Clarion Review ★★★★★ **THRILLER**

Segment of One

Michael Grigsby
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Segment of One is a gripping, high-stakes novel in which marketing analyses and science could be used to stop serial killers.

In *Segment of One*, a thriller by Michael Grigsby, a Texas community is placed in the grips of two serial killers.

After decades of putting his marketing analysis career first, Nick is struggling to connect with others in his life. The recent retiree and widower is estranged from his daughter due to his inability to get in touch with his feelings. Still, he spends quality time with his granddaughter, Holly, a twelve-year-old math guru. While doing contract work for the police department, Nick discovers a trend in gun violence, tipping the department off to a potential serial killer. In the process of Nick helping to stop the pattern of death, though, Holly is placed in harm's way.

One of the killers, David is trying to make a point with his killings, which he commits with his younger brother, Solomon. In David's opinion, Texas's gun laws are too lax: he lost his wife and unborn son in a school shooting years back. Clinical and apathetic, David seeks revenge for what was taken from him, while Solomon wants retribution for the abuse he's sustained; he feels wronged by the world. Both brothers have exhibited aggression and violent tendencies since childhood. Now, they act on those inclinations in a public manner, using a mathematical equation that tells them when, where, and how many people to kill. That equation puts them in Nick's sights, though.

Segment of One is split up into four parts. At the beginning of each chapter, a timestamp for what follows is listed, helping the book to maintain tight control of its events as they occur. The chapters, as well as sections within chapters, are further delineated by their devotion to specific people. Nick's perspective is direct; David and Holly's points of view are rendered in a more distant manner. All are distinctive.

But the prose is heavy with marketing definitions, descriptions, and analytical methods that stand to compromise its thrills for general audiences. Some of its descriptions of statistical processes are too winding, too, resulting in a sense of disconnection from the wider plot and its intersecting story lines. Further, issues arise around the characterization of Lily, an FBI agent whose speech patterns build from stereotypes: her sentences are stilted and missing words. Beyond such technical diction and dialogue issues, though, the novel moves with speed, satisfying its audience with its developments and delivering action, suspense, and intrigue.

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ALEX DAILEY (April 6, 2022)

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