



## Vindication (A Matt Royal Mystery)

*H. Terrell Griffin*

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**Premier adult community with everything you could possibly want, need, or dream of doing in your retirement years is just a golf cart ride away—now the scene of a murder**

In this John Grisham style mystery, Matt Royal, the retired lawyer-turned-beach-bum is called back into the courtroom to defend his girlfriend J. D. Duncan's Aunt Esther, who lives in the sprawling North Central Florida retirement community of The Villages. A best-selling author has been murdered after a book signing, and Aunt Esther has been arrested. Matt has a history with the local sheriff—one which may not bode well for his client.

Matt reluctantly suits up for the courtroom, and J.D. takes a leave from the police department to go undercover. A bizarre specter from the past haunts their investigation every step of the way. As they delve further into the case, the pieces of the puzzle refuse to fall into any kind of coherent pattern. Jock Algren arrives with his special skill set to expose the real murderer and free Aunt Esther, but to no avail. Not until the case goes to trial and the evidence is revealed does the truth emerge—and a strange kind of justice prevails.

## **Vindication (A Matt Royal Mystery) Details**

Date : Published January 2nd 2018 by Oceanview Publishing

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Author : H. Terrell Griffin

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Genre : Mystery, Contemporary

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## **From Reader Review Vindication (A Matt Royal Mystery) for online ebook**

### **Al Stoess says**

Good courtroom stuff. Average book. worth reading.

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### **Tulay says**

#### **Really good.**

Entertaining, humorous story. Matt Royal and J.D. do excellent job, they're not in my age group but rest of the characters live in this beautiful village are in my age group. Love this series and can't wait for the next book and find out what is going to happen June 6th.

Always read the first couple of chapters twice, and keep it at the edge of my mind, when trying to figure out the guilty one. Read this book.

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### **Suze says**

#### **VINDICATION**

I loved this book, as I have loved all of the Matt Royal stories. This was a very complex plot, a lot of drama and humor and the wonderful characters from Longboat Key.

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### **Breakaway Reviewers says**

An excellent read but not without its flaws

By my calculation, this is the 7th Matt Royal murder/mystery but it's my first and won't be my last. Let's get my concerns out of the way first so I can concentrate on the main event. Certainly, during the first third of the story, the dialogue was a little wooden and didn't flow. Unusual and unfamiliar words were occasionally thrown in as well which were out of place with the style of writing. Additionally, the sentences were often too short which gave a staccato and flat feel to the story. Most annoying though were the spelling mistakes and errors and the proof reader should be reprimanded. "Principal" is the word for a sum of money on which interest is paid Mr Griffin not "principle". Goodness knows how many times the word was used and I only counted one instance when it was spelt correctly.

Whilst the errors offended my OCD proclivity, they did not detract from the great plot which twisted and turned. Matt Royal and his squeeze J D Duncan, who works uncover in this story, investigate the background to JD's aunt's, Esther, arrest for murder in The Villages – a large retirement development in Central Florida. Matt takes little persuasion to come out of retirement to defend Esther. It was good to read a book with the minimum of violence and the maximum of mystery and one which challenged the reader's investigative

powers. I thought I had it all sorted out quite a few times but a spanner was always thrown into the works.

The trial and the subsequent denouement was superbly done. The logical process of development of the facts in the courtroom was first class and captivated me throughout, showing an excellent grasp of trial procedure. Even though the outcome was never seriously in doubt there were a few curve balls thrown into the mix to maintain full interest right up until the real murderer was named.

I am very pleased to have found another writer to add to my list of favourites and I recommend this novel without hesitation,

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.

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### **Aleasha says**

Vindication was a perfectly adequate novel, but it was just that. Adequate. I felt the author was really trying to explain things to death, going in to way too much detail and not leaving much mystery or anything to really gauge our interests in where it was going. That being said, I come from a legal background at work so perhaps I just found it tedious everything being explained so thoroughly. I also found that I had guessed the ending pretty early on.

Thank you to netgalley for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Vijay Anand says**

‘Vindication’ had an intriguing premise, but when I started reading the book, I wasn’t completely sure if I’d like it. But when I finished the novel, I realized I loved it. So much so, I’m tempted to go back and read every one of the Matt Royal books.

First, what I liked.

My first impression was that the book is gorgeously written. The style is lyrical, with each word seamlessly flowing into the next. Apart from being incredibly easy on the eyes, this made it very easy for me to construct the scenes at reading pace.

The characters too are incredibly well-developed, but perhaps that is because this is the latest in a long series of books featuring most, if not all, of these characters.

I make it a habit to delve into a book without any substantial knowledge of what the book is about. This is a double-edged sword. It sometimes makes for breathlessly entertaining reading, but it can also lead to bitter disappointment if the book is poorly written.

I’m happy to report that this book falls into the former category.

This whodunit is developed in a sublime manner, with all sorts of clues to let the reader form his or her own theory as to who the killer might be.

At the 30% mark, it seemed fairly obvious to me who the killer was, and I must confess I thought it was lazy writing if I was able to deduce the killer's identity so early in the book. But I read on, and I'm glad I did.

Initially, I was curious about how the author would establish the identity. But as the story progressed, I realized I could be wrong. That someone else might be the killer.

Turns out I was right and wrong at the same time. While my guess as to the killer's identity is spot on, someone else, someone unexpected, is the master of puppets.

The legal side of the story (Matt Royal is, after all, a first-rate lawyer) is done in a very reader-friendly manner. There is no heavy-handed exposition peppered with incomprehensible legalese. On the rare occasion that calls for a legal term to be used, it is duly explained by the author so the readers are able to keep up with the story without any interruptions.

There are books that drag endlessly, and there are books that feel too short despite a sizeable story.

'Vindication' is the latter. At 320 pages, it never feels boring. It is not heavy in the middle. That's a good thing.

Now, what I didn't like.

One of the few things I didn't really buy were the point of view chapters where JD was concerned, and Matt Royal's separation anxiety.

The abrupt shift from first person to third is jarring, and many passages feel superfluous, as the author often treads upon areas which were already covered from the protagonist's POV.

Then there's Matt's constant pining for JD whenever she is not around. For an accomplished and retired lawyer, it makes him sound incredibly juvenile and not keeping in with the character.

Now that that's out of the way, I'll conclude by saying 'Vindication' is a breezy legal thriller that I will definitely recommend as we get closer to the publication date.

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## **Maranda says**

Griffin is an author that leaves bread crumbs along a path for the reader to follow. Excellent crime drama with likable characters that travel through the pages in a smooth and entertaining format. This being the eleventh book in the Matt Royal series it has no problem being a stand alone. Matt is a retired lawyer who has found the spice of life as a beach bum. His girl friend J.D's aunt Esther has been arrested for murder and Matt is putting his shorts away to come to her rescue. Loved the way that Griffin left clues but kept the mystery moving till the very last page. All the evidence was gathered and justice was served in this case. "A copy of the book was provided by Oceanview Publishing via Netgalley with no requirements for a review.

All comments here are my honest opinion." Would not hesitate reading any of the others in this series.

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### **Scott Parsons says**

This is a very well-written mystery/legal novel. It is part of a series but it is my first encounter with Matt Royal, lawyer, now a retired beach bum in Longboat Key, Florida. Apart from fishing he hangs out with police deputy J.D. Duncan. The novel is written in a lyrical yet laid back style.

Most of the story occurs in a Central Florida retirement community called The Villages. One morning a body is found in the town square. It is the corpse of a best-selling female author who is in town for a book signing and talk about her novel. She is supposed to have left the previous evening but en route to the airport with a friend she receives notification that her flight has been cancelled. Much of the plot revolves around a local book club and the various personalities. J.D. Duncan's aunt Esther claims that the murdered author had stolen a novel she had written and passed it off as her own. This occurred via another member of the book club who had read Esther's draft and responded that it was not publishable. Esther sees the published novel and accuses the author's friend of having slipped her a copy.

This provides Esther with a motive and some additional evidence, i.e. the murder weapon being Esther's, point to Esther as the prime suspect. J.D. persuades Matt Royal to go to The Villages and represent her aunt. She then takes a leave of absence from her job and goes to The Villages masquerading as someone's niece to assist Matt in uncovering the real killer, assuming that Esther is innocent.

There are many twists and turns in the plot and a number of red herrings strewn around which suggest possible killers. But we do not reach a reasonable conclusion until the trial is underway. Just as it looks like Esther is going to go down for the murder, Matt Royal pulls a rabbit out of a hat, so to speak, and the real culprit is tagged.

An entertaining novel which motivates me to read more of this series. A copy of this book was provided by Oceanview Publishing via Netgalley with no requirements for a review. All comments here are my honest opinion.

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### **Claudia Marie Hopkins says**

#### **Best one of the series to date.**

I have waited for this book for so long, great story and characters. I didn't want it to end. I hope there are more to come.

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### **3 no 7 says**

"Vindication" is book eleven in H. Terrell Griffin's Matt Royal Mystery series. It is not necessary to have read any of the previous books to enjoy this one. This is the first book I have read in the series, and I did not realize there was a series until I finished the book and wanted to read more.

A woman's body is face down on the concrete dance floor of Paddock Square. So it begins, and it does not end without many questions but few answers.

Curiously, the first two chapters seem to be almost accidentally slipped in from another book, but do not skip them. Chapter three opens with "retired" lawyer Matt Royal's first person narrative as he relaxes in Longboat Key, Florida.

In a story so relatable, that Griffin must have been spying on people I know, a member of a mystery book club has been arrested for murder. The club meets in a local bookstore, and the victim is an author visiting for a book signing. The accused suspect happens to be the aunt of Matt Royal's long-time girlfriend and local police detective J.D. Duncan, so Royal is asked to "come out of retirement" and take the case. Along the way, Jock Algren, Matt's friend and one of the best agents in America's Intelligence community, who is visiting, unwinding, and relaxing in Longboat Key is asked to help out.

The story unfolds with Matt's narrative alternating with the third person story line. Matt's first person sections are filled with musing about the progress of the case and compelling insight into legal procedure and why he is doing what he is doing. The third person sections provide needed background and views of events from other perspectives. The pace is steady, and the alternating points of view give depth and add interest.

The characters drive this story, and these characters are intense, realistic, and hilarious. When Aunt Esther Higgins, retired schoolteacher, faces taking a guilty plea bargain or spending months in jail awaiting trial, she reassures Matt that she will be fine because:

"Years ago the school system that I worked for got in a jam and had to assign me to an all-boys junior high school to teach English .....You tell that prosecutor that if I could handle that for nine months, I can damn sure handle a jail cell for six months. No deals."

Matt laments that the legal "process is mentally exhausting and not nearly as much fun as fishing." He does relish the Florida weather, especially on "one of those days when everybody calls their relatives in the still chilly north to rag them a little about the gorgeous days that a Florida spring produces." Moreover, where else would a suspect be called "a pusillanimous puissant" or a traffic-congested road labeled "Malfunction Junction"?

Despite the hilarity, a lot of investigation goes on, and dead-ends and false leads abound. Many secrets from the past rear their ugly heads but do not seem to lead anywhere. In true Perry Mason style, everything finally falls into place during the trial in unexpected ways and a peculiar justice finally prevails

I received a copy of "Vindication" from Oceanview Publishing, H. Terrell Griffin and NetGalley. This is an entertaining book to read, but be careful; you might just laugh right out loud as you read.

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## **Joyce says**

4 stars

Former attorney Matt Royal is enjoying his "retirement" on Longboat Key when he receives a telephone call from his girlfriend Jennifer Diane "JD" Duncan who is a detective and takes a few weeks off to help Matt resolve Aunt Esther's situation. Her aunt Esther Higgins has been arrested for the murder of writer Olivia

Lathom.

Olivia Lathom was a member of a book/reading club that focused mainly on mysteries. Aunt Esther asked one of the women to review her novel, and the woman said it wasn't very good. Imagine her surprise when the murdered woman steals the novel and it becomes an immediate bestseller! It seems no one knew the deceased woman very well. Her past is a mystery. She can't be located on any database and her fingerprints are not in any system. Matt interviews many people and travels all over Florida and Georgia seeking answers to his quest. She claimed to be from a wealthy family from Georgia. When Matt tracks down the surviving family member Charles Lathom, he is surprised to learn that Olivia Lathom was the sister-in-law who was married to a younger brother called Danny. He died just one month after his marriage to Olivia under mysterious circumstances.

The woman who gave Olivia Esther's novel is Ruth Bergstrom and she is very hostile and defends her deceased friend loudly and often. JD goes "under cover" to interview her in hopes that she'll let something slip.

The police are being very nice as is the prosecutor. Matt wonders what is up. He is followed and threatened by hostile men.

As the trial date grows closer, JD and Matt continue to interview witnesses and talk to people. Some very interesting facts come out as they speak to scientific specialists and computer people. The trial begins.

The identity of the killer is not so much of a surprise, but Matt reaching that conclusion is a study in patience and determination.

This book is very well written and plotted. It is easy reading and moves along apace. The descriptions of South Florida were wonderful and honest. (The weather is awfully hot in August – yuk...) I like Matt, JD and Aunt Esther. The other characters in the book were – for the most part – likeable. The book was interesting in that it offered little asides in how an attorney prepares for trial and what they can and can't say or do. It was very well done. I've read H. Terrell Griffin's novels before, but it has been some time. I'd forgotten how much I like him as an author. Well done, Mr. Griffin!

I want to thank NetGalley and Oceanview Publishing for forwarding to me a copy of this good book to read and enjoy.

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### **Louise Wilson says**

Matt Royal is a retired lawyer-turned-beach-bum is called back to the courtroom to defend his girlfriend, J. D. Duncan's aunt Ester, who lives in the retirement community of The Village, in North Central Florida. A best selling author has been murdered after a book signing and Ester has been arrested. Matt reluctantly suits up for the case while J. D. takes leave from the police department to go undercover.

I really liked the characters of Matt Royal and his law enforcement girlfriend J. D.. I liked that there was also some humor included in the story. There are a lot of red herrings and secrets from the past are unearthed. The author has a great style of writing. This is book eleven in this series but it can be read as a standalone. I will be looking for more books from this author . A great courtroom drama.

I would like to thank NetGalley, Oceanview Publishing and the author H. Terrell Griffin for my ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Linda Strong says**

Matt Royal is a retired lawyer -turned beach bum. He finds himself called back into the legal system when his girlfriend's aunt is arrested for murder.

Aunt Esther lives in a retirement community in Florida. She is accused of murdering a sort - of friend who lives in the same area. She was shot in the back and dumped in a parking lot. The victim was a best-selling author and had just finished a book signing.

Things don't look good for Aunt Esther. The murder weapon is found in her house with her fingerprints all over the gun and bullets. She was heard saying that she was going to kill the victim the day before she was shot.

Matt has his hands full, as well as trying to find a way to beat these charges. The local sheriff and Matt have a history ... and not a good one. And there are people who aren't who people believe they are.

It is only when Esther goes to trial that the puzzle pieces begin to fall in some kind of order.

I really enjoy a good legal thriller ... especially when it is well-written and not a Perry Mason moment anywhere to be seen. Matt Royal is a great character, as is his girlfriend, J. D. who is also a law enforcement officer. I love how they interact with each other, as well as with their friends. One of them is Jock, who's a sniper for an unnamed company. Murder is serious, but there's always room for a little humor and the author writes it well.

This is book 11 in a series .... and it does well as a stand alone. I have read some of his earlier books and found all of them to be engaging, filled with twists and turns and surprising endings.

Many thanks to the author / Oceanview Publishing / Netgalley for the advanced digital copy. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

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### **Blagica says**

Vindication (A Matt Royal Mystery) by H. Terrell Griffin Published January 2nd 2018 by Oceanview Publishing was a very interesting read.

Former attorney Matt Royal is enjoying his “retirement” on Longboat Key when he receives a telephone call from his girlfriend Jennifer Diane Duncan who is a detective and takes a few weeks off to help Matt resolve Aunt Esther’s situation. Nothing takes you out of retirement quicker than the person you love or their family needing help. Her aunt Esther Higgins has been arrested for the murder of writer Olivia Lathom. That is the first book by this author that I have read and it was a nice quick read. The prologue confused me because I was like what does a Miss Georgia pageant have to do with Aunt Esther’s book? This book is well written and brilliantly paced, it is a murder mystery until the last page. All the characters are likeable and the

descriptions make me want to visit Florida more often. I look forward to reading more by this author in the future. I give it 4 Royal Stars. Thank you Negalley, Oceanview and H Terrell Griffin for my arc of this book I enjoyed it.

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### **Mandy White says**

Matt Royal... Lawyer turned beach bum turns back to lawyer when his girlfriends aunt is accused of murder. A legal thriller that twists and turns and makes for a great read. This book is the latest in a series that I have not previously read but will be looking out for more. It reads well as a stand alone book.

Thanks to Oceanview Publishing for sending me a copy of this book to read via Netgalley in return for an honest review

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