

The Stringer

Ted Rall

Pablo Callejo, Illustrator

NBM Publishing (Apr 20, 2021)

Hardcover \$24.99 (152pp)

978-1-68112-272-4

A reporter squeezed by the changing news industry decides to play by different, dangerous rules in *The Stringer*.

Mark Scribner is a seasoned war correspondent who risks his life to bring truth to the world. But as the world shows less desire for that truth, the employment options for Scribner and his colleagues grow bleaker. Unwilling to suffer the penurious fate prescribed for him, Scribner decides to use his extensive knowledge of hotspots around the globe to manufacture news, making himself a celebrity, but abandoning his principles in the process. Soon Scribner discards any journalistic pretense and becomes an outright arms dealer for almost any group that will pay.

Scribner is a classic antihero. His is a tale of power, temptation, and the hazard to society inherent in a landscape where “making news” through deepfake videos, and giving people what they want, rather than the truth, is more prevalent than ever. While Scribner’s self-serving morality is distasteful, his actions are convincing, especially as he sees the journalistic integrity he once prized devalued, and the risks he and his fellow reporters take daily go unappreciated. Even at his worst, Scribner is capable of love; he finds it with a young Afghan woman, and feels the cost of his mercenary ways when she discovers what he’s doing and witnesses the devastating consequences.

The book’s full-color art captures scenes in New York, Afghanistan, and elsewhere with a high level of verisimilitude, a necessary complement to some of the bold and outlandish activities Scribner undertakes. A thoughtful story that’s unpredictable to its end, *The Stringer* is an engaging thriller that strikes a resounding note of warning.

PETER DABBENE (March / April 2021)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255.