixon's extremist views are finding receptive ears. Most people in Northern Ireland expected a peace dividend following devolution. It didn't happen. Jobs haven't materialised, and benefits haven't improved. Moreover, the influx of "outsiders" is transforming the housing estates, leaving locals to question their identity



and their prospects for the future. Fear and resentment are running high. As she struggles to bring some form of justice to the lifeless body whose identity remains unknown, Lucy Black must also try to maintain the fragile peace that masks a potentially deadly social conflict simmering just below the surface.

Combining layered sub-plots, convincing characters, and compelling dialogue, *Bad Blood* is the fourth in Brian McGilloway DS Black series, and his ninth crime novel overall. It is an informed and thoughtful novel that

addresses the complex cultural tensions that beset today's Ireland—and, it could be argued, society at large. *Bad Blood* is a fine read, and highly recommended.

Previously published on *Reviewing the Evidence*, July 2018.

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 his own award-winning review site, *Deadly Diversions*. His reviews can also be found on *Amazon.com* and *Goodreads*. His crime novel *Legacy* was published in the Spring of 2017, and the second in the series, *Ridley's War*, is scheduled for release in late 2018. He can be reached at jnapier@deadlydiversions.com



© Jim Napier 2018