

[In My Own Words]

When Closing the Case Is Only Half the Story

BY LISA GARDNER

Gardner was initially inspired to write *Find Her* (Dutton, Feb. 2016) by an article she read about the FBI's Office of Victim Assistance, which helps families through the entire lifecycle of an abduction case.

Once upon time, happily-ever-afters in major crimes consisted of making an arrest. We all know the scene at the end of the classic mystery: the butler did it! Ah-ha! Case closed.

Truth is, in this day and age of high-profile abductions, crimes take on a life of their own. A loved one is kidnapped? There's way more than one investigator circling your living room. There are reporters camped out on the front lawn, hourly phone calls from network news, and rigorous social media campaigns. Then, should the best-case scenario happen—the perpetrator is arrested and the victim returned home—your loved one may still face long-term medical or psychological needs, not to mention a painful legal process dragging out for years.

No doubt about it, crime has changed. As a writer interested in the whole story, including life after the butler's arrest, I decided to delve deeper into these issues for my latest thriller, *Find Her*. Little did I realize that I'd end up conducting some of the most emotionally intense research I've ever done.

My 27-year-old heroine, Flora Dane, was once held captive in a wooden box. Now, five years after her safe return to the Boston area, Flora's goal is to move on with her life. But can she? Obsessed with self-defense and firearms training,

Flora has mastered all the skills she thinks will keep her safe. But as her mother can attest, the new and improved Flora can be a bit... scary. Has she truly moved on with her life, or are her new hobbies a sign of more dangerous things to come?

According to the FBI's victim specialists, if you have met one victim, then you've met one victim. There's no single response to trauma, and certainly no right way to be a survivor. To understand more, I spoke with the mother of an abducted teen. I'm pleased to report this family had their happy ending: after months of intense searching, the teen was found safe. And yet, as the mother described it, crime is like cancer. It took over every facet of their lives. And even with an

arrest there's no sense of resolution, of case closed. There's more like life before and life after. And life after is still a work in process.

Flora promised herself that if she could just make it home, she would always be happy, never complain again. But surviving is a journey, not a destination. And so she roams the streets of Boston night at night, obsessed with a missing college student. *Find Her* is Flora's next chapter, and it's about to become very dangerous.



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by the prospect of exploiting Duberman's vulnerability. Typically unflappable in tight situations, Wells uncharacteristically freezes up at one point. Yet when the call of duty summons, Wells rises to the occasion; his emotions may be mixed, but he still puts on a great show for readers. *Author tour. Agent: Heather Schroder, ICM. (Feb.)*

The Passenger

FR. Tallis. Pegasus Crime (Norton, dist.), \$25.95 (384p) ISBN 978-1-60598-957-0

The claustrophobic confines of a German submarine provide the setting for this less than successful supernatural thriller from Tallis (*The Voices*). Somewhere in the North Atlantic during WWII, Kapitänleutnant Siegfried

Lorenz, the commander of U-330, surfaces his vessel amid some ice floes. He and his crew witness an eerie sight—a raft with two corpses, one frozen upright, their features eaten away by gulls. Meanwhile, the SS orders Lorenz to Iceland to take custody of two prisoners: a British naval officer, Lt. Cmdr. Lawrence Sutherland, and a Norwegian academic, Bjørnar Grimstad. They succeed in getting the two men aboard, but en route to Brest the Englishman somehow gets hold of a gun and takes both his life and that of his fellow captive. After the bloodshed, Lorenz, a dutiful officer in the tradition of *Das Boot*, finds himself haunted by visions of the dead. After the intriguing premise, the book falls short, with genuine scares few and far between. *Agent: Clare*

Alexander, Aitken Alexander Associates (U.K.). (Feb.)

He Will Be My Ruin

K.A. Tucker. Atria, \$25 (352p) ISBN 978-1-5011-1207-2

Tucker (*Ten Tiny Breaths*) makes her hardcover debut with a nail-biting thriller. Well-to-do Maggie Sparkes, who has just returned to New York City from helping villagers in Ethiopia, has her doubts that the cause of death for a dear childhood friend, Celine Gonzalez, was suicide. Maggie is convinced that Celine would never cause pain to Rosa, Celine's mother, who once worked for Maggie's mother as a housekeeper. While packing up Celine's Lower East Side apartment, Maggie finds nearly \$10,000 in cash and