



Bagmen (A Victor Carl Novel Book 8)

By William Lashner

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Victor Carl is back, and back in trouble. At a low point in his lowly career, Victor finds himself skulking through the streets of Philadelphia carrying a bag full of money for an ambitious politician. It is a rotten job on the wrong side of anyone's line, but with bag in hand Victor is suddenly hobnobbing with the city's elite, filling his bank account, and having sex with the politician's gorgeous and deranged sister. But just when Victor begins to think he's got a future in the political game, one of his payoffs ends up in the pocket of a dead woman, and Victor goes from bagman to fall guy. Now Victor's only way out might lie with a brotherhood of shady characters with sacks full of cash, bad fedoras, and their own twisted set of rules. Will Victor's new friends help him find a killer or bury him deep?

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review: Shamus Award–finalist Lashner brilliantly mixes anger and humor in his eighth novel featuring sad-sack lawyer Victor Carl (after 2007's *A Killer's Kiss*). When Victor attaches himself to the underbelly of the reelection campaign of Pennsylvania Congressman DeMathis, he recognizes that he's just an errand boy carrying illegal payoffs from one place to another. He'd be happier if he could stop noticing how ugly corruption is so that he could relax and wallow in it. The brutal murder of a young woman to whom he just gave a blackmail payoff, however, makes Victor see that he's being set up as the fall guy and that he can't trust the people around him—his Machiavellian friend from law school, DeMathis's enigmatic, weirdly sexy sister, and the crew of veteran bagmen who give him lessons in unscrupulous behavior. The plot itself is admirably taut, but readers will delight most in watching Victor's savagely hilarious struggle against his better nature.

From Booklist

Sometimes trolling for clients at the courthouse won't do it, so lawyer Victor Carl goes even lower. He becomes a bagman, toting cash from one who needs a favor to one who can grant it. No sooner have we finished the second chapter than a corpse is found with clues that lead to Carl. Detective work intersects bag work for the rest of the novel, and the author is good at both. This is one of the rare crime novels that convey a little-known truth: moving through glittering rooms full of wealthy, beautiful people with shark edges can be really tiresome. More death leads Carl to a Chinatown-like revelation, though readers might find the most fun is in the buildup. Carl turns conversations into vaudeville routines, with the world his straight man, and though there are too many of them, the exchanges are often very funny. Cop: "God is dead." Lawyer: "That means there's an opening." And there's room for philosophy, too. Bagmen aren't always awful. They grease wheels, unjam jams. An entertaining, thoughtful read.

Review

"An enjoyable and entertaining read." —*The Crime Scene*

"If they gave a Pulitzer Prize for snappy dialogue, William Lashner would be a betting favorite every time...Lashner has a talent for creating memorable characters—or maybe caricatures would be a better word. Either way, they're a lot of fun. He introduces Victor to a group of bagmen who in another era would have done Damon Runyan proud...So sad to read about in the paper, so much fun to read about in *Bagmen*."
—*Philadelphia Inquirer*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Emilie Lechner:

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