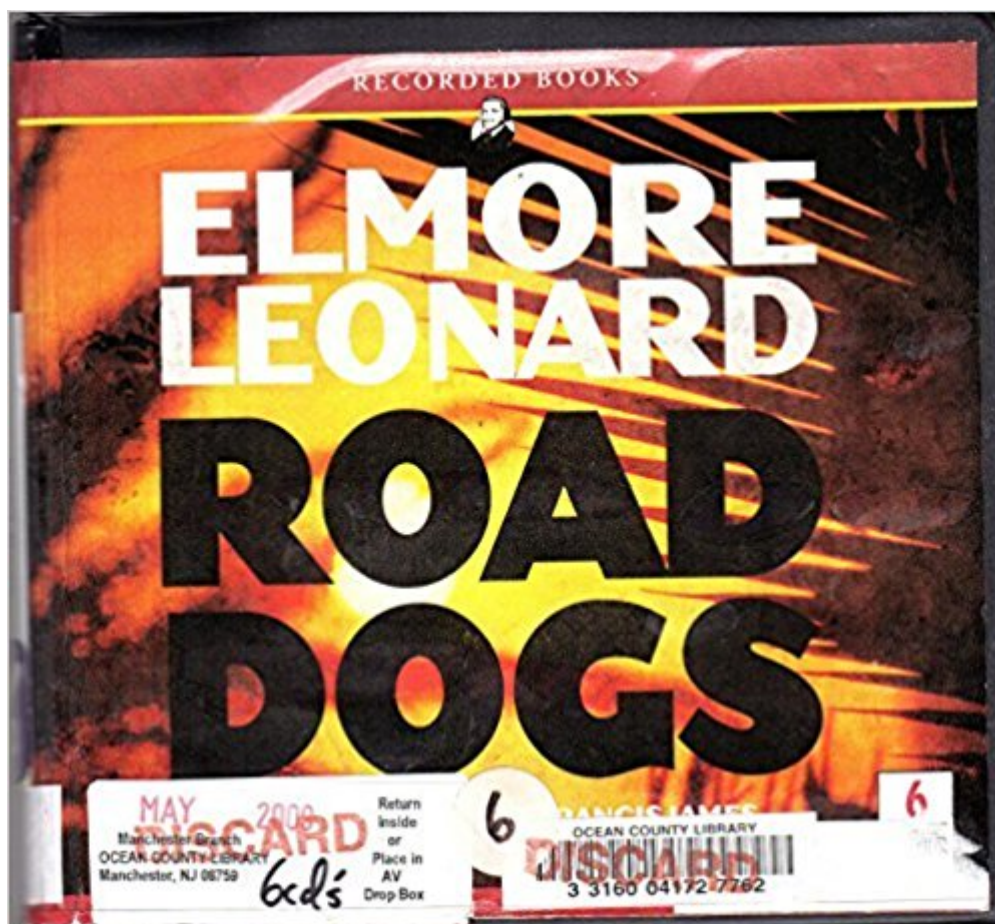


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Road Dogs



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Customer Reviews

One of Leonard's best. If you liked Jack Foley in "Out of Sight", Dawn Navarro in "Riding the Rap" and Cundo Rey in "La Brava", then this one is for you. We take a wild ride from Gun Club Highway in Florida to the canals of Venice, California. "Good guy" Jack Foley (he's only robbed somewhere north of 200 banks across the south) uses Cundo's attorney to get him loose from prison after U. S. Marshall Karen Sisco is persuaded to aid in his defense. She's the one who helped put him away after a brief 'time out' in "Out of Sight." Cundo has come into a small fortune after a stint as the male dancer in a female night club. He sends Foley ahead to check on Dawn and set the stage for Cundo's comeback in crime. He'll be out of prison, too, in a couple of months and in this time Foley and Dawn have gotten to know each other. Cundo's jealousy comes into play as the three of them become an explosive mixture. Full of the poignant pathos of a typical Leonard situation, "Road Dogs" is pure pleasure to the Leonard fan. Well deserving of a five-star rating.

Where would we be without friends? Jack Foley is the most prolific bank robber of all time. Cundo Rey has a much more varied criminal record, and is extremely rich. They become friends in the prison yard, so much so that Cundo hires his own attorney to get Foley's sentence reduced. Once that feat is accomplished, Cundo encourages Foley to live in one of his two houses in California. Wondering about the motivation behind the offer, Foley nevertheless accepts, and travels to Venice Beach, where he meets with Cundo's girlfriend, a leggy professional psychic named Dawn Navarro, who has supposedly remained faithful to Cundo while the moneyed con serves out his time. Fat chance of that, for this is an Elmore Leonard novel, and there are no deep psychological studies here, just a rollicking good yarn. Dawn is loyal to one thing, the concept that she is entitled to Cundo's fortune. And she doesn't care who she uses to obtain it, or how she uses them. That

includes a supposedly reformed gang member named Tico, now working as what is termed a gang interventionist. As Cundo has been otherwise occupied behind bars, his assets are held in title by his chief loyalist, Little Jimmy. Cundo is eventually released from stir, and returns to his lady and his lair, resuming his friendship with Foley, although the bank robber never fully understands why he is the chosen one. Foley himself is hounded by an FBI agent named Adams, anxious for him to return to his old ways so he can force Foley into handcuffs. As typical of Elmore Leonard novels, the words skitter rapid fire across the page, funny and knowing. Never serious, Leonard specialized in characters who revealed themselves as being immersed within the underside, criminals who were sometimes icy in their determination to get what they wanted, but who could sometimes easily pose as the good neighbor down the block. Now departed from this earthly life and perhaps writing tales for an audience up above, Leonard's first rule of writing was that if it looks like writing, rewrite it. There isn't much in *Road Dogs* that looks like writing, which makes it well worth reading on days you need large doses of ironic and worldly humor.

Elmore Leonard really hit his stride with this one. You don't need to like Elmore Leonard, and you don't need to like the genre. If you enjoy good writing, clever and realistic dialog, interesting and well-developed characters and a tight plot, you'll like this book. If you want to follow the references, you can read *Out of Sight* (for the backstory on Jack Foley) and *La Brava*; you can even read *Maximum Bob*, but it's not necessary, even though Leonard pulls in a number of references to characters in them. (He even works in a crack about Hollywood's failure to comprehend *When the Women Come Out to Dance*.) For a similar concept wrapped in a very different plot, you might want to read *The Big Bounce*: another tale featuring a smart, sociopathic girl vs. a smart and socially marginal, but not sociopathic, guy.

Road Dogs, one of Elmore Leonard's last novels is well worth the read. Written in 2009, it marks the return of 3 Leonard characters. Jack Foley, the good-hearted bank robber of *Out of Sight*, (played by George Clooney in the Movie), Dawn Navarro from *Riding the Rap* and *Pronto*, and the inimitable Cundo Rey, who has somehow survived his encounter with Joe LaBrava in the novel aptly named *LaBrava*. Foley, after being shot by Karen Cisco in *Out of Sight* is returned to prison for a 30 year sentence. There he befriends, and ultimately protects Cundo Rey, who has extricated himself from his situation in Florida, but is finally apprehended in California. However, while in LA he has made a great deal of money selling drugs and buying real estate. He also has a girlfriend, the aforementioned Dawn Navarro. (Probably anyone interested in *Road Dogs* might read *LaBrava* first.

Getting to know Cundo Rey makes this novel all the more enjoyable). Foley and Rey become road dogs, slang for buddies who have each others' backs while doing time. As a reward and a thank you, Cundo arranges an interview for Jack with his own high powered attorney. This eventually results in Foley's release from prison, (Cundo's release will follow shortly,) but at the cost of \$30,000. Cundo, of course provides the funds, in exchange for some favor at a later date. Jack must go to LA to watch over Dawn Navarro who is now a well paid psychic, and of course beautiful. That sets up the rest, which is approximately 250 pages of pure Leonard. This is a must read for all real Dutch fans. If it is ever done as a movie, I hope George Clooney returns as Jack. This is something that Leonard spoke about in an interview before his passing.

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