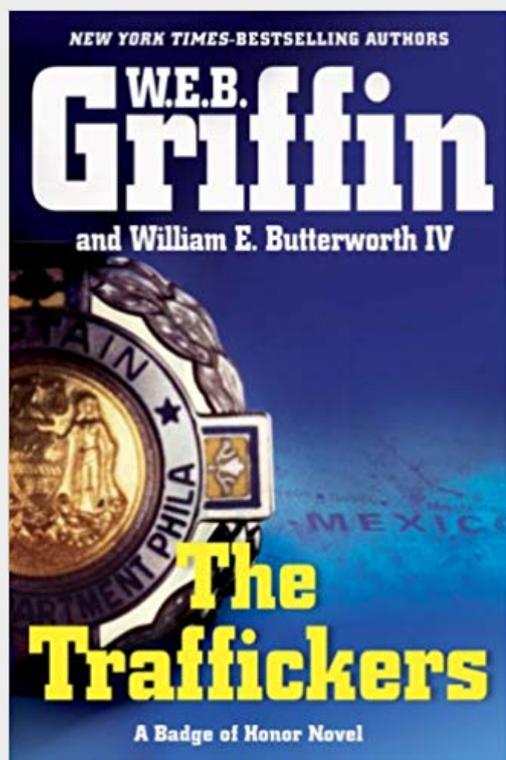


The Traffickers (Badge of Honor) by William E. Butterworth IV, W.E.B. Griffin



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Griffin's popular Badge of Honor police series returns, with a story of murder and lawlessness as compelling as today's headlines. Just as with his remarkable military novels, millions of readers have been captured by the rich characters and vivid realism of W. E. B. Griffin's police dramas. "Griffin has the knack," writes *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. "He sets his novel before you in short, fierce, stop-for-nothing scenes. Before you know it, you've gobbled it up." Homicide Sergeant Matthew Payne is used to murder, but lately there's been an awful lot of it in Philadelphia. A gangland shooting in a popular tourist location has left six dead, most of them innocent bystanders, and days later the body of a headless Latina turns up in the Schuylkill River. Everybody assumes they're not related, but Payne can't shake the hunch that there's something more to it—and that hunch leads him far from the City of Brotherly Love to the Texas-Mexico border. There, he finds a world where the lines of law and order are murkier than he ever imagined possible, and the daily question is "O Plato o Plomo?" Silver or lead. Cash or death. Which will Matt Payne take? Or will he just go home, glad to be alive . . . ? Filled with authentic color and detail, this is a riveting novel of the men and women who put their lives on the line, from the cop on the beat to the commissioner himself. It's a story of fears, dangers, courage, loyalty, and genuine heroism: storytelling at its best.



Reviews of the **The Traffickers (Badge of Honor)** by William E. Butterworth IV, W.E.B. Griffin

1. Agantrius

Unlike most offerings within this particular series, Matt Payne plays a rather sedate part in the unfolding of the story-line.

Whether it was the influence of Butterworth IV (Griffin's son) or Griffin himself, this novel delves into the very real, often confusing, subject of undocumented immigrants and issues faced when things go terribly wrong.

Whatever your feelings on immigration; illegal immigration; and immigration reform, you might well find yourself questioning those feelings as you read through "The Traffickers". Drug trade and sexual slavery are at the forefront of this offering.

There is much to be learned from its contents, but, as a Californian, I find myself wondering whether immigration (legal or otherwise) from south of our borders is really a problem or whether drugs, money laundering, and exploitation of those seeking a better life above an artificial border (having flown, and cruised, to and from Mexico I have yet to see a "wall" denoting where the United States begins and Mexico ends) are far more insidious; far more dangerous than a hard-working human being simply wanting more for his or her family.

This novel is a major departure from Griffin's (now with Butterworth IV) offering. I have been critical of some of their more recent works, however, on the second reading of "The Traffickers" I find they do have something more significant to offer than just "Wyatt Earp of the Mainline" putting down (permanently) the "bad guys". Certainly Paco is in the United States "illegally" but is he any less a "good citizen" than those born here? You

decide for yourself!

2. Small Black

I am binge reading this series for the first time. The characters are tough but they also care. The writing is good, some adult content but not graphic. The violence is graphic. Griffin makes all of his books so that you can read one from the middle of the series and understand what is going on. He does brief flashbacks of important backstory when necessary. In that I am binge reading I have clear recall of this history, but if not this is a good thing to have. I have 3 more books and will have read everything Griffin has written. I have never been disappointed.

3. Hulbine

Illegal immigration, human trafficking, forced prostitution, and some of the sleaziest bad guys ever in Griffin books make this interesting but depressing. Main character Matt Payne, is just a little immature in this one. Way too much forced conversational humor most of which is not very funny. Matt comes off as a spoiled rich kid which is what he is. In previous books, I did not see him that way. The very seedy side of Philly is looked at, and several very fine characters emerge, one of whom is an illegal who works hard, and is a good man. The Texas Ranger is an interesting guy who has a view of guns that seems to shock the doctors in Matt's life. I liked the story as the bad guys definitely do not win in the end. Several loose ends not tied up at the conclusion. Not a Griffin best, but an interesting one that contains well defined and evil bad guys.

4. IWantYou

It is a pleasure to report that *The Traffickers* is a pleasure. The author team has found its voice. Every popular author--and hasn't W.E.B. Griffin had a terrific run?--should have a successor as capable as his son, William E. Butterworth, has become. *The Traffickers* does not try to be a W.E.B. Griffin clone, the way all of those awful post-Ian Fleming James Bond books did. The characters, the setting, the city and the style are familiar but they are also new.

If William E. Butterworth turns out one title a year in this series, the *Badge of Honor* will just shine brighter and brighter. That may be wishful thinking. This book is not as good as the others that precede it in the *Badge of Honor* Series. But it is okay. I expected much less but I wanted to give Mr. Butterworth one more try. I'm glad that I did.

The entire story in *The Traffickers* takes place in just one day. There's no chance of Matt Payne growing up, and growing old, and leaving us (like Craig Lowell did, for one).

The modalities of the story--the drug trade and human trafficking--are serviceable. While not everything and everyone has carried over from the earlier books, bad guys--usually deceased by police--are still referred to as critters. Some things should never change even as torches pass.

Congratulations to Mr. Butterworth, and to his Dad: thanks, for *Brotherhood of War*, *The Corps* and *Badge of Honor*.

5. Faehn

As another reviewer has pointed out, there are a few errors of continuity. The description of Matt Payne's family is all mixed up. Amy is a half sister and older. Griffin also forgets that, in the last modernized *Badge* series book, the Philadelphia mayor had been brought up to the present as a black politician. Carlucci is an obvious picture of Frank Rizzo of the 70s but the mayor of "Final Justice" is black. Now, we have an immediate sequel where the mayor is back to Carlucci. Griffin has made similar errors in other series so I wouldn't attribute them to his age. He just needs a continuity editor. The book does move at a fast pace although at the expense of character development and the plot is pretty simplistic. The last of the *Presidential Agent* series was a much better novel. Still, I read the whole thing in a morning and enjoyed it. If you are a Griffin fan, you will overlook the weaknesses and enjoy it. If you are new to WEB

Griffin, I would suggest other books, such as the Presidential Agent series or the Marine Corps series. Why doesn't he write a sequel about Marine pilot Charlie Galloway and Aunt Caroline ? That one I'd buy in a minute. Oh well, I buy them all anyway.

6. Akta

I enjoyed the book, it captures your attention, but it is not nearly as suspenseful as others in the series. The author somehow elected to actually tip his hand, and the reader was left wondering, okay, we know what is going to be the outcome, when are you going to pull the trigger. Then the author puts a lot of time into building up the story and the characters and rushes to the end, as if someone pulled the fire alarm and he has to get out of the house fast. Sorry guys, you just didn't polish this one enough. But in the end, I did enjoy it, and will read the next installment. John

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