



Rush to Judgment: A Damian Jude Mystery

Ron D. Albert Sr.

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The hero of Ron Albert's *Rush to Judgment*, ex-Marine Sgt. -E5 Damian Jude ("DJ" to friends and enemies) is a hardboiled PI of the old school. He'd be right at home trading clues, chewing on bullets, boozing and bragging about broads with the likes of Sam Spade, Phil Marlowe and Mike Hammer.

But in April 2006 he's in NYC gumshoeing around, trying to solve the murder of six prostitutes from the "Seven Sisters Escort Services." They were clubbed to death with a baseball bat allegedly wielded by John Kellogg, an ex-Marine and alcoholic veteran of the Gulf War. Even though DJ knows he's "not the sharpest tool in the shed", he's determined to find out who killed six of the seven working girls and thereby free his co-jarhead Kellogg.

It's a raucous adventure of just over one hundred pages with many of the earmarks of a potential PI thriller - slam bang action; JD's love interest with his sympathetic secretary, Kate Hudson; her kidnapping; whiskey galore at Slappys Bar & Grill; gutsy language; a couple of fights; and lots of double dealing between factions of the Russian Mafia and elements of an Arabic terrorist organization intent on a nefarious scheme. There's even a guffaw of a scene with a city police detective disguised as a waiter so he can plant a wiretap at a restaurant table.

Unfortunately, the potential in the book isn't fully realized because its numerous errors in grammar and punctuation interfere with the flow of the story. Perhaps the author is trying to use a stylistic device to reinforce his characters' backgrounds, but sentences like "Papers were strewn; every where" and "A plastic bag; was taped over her head" are jarring. "There" for "their" doesn't help either. Then too, the lack of punctuation to indicate where dialogue begins and ends makes for difficulty in following the speaker's identity. The one page excerpt from Book 2 in the series promises more of the same—an exciting story but flawed with the opening sentence, "I heard yelling, and turned to see a young girl dressed in a red shirt, black pants, and shower shoes, running; and screaming "In Chinese" I stopped her, and said what's wrong?"

Regrettably, Ron Albert's *Rush to Judgment* seems to be too much of a rush to publication, at least for mass-market distribution. As an accomplishment for himself and his friends and family it may have been worth the effort for the ex-Marine turned writer. Still, it would be great to see his potential realized at a later date with a little more help from his friends.

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