



American Tabloid: Underworld USA (1) (Underworld USA series)

By James Ellroy

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CHOSEN BY TIME MAGAZINE AS ONE OF
THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR
"ONE HELLISHLY EXCITING RIDE."

--Detroit Free Press

The '50s are finished. Zealous young senator Robert Kennedy has a red-hot jones to nail Jimmy Hoffa. JFK has his eyes on the Oval Office. J. Edgar Hoover is swooping down on the Red Menace. Howard Hughes is dodging subpoenas and digging up Kennedy dirt. And Castro is mopping up the bloody aftermath of his new communist nation.

"HARD-BITTEN. . . INGENIOUS. . . ELLROY SEGUES INTO POLITICAL INTRIGUE WITHOUT MISSING A BEAT."

--The New York Times

In the thick of it: FBI men Kemper Boyd and Ward Littell. They work every side of the street, jerking the chains of made men, street scum, and celebrities alike, while Pete Bondurant, ex-rogue cop, freelance enforcer, troubleshooter, and troublemaker, has the conscience to louse it all up.

"VASTLY ENTERTAINING."

--Los Angeles Times

Mob bosses, politicians, snitches, psychos, fall guys, and femmes fatale. They're mixing up a molotov cocktail guaranteed to end the country's innocence with a bang. Dig that crazy beat: it's America's heart racing out of control. . . .

"A SUPREMELY CONTROLLED WORK OF ART."

--The New York Times Book Review

From the Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Although it follows his L.A. Trilogy chronologically, Ellroy's visceral, tightly plotted new novel unfolds on a much wider stage, delivering a compelling and detailed view of the American underworld from the late 1950s to the assassination of JFK. Demythologizing the Camelot years, Ellroy (*White Jazz*) depicts a nexus of renegade government agencies, mobsters, industrial tycoons and Hollywood players fueling the rise and fall of the Kennedy administration. The story hinges on the entanglements of three 40-something government mercenaries who play major, behind-the-scenes roles in such events as the Bay of Pigs and the assassination of the president. Suave and sybaritic Kemper Boyd pimps for JFK while carrying out simultaneous undercover work for the CIA, FBI, Robert Kennedy and the Mob. Hulking, sadistic ex-L.A. cop Pete Bondurant, a hired killer for Jimmy Hoffa, digs dirt for a drug-addled Howard Hughes while training a cadre of bloodthirsty, anti-Castro Cuban exiles off the Florida Coast. Idealistic FBI wiretapper Ward Littel, following a series of disastrous anti-Mafia operations, becomes a Machiavellian mob lawyer. All three rub shoulders with an enormous cast of real-life characters, including clever, two-dimensional portraits of the Kennedy family, J. Edgar Hoover and Jack Ruby. Exercising his muscular, shorthand prose, Ellroy moves the narrative from break-in to lurid assignation to brutal hit job in a tightening gyre that culminates in the murder of the president. While not especially convincing as revisionist history, this is a cool and riveting evocation of a cultural epoch abounding in government surveillance, endemic corruption and yellow journalism. BOMC and QPB selections; author tour.

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From Library Journal

Critics either adored or abhorred Ellroy's last crime novel, *White Jazz*, for its gritty subject matter and "word jazz" prose. *American Tabloid*, a fictional examination of the conspiracy-to-end-all-conspiracies-the assassination of JFK -will contain more of the same.

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From [Booklist](#)

James Ellroy's great gift as a writer is his ability to view history from the bottom up. Appetites, he has shown us again and again--but especially in his L.A. Quartet of crime novels--are what drive human events: money, power, and sex lurk behind every headline, and to follow their trail is to expose a slippery umbilical cord of sleaze connecting high life to low life, ideological posturing to the fundamental hungers that define us all. Given this worldview, it was inevitable that Ellroy would come eventually to that paradigmatic tabloid moment in American history: the assassination of JFK. Forget Camelot, grassy knolls, and Oliver Stoneish righteous indignation: Ellroy's story reads like your typical office power struggle gone bad. At the center of it all are three extremely bent law-enforcement types: two FBI agents and an ex-L.A. cop turned CIA operative. The labyrinthine machinations that take these three through multiple coalitions involving JFK, RFK, J. Edgar Hoover, Howard Hughes, Jimmy Hoffa, various mobsters, and a few boatloads of anti-Castro Cubans are detailed in Ellroy's signature staccato style. His short sentences and shorter paragraphs read as if fueled by the Benzedrine that propels the central characters in their various moves and countermoves.

Narcotics of all kinds are omnipresent in Ellroy's books, but the most potent drug of all--the most energizing and the most debilitating--is always power. Writing about powerful people is difficult for a novelist who does it unflinchingly because power works against empathy. We never care about powerful characters with the same passion we care for those abused by power, but we are fascinated by them and feel the allure of

their addiction. That's especially true here. It's as if Ellroy injects us with a mainline pop of the undiluted power that surges through the veins of his obsessed characters. Though he is thought of as a crime novelist, Ellroy is really a political novelist, and like the best of the breed, his work has no politics. Is his version of who killed JFK believable? Probably, but the real message behind this profoundly disturbing, utterly intoxicating book is how trivial a question that really is. *Bill Ott*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur Smith:

The knowledge that you get from American Tabloid: Underworld USA (1) (Underworld USA series) may be the more deep you excavating the information that hide into the words the more you get interested in reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to understand but American Tabloid: Underworld USA (1) (Underworld USA series) giving you thrill feeling of reading. The copy writer conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this guide is well-known enough. This book also makes your personal vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having that American Tabloid: Underworld USA (1) (Underworld USA series) instantly.

James Goldman:

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Laura Lee:

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