



Cash Landing

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The *New York Times* bestselling author of *Cane and Abe* and *Black Horizon* blends *Goodfellas* and Elmore Leonard in this wild, suspenseful caper inspired by actual events, in which a band of amateur thieves pulls off one of the biggest airport heists in history with deadly consequences.

Every week, a hundred million dollars in cash arrives at Miami International Airport, shipped by German banks to the Federal Reserve. A select group of trusted workers moves the bags through Customs and loads them into armored trucks.

Ruban Betancourt has always played by the rules. But the bank taking his house and his restaurant business going bust has driven him over the edge. He and his wife deserve more than life has handed them, and he's come up with a ballsy scheme to get it. With the help of an airport insider, he, his coke-head brother-in-law, Jeffrey, and two ex-cons surprise the guards loading the armored trucks and speed off with \$7.4 million in the bed of a pickup truck.

Investigating the heist, FBI agent Andie Henning, newly transferred to Miami from Seattle, knows the best way to catch the thieves is to follow the money. Jeffrey's drug addiction is as conspicuous as the Rolex watches he buys for dancers at the Gold Rush strip club. One of the ex-cons, Pinky Perez, makes no secret of his plan to own a swinger's club—which will allow him carte blanche with his patrons' wives. Levelheaded Ruban is desperately trying to lay low and hold things together.

But Agent Henning isn't the only one on their trail, and in the mob-meets-Miami fashion, these accidental thieves suddenly find themselves way in over their heads . . . and sinking fast.

Cash Landing Details

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From Reader Review Cash Landing for online ebook

Barry Martin Vass says

A dysfunctional family of Cuban-Americans fall on hard times during the Great Recession, basically losing everything they have worked so hard to achieve. Years later they come up with a scheme to hijack millions of dollars of overseas cash destined for the Federal Reserve. In a daring raid, they get away with almost ten million dollars and split it up, then begin to turn against each other in a matter of days in order to get all the money for themselves. I found this overly brutal and largely unsatisfying, simply because there isn't a single person in this novel to root for. Everyone lies, cheats, steals, and then rationalizes their behavior to get something over on the other guy. This may be the way things are in the Cuban community of South Miami, but any reader is generally looking for something more than this.

Jo says

Maybe I have just read too many of this type of thriller...because the thrill is gone. 'Just an Ok read.

Mark says

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery & I think Grippando made a concerted effort to imitate the wonderful novels of Elmore Leonard which give us an unvarnished look at our nation's criminal class...wonderfully plotted, it was difficult to generate sympathy for our "dark" characters involved...also missing was the unique humor Leonard was able to bring to his type of "noir"...based on the 2005 Miami "Brinks Money Plane" heist Grippando follows the deterioration of the heist gang in the aftermath of the big score...again decently plotted, but NOT Elmore Leonard standards, but I did like the "Meet Cute" for Jack Swytek at the end!

Naomi says

Ruban Betancourt and his wife Savannah have lost their house and their restaurant when the 2008 economy tanks. He tries desperately to find a way to get a little payback. In Miami where they live German Banks send bags of money to the Federal Reserve. I liked Ruban because he loves his wife and anything she wants, he'll get it for her. She doesn't know about his plans that include her coke-headed brother and other relatives. The FBI gets involved after the robbery and Ruban does his best to steer clear of the investigation so his wife won't find out about it. He always seemed to come up with a new plan to keep going. Still a fun read although no one is really too bright in this story.

James Hein says

Grippando is usually better than this.

If you are after a book about the psychology of groups and self-interest then this is for you in a shallow sense. I found it predictable and with no surprises I was left feeling somewhat empty afterwards. Rating of 2.5 stars mostly for the quality of the writing.

Kathy says

This is listed as a Jack Swytek book Jack is a defense attorney who is generally a major character in James Grippando's novels. In this book, he is on one page very near the end. The book was misrepresented. This was a typical crime novel where the criminals are stupid and get caught or killed. Fairly boring. Would not recommend although I generally like James Grippando books. There is no one likeable at all in this novel.

Eric says

Well, it surely won't make you a more enlightened person to have read this, but at the same time it's not a total waste of your time. On a moral level it shows quite clearly that criminals have a twisted outlook on life and are particularly good at self-destructing. There are some interesting bits about how law enforcement goes about its business that might make one a better consumer of law enforcement's services. I did think that, as the varying local, state, and federal agencies all pulled into town to get a piece of the action (it didn't last - it became a FBI/Miami PD case) that there are likely cost savings to be realized from watching carefully how all those dollars get spent. The narration had a good pace that accompanied nicely the movement of the story, which seldom got too far-fetched. Could do worse for a summer page-turner.

Kevin Bachovchin says

In Cash Landing, a group of amateur thieves pull off one of the biggest airport heists in history.

While this book didn't have as good of reviews as most Grippando novels, I still enjoyed it. Reading the other reviews, the main criticisms seemed to be that none of characters were likeable and that most chapters in the story are told through the point of view of Ruben Betancourt, the brains behind the heist and the most sane of the group.

While it's true that none of the main characters were particularly likeable other than Ruben's innocent and gullible wife Savannah, there were a lot of twists and turns in the plot, and I thought it was entertaining to watch the thieves self-destruct, with Ruben desperately trying to keep things from blowing up. I actually thought it was intriguing and refreshing to have the majority of the story told from the point of view of the criminal, rather than the investigator like usual in mystery books. I did think Grippando could have done a much better job developing the character of the FBI agent investigating the heist Andie Henning, who he borrowed from the Jack Swytek series. (FYI for Swytek fans, Jack does make a cameo appearance on the final few pages but his role is very minor).

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life.

3.5 Stars

I have to admit that I am a little torn over how to rate this book. I have been a long time fan of James Grippando and have really enjoyed every one of his books that I have had a chance to read. I liked this book well enough but I just don't feel like it is nearly as good as what I have come to expect from this talented author.

This story was told a little differently than what I have come to expect from Mr. Grippando. This story is told almost entirely from the criminals' point of view. The detectives solving the case get a relatively small voice in this story. I have become very accustomed to reading stories mostly told from the point of view of a very strong, likeable character trying to solve the mystery, or one of the good guys. In many ways, this was a story where I just sat back and watched the criminals catch themselves with their own stupidity.

One of my main issues with this book is that I couldn't find any characters that I really grew to like. Every single person involved in the heist were about as unlikable as I have ever experienced. Even Ruban's wife, Savannah, who was not directly involved had such a weak personality and was so easily persuaded to go along with everything that I ended up disliking her as much as the individuals actually involved in the crime. I don't think that the detectives were in the story enough for me to connect with them in any way and their personality didn't have a chance to develop at all. They felt a bit flat to me. The character that was the most likeable was Jack Swytek who showed up for a small cameo role at the end of the book but showed more character and spunk than anyone else in the book.

Even though I didn't care for the characters, I still enjoyed this book. There were enough twists and turns to keep me guessing and it was actually kind of amusing watching how many bad decisions some of these criminals could make. Connections were made in ways that I never expected and the plotting of the overall story was very well done. I found that this was a book that was actually really hard to put down because I just had to know what was going to happen next. The pacing of the story was well done.

I would recommend this book to mystery thriller readers who like a book full of twists and turns. This is not my favorite book by James Grippando but I found it to be a very worth while read. This is definitely an author that I will continue to follow.

I received an advance reader edition of this book from HarperCollins Publishers - Harper via Edelweiss for the purpose of providing an honest review.

Mary Skulski says

I am still confused about this book. Most of the story line we are following the criminals. I am trying to figure out who the author wants me to root for. Andie Henning is introduced with such a small role and forget Jack! He shows up on the last page! The end left me sad because I did not care about the character Jack defended !! I was hoping for a clever way out for the main character Ruban since he is the one I thought the book mainly followed. First time I didn't really care for one of his books.

Joyce says

Catching up on my Swytek after reading Grippando's most recent. This one is a prequel, which should put it back in the 90s in the time line, but it's based on a true crime in 2005: a Miami airport heist of bills headed for the Federal Reserve Bank. So a caper with the bad guys telling their story, zany yet violent. The good news is that it introduces Andie Henning, the FBI special agent who becomes Jack Swytek's love interest. She's the investigator and we only get a nod to Swytek at the end. Strong sense of place in Miami, well-paced, gritty. It reminded me of Elmore Leonard's capers, although the dialog isn't quite as smart. (But then whose is?) Well-narrated by Jonathan Davis, who has become the voice of the Swytek series.

Joan says

Ruban Betancourt has lost his restaurant and the bank has foreclosed on his home; he's certain he and his wife, Savannah, deserve better. To that end, he's concocted a scheme to grab part of a German bank's money shipment when it reaches Miami International Airport. In his quest for the money, Ruban recruits a couple of his buddies, his dim-witted, coke-sniffing brother-in-law, and an airport insider. The caper goes off without a hitch and the motley group manages to make off with several million dollars, most of which ends up buried in the back yard of the rented house Ruban and Savannah now call home.

Ruban knows they need to lay low, to continue with their day-to-day activities and not draw undue attention to themselves, but dissension grows as greedy partners prove unwilling to wait to get their hands on their share of the loot. A delicate balancing act is complicating matters for Ruban --- he's trying to keep Savannah from discovering his involvement in the heist and the lies he's telling are getting more and more convoluted. Adding to his troubles, his fellow thieves aren't the only ones after the money and with things spiraling out of control, Ruban soon finds himself in danger of losing everything.

Andie Henning, an FBI agent newly transferred to Miami from Seattle, is assigned to investigate the heist. Will she track down the thieves and recover the money or will the beleaguered Ruban find a way to control the situation and hold on to the cash?

Unpredictable betrayals, the unraveling of Ruban's plans, and the interaction between these thoroughly unlikeable men and their low-life confederates will keep readers trying to turn the pages faster than the despicable thieves turn on each other. The suspenseful plot keeps twisting and turning with unforeseen surprises, treating readers to a wild adventure that leads to an unexpected climax.

Recommended.

Donna says

This story line reminded me of a Donald Westlake Dortmunder book in terms of everything going wrong for the crooks. Except, in this case, it was much more violent and definitely not funny. Perhaps it's because there was no Murch's mom involved in the caper.... An enjoyable read but not one that I couldn't put down.

Darlene Quinn says

This is the first James Grippando novel that I have rated below a 4 or 5 star. He is a terrific storyteller, who delivers riveting plots and usually terrific, three-dimensional characters. While Cash Landing did not fail to deliver page tuning suspense, it was not up to his previous standards in characters development. Being blessed or cursed with an author's DNA, I can't resist analyzing all elements of a story. Characters I can root for are at the top of my list--Grippando usually delivers. However, while his protagonist, Ruban is a fully developed bad guy, this novel was missing a strong, admirable character to root for.

A character engaged in wrong-doing can be engaging. However, for that character to be someone we root for, he must be engaged in wrong doing for right or honorable reasons. Otherwise we need a compelling adversary to root for. The protagonist, Ruban Betancourt, in Crash Landing is doing the wrong things for wrong reasons. The lack of balanced which should be accomplished by a fully developed opposing character is lacking.

Neither of the two characters that might have filled that role (Andy, the savvy, FBI agent and Savanna, the protagonist's honor bound wife) were fully developed. While Ruban was an intriguing character, readers were not given strong enough reasons to care deeply about any other character. One thing that occurred to me when Jack Swytek, (the attorney the Grippando has based a series on) made a cameo appearance at the end is that perhaps the author also borrowed the FBI agent Andy from a previous book where she had more substance. Swytek did not need to be fully developed since he was a walk on character at the end of the novel, but Andy, whether she was borrowed from a previous book or just introduced needed more backstory--being smart and strong was not enough. All that said, the plotting was terrific.

Bill Mackela says

Cash Landing feels like an Elmore Leonard crime caper gone wrong. It's set in South Florida. A couple of guys get some inside info on how they can easily score a major theft of clean U.S. currency being brought back into the country. They figure that since it will be so easy that the best idea would be to have it be a family affair. So they make their plans, enlist the family, and are ready to go. From then on, things start to go wrong.

Mr. Grippando based Cash Landing on a real life heist that happened in Miami.

Cash Landing is a well written caper novel, with believable characters that do stupid things once they get their hands on huge amounts of untraceable cash. It's fun to see the extremes that people go to when they think that they are rich.

I give Cash Landing 4 1/2 Stars, and a Big Thumbs Up!

I received a Digital Review Copy from the publisher.
