

Quarantined

Joe McKinney

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The citizens of San Antonio, Texas are threatened with extermination by a terrifying outbreak of the flu. Quarantined by the military to contain the virus, the city is in a desperate struggle to survive. Inside the quarantine walls, Detective Lily Harris is working burial statistics duty at the Scar, San Antonio's mass graveyard, when she finds a murder victim hidden amongst the plague dead. But Lily's investigation into the young woman's death soon takes a frightening turn as yet another strain of the deadly flu virus surfaces, and now Lily finds herself caught up in a conspiracy orchestrated by a corrupt local government intent on hiding the news from the world and fighting a population threatening to boil over into revolt. As the city erupts in violence, Lily is forced to do the unthinkable. With the clock ticking toward annihilation, Lily must lead her family through the quarantine walls and escape with news that just might save us all.

Quarantined Details


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Author : Joe McKinney

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From Reader Review Quarantined for online ebook

William M. says

This dark drama/thriller by author Joe McKinney is an exceptional read. The book's plague-infested environment, filled with danger and chaos, and with such striking emotion, has never been told quite like this before. The author's law enforcement background gives the writing a realistic authenticity to the language and details without bogging it down with overly technical descriptions and police procedures. McKinney uses a wonderful balance between character and story, constantly building the tension to unbearable heights. There are moments so suspenseful, I actually caught myself holding my breath on a few occasions, especially towards the end.

Perhaps even more impressive than this story is the fact that this is only McKinney's second novel, his first being the zombie book, *Dead City*. If this is any indication of this author's learning curve, I absolutely can't wait to see what he writes next. Horror fans should be cautioned, however, that this is more a drama/thriller with an element of mystery, so be prepared. That being said, this book should please any reader looking for a fresh and original story involving an extremely deadly plague in America. Deeply drawn characters, tight meaningful dialogue, and well-paced suspense is what you're guaranteed to find with *Quarantined*.

Melinda Elizabeth says

It started off well, I like realistic doomsday plots, and the thought of a city being cut off from the rest of the nation to stem an outbreak of a deadly flu seems just plausible enough to suck you in.

All was going well until I noticed how short the novel was. Then the wild goose chases and the riot scenes started to worry me.

An unexpected proposition from a character sealed the book's fate- it felt like the author had run out of time and needed to make a hasty end chapter to finish the book. The end came suddenly, that you feel ripped off as a reader for such a tactless ending.

Richard says

This was better than "*Dead City*" his first book I read. I good cautionary tale about what can happen to good people.

Becky says

There are no zombies in this book. It seems like there should be, considering that this is a book about a plague, and the author writes other zombie books, but this is just your normal super bird-flu outbreak that goes apocalyptic... or at least it does in San Antonio, Texas.

As I was reading this, I couldn't help but think about two other books which have some similarities.

First, of course, is *The Stand*. There we have a superflu outbreak, though with a much, much higher mortality rate (99.4% if I remember correctly, vs 18% here), but what I kept thinking of was the methods used to try to contain the outbreak. Obviously, in *The Stand*, that had to be unsuccessful, or the larger story of the good vs evil would not be possible, but I did wonder how it was done SO successfully in this book. In this book, they used a wall (originally constructed for the US/Mexico border and re-purposed) for contagion control. I just don't see how NOBODY made it out before the perimeter was in place. San Antonio is a big city, with a lot of people, and quarantine seems like it would be difficult to manage perfectly.

Of course, this story is taking place months after the quarantine is in place and patrolled vigilantly and ruthlessly, so maybe there were breaches in the beginning and now the system is in place and rolling along smoothly just letting peoples' fear of being killed outright keep them from trying to escape. But I remember the scenes from *The Stand*, where the military officials in charge of containment failed so spectacularly and it seems to me that it would be much harder than this book makes it seem.

The second book that I kept thinking about as I read this was *The Last Policeman*. Both that book and this one feature a police officer investigating a murder in a kind of end-of-the-world setting. TLP has a meteor hurtling toward Earth as the impending doom, and this one has a superflu, but both have people who are trying to do their jobs while in the midst of chaos. And both were told from first person narration.

Honestly, I think this book was far more successful than TLP was, for a number of reasons. For one, I felt that the details about the investigation in *Quarantined* were more realistic and accurate than the way that Winters portrayed his investigation, including the main character/protagonist and their thoughts and rationale and logic processes. I think this could be due to the fact that Winters' protagonist was a rookie whereas McKinney's was not, but the whole investigation aspect of TLP just didn't work for me. I did not have that problem with this book. This may have something to do with the fact that McKinney was in law enforcement himself, a fact I learned after finishing this book and viewing his author page to see what else he's written, but overall, I think it was just that TLP was a bit too fantastical for my tastes. It was supposed to be a murder investigation occurring in a pre-apocalyptic setting, but it just felt a bit outlandish at times. It just didn't work for me.

I really felt like the investigation, and the tone of the story, was just well handled in *Quarantined*, and felt professional and real. It's how I would imagine an investigation in such circumstances may really go.

Speaking of realism, the H2N2 superflu device was very well handled here. I loved how it was both the setting and critical to the investigation, so it didn't feel superfluous (see what I did there?) to the story, but integral. The science and politics surrounding the flu were plausible and worked, and added to the overall feeling of "This could really happen, and this is what it could look like."

I liked the characters in this book, and felt that they were all realistic and interesting, considering that they were living in a purgatory of sorts. I would have liked a bit more to Billy, main character Lily's husband. (Also, Lily and Billy kinda took me out of things a bit. I wish authors would think about stuff like that. Or at least mention it somehow - like how he prefers most people to call him Bill but she calls him Billy because she likes how their names rhyme or something.) Billy is something of a supporting character here, but his influence is vital to Lily's character arc, so I would really have loved to see a bit more from him.

I was a bit ambivalent about the audiobook reader, though. I mostly liked her reading, but there were some characters and sentences that I think she should have read differently, to give them a different connotation. If

anything, she seemed a bit... eager. I like a more subdued reader.

But, as a whole, I'm actually pretty pleasantly surprised by this book. I enjoyed it quite a lot and will be checking out more of McKinney's work.

B. Hale says

In a 10 book collection of Undead books, there were no freaking zombies! More like a warped version of the movie Contagion mixed with an episode of law and order. I hate both. There were a bunch of negative stereotypes I don't know and then republicans were taken up for in this book...who in their right mind. Last but not least the word faggish? Really?

Marvin says

Good novel combining the hard-nosed detective tale with a nail-biting science fiction thriller. I liked the realistic overtones. I could imagine this sort of scenario if an uncontrollable epidemic did break out in a major city. I was not so thrilled with the mystery aspect which was too simple and too easily solved for my taste. Nonetheless it was an enjoyable read and good enough to check out other novels by the author.

Cats of Ulthar says

This is what "apocalyptic" really signifies:(

Review of Quarantined by Joe McKinney

I really enjoyed this book, despite the Dystopian framework which I found very depressing. The condition of San Antonio during this time period reminded me of what I'd read about Beirut. It's terrifying that such a situation is potentially very possible, as many novelists and short-story writers have suggested in regard to plagues.

Author Joe McKinney has a special touch (witness, for example, "Inheritance") and here it applies to a more or less straightforward murder mystery/police procedural. Detectives Lily Harris and her partner Reginald "Chunk" Dempsey (you'll figure out why the nickname early on) are on Scar detail following the H2N2 influenza plague in San Antonio, a city literally under quarantine: locked inside containing walls, perpetually short of food and supplies, repeatedly looted and burned, with tens of thousands dead and more dying every day. When a body turns up on a transport which is unaccounted for, then proves to be one of the World Health Organisation doctors, mystery upon mystery begins to unfold. Meanwhile, Lily feels the pressure ever more, as she dreams of a "real life" for her five-year-old daughter Connie and her husband Billy and herself.

MegaDude says

I honestly can't remember the last time I read a non-post-apocalyptic book. I think it might have been last summer, but it may have been the summer before that. It's not that I hate anything that doesn't involve the end of the world, far from it, but I just have so many PA books in my collection, with more being sent to me all the time, that I feel like I have to get through those first.

So when I checked my email the other day and found that the folks at Permuted Press had sent me a copy of *Quarantined* by Joe McKinney for review, it turned out to be kind of a surprise in two ways.

First of all, I was in-between books, and found myself in the mood for a plague story, something at the outbreak stage, and *Quarantined* sounded like exactly what I was looking for.

Quarantined is set in San Antonio in the months following the reappearance of a particular strain of the flu, a strain so virulent that the government takes the drastic action of surrounding the city with 190 miles of wall, sealing the surviving citizens in with the sick, and the dead. It's when one of those dead doesn't look exactly right that Homicide Detective Lily Harris and her partner start an investigation that leads them to answers they were never expecting to find.

That leads to the second sort-of surprise; the book isn't really that post-apocalyptic. Yes, we're told that this deadly new flu is killing about 25,000 people per month, schools are closed and public gatherings are prohibited, and the population lives in constant fear of infection, rioting at the lack of basic supplies, believing they've been abandoned by the rest of their country.

But even so, all of that isn't so much the focus of the book as it is the backdrop; the story is really kind of a classic murder-mystery-leads-to-a-broader-conspiracy cop novel. The story is narrated in the first person by Detective Harris, and as I was reading I kept wondering if the author was a female police officer, because all of the details felt spot on, and it turns out that I was half right.

Joe is definitely a guy, but he is, in fact, a Homicide Detective with the San Antonio PD, so he was really able to fill his story with authentic details about the procedures involved in a murder investigation. And as he is himself a member of one of the agencies that are portrayed in the book, he has a good feel for the kinds of competition and infighting that goes on in the real world, and that when combined with a deadly super-flu could lead to the deaths of thousands.

So overall, although *Quarantined* didn't turn out to be exactly the kind of story I thought it was, that wasn't a negative at all. It was cool to be able to read the kind of book that normal people read, but have it have just enough spice to keep a PA nerd like me entertained. And *Quarantined* is definitely entertaining, whether you're looking for a read that includes the end of the world, or not.

Spurnlad says

Not bad. Interesting premise, with a whole city under quarantine.

Strong characters, finished a bit quickly

Rebecca says

Very well written. I liked the mystery plot in the setting of the decimated/quarantined city. It was my first time reading this author and I'm very interested in checking out more of his work!

Jackie says

I started this book with the thought that it was going to be a zombie novel. I read on and on waiting for the zombies to rise and take over. They never did... Instead, I was thrown into a world with murder, mystery, corruption and an epidemic. It didn't lay to much into the ground work that got me a little confused halfway in the book. it made me question their environment, their situation, the issur but never got the answers. The mystery was intriguing and the theme and the way people responded to drop in infrastructure, limited supplies and power struggle between the government and the people seemed quite plausible. Even though there seemed to be plot holes and stories that didn't get finished.

Kate says

3.5*

Ebony Irby says

Good book. Sad that there was Zero zombies in this book. But still a very enjoyable read. I was under the impression that it was a continuation of the "Dead World" series, but it is actually a stand alone novel about a family being quarantined in Texas. Though the ending kind of led you to believe that a zombie outbreak was imminent.

Misti says

So disappointing. This was the first book in my recently purchased (for 99 cents!) Ultimate Undead Collection: Zombie Apocalypse Best Sellers (set of 10 books), and there were no Zombies in it! Instead it was a small scale flu-related post-apocalyptic crime novel. The story follows a pair of detectives trying to solve a murder in a quarantined town. Initially I thought the main character was male based on the inner dialogue and was totally surprised when I realized she was actually female. I was also thrown by the homophobic language which was very distracting and offensive. And the characters all seemed to be contradictory or stereotypical. Here's hoping I enjoy the other 9 books more and that they actually have Zombies in them!

Justin says

Quarantined is something of a departure for author Joe McKinney, who is best known for his series of zombie novels starting with *Dead City*, but some of the themes remain the same. McKinney tells the story of a flu pandemic outbreak in a major American city and the government's attempts to contain the disease, which will resonate with fans of the zombie genre.

More than just an "outbreak" novel, *Quarantined* has a Law & Order aspect, focusing on a pair of homicide detectives in a walled-off San Antonio who are trying to solve a murder while at the same time take care of themselves and their loved ones in a situation that's rapidly deteriorating. Throughout the course of their investigation, McKinney provides some background on how the pandemic started, the level of casualties, the extreme nature of the government's response, and what might be next for the citizens of San Antonio and the rest of the world.

Some of the ideas in the book are tough to accept. Would the population of a city that large really allow themselves to be fenced in like that? What about San Antonio's significant military presence? Were they quarantined as well? If so, why weren't they providing some crowd control if the police weren't up to the task? If you can shrug some of these details off, *Quarantined* is a satisfying read. Even without the walking dead, the threat presented in *Quarantined* is horrifying enough. It helps that McKinney writes compelling characters and believable dialogue, and sets a brisk pace that's perfect for the age of the police procedural. Given the subject matter, it's hard to call this a "light" read, but it's the kind of fast-paced adventure that's perfect for airplane trips or while you're taking a break between longer series.
