



Setup on Front Street

Mike Dennis

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"Mike Dennis is a modern master of noir." -- Max Allan Collins, author of ROAD TO PERDITION

"Dennis writes true noir." -- Vicki Hendricks, author of CRUEL POETRY

"...tight, to the point, like a line drawing..." -- Noir Journal

"Fans of Elmore Leonard should find Mike Dennis an author worth watching - and worth reading." -- BooksAndPals.com

Key West, 1991. Don Roy Doyle is back in town. Tough and quick-witted, he's fresh out of prison, where he served three years for a diamond swindle. Now he's back to collect his share of the proceeds, about \$200,000, but the money has vanished.

A local family dynasty which has controlled the island's politics for generations, a cop with a grudge, the FBI, and the Russian mob all have a stake in the action. They're convinced Cuba is on the verge of "opening up", and they all want Doyle gone.

In this tightly-knit town, who can be trusted? And how long can Doyle stay alive?

SETUP ON FRONT STREET is the first novel in Mike Dennis' Key West Nocturnes series. It takes you deep inside the world of Key West noir, behind the margaritas and the sunshine, way back in the shadows and the alleys, where the tourists never go.

Setup on Front Street Details

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Author : Mike Dennis

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From Reader Review Setup on Front Street for online ebook

Drew says

When I picked up this book I hoped for a nice mystery set in the paradise of Key West. What I got was something that seemed to be written in the 1950's detective style. The plot is interesting but the writing grated on me. It seemed a bit hokey at times right out of an old gangster movie. Finally, the characters aren't likable at all. The main character is a racist con-man who just got out of jail and goes right back to his old games. Towards the end he states he want to go straight but by that time I thought he was a low life.

Stan says

Fast good read. Like previous reviews I liked the noir feel of the story. Reading the book made me feel as if I was actually in Key West witnessing the action.

Tim says

This was a fast paced story that was hard to put down. The author did a great job creating a noir feel and it reminded me of reading a James Ellroy book. If you liked L.A. Confidential or The Black Dahlia I think you will like this book. I also enjoyed the Key West setting. The author shows a different side of this town which is typically known for vacationing. I look forward to reading more books from this author.

Michael Tucker says

If you like noir fiction, you'll like this novel. Mr. Dennis writes in a true noir fashion, first person narrative point of view. He's clever in how he introduces his protagonist's physical description and name, Don Roy Doyle. When he describes, Sullivan's, I feel like I'm right there on Duval Street, and can smell the toxic mix of stale beer, sweat, whiskey, and cigarette smoke, and hear the hard-driving sound of rock and roll.

The story takes place in Key West in 1991, and opens with Don Roy Doyle's release from prison. The plot is driven by Don Roy's quest for his \$200,000 share of a diamond heist, for which he was in prison. Mr. Dennis introduces actual historical events to play a backdrop in the plot. These historical events inhibit Don Roy's ability to get his share of the money.

Don Roy, the criminal, and his girlfriend, Norma, the prostitute, become sympathetic characters you root for in spite of their flaws. Together they battle with corrupt politicians, dirty cops, the Russian mob, Cubans, the SEC, and the FBI. It's all there in this fun read.

Robin Jonathan Deutsch says

Pleasant, quick, not earth-shattering by any stretch. Fairly formula driven, but if you're looking for an in

between book, this isn't all too bad. Could have been deeper and more descriptive, more who-done-it, but I'm happy I gave this author a chance.

Mical says

This was a fun book. I gave it a 5 star so it would up the averages when it probably should have been a 4 star. I saw that it has been given some undeserved poor ratings. It is a good book. I enjoyed it very much. It's a fast entertaining read. I plan to read more of Mike's books.

Intoxicated by Books says

I can't believe that this author used to be a pianist! You would never think so from reading his book! Setup on Front Street is a fast paced, remarkably written story that changes the image of Key West as we know it! Dennis does an excellent job making readers want to keep going...not put it down. This book is a page turner with plenty of tension and suspense! The plot is very easy to follow and keeps you on the edge of your seat. Mike Dennis did an excellent job portraying his characters as well as the story.

Keith Nixon says

It's 1991. Don Roy Doyle, a hustler and con artist, is just out of prison after a seven year stretch and he has the scars to prove it. He was jailed for his part in a jewel heist, the only gang member that took the fall. In the opening chapter Doyle steps off a bus to arrive back in Key West and settle a few more scores, in particular he wants his \$200,000 share of the robbery proceeds. He wastes no time and immediately confronts Frankie Sullivan (Sully) a nightclub owner and partner in the original scam. Sully, however, has 'invested' the money in a dubious property deal with the Russians mafia and cannot immediately access it. Doyle gives him a week to do so or expect the worst.

After leaving Sully, Doyle spends subsequent chapters reacquainting himself with characters from his past – Avi Abraham a weapons supplier, BK the mayor and ex-classmate, Ortega the local police officer who threatens to send Doyle back to prison should he step out of line and Mambo DeLima a Cuban criminal. Then Sully ends up dead and Doyle is in the frame for his murder.

And herein lies one of the problems with this novel - new characters pop up almost every chapter through literally the first half of the book (and one or two in the latter half as well) including BK's patriarchal father, Wilson J Whitney, and Doyle's ex-girlfriend Norma who's turning tricks for BK (she immediately becomes his current girlfriend), BK's needy wife Rita, and a variety of Russian gangsters among quite a few others. Unfortunately, the time spent introducing characters, their past relationship to Doyle and / or the crime, means the rest of the plot feels crammed into the second half primarily because Setup on Front Street is relatively short at 50,000 words. So little space is left to fully explore the plot. For example Ortega the policeman is only made reference to once more in passing, FBI special agent Ryder appears then shifts to the background until it's time, all too soon and all too easily, to take down the bad guys (helped by yet another character introduced to help Doyle get the information he needs).

That being said, Setup on Front Street was an enjoyable read, the story skipped along at a decent pace and the characters, despite there being so many, were in the main colourful and entertaining. The plot is set against an interesting historical backdrop - the locals are convinced Castro is about to fall and Cuba will be a

fantastic opportunity for a new criminal gold rush that is about to begin and the various factions want a piece of the action.

If I were to come across Mike Dennis' books in the future, I certainly would pick them up and, I am sure, enjoy them.

**Originally written for "Books and Pals" book blog. May have received a free review copy. **

Bert says

I like Key West, and I like crime mysteries, and so I was predisposed to like this book. Our protagonist is a late-30's ex-con who just did 3 years hard time because he wouldn't reveal his accomplice in a grifters scheme. He returns to town to claim the \$200K which was his share of the scam. Lots of action surrounding Russian mobsters planning to move into Cuba when Castro departs. My rating: ????

Dorothy Gagnon says

Plans to Take His Life Back

Don Roy arrived in Key West to collect his share of the money only to find his partner heavily invested it with the Whitneys. The last 3 years in prison, he planned his life with Norma, and the Whitney family was not going to ruin his plans.

Finding Norma working as a prostitute to pay her boyfriend the mayor, BK's gambling debts, leads him to going after BK and his father. Norma is better than that, and his girl.

Great suspense and murder, along with a plot to take down the Whitneys so he can be with Norma and get his money. Can he do it?

Princ3ss says

This was exactly what I needed to break up the monotony of the genres I was reading. I felt like I was in a reading slump. This book put me back on track.

The story itself was fast paced with a good plot. I thought there could have been a little more to the story, I'm not sure what I was looking for but I was wowed by it.

Debbie (Doc) says

Sometimes, books just hit a sore spot, and unfortunately, this one did just that. I have to say that I really did like the plot and the buildup of the characters. Although, the end was predictable, I did enjoy it. I gave the low rating due to some parts in the book that I felt were totally unnecessary. The author appeared to be extremely discriminating, especially to Cubans and to blacks. His remarks had absolutely nothing to do with

the storyline, in my opinion. Several times, he referred to blacks using the N word, which I absolutely despise. I have many friends who are African Americans and I would be totally embarrassed to suggest this book to them, and for that reason I gave it only 3 stars. I would like to read additional books by this author but more than likely, won't.

Judi Rae says

I'm only 7% into this book and there have been at least 3 racial slurs already. I'm not a prude. I understand the world's not always pretty and sometimes in a book it's a defining part of the character. This, however, didn't seem necessary to me. You have to make the "hero" have some likeable traits and not be completely heinous in order to make the readers care about him. The author was not successful in this regard. I don't care about Don Roy. At all. It's rare for me to stop reading a book before I finish but I just can't keep going.

Ben says

I am a big fan of noir mystery thrillers, especially ones that are usually described as "gritty", "intense" or "dark." After all, doesn't noir mean dark?

So yes, the antihero of Mike Dennis' book *SETUP ON FRONT STREET* is not a very nice guy. He is an ex-con, a grifter, a thief and an associate of others like him. If he has any redeeming qualities, it is that he a stand-up guy who stood for a prison sentence rather than rat on others who took part in the heist, nor tell where all the money was hidden.

Thus flows the plot. Released on parole, Don Roy Doyle, returns to Key West to get his share of the loot, and to find his woman whom he has not heard for a long time. What he finds is that the money is gone, put into some kind of money-laundering scheme investment racket, and lost, poof. And that the woman he loved has been put out to prostitution to pay off the gambling debts of a playboy mayor with whom she became involved.

Mayhem results. Doyle fights treachery with treachery, and with violence. There is not so much detecting here as brute force, simply finding who was behind the scheme to steal the loot, and then punish his enemies. The writing here is straightforward and simple, as is the plot. None of the characters are good guys, not even the FBI agent who threatens to entrap Doyle into a setup that will send him place to the slammer for 20 years unless he helps the Feds catch the "Man Behind It All."

Some reviewers have complained that Doyle is racist; he is. He does not like anyone much, white or black, but most of his criminal associates are Cubans, and it is they, and a long-time black associate, in whose hands he places his life. Yes, there is some sexual content-his lost lover works in a massage parlor after all-but Doyle redeems her, and is true in the face of some temptation from a bored wife.

Yes, I enjoyed the book and recommend it to lovers of tough, gritty noir novels. I plan on reading more of Mr. Dennis.

Mahree Moyle says

Hard to tow the straight and narrow with a past riddled in crime. Nearly makes one understand this whole separate life than what most of us are used to. Good character build-up and great storyline. Will read other books by this author.

