



The Crime of Our Lives

Lawrence Block

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An MWA Grand Master tells it straight: Fredric Brown: “When I read *Murder Can Be Fun*, I had a bottle of bourbon on the table and every time Brown’s hero took a drink, I had a snort myself. This is a hazardous undertaking when in the company of Brown’s characters, and, I’ve been given to understand, would have been just as dangerous around the author himself. By the time the book was finished, so was I.” Raymond Chandler: “You have to wonder how he got it so right. He spent a lot of time in the house—working, reading, writing letters. He saw to his wife, who required a lot of attention in her later years. And when he did get out, you wouldn’t find him walking the mean streets. La Jolla, it must be noted, was never much for mean streets.” Evan Hunter: “In his mid-seventies, after a couple of heart attacks, an aneurysm, and a siege of cancer that had led to the removal of his larynx, Evan wrote *Alice in Jeopardy*. And went to work right away on *Becca in Jeopardy*, with every intention of working his way through the alphabet. Don’t you love it? Here’s a man with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel, and he’s perfectly comfortable launching a twenty-six book series.” Donald E. Westlake’s *Memory*: “Here’s the point: Don’s manuscript arrived, and we had dinner and put the kid to bed, and I started reading. And my wife went to bed, and I stayed up reading, and after a while I forgot I was having a heart attack, and just kept reading until I finished the book around dawn. And somewhere along the way I became aware that my friend Don, who’d written a couple of mysteries and some science fiction and his fair share of soft-core erotica, had just produced a great novel.” Charles Willeford: “Can a self-diagnosed sociopath be at the same time an intensely moral person? Can one be a sociopath, virtually unaware of socially prescribed morality, and yet be consumed with the desire to do the right thing? That strikes me as a spot-on description of just about every character Willeford ever wrote. How could he come up with characters like that? My God, how could he help it?” An MWA Grand Master and a multiple winner of the Edgar, Shamus, and Maltese Falcon awards, Lawrence Block’s reflections and observations come from over a half century as a writer of bestselling crime fiction. Several of his novels have been filmed, most recently *A Walk Among the Tombstones*, starring Liam Neeson. While he’s best known for his novels and short fiction, along with his books on the craft of writing, that’s not all he’s written. *THE CRIME OF OUR LIVES* collects his observations and personal reminiscences of the crime fiction field and some of its leading practitioners. He has a lot to say, and he says it here in convincing and entertaining fashion.

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