



Fatal Error

Michael Ridpath

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In the dotcom boom it was easy to make millions ... and then lose them. And some people are not good losers.

The year is 1999 and Internet companies are springing up everywhere. Anything seems possible for those who think big.

David Lane – a quiet, cautious banker – is invited by his old friend Guy Jourdan to help start up ninetyminutes.com. He decides that for once he will do something daring, something dangerous.

If only he'd realized quite how dangerous. Guy falls out with Tony Jourdan, his father and their biggest investor, bringing the company close to collapse. Then Tony is murdered – and David's roller-coaster ride in to danger and disaster begins.

Michael Ridpath has written eight bestselling financial thrillers, published in over 30 countries.

PRAISE FOR MICHAEL RIDPATH'S FINANCIAL THRILLERS:

“Ridpath has that read-on factor that sets bestsellers apart.” - The Guardian

“It is the author's insight into the complexities of the business that gives his novel so much life. And he can write... Yes, he has a winner here.” - The New York Times

“It'll send a shiver down bankers' spines.” - Mirror

“The author makes you feel the intensity of the trading floor, the combination of number-crunching and gut instinct that leads people to take big risks, the thrill of playing a hunch and getting it right.” - Los Angeles times Book Review

“For sheer entertainment, there's nothing in the mystery genre to beat a well-constructed thriller... .the new book of Michael Ridpath provides a master-class in how it's done. I read it in one gulp.” - The Observer

“As slick and compulsive a piece of storytelling as can be found in the best of blockbuster fiction.” - Sunday Express.

Fatal Error Details

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From Reader Review Fatal Error for online ebook

Pam says

Fatal Error is by Michael Ridpath. It is a thriller and deals with the psychology of people. It is a really good book and definitely keeps your attention. You want to know the answers to many questions as you read. David Lane had known Guy Jourdan for seventeen years and had worked with him on Ninetyminutes.com from the beginning. Now it seems that all their work was for nothing unless they could get additional funding. When Guy had the idea of creating “the foremost soccer website in Europe”, he came to David to get advice and help. David worked for a bank in acquisitions and knew something of the way businesses were set up and how they obtained money. David liked the idea of getting in on something at the start and anything to do with the Internet seemed to be a safe choice. Guy, his brother Owen, Ingrid Da Cunha, and Mel Dean all worked on the website. They borrowed startup money from Tony Jourdan, Guy’s dad. Tony had 80% of the stock. When David and Guy brought Orchestra Ventures offer and conditions to the Board, Tony struck them down. He wanted to get the website into porn which Guy refused to do. Instead he resigned.

David and Ingrid tried to figure out a way to get Tony to go with Orchestra Ventures and to get Guy back. They went to talk to Tony and got fired for their efforts. Tony did what he wanted. Tony left for another meeting as David and Ingrid were leaving. David and Ingrid heard the crash as Tony was struck by a hit and run driver and killed. Now what would happen to Ninetyminutes.com. Was all this connected to something that happened the summer the guys graduated? David is determined to find out.

Ann says

What a good book! Real edge of seat stuff. All the action stems from the internet boom.. Many new companies were set up in this dot.com time. However some were destined to fall by the wayside. Will that happen here? You have to read it to find the answer.

Of course, there is lots more to the plot than just computer business. Murder and deceit among other things.

You will want to keep turning the pages.

Geoff Woodland says

I've read a number of Michael Ridpath's books over the years, and I have always enjoyed his stories, so I was very pleased to receive a free copy of Fatal Error, as an e-book, after promising to write a review. The story is wrapped around the creation of an internet football web site (Ninetyminutes.com) and the ups and downs of cash flow, dead bodies and relationships between the characters. It is an easy enjoyable read that encouraged me to keep reading, even though I should have put it down and go to sleep. If you like twists and turns linked to the internet and finance Fatal Error will meet your needs.

Ian Coates says

Fatal Error is a slow-burn crime novel with a brooding back-story. This is adrenalin-pumping action, and is somewhat different to Ridpath's other thrillers, but the thin plot redeems itself with an exciting climax.

When David Lane tries to ride the dot-com bubble with school friend Guy Jordan, things start well, and their ninetyminutes.com football website gains good feedback and increasing visitor numbers. But dot-com start-ups eat money, and raising funding is paramount.

Guy reluctantly persuades his father, property tycoon Tony Jordan, to invest heavily, and Tony Jordan and his lawyer join the board. But when the pair tries to force a change of direction in order to quickly generate cash, Guy so violently objects that he resigns. Without him, ninetyminutes.com will fail, but then Tony Jordan is conveniently killed by a hit-and-run driver, Guy rejoins, and the company continues.

The police fail to find the culprit, and Lane's suspicions that Guy was somehow involved in the death threaten their working relationship. Underlying his unease are memories of a holiday to France with Guy and other school friends years before. They stayed in Tony Jordan's holiday mansion, and his new wife was killed during their visit. With no perpetrator ever found, Lane was suspicious of Guy and his brother.

Lane realises he must put his doubts about his partner to rest if they are to work together effectively, so sets out to discover who was behind the two deaths. He soon finds himself the victim of threats and violence.

As the truth begins to unfold, the brooding backstory about what happened in France increasingly casts its ominous shadow across events.

When the dot-com bubble bursts and it becomes clear that ninetyminutes.com will be unable to raise the cash it needs, Lane demands the company cuts back in order to survive. This trips Guy {over the edge} and things accelerate towards an exciting climax and an unexpected twist.

This is an enjoyable story, even though the action is slow and the plot feels thinner than in Ridpath's other novels, which have richer storylines and better pace. If you've not read any of his books before, start with See No Evil or The Predator, which seem more typical of Ridpath's style.

David Brown says

This book is surprisingly good. I found it compelling and a bit of a page turner. The baddie was unexpected although I was looking. The author starts by introducing most of the characters and I found this a bit confusing. Thankfully, this chapter was well into the story. The author then went back to the beginning and the characters were slowly put into place. I don't know why he did it this way. Maybe it was to keep the readers interest? I would have preferred a straight story. In any case, this book is a good read.

Dan says

Engaging thriller set in the crazy world of the dotcom bubble. I found this book in the 'free' stack at Amazon

and was surprised at how much I enjoyed it. I stayed up too late more than one night with it. I only found one minor implausibility from the tech side of things, easily forgivable. Good plot, plenty of hints, but I missed them all. I kind of like mysteries told from the financial guy's point of view. Maybe I just think like them.

Chris Steeden says

Boy from a not so privileged background, usually not from London, and a bitter, rather than a lager, drinker to make him more down to earth does good and in adult life, joins a firm where the privileged are abhorrent and murder ensues. The boy tries to figure out what is going on getting into scrapes on the way. As he says in this book 'I would have to start my own personal crusade for justice'. There will, of course, be a girl in there somewhere as well for a bit of romance. That is a normal Ridpath novel. They are always entertaining. No brain power is involved. Just sit back and enjoy. The pace is fast and the plot is clear.

Fatal Error is not really any different from the normal Ridpath. The 'Boy' in this case is David. His family holiday in a caravan in Devon rather than having a home in the south of France. The arrogant capitalist Chairman of the firm he has founded with his friend, Guy, is soon murdered. We go back and forth between 1999 and a major event in 1987 involving all the characters. David becomes detective trying to work out exactly what has been going on. It is all silly high-velocity fun.

Liedzeit says

Very good thriller. Nice idea to set action in the internet boom time.

David Highton says

A decent enough financial thriller, builds tension in the first half but then slightly meanders in the second half. Ridpath is quite a good thriller writer so more on my list

Kerrie says

Michael Ridpath takes us into a world about which I know very little. His story though feels very credible.

Guy Jourdan, failed actor, has the idea for a startup dot.com company, a website that will deal only with football, and will attract those who not only want to see results, but articles to read, and merchandise. It will eventually become the number one site for European football fans.

Guy's father is a millionaire, a very successful businessman and Guy wants to follow in his footsteps, and to outdo him. The dot.com boom offers a way to make quick money, but in order to do that you have to borrow lots and then manage it well. And that is where his old boarding school roommate, David Lane, comes in. David will provide the financial expertise, and Guy's brother Owen will be the technical wizard.

There have been a couple of incidents in the past, one where Guy's stepmother was killed, and one where Guy nearly crashed a plane into a mountain, which have resulted in estrangement between Guy and David, so David is very surprised when Guy contacts him about the new venture. Between them they manage to put together a small amount of money to get started,

When the first lot of money runs out Guy approaches his father Tony for a two million pound loan. Tony, who dislikes David, obliges but wants an 80% share of the company. Shortly after he and Guy have a big argument Tony is killed by a hit and run driver. David reflects that something or someone keeps coming to Guy's rescue. And that is where things begin to get interesting and dangerous.

Quite a good thriller with some anonymous death threats providing mystery and spice. David thinks he knows who is behind them, and they serve to show what a dangerous world this is.

Gill says

This for me was a 'not quite' book. The plot was 'not quite' plausible; the characters were 'not quite' believable; the tension was 'not quite' thrilling. Quite good but, in the end, humdrum.

Shirley Procter says

Gripping to the end

I loved this book; it's well written, with believable characters. The plot twists back and forth in time, linking the main characters' lives well. The ending is startling but inevitable.

Robin says

As always, I enjoyed this Michael Ridpath novel. It is not quite so good as his first works, which really gripped me when I read them years ago - and again upon re-reading. However, it's not worth rejecting a Ridpath because it's not at the top of the pile.

The male and female characters are interesting, meeting while they are young and at university and then at the beginning of their careers. The novel works between these early developments and their coming together again in a dot.com business, devised by the wealthy student, Guy. David, his friend and admirer on a scholarship when they first meet, is a fairly successful banker in a boring job. Guy offers him a renewed life, with the prospect of great wealth. David, to do him justice, is more interested in the former than the latter, although he has enjoyed the holiday with Guy in which he experiences great wealth, his first sexual encounter, fear at possible reprisals and anxiety about his relationship with Guy.

The women, Megan and Ingrid, join the holiday, a later almost disastrous plane trip, and eventually the business. Both have careers that are relevant - Ingrid is a successful magazine editor and Megan is a lawyer. In the background is Guy's odd brother and his competitive father.

Murders, threats and the development of the dot.com business and its possible failure move the story along at

the fast pace expected from a Ridpath novel. At the same time, the relationships between the characters are, at times, complex and a valuable contribution to creating a novel which is really worth reading. Guy and David's relationship has various strands, seemingly superficial with its rich boy vs poor boy theme. In reality, both men have character flaws which the other exploits and forgives. The relationship between the siblings, David with his largely ignored sister and Guy with his brother for whom he seriously cares, is a case for reconsidering the simple interpretation of the two as a 'good' poor man and 'bad' rich man.

Fatal Error can be read a thrilling quick read, or with more attention to the complexity of the characters. I read it for both, and as an aside, enjoyed the focus on the dot.com businesses.

Brian says

I enjoyed the book

Denise A Humphries says

Really good mixture of cerebral mystery and action thriller.
