



Bury the Lead: A Joe Gunther Novel

Archer Mayor

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Joe Gunther and the VBI team are investigating a murder and an arson case--both potentially related to an outbreak of ebola.

When the body of a young woman is found near a trail at a popular ski mountain, the case falls to Joe Gunther and his team at the Vermont Bureau of Investigation (VBI). They quickly have a suspect, Mick Durocher, and a confession, but not everyone on the team is convinced. Despite Mick's ready admission, investigators quickly sense there might be more going on than is immediately apparent.

At the same time, a large local business is being targeted with escalating acts of vandalism--a warehouse fire, a vandalized truck, a massive cooling system destroyed--resulting in loss of life. And either by coincidence, or not, Mick Durocher, the self-confessed murderer, was once employed by this very company.

These two puzzling cases--now possibly connected--are further complicated by the sidelining of a key member of VBI, Willy Kunkle, who undergoes surgery at a hospital that appears to be having an unlikely--and suspiciously timed--outbreak of Ebola.

Joe and his team pursue these cases, uncovering motives that might link them, while proving that trust betrayed can be a toxic virus, turning love into murderous loathing. Indeed, behind the mayhem and murder, Joe must uncover a tragic history before another victim dies.

Bury the Lead: A Joe Gunther Novel Details

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From Reader Review Bury the Lead: A Joe Gunther Novel for online ebook

Ed says

#29 in the Joe Gunther series. This 2018 series entry by author Archer Mayor brings Joe Gunther, field commander of the Vermont Bureau of Investigation, and his team to a challenging mix of cases. Joe's ensemble team highlights two new members. Team member Lester Spinney's wife Sue is a nurse with a new job and she is drawn into caring for her friend Sam Martens' husband Joe Kunkle, both members of the VBI team. Meanwhile, Rachel, the daughter of Joe's lover, Vermont Chief Medical Examiner Beverly Hillstrom, has been employed as a staff photographer for several local newspapers in which position she manages to play a pivotal role in the VBI investigation of a series of sabotage actions towards a wholesale distributor. The annual visit to Joe's iconic Vermont is always welcome.

After an autopsy conducted by chief medical examiner Beverly Hillstrom, Joe Gunther's trusted associate for decades and, more recently, his lover, on the body of an unidentified young woman found near a resort on Bromley Mountain. Joe and his team at the Vermont Bureau of Investigation soon have a suspect, thanks to security camera footage that caught Mick Durocher, who's also a small-time crook, disposing of the woman's body. Mick readily confesses that he hit the victim, a woman named Teri Parker he picked up in a bar, with a two-by-four in a drunken quarrel, but his story doesn't hold up, and finding the real killer isn't easy. Meanwhile, arson strikes the GreenField Grocers, and further sabotage has fatal results. Beverly's daughter, Rachel Reiling, newly hired as a photographer for the Battleboro Reformer, does her own, predictably dangerous, investigating into the GreenField case.

Rob1109 says

I've been a fan of Archer Mayor for quite some time. I've always found his books enjoyable, his dialogue rings true and characters that are real. His last couple novels, however, left me flat.

Maybe my taste has changed since I seem to be in the minority but I found 'Bury the Lead' very slow moving and boring. It was a relatively short novel, only 291 pages. Yet, it seemed much longer. The story never pulled me in. Parts of it dragged and sadly, the characters I used to feel a connection with I know feel nothing for. Every time I was sure the story would pick up, it didn't.

I might take a break from Mr. Mayor's books because this one was a struggle to get through. It really deserves a 1 but since I've been a fan of his books for years, I'm rating this a very generous 2

Chris Conley says

It is lovely to follow a series and realize that I like the characters. Not just as actors in the story but as individuals who I feel I have come to know over the years. In this entry, Willie finally gets a break. Joe might be on a path to personal happiness. All of the team is helping Beverly's daughter begin her new life.

The underlying mystery has the usual Mayor twists and turns. These are terrific stories.

Debbie Smith says

When a body is discovered near a popular ski trail, Joe Gunther and his team at the Vermont Bureau of Investigation quickly locate a prime suspect, Mick Durocher. Durocher confesses almost too quickly, with only partial details which cause many on the team to doubt him, yet they aren't sure since the facts do lead to him.

At the same time, a business is targeted with vandalism and Mick Durocher, the confessed murderer, was once employed by the company.

So as these two cases possibly tie together, there is yet one other concern. Willy Kunkle, a member of the Vermont Bureau of Investigation, undergoes surgery at a hospital that has a suspicious and perhaps timely outbreak of Ebola.

This is Archer Mayor's 29th Joe Gunther novel.

What Concerned Me: While this is a very good novel, my favorites are the ones that start a little faster. This one took a bit to draw me in.

What I Loved Most: Though this is the first book I've read by Archer Mayor, the characters are introduced in such a way that I didn't feel lost. As with any series, if you want the most out of it it's probably better to start at the beginning, but I was comfortable with quickly learning who was who.

Thank you NetGalley, St. Martin's Press, and Archer Mayor for allowing me to give my honest review of this ARC.

<https://debbieshakespearesmith.blogspot.com>

Stacy Bearse says

This is a good mystery, but it is not Archer Mayor's best work. I can't quite put my finger on the exact root of my disappointment. There's lots of action. Strong characterization. And, an interesting plot. But the individual strengths simply don't mesh; the whole is less than the sum of the parts. That said, I'll continue to read this author and commend him for adding contemporary angles to a tightly focused series.

Randy says

Joe Gunther and his team, once again become embroiled in a mysterious murder and weave their way to a dysfunctional family secret ending in murder. The cast of regulars are all involved in one aspect or another. Having read this series from the beginning, I know I can always expect a great mystery as well as finding out

what's happening in the lives of some of my favorite characters. Another great installment!

Deb Jones says

Joe Gunther is the sort of person I'd enjoy as a friend, a mentor and/or supervisor. He exudes patience and wisdom, gumption, and a sense of justice all in the right proportions. One of his team describes Gunther as an Obi Wan-type figure, something with which I agree.

An interesting plot along with a varied and interesting cast of characters keep this story moving forward at a steady pace.

This is a police procedural that is more focused on the characters and plot action than absolute accuracy in police thinking and detail, but it's easy enough to suspend belief for the sake of everything else that is going on in the book.

3 no 7 says

NetGalley

“Bury the Lead” by Archer Mayor is book twenty-nine in the Joe Gunther series, and the series is as compelling as ever. A new reader can enjoy this book because while the characters are the same, Mayor provides quick background comments within the context of the storyline to fill in anything from the previous books that a new reader might need.

Right from the start Mayor sets out to create mystery. In a note he admits that things are not what they seem, and implores readers to stay the course. “Appearances can be deceiving. My lead may indeed be buried, for good reason.” That suggests a complicated and intriguing mystery within a mystery.

The story opens as Joe Gunther of the V.B.I. enters the autopsy room; a young woman had been found dead through “unknown misadventure.” Her clothes are wrong for a mountainous hiking trail in the dark of night, and she was pregnant. The team tracks down a suspect, who, to everyone’s surprise, confesses. This is just too easy, and things just do not fit. The question remains, who really killed her?

Different crimes and several story lines run simultaneously, just as one would expect to find in real life. One conspicuous problem is finding the motive behind detailed, complex, but unrelated crimes that are inexplicably tied together. “We’re talking Shakespearean tragedy here. Love– hate, privilege run amok, zero impulse control.” Things are hidden, but little by little, clues come to the surface, and eventually a very different picture comes into focus. As Joe comments, “Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

Joe Gunther and all the familiar characters are here, working together. There is a small town feel to dialogue. Everyone is friends, everyone knows each other, and as they catch up with each other, readers catch up as well. They get first jobs; they get new jobs. We get to know them, and discern how they feel about jobs, life, crime, and each other.

Mayor develops a sense of place so accurate that when the team goes somewhere in Vermont, readers can

follow along on Google maps. When the story takes someone down route 30, readers can go along. When Joe visits the Department of Transportation truck depot between Brattleboro and Putney on Route 5, there it is on Google Maps, the semicircle of truck-sized sheds and the Connecticut River.

Mayor constructs a story around people who are compelling, captivating, and charismatic. Joe simply loves what he does. Any of characters could change the world for the better, or have a lasting impact upon society's behavior. They do good work, have a positive influence, and are of use to people in need. There is always a laugh or two along the way, even in dire circumstances.

I received a copy of "Bury the Lead" from Archer Mayor, St. Martin's Press, Minotaur Books, and NetGalley. I loved this book as I have loved every book in the series. Mayor does not just drop familiar characters into a formula plot. Each character grows, changes, and develops in every book, just as if they were living right down the street. Get out your Google maps and visit Vermont along with Joe and the crew.

Herzog says

Gunther has done a really nice job of fleshing out these characters. He had me deeply concerned for Willie's health and neatly wove Sue Spinney and, again, Rachel, into the narrative. The plot combines a couple of disparate crimes.

Jay says

In the new Joe Gunther novel by Archer Mayor, Gunther's VBI team finds their investigatory exploits split between the murder of a young woman and a series of vandalism crimes at a local grocery wholesaler.

The murder seems to be an easy solve as the killer is soon caught and confesses. But variations between the confession and the actual evidence leave the team trying to track down the inconsistencies to nail down the killer.

Meanwhile, the vandalism spree seems to escalate with each successive incident until there is soon a body count and more agencies are brought in to bring the killer to justice.

If that wasn't enough, there's a possible high contagion disease breakout at a local hospital.

What's worse is that all three of these individual plots might just be all tied together by a darkly sinister maniac's plan for revenge.

Mayor's procedurals are always top notch. His characters are always well drawn but even after all this time, they seem to grow and show new development which make learning more about them a treat in each book. The developments in this book surrounding Gunther's contrarian detective Willy Kunkle start off with the potential for tragic and sad endings but as that particular subplot develops over the course of the story, there is a sea change possibly on the horizon. The effect of this could ripple outward and while it won't change the fundamental nature of Willy's character in the long run, it does give hope of at least some brighter days ahead.

Joe's interactions with his girlfriend Dr. Beverly Hillstrom show progress as their relationship deepens. Her daughter Rachel is also a key figure in the story as a new job puts her in an oppositional position from Joe and his team.

Overall, each step of the investigation was a thrill to read. Whether it was a dead end or revealed a clue to further the investigations, you couldn't help but want to keep turning the pages to see what was going to happen next.

The thing about Archer Mayor's books is that they do a thorough job of entertaining the reader without relying on over the top theatrics. The story is told straight up and when the situation arises that some sort of action set piece is needed, it always fits the overall storytelling.

The cast of characters keeps me coming back because I want to see what they are up to with each new book. These books are just too damn good and the idea that I have to now wait another year for the next Joe Gunther adventure makes me wish for a method of time travel so I can get my greedy hands on the next book!

James Thane says

This is another excellent entry in the long-running series by Archer Mayor featuring Joe Gunther of the Vermont Bureau of Investigation. The story opens when the body of a young woman is found at the top of a ski trail. Joe's team fairly quickly and easily identifies the man who dumped the body and they fairly quickly and easily secure his confession to the woman's murder. The problem is that this all happens almost *too* quickly and *too* easily, and Joe suspects that something is off about the whole business.

While Joe and his team investigate the killing, someone inaugurates a string of actions targeting a giant food distribution warehouse. The vandalism begins with a few small fires but quickly escalates to the point where people are dying. Investigating the crimes is a daunting task because there are so many potential suspects and so very few good leads. But then a connection appears linking the murder of the young woman to the crimes committed at the warehouse, and things get even more complicated--and much more dangerous--in a big hurry.

Both the original murder and the subsequent vandalism and murders are cleverly designed, and watching the VBI agents attempt to untangle the various threads of these problems is especially entertaining. By now this cast of characters is entirely familiar; readers of the series have watched them grow and develop over the course of twenty-nine books, beginning with *Open Season* in 1988. Returning to the series is like dropping in on a cast of intimate friends and acquaintances, and while the mysteries in this series are always first-rate, the real joy in reading these books is checking in to see how Joe and the extended cast are getting along. This has long been one of the best regional mystery series going and *Bury the Lead* continues that fine tradition.

Jenna says

Bury the Lead is an apt title for this latest installment in the world of Joe Gunther and the VBI. Logic and

happenstance both play a part in the unravelling of the mystery. The story is well plotted with enough buried surprises to keep me engaged until the end. The character development is reasonably well integrated into the whole. The language geek in me appreciated the author note regarding the use of Lead/Lede.

Raymond Mercier says

More Murder in Vermont

Faithfully continues the characters we have become so attached to in his previous novels, and gives us another good read as we try to figure out the ending before it is revealed. Again Mr. Mayor's knowledge of actual police work gives us a feeling we are looking at what a real investigation must be like. His usual "Well done".

LJ says

First Sentence: Joe entered the autopsy room unnoticed, stepped to one side of the broad door, and leaned against the wall to watch.

The body of a young woman is discovered and a confession quickly obtained, but it doesn't take much to determine the confession is false. However, the man who confessed once worked at a large local warehousing company experiencing serious acts of vandalism, the latest of which resulted in a death. Is there a connection? Willie Kunkle, a key member of Joe Gunther's team on the Vermont Bureau of Investigation, is hospitalized as there is a suspicious possible outbreak of Ebola. Are all these events linked? That's up to Joe and the VBI to find out.

It is hard for many to image witnessing a real autopsy. The opening achieves several things beyond taking one through the procedure; one is introduced to Joe, learns about his department and his past, and demonstrates Joe's humanity—"This was always an autopsy's watershed moment for Joe, making the divide between seeing a fellow human as someone's recently lost companion or child and simply discovering—piece by piece—what had one made it function." One also meets Beverly, the pathologist and Joe's lover. This is nicely done both for new readers, and as a reminder for those who have followed the series. However, it also provides initial information on the victim and the crime.

Although Joe is the protagonist, his team is an ensemble about whom series readers have come to care, and that's certainly true of Willie and Sammy. Each character is fully developed and plays a vital role. That this extends beyond Joe's team to their families creates a sense of reality, including talking about murder in front of the fridge as do Lester and his wife Sue. It is through his style that Mayor makes the reader feel invested in, and even part of, the team. What is especially nice is that the characters change and evolve over time.

One of the many things to be appreciated about Mayor is that he provides explanations, such as what is a Spellman entry, as he goes along. Even better that is the explanations never slow down the pace of the story. Something about policing which one rarely considers is well stated—"Joe found himself in the dreariest corner of human behavior in which his job so routinely deposited him, surrounded by the loss, waste, and malice of others."

It's nice to have a police procedural where the police actually follow procedure. No cutting corners, no bending the law, no working without notice in other jurisdictions. It is a credit to Mayor's character of Joe that one really starts to believe there are people such as him in law enforcement. If only they were much more visible.

As connections are made and a threat is issued, tension increases. Again, it's the details where Mayor shines; the explanations of what happened and what will happen. The plot is really well done, with enough twists and surprises to keep one thoroughly engaged. There is an excellent ending and an explanation which sums things up perfectly.

"Bury the Lead" is a very good police procedural with an ensemble cast of characters, a delightfully complicated crime. This is another well-done installment in a terrific series.

BURY THE LEAD (PolProc-Joe Gunther-Vermont-Contemp) – VG
Mayor, Archer – 29th in series
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Diane Burnett says

Archer Mayor's Bury the Lead, is another great trip around Vermont solving crimes. He gets a bit more detailed about Willy and his arm as well as the autopsies. But it's all good. Joe is kept busy in both solving crimes and his love life. Always a great read.
