

Frankfurt Book Fair

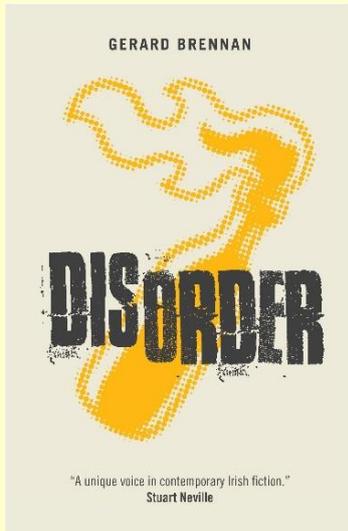
2018

HIGHLIGHTS

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GERARD BRENNAN



Publisher: No Alibis, UK

Rights available: World except English UK & Ireland

Genre: Crime fiction

Disorder

"There was an emergency somewhere in Belfast. There always would be."

Detective Inspector Tommy Bridge, of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, has revenge on his mind. His first act of vengeance is the murder of a small-time thug, Vic Wallace, during a Belfast riot. Not exactly exemplary behaviour from a cop... And that was merely an appetiser.

At the same riot, Jimmy McAuley, a 20-year-old student, is assaulted and scarred for life. And Bridge gets into a fistfight with Clark Wallace, Vic Wallace's bigger, more dangerous cousin. Bridge is rescued by DS Patricia 'Dev' Devenney. The madness is caught on camera by investigative journalist, Grace Doran. In the wake of the riot, Clark Wallace vows to track down his cousin's killer. Mistakenly, he fixes on Jimmy McAuley as the most likely culprit. DI Bridge offers to protect Jimmy, but only because he thinks he can use him to further his own plans.

Jimmy and Grace are head-hunted by Joe Soap, the CEO of a private security firm. Soap wants to win a contract through which his security agents can assist the police in the restoration of order at riots.

Grace and Jimmy, following fifteen minutes of viral internet fame, are to be used as the poster boy and girl of this new venture. They're a perfect fit, until Grace starts digging for dirt... And while this plays out, a new flurry of riots rage on through the streets of Belfast...

The Times Crime Club Selection. Selection Books Ireland Magazine, Summer 2018

"A dark, disturbing and satiric look at the absurdity of politics, power and crime in present-day Belfast."
—**The Guardian Recommended Reads**

"Authentic street dialogue and surprising black humour" —**Adrian McKinty**

"A unique voice in contemporary Irish fiction." —**Stuart Neville**

"Gritty, compelling and original Belfast noir. And what an ending!" —**Liz Nugent**

"*Disorder* reads like Adrian McKinty adapting one of Carl Hiaasen's shaggy dog tales for a Northern Ireland setting, a coal-black comedy caper in which everyone seems to be feeding off the manic energy generated by the potential for violence that is stitched into every page." —**The Irish Times**



Gerard Brennan's short stories have appeared in several anthologies; including three volumes of *The Mammoth Book of Best British Crime* and *Belfast Noir*. He co-edited *Requiems for the Departed*, a collection of crime fiction based on Irish myths which won the 2011 Spinetinger Award for best anthology. His novella, *The Point*, was published by Pulp Press in October 2011 and won the 2012 Spinetinger Award for best novella.

Gerard has been featured on *Arts Extra* and *Talkback* on BBC Radio Ulster, interviewed for *The Irish News*, *The Belfast Telegraph*.

He has received five 'Support for the Individual Artist Programme' awards from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and two 'Individual Development' awards from Northern Ireland Screen.

MARTIN LONG

The Dragon Eye series



Rights available: World English and Translation, ex. French (In Octavo)

Genre: Crime fiction

Following his wife's death Public Security Bureau officer Tian Haifeng is transferred to his home town of Nanjing as CID Senior Inspector. Living with his sister and teenage son, he has made his mark on his old patch, gaining the trust of Divisional Head Hu Tang and working closely with junior officer Jin Yun.

Haifeng sticks out in a crowd with his burnished skin and face of a mountain peasant – certainly not the face of his deceased Han mother or drunkard Han father, and with each case he works on, he is unconsciously seeking his own origins. For him, an unsolved murder is an unread story and a betrayal of the victim.

As a detective, Haifeng is not the classic hard-nosed loner. Though he doesn't suffer fools, he is a man who understands the underdog and the downtrodden, and fights for them. He has to navigate the political minefields of his job, raise a teenage son, and handle his own love life. China is changing, and so must Haifeng.

This originality of this series is in its blend of crime fiction with the discovery of local culture in widely diverse regions of China: Xinjiang in the remote north-west, Yunnan in the foothills of Tibetan plateau, the capital Beijing, the “renegade” island of Taiwan, and the north-east province of Shandong, for the first five in the series.

The investigations take the reader off the beaten path, avoiding, on the whole, over-familiar Chinese issues such as pollution, politics and freedom. Instead, they are woven from myriad of every-day incidents of a uniquely local colour – elements and leads that Tian Haifeng discovers and follows in each case.

Although the series develops chronologically each book can be read as a stand-alone crime novel. The French publisher of Martin Long, In Octavo, has started the series with *The Sisters of Beijing* (“Les Soeurs de Pékin”).

The Fathers of Xinjiang

Senior inspector Tian Haifeng of the Nanjing Public Security Bureau has seen more murder victims than he can remember, yet the ancient remains of a woman dug out from a peat bog astound and haunt him. The body is destroyed and an archaeology student is murdered. Defying orders to halt the investigation, Haifeng makes the case his own. He follows a trail across China from the banks of the Yangtze River in Nanjing to the Taklamakan Desert, and across time from contemporary China to the ancient origins of Xinjiang. Arriving in the wild frontier province with tensions running high between Uighur Muslims and Chinese security forces (still very much a current issue), Haifeng realises he has unearthed much more than a simple corpse.

Xinjiang too has its own ancient corpses – sun-dried Caucasian mummies attesting to the presence of Caucasian colonisation of the region long before the Chinese arrived. In the war of propaganda against separatism, the politically sensitive mummies are an unacceptable embarrassment for the Chinese government. Archaeology has become a new battle ground.

In Xinjiang, and aided by Mai Jing, the friend of a local archaeology professor, Haifeng picks up the trace of the Nanjing murderer – a government security officer – at a secret archaeological site. The fabricated excavation and its fake finds will change Chinese history forever and put an end to separatism – the unearthing of the so-called Fathers of Xinjiang will settle Beijing's claim on the region. Uncovering the plot, both Mai Jing's and the professor's lives are in danger.

Haifeng knows the case is way above the head of a simple senior inspector, but has no choice. The truth was destroyed once in Nanjing and he refuses to let it happen twice.

The Mothers of Yunnan

A destitute monk is murdered in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen in a theme park. A botched enquiry files the death as an accident and fails to identify the victim. Haifeng's niece, witnessing the murder, is traumatised by the incident. For Senior Inspector Haifeng, an unsolved murder is a betrayal of the victim and the family. Though on vacation in the region, he is unable to ignore his niece's suffering and his professional instinct.

In search of the monk's identity and, unconsciously, of his own, Haifeng picks up the case unofficially. At the same time, he is struggling with a truculent teenage son who is violently rejecting his father. In an attempt to save his relationship with the boy, he enrolls him in the inquiry and sets off on a voyage across Yunnan to the foothills of Tibet and finally to the Kingdom of Women.

China boasts of its 56 ethnic minorities that make up a harmonious nation. Haifeng has never heard of the Mosuo – an unrecognised people living by their remote mountain lake, whose unique culture is quickly disappearing. He discovers a matriarchal society with no concept of marriage, of fathers or husbands; he discovers a mountain paradise and a sacred lake; he discovers an ancient religion and its shamanic rituals; he discovers a people in danger from rampant tourism and the financial greed that can lead to murder.

The Sisters of Beijing

Modern-day China: Widower Tian Haifeng joins a police-force dating web site. Against all hope, the senior CID inspector is contacted by the radiant and charming Bao Yu, and he finds himself daring to love again for the first time since his wife's death.

Bao Yu supposedly has business in Shanghai, only her mutilated body is found in a courtyard house in Beijing belonging to a lesbian in the Beijing jet set. The local PSB have already pinned the crime on her, but have not caught her. Haifeng is faced with the pain of both loss and betrayal.

He senses that the case is far from closed and discovers a diary written by Bao Yu in the seventies. Its pages reveal the dreams and illicit loves of the post-Mao years – a short-lived springtime of hope and youthful freedom that would soon be crushed (1978-84, a much-ignored period and a turning point in Chinese history). Studying the diary, he is convinced that the true murderer is hidden in its pages. He tracks down her old companions one by one – who would want to kill Bao Yu, the only Sister of Beijing who escaped the repression that followed the springtime?

As his investigation peters out, he receives astounding news: Bao Yu is not dead, but is the victim of a car accident in Shanghai, and in intensive care. The case is turned on its head. The mutilated body was not hers – yet it carried her ID. Was the real Bao Yu the intended victim, or the one who usurped her identity and stole her diary? Will she again become a target for the murderer?

Before Haifeng can get to Shanghai, she disappears from the hospital. Again, Haifeng has only the diary to guide him. The past is only yesterday, they say in the old Beijing alleys. Haifeng realises it is true, and must move quickly to find Bao Yu. It leads him to an unconsumed love that has not faded over the decades – and one that is expressed in a uniquely Chinese way.

The Cousins of Taiwan

The discovery of a mutilated corpse at the senior inspector's wedding reception in Nanjing is hardly a good omen. Drop the case and get on with your married life, his colleagues beg him. Unable to shake it off, the vicious crime peruses him to his honeymoon destination on the renegade island of Taiwan.

Is Taiwan a part of China, belonging ultimately to Beijing or simply a cousin of the mainland? Haifeng discovers a tranquil, welcoming people who were spared the madness and the scars of the Cultural Revolution and the frenetic destruction of its natural resources – a China that could have been and that has conserved its greatest treasures. But is it really a paradise?

Haifeng identifies the wedding-day victim as Taiwanese – slaughtered using an ancient Taiwanese art of massage knives. The murder is just the first in a series, each linked to an ancient Chinese craft, and each victim mutilated accordingly – using calligraphy, ceramics, ornate glass and carved jade. With no official China-Taiwan police cooperation between the two adversaries, how can Haifeng stop the butchery and get on with his life?

Working off the record with his Taiwanese counterpart, the link between the victims becomes clear to Haifeng – all from families that fled the communist troops seventy years earlier, and seeking refuge with the nationalists in Taiwan. What crimes had their fathers committed whilst fleeing for their children to be butchered this way?

Others are on the list. He must track them down on both sides of the Taiwan Straits and warn them, only the serial killer is one step ahead – until uncultured Haifeng is plunged into a volume of classic Chinese literature and into the ancient art of hand-made silk brocade, and understands what exactly is at stake.

The Dragons of Shandong

A corrupt Nanjing government official is murdered on a snow-covered beach in Qingdao, a coastal city in Shandong, in north-east China. Sent to follow the local investigation, Senior Inspector Tian Haifeng is not on home turf. Should he slow down the investigation for fear of the sleaze it will expose back home in Nanjing or should he do his own investigating?

Much to the irritation of his Qingdao CID counterpart, to elucidate the case, Haifeng draws characters in the snow using goose feathers, speaks in metaphors, and meditates on the famous local black dumplings.

For Haifeng too is being toyed with. He knows a young local woman with dyed red hair knows more about the murder than she admits. She spends her mornings beach combing and her days selling sports shoes in a store for a pittance. Going by the name of her hero, Jane Austen, the impoverished woman who was never able to study literature at university, leads Haifeng on with riddles and references to the great foreign writer.

She guides him through the old, crumbling German concession and the hidden quarters of Qingdao, refusing to tell him bluntly what she witnessed – for she and her family have suffered too much at the hands of ignorant brutes. The woman – a metaphor for the city itself – wants Haifeng to understand the *why* of the murder before the *who*, to understand life before he investigates death.

In the story of life and death that Haifeng must understand, it all comes down to traditional kites and paper lanterns.



As a speaker of Mandarin, **Martin Long** has been visiting China regularly for fifteen years, from major cities to remote rural settings, in search of authentic material for his novels. With dual British-French nationality, he is intrigued by the challenge and richness of cultural differences.

After a career as the head of a higher-education language department in Paris, Martin Long now writes full-time. In addition to his Chinese crime novels, he has produced a book for children, a stand-alone novel about Paris and collections of short stories.

Keeping up with the fast pace of change in China today, he is continuing the Dragon Eye crime series and exploring new regions of the country.

CRAIG McDONALD



Publisher: Down & Out Books, USA

Rights available: World translation

Genre: Historical fiction; Coming-of-age

Once a World

Across a series of awards-nominated, internationally praised novels, Craig McDonald has depicted the secret history of the 20th Century through the eyes of author Hector Lassiter. Now, in this standalone prequel to the Lassiter saga, we see a young Hector and America as both struggle to find their way in an increasingly dangerous new age.

Once a World is a *bildungsroman* set in a time seemingly distant, yet disarmingly of the moment—a legendary *then*, anticipating our disturbingly uncertain *now*.

At the age of sixteen, aspiring writer Hector Lassiter, inspired by propaganda and the siren's song of throbbing war drums, lies about his age, saddles up, and rides off into Mexico behind the dashing General "Black Jack" Pershing and a blood-lusting Lt. George S. Patton to capture Pancho Villa and avenge the deaths of numerous American murdered in a bloody attack of a border town.

But the expedition south of the border is swiftly laid bare as a cynical training ground for a far deadlier conflict, one that will find these same young soldiers scrambling to survive in the trenches of France in the so-called "War to End All Wars."

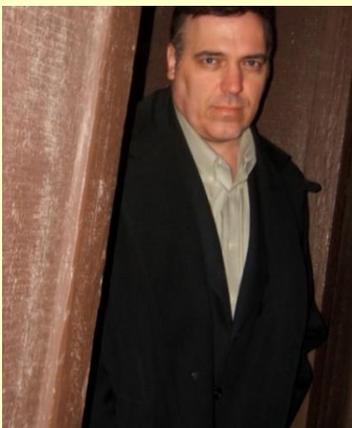
Soon enough, the under-age Hector indeed finds himself in Europe, fighting in the "Great War" and driving ambulances to and from the Italian front with fellow novelists-in-waiting, John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway.

Once a World is novel about war, but also a love story that is at once epic and intimate, a portrait of the artist—and the four remarkable women who shape the young Hector Lassiter as a writer and a man—during a defining moment of world history. A portrait of the crime novelist as a young man.

"Reading a Hector Lassiter novel is like having a great uncle pull you aside, pour you a tumbler of rye, and tell you a story about how the 20th century really went down." —**Duane Swierczynski**

"A writer of truly unique voice, approach, and ambition." —**Michael Koryta**

"What critics might call eclectic and Eastern folks quirky, we Southerners call cussedness—and it's the cornerstone of the American genius. As in: "There's a right way, a wrong way, and my way." You want to see how that looks on the page, pick up any of Craig McDonald's novels." — **James Sallis**



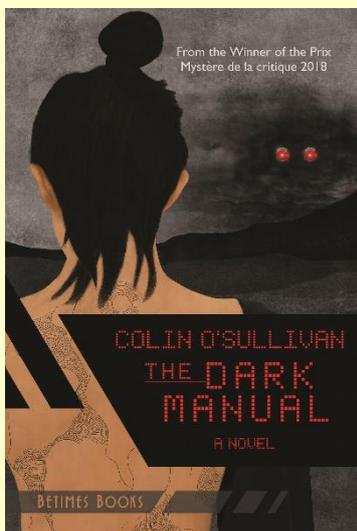
Craig McDonald is an award-winning author and journalist.

The Hector Lassiter series has been published to international acclaim in numerous languages (French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Mongolian, and Spanish).

McDonald's debut novel *Head Games* was nominated for Edgar, Anthony and Gumshoe awards in the U.S. and the 2011 Prix Polar Saint-Maur en Poche in France. It was published as a graphic novel in 2017 by First Second Books (Macmillan, USA)

The Lassiter series has been enthusiastically endorsed by a Who's Who of crime fiction authors, including Michael Connelly, Tom Piccirilli, Margaret Maron, Stephanie Pintoff, Ken Bruen, Megan Abbott, George Pelecanos, etc.

COLIN O'SULLIVAN

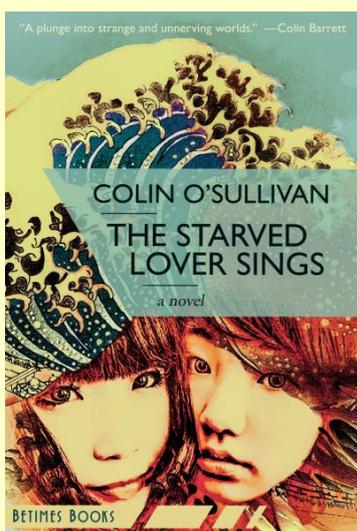


Publisher: Betimes Books, Ireland

Rights available: World translation

Other rights sold: Film/TV rights to Entertainment One /eOne, USA

Genre: Sci-fi Noir; Literary



Rights available: World translation, ex. Russian (Arkadia Books)

Genre: Literary fiction; Speculative

The Dark Manual

Japan-based Irish writer Colin O'Sullivan couples his usual lyrical flourishes with tense and often terrifying noir-ish scenes, to present before us an unsettling vision of an anxious woman teetering in an anxious time.

Fans of *Black Mirror*, the dark humour of early Haruki Murakami, and even Asimov or Aldiss, will be keen to sample this frantic foray into a near and nery future, **soon to become a TV series**.

Susie Sakamoto, an Irishwoman in Japan, spends her days drinking heavily and cursing the home robot that takes care of all her domestic needs. She despises the *thing* her dead husband designed and is under the impression that it is about to do her harm.

To escape the overwhelming grief of her missing family, she takes to the night-time and the lawless section of the city, loitering in seedy bars with her wild, drug-fuelled, hypersexual friend, Mixxy.

Are Susie's persecutions merely a result of her own paranoia? Or will she have to search for the mythic Dark Manual, to find a way to finally switch off the homebot and end her litany of woes? But it might already be too late...

"The Dark Manual defies easy categorisation; it's a literary novel, a very desperate tale of love and loss, a noir thriller, of real and imaginary threats and a sci-fi speculation (which could be read as prescient future gazing). [...] *The Dark Manual* is a mature rounded work, assured and confident, at times lyrical and beautiful but also punchy and sharp." —**Book Noir**

The Starved Lover Sings

"I don't know the rules of the world."

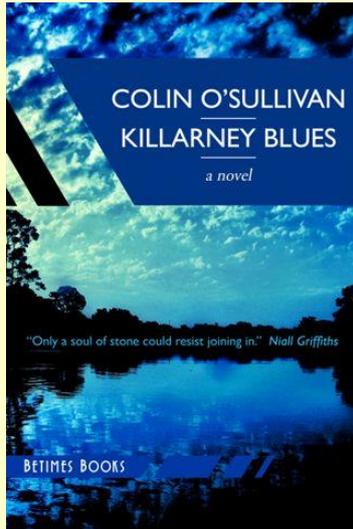
How much can one land take? How much can one *man* take? What if the rains kept coming? What if the huge waves kept crashing in? What if the plates kept shifting and volcanoes kept up their choking spew?

It's the not-too-distant-future and a certain Asian country is in physical and moral tatters. What was once a polite society has become fouled and corrupted. Part-time referee and full-time PE teacher, Tombo, stands in the middle of all this, trying to find fairness and balance in his own life, as things continue to crumble around him.

Added to his personal miseries – missing-presumed-dead daughter, eerily silent wife, unrequited lusts – comes the unwanted, unwarranted attention of two, mean-spirited adolescent girls, who have decided that he is to be their "chosen one".

Can this harangued Everyman battle against the forces that envelop him, or will he too fall to the whims of the new dystopia?

"Colin O'Sullivan's writing is an antic, mordant and perverse plunge into strange and unnerving worlds." —Colin Barrett



Rights available: World translation, ex. French (Rivages Noir)

Genre: Noir; Literary

Killarney Blues

Prix Mystère de la Critique 2018, France

Picturesque Killarney might seem the perfect place to enjoy the rare gift of sun but the town has got the blues. Bernard Dunphy, eccentric jarvey and, secretly, a terrific blues guitarist, is pining for Miriam Yates, his unrequited love and has to contend with an ailing mother and an ailing horse.

His friend Jack, a philandering egotist, spins out of control as the novel progresses and savagely murders a man in a raging frenzy. A trio of girlfriends becomes entangled in the terrible webs of their own making.

As the novel swings back and forth from thorny past to tumultuous present, it swings, too, from darkness to light. Darkness: shadow of Bernard's father's tragic past, suicide, abuse, murder. Light: comedic banter, friendship, romance, and the joy and redemptive powers of music.

Killarney Blues offers a glimpse of a very modern Irish town in an economic and moral crisis, as well as the trials and torments of its struggling inhabitants.

"*Killarney Blues* is a Noir novel – but not only – at the farthest reaches of love, desire and loss." —**Lettres d'Irlande et d'Ailleurs**

"Colin O'Sullivan writes with a style and a swagger all his own. His voice – unique, strong, startlingly expressive – both comes from and adds to Ireland's long and lovely literary lineage. Only a soul of stone could resist joining in." —**Niall Griffiths**

"His words swagger with purpose, never meandering too long on a scene, always moving the story forward, even when it goes back in time, like a faded photograph coming into view. Lyrical to a point, one word flowing to the next, hardly stopping." —**Love Sex and Other Dirty Words**

"Carried by a genuine writing talent, *Killarney Blues* is a Noir novel full of melancholy and unfulfilled dreams with a surprising glimmer of hope at the end. Without the slightest naivety. A revelation." —**Le Soir (Belgium)**

"A hard, poignant novel of great humanity... remarkably well written..." —**Rolling Stone (France)**

"In a style that is sometimes luminous, sometimes direct, sometimes poetic, Colin O'Sullivan traces his narrative path, creates incredibly vivid and appealing characters and brings the reader, to the 12-bar beat of the blues, towards a heart-breaking denouement." —**Le blog du Polar de Velda**



Colin O'Sullivan's short fiction and poetry have been published in various print and online anthologies and magazines, in Ireland and elsewhere.

His first novel, *Killarney Blues*, won the Prix Mystère de la Critique 2018 in France.

His second novel, *The Starved Lover Sings*, is coming out in Russia in Spring 2019.

The Dark Manual, his latest, is being made into a TV series by Entertainment One (*The Walking Dead*, *Sharp Objects*, etc.).

Colin O'Sullivan lives in the north of Japan with his family and works as an English teacher.