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Norman Kross is a career interrogator who has worked covertly in some of the most dangerous places in the world. He returns to his LA home, contemplating retirement and coming to terms with his past. He may be a master at unlocking others' secrets, but he is blind to the truth of his relationship with his wife, sons, father, and friends. Floundering as a teacher, Norman agrees to take on one last assignment, to interrogate a character actor who may be responsible for the death of a director's daughter. The secrets he uncovers are far more terrifying than any battlefield, any windowless room, any passage in the notebook he feverishly writes in to make sense of what men are capable of behind their masks.

The Interrogator's Notebook Details

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Author : Martin Ott

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From Reader Review The Interrogator's Notebook for online ebook

Darcia Helle says

This is a fascinating glimpse into the life of a man whose job is to get the truth through interrogation. The story isn't about torture, at least not in the physical sense. It's about manipulating people's thoughts, their reactions, and their feelings.

Norman Kross has been an interrogator for a very long time, but the case he works here is the biggest challenge of his career. Through Norman, we see what happens when two masters of mind manipulation are pitted against each other. The truly interesting thing for me was in watching Norman's deterioration. We don't often consider the emotional and psychological damage done to the person in charge of the interrogations.

Martin Ott's own experience in this field adds intense realism to the feel of this complex story. I found it thought-provoking and, at times, absolutely chilling.

Gigi Frost says

Norman Kross, a retired interrogator, finds himself teaching a class within his field expertise, perhaps feeling a bit bereft of his own path in life. In civilian life, he is going through the motions of a pseudo-proletarian existence. The aphorism "those who can't do, teach", rings with the banality of truth.

His family life is at odds with the successes of his professional life, and he is plagued with certain doubts.

"His bombshell Russian wife, her volatile violinist father, and his two headstrong sons stared at him from their framed family holiday photo. What did it say about him that he wasn't in it? ... Did his family like having him around now that he wasn't traveling to the four corners of the globe..."

When Norman is commissioned with a job of interviewing a character actor, George Stark, concerning the death of a young woman, he suddenly finds himself walking a sinister tightrope that shatters his original assessment of the generic private sector.

I was impressed with the progression of The Interrogator's Notebook and the character development that portrayed a complex understanding (on the author's part) of human behavior. Snippets of the Notebook are added before each chapter, allowing a glimpse at the moral reckoning and experiences of the main character.

Read the entire review here:
Bookend Chronicles

Anirudh Parthasarathy says

The Interrogator's Notebook is a psychological thriller novel written by Martin Ott; a poet who has successfully trespassed into the thriller genre. It features a former army interrogator, Norman Kross, but doing a much lighter task now, that is teaching. However, he couldn't stay away from his profession for too long, as he accepts to do one last assignment, interrogating an actor, who is suspected by the famous director

Owen Arnold, of murdering his daughter Natasha.

Norman Kross – his unique character was a highlight of this novel with his seemingly unconventional techniques of interrogation, his totally messed up personal life, the squabbles with his father in law, and his complete devotion to his profession. I liked the introductory pages of every chapter where the Norman narrates his past experiences and also his approach to interrogation. The balance too, was proper, and nowhere did I get a feeling where the story regarding his personal life is merely a sub-plot. The antagonist too was an interesting character, the actor George Stark, who managed to keep Norman under threat – something which he had probably never felt, even at Fallujah. The USP of this novel is that it is straight from the horse's mouth, with Martin Ott, himself being a former interrogator and the book that I read, is probably even a collection of his own experiences – which was suggested, I guess in Lesson 10, where Norman states that if he has to compile his experiences, it would probably be presented as a fiction. The only significant drawback I felt was that the pace that was required for a thriller novel wasn't present in this plot, although that didn't in anyway made it dull. For casual readers, this might not be so easy read; taking a gist of paragraphs after a couple of glances won't help you and if you're intrigued by this review, I suggest you read this book without skipping a word.

When I came to know that this book was categorised under Psychological Thriller, I was quite sceptical about the whole thing as the only psychological thriller I've read so far is the famous Russian novel, Crime and Punishment and I was utterly disappointed with it but this book has helped to dispel that scepticism on this sub-genre. I had an enjoyable experience reading this book, and I felt that this was one step ahead of a good book, and therefore, my scale would award The Interrogator's Notebook a four on five.

Ciska says

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review

Author

Born in Alaska and raised in Michigan, Martin Ott joined the Army as a Russian linguist and interrogator before attending the University of Michigan. He began writing fiction and poetry in his undergraduate years. He has traveled through the United States and internationally, and these influences can be seen in his poetry travelogue, Poets' Guide to America from Brooklyn Arts Press, cowritten with John F. Buckley. He moved to Los Angeles in 1995, and often writes about his adopted city.

Review

Lesson's I learned from this book. One: Do not ever start a relationship with an interrogator. You will always be one of his subjects. Two do not ever date an actor who wants to role play in different parts of your relation. Three do not play golf in the middle of the night on an unlit course.

The main character Norman Kross is a very broody, depressive person. He obviously has some serious issues and there are many points in the book where I felt like slapping him and telling him this was the time to do something. He has no proper reaction towards any person in his surrounding. He does understand and catches the signals given by people but does not react to them and feels bad about it after. But this goes on and on and on and he does not seem to learn from it. As a female this mad me cringe over and over again. The other character George Stark, the actor, is a real creep. He is scary and gave me the same feeling as Pennywise gave me years ago. You never know what he is up to and he can be everywhere. I really loved that aspect of the book.

The development in the story between Kross and Stark is solid but for 200 pages there are too many things happening. I did not know the places of all the extra characters mixing Lawrence and Owen up all the time.

There was a lot of family drama going on which seemed to be important in the one part of the chapter and was waved away a bit on other parts. There were the diary parts in chapters which I could not always place in the story. I like stories where parts of a diary are written out if they make sense for the chapter before or after it but I did not always experience a connection between them though they did give some insight in Norman's head.

Ow and that actor... is a creep

Alain Burrese says

“The Interrogator's Notebook” by Martin Ott was an intriguing read, and not like my favorite types of novels that are filled with special op type and martial art action. This book didn't have the action I'm used to, but it certainly had the suspense and intrigue that kept me wanting to read more and learn how the story would play out.

I found Norman Kross, the career interrogator, to be a complex and interesting character with his past and present mixed to form a man who didn't really know what he should do any longer. I felt his struggle to figure things out while reading. The villain, an actor, is an extremely strange fellow and I liked what Ott did with him.

I found the story to be a bit complex, just as the characters. It'd definitely not a popcorn watching summer action tale, but rather one of those serious art house films that garners the academy nominations. If you are looking for a psychological thriller that delves into the minds of both the flawed hero and the twisted villain, check out Martin Ott's “The Interrogator's Notebook.”

Brandon says

Norman Kross has returned home to Los Angeles following a lengthy career as a professional interrogator. Content to work on his memoirs and mold the minds of future interrogators, Kross begins to consider retirement. Approached to interrogate a veteran character actor who is believed to be behind the murder of an acclaimed director's socialite daughter, Kross soon learns that this may prove to be his most challenging interrogation yet. Can Kross uncover the truth?

Full disclosure: I was approached by the author and offered a free copy in exchange for a fair review.

My first impression of Ott's novel was the intricate nature of his writing when it came to detailing Kross' surroundings - something that's important considering Kross' skill set. It seems that as an interrogator it's a good idea to know your environment and to know your opponent, as there's a consistent pressure to remain in control at all times. While I can't speak to its accuracy, I can imagine Ott's personal experience as an interrogator played well into the intensity of each session with the suspect.

Speaking of Mr. Stark, I had some trouble with Kross' adversary. It was a struggle to believe someone would be so flamboyant in the face of a murder investigation. That being said, it did keep things interesting, which is sometimes better than a straightforward procedural.

It should be worth noting that Ott also inserts excerpts from Kross' fictional memoir at the beginning of each chapter. A bonus story that works well and doesn't feel tacked on.

Cross Posted @ Every Read Thing

Valentina says

This is definitely one of those books that suck you in as soon as you start reading it. It is a smart thriller that keeps you guessing until the end.

Norman, the protagonist, is a flawed character. Now, this might feel like a cliché, the jaded detective, but it really doesn't feel like it at all as you read. The author does such a nice job of shaping him into a fully-dimensional character that he is able to avoid Norman being forgotten amidst all the similar characters in this genre.

This book is more than just a thriller, though, since the writing lends itself for deeper analysis. There are some lovely images and thoughtful scenes that we don't usually get in this genre. It really added to the ambience. The details and descriptions never get in the way of the plot, however, highlighting the important things instead of overwhelming them.

This is one thriller that I would recommend for all lovers of this genre or anyone looking for an edge-of-your-seat read.

Lexie Miller says

Nicely written and intriguing story that grabs your attention and won't let go. How hard will Norman have to push until he gets too far? Great read!

Superstition Review says

The Interrogator's Notebook by Marin Ott delves into the world of Norman Kross; an interrogator whose final job brings him to the front door of an alleged murderer who has a knack for bringing his victims back to life.

Ott's psycho-thriller-murder-mystery reminds the reader just how crazy the world can be, and that a person should never be judged based on their looks, since physical traits can be easily changed. And Norman's struggle between whether or not to tell his wife and kids about George Stark can be seen as symbolic of many people's own struggles and uncertainties in life. And while most secrets will not result in near death experiences due to a psychopath, they can still have a huge, sometimes life-changing effect on a person's

life.

Ott has mastered the ability to keep a reader completely enthralled in his story, to the point where they become seriously concerned for the Kross family's well being, and are undeniably interested in the life of George Stark, and the reasons for his actions. Ott also writes in such a way that there is no doubt in the reader's mind that these events could take place in the real world, and might have already. And while George Stark is definitely insane, he does teach the reader one valuable lesson in the end. Stark is proof that you cannot run from your past, because no matter how much you change yourself, no matter who you try to become, the truth will always come out.

The Interrogator's Notebook is a story of acceptance, forgiveness, and learning to trust. And Ott, through Norman and his family, proves that without communication, even the sturdiest of relationships will eventually fail.

By Lindsey Bosak

John Buckley says

Martin Ott's complex protagonist Norman Kross holds the mirror up to all those who combine raw talent, earned skills, and significant personality flaws. Along the way to learning deeper truths about himself, Kross must first best an enemy with a sinister mastery of misdirection and perception, an enemy that threatens what Kross holds most dear. I read this book in one sitting, for good reason.

Gayle Pace says

THE INTERROGATOR'S NOTEBOOK by Martin Ott

OVERVIEW: (from Amazon)

Story Merchant Books presents the debut novel *Interrogator's Notebook* from prize-winning author and blogger Martin Ott. A former U.S. Army interrogator, Martin Ott uses his real-world experience and meticulous research in creating the character of Norman Kross, a master interrogator skilled at unlocking others' secrets but blind to the truth of his relationship with his wife, sons, father and friends.

In the novel, Norman Kross is a career interrogator who has worked covertly in some of the most dangerous places in the world. It's taken its toll, though. He returns to his Los Angeles home, contemplating retirement and coming to terms with his past in his *Interrogator's Notebook*.

Floundering as a teacher, Norman agrees to take on one last assignment, to interrogate the character actor George Stark who may be responsible for the death of a director's daughter. Armed with cunning, deceit and a deadly past, the actor poses an escalating challenge, and a terrifying threat to everything Norman has ever cared about.

For the author, the heated debate surrounding enhanced interrogation techniques and the role of the interrogator in protecting our national interests provides the backdrop to this crossover literary/suspense novel. But it is the personal life of a man pushed to the brink of his and societal moralities, and the choices he makes that is at the heart of this story.

Find out more at www.interrogatorsnotebook.com.

ABOUT NORMAN KROSS: (from back of book)

Norman Kross is a career interrogator who has worked covertly in some of the most dangerous places in the world. He returns to his LA home, contemplating retirement and coming to terms with his past. He may be a master at unlocking others' secrets, but he is blind to the truth of his relationship with his wife, sons, father, and friends. Floundering as a teacher, Norman agrees to take on one last assignment, to interrogate a character actor who may be responsible for the death of a director's daughter. The secrets he uncovers are far more terrifying than any battlefield, any windowless room, any passage in the notebook he feverishly writes in to make sense of what men are capable of behind their masks.

REVIEW:

The author, Martin Ott did a great job of writing this book. It provides the reader with a lot to think about. It's about an interrogator on his last assignment. The author shows the fight within the interrogator between his family and his job. This book took the thought that most women have that men leave them because they can't handle the responsibility of a family. The author shows that it's much more than that. When you think about interrogation, you think about torture. This story isn't about torture, at least not physical. The book is written with a common theme in mind, but there isn't such a thing as a common theme. Every writer writes in his own style with his own ideas and reasoning. No two are the same.

The minute you start reading you become hooked on the book. You keep turning those pages wanting to know what the ending holds Norman has many flaws but the author shapes him into a totally rounded man. The book is more than just a thriller. The author adds detail and images that are very thoughtful. You expect this type of genre to be hard and uncaring. You won't want to put this book down. It's a page turner and a keeper. You'll want to keep this on your shelf to read several more times.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mr. Ott served in the Army as a Russian linguist and interrogator before attending the University of Michigan. He began writing fiction and poetry in his undergraduate years, and early publications include the chapbook *Misery Loves on Red Dancefloor* Press.

He has traveled through the United States and internationally, and these influences can be seen in his poetry travelogue, *Poets' Guide to America* from Brooklyn Arts Press, cowritten with John F. Buckley. He moved to Los Angeles in 1995, and often writes about his adopted city, including in the novel *The Interrogator's Notebook*, Story Merchant Books, and poetry books *Captive*, De Novo Prize Winner, C&R Press and *Underdays*, to be published by The University of Notre Dame Press in 2015.

I would give this book 4 STARS.

I received a complimentary copy of this book *THE INTERROGATOR'S NOTEBOOK* by the author, Martin Ott., for this unbiased review.

<http://writeliving.wordpress.com>

www.goodreads.com

www.shelfari.com

www.amazon.com

<http://bemiown.blogspot.com>

theinterrogatorsnotebook.com

Grady says

The poet in the novelist's cloak

There is much praise being heaped upon this new novel by Martin Ott and rightly so. He is a young man of considerable talent and it is satisfying that he refuses to leave his already well established reputation as a poet to enter the financially more lucrative realm of writing fiction. He writes fiction well - a story that is a psychological thriller imbued with the synaptic connections that only someone with the lived background of a former U.S. Army interrogator could understand so well, and could translate that manner of crawling through the brain of a person being psychologically dissected and use that language to create the characters that populate this novel.

For the sake of those who have yet to read this novel, the Publisher's summary will be helpful and thus is quoted here: `Norman Kross is a career interrogator who has worked covertly in some of the most dangerous places in the world. He returns to his Los Angeles home contemplating retirement and coming to terms with his past. He may be a master at unlocking others' secrets, but he is blind to the truth of his deteriorating relationship with his wife, to take on one last assignment, to interrogate a character actor who may be responsible for the death of a director's daughter. The secrets he uncovers are far more terrifying than any battlefield, any windowless room, any passage in the notebook he feverishly writes in to make sense of what men are capable of behind their masks.'

And that would be enough were Ott not so sophisticated a construction engineer of words (aka, a wordsmith). But fortunately for the reader he provides enough of a challenge to piece together his narrative that his demands on our attention span are great. The way he weaves paragraphs and conversations is not at all unlike that manner in which he distills his poetic paintings. And for those unfamiliar with Ott's poems and how gritty and real they can be, this reader feels it is helpful to select one and place it here, for appreciation, for comparison.

113 Degrees of Separation

On the hottest day ever in downtown L.A.,?
a bearded man sleeps on his chaise throne,
?Kings jersey and cap protecting his face?
from the hot lance poking into his realm?
of cold thoughts, unremembered home.?
The open electrical box holds a sandwich?
and wax cup emblazoned with burger crown.?
No one dare approaches this royal sleeper?
as our metal beasts belch fire and churn?
into vaults that connect to tall iceboxes.?
His majesty, perhaps, has learned too well?
of the power of siesta and ambient horns,?
the white-capped mountains of his childhood,?
the quest for snow captured in damp fabric, ?
the mirage that has risen around his epoch.?
When he wakes he will once again beat back ?
the heat with windmill arms and curse words ?
in ancient ash tongues. He will swing his middle?

finger like a scepter to protect the fragile air?
and our fluid forms from bursting into flames.

Read the poem (read all his poems!) and then turn to THE INTERROGATOR'S NOTEBOOK. So much of what Ott has accomplished as a novelist began in the succinct stories of his poems. Martin Ott is a talent to watch - on very many levels. He is important now: into what will he morphose next?

Grady Harp

Nadine Maritz says

The Interrogator's Notebook-the title in itself drew me from the letter T. As many people, I too am just human and fickle when it comes to matters that rise suspicion and clarity. I mean what human out there would deny their eagerness to know things? Who out there wouldn't want to know how to pull information from others, who wouldn't want to know how to react or avoid when in question? Suffice to say just the title, The Interrogator's Notebook, that alone chained me from the word go.

Martin Ott starts his novel off with a lesson, "Mapping the Body." From a bird's eye view one's first impression is that the novel will be some kind of an autobiography or maybe even a documentary on the way the body and mind works. Sitting here, maybe, that's exactly why I was intrigued in the first instance.

Surprisingly, Martin's first words change your perception. He starts it with, "In the beginning, there was not god. There were men who questioned the nature of the universe," And there it was: I was intrigued. Aren't you?

The Interrogator's Notebook is a psychological thriller novel based on the life of Norman Kross – a career interrogator who works in some of the most dangerous locations throughout the world. What makes the thriller all the more appealing is the fact that Martin hasn't branched on about his protagonist's worldly adventures, which in itself could be as adventurous. Instead he created an exciting thriller that points back to Norman himself, his struggles within his own marriage, his family.

I had the honour of interviewing Martin a while back and wanted to know how close he was to this main character Norman Kross. I questioned how interlinked his own story was with that of his protagonist. His answer seemed diplomatic yet insightful when he noted that he feels all authors dip into their own well of experience; he confirmed that he did use some detail from his own life but that Norman's life was vastly different from his own.

What I liked:

Martin Ott has a way with words. I loved the way he describes things from every day locations to tables and chairs, boots and paper. He has this novel way of depicting things that puts you right there at the edge, in the story with his character.

I am intrigued by the way he allows his readers to experience the deterioration of his protagonist. We see so many stories about hero's that are unaltered, unaffected and un-deranged. Martin allowed his character to have flaw, which is risky but it made the story line that much more gripping. His family life was - to say the least really in chaotic, far from normal, colorful.

I found Martin's descriptions on his characters, especially his villain and his surroundings, masterful. In fact all I wanted to know was what George Stark was up to next, which character he was going to express, how

close Norman will get to resolving the murder.
Having said this, this specific point also created a small dislike.

The name Stark constantly pulled me out of the story to compare George Stark back to the familiar figure of Robert Downy Jr. Even though I thought the character lay out to be masterful, I did constantly compare this particular villain to Stark meets Sherlock Holmes both done brilliantly by Robert D. I don't know whether this was intentional or deliberate but yes-- If this novel had to go to film I would struggle to see any other character other than Robert portraying the role successfully.

All in all, I can say that this was one of the best novels' I have read this year.

Miles says

. . . if you like military intelligence novels and psychology you'll like this book !!!

Yawatta Hosby says

I received a free copy in exchange for a book review

I loved this 12 chapter book; I thought it was awesome how each chapter started with a part of Norman's memoir, which was called "The Interrogator's Notebook." I had an instant like to him since he was a writer and had led an interesting life, keeping secrets from his family. My favorite lines: 1) My first nightmares were not of bogeyman or sharp-fanged monsters but of leather shoes shuffling down the corridor, the terror of what might spring from my own actions. 2) Truth was, I had been arrogant, a victim of my cleverness. This woman would not be the last person whose life I ruined as an interrogator. 3) He helped me see the story within the story to probe myself, as much as those I questioned. 4) Every journey starts at the beginning, not the middle. 4) "You don't see it, do you?" For the first time, Ari the Elder beamed a self-satisfied smile. "The great interrogator is blind to the truth all around him!"

A famous director's daughter was murdered, so Lawrence, a best-selling author, asked Norman to interrogate the potential suspect. George was a famous actor with a dark side. He gave me the willy nillies, in a good way. The first pool scene where he dressed up as the victim gave me chills down my spine. I really was afraid for Norman's safety. It was cool that George kept getting inside his head and getting the best of him. Knocked Norman down a couple of pegs. My favorite scene was when Vera and Norman are at the cabin. It was pretty scary.

I loved the suspense and the mystery. It was full of tension, and I loved Norman's family dynamics, especially the backstory with his father. The situation was very sad, and I enjoyed all the drama. Poor Norman. The author had a brilliant talent with characterization; all the people in his story were three-dimensional and entertaining. I liked the villains and the heroes. His sons and the son's girlfriend were witty and cute.

I RECOMMEND this book to read.
