



The Wind Chill Factor

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Decades after Hitler's fall, Nazis are still trying to kill John Cooper

His marriage destroyed by drinking, John Cooper returns to Cambridge, Massachusetts, trying to recapture the joy he felt as an undergraduate in Harvard University's sacred halls. He is just beginning to piece his life together when he gets a telegram calling him home to Minnesota. The message comes from Buenos Aires, and with Cooper's family history, that can mean only one thing: The Nazis are staging a comeback.

To John and his brother, their grandfather was a kind, distinguished old man. But to the American people, he was the worst kind of traitor. An industrialist who spent the 1930s in business with Fascists, he became infamous as "America's Number One Nazi." When Hitler's old lieutenants decide to get together a Fourth Reich, the Coopers are the first family they call. John hasn't even made it to Minnesota when the first attempt on his life comes—a message that if he isn't ready to honor his family legacy, he will die for it.

The Wind Chill Factor Details

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From Reader Review The Wind Chill Factor for online ebook

Amy says

Great read!

Fast-paced, action-packed, and well-written, this story held my attention from the very first chapters. Love the author's style. Well worth your time.

Pat says

Nazis in 1970's, family in Cooper's Falls, Minnesota.

People keep getting killed, including librarian who found records of WWII. Library blown up.

John Cooper is grandson of a Nazi collaborator who finds out a lot about his family.

Donna S says

Smooth, even all-round good read. The Catholic Church takes another hit, but survives nicely as a powerful force always does. Read it with a crackling fire and a warm blanket.

Muriel says

A suspense novel involving a Nazi theory.

Karen C Jones says

This is the third time I have read this book and it is very good.

Daniel Driewer says

First for pleasure book that I read during college

Checkman says

Nothing unusual. I first read this book back in the 80's as a high school student. I thought it was very impressive at the time. But time changes things. The second time around it's a product of it's time (mid-70's) and reminded me of an old Alfred Hitchcock movie (actually the narrator refers to Hitchcock more than once

in the course of the story). Meaning that while it might have scared contemporary audiences it seems hopelessly out of date in 2012. You know the story, *The Fourth Reich* (one of the Boogeymen of the 1970's) is not dead. It has infiltrated governments all over the world and our hero stumbles across evidence of the conspiracy. People begin to die and there is an investigation that takes him from the United States to Argentina to Europe and back to the U.S. for the not so shocking final revelations. Most people will figure out what those revelations approximately half way through the book.

This isn't a terrible book. It's just that some novels age better than others and ,despite the plot-line, there is just something special about the writing, characters etc. Which is why some novels survive to become classics and others (like *The Wind Chime Legacy*) eventually go out of print and become staples of used bookstores and garage sales.

If you're at the beach for a long weekend or are stuck at your parents without anything to read from your library this book isn't a bad way to go. It will at least burn a few hours. Sort of like watching an average thriller from the late sixties. Goes down okay and has a few predictable twists.

Peter says

Thomas Guthrie was a prolific writer of popular thrillers. “*The Wind Chill Factor*,” published in 1975, was his first. The protagonist is John Cooper, scion of the affluent Cooper family of Cooper’s Falls, Minnesota. In the early 1970s John is a 34-year old writer living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when he receives an urgent telegram from his brother, Cyril: “Meet me in Cooper’s Falls. The family tree needs tending.”

John understands that the problematical part of the Cooper family tree is his grandfather, Austin Cooper. Now dead, Austin was the creator of the family fortune and a Nazi sympathizer with connections to Hitler and his crew. So John jumps into his 1972 Lincoln and starts driving toward northern Minnesota and into a major snowstorm. On the way, someone runs him off the road and tries to kill him. Slightly wounded, he reaches Cooper’s Falls in a raging snowstorm. There he meets Cyril’s high school girlfriend, a former hottie turned librarian, who says she found papers in the archives showing disturbing connections between Austin and the Nazis: this seems to be the genesis of Cyril’s telegram.

On arriving at his family’s empty mansion in Cooper’s Falls, John finds his brother dead; Cyril’s murderer likes cigars and brandy. That death brings Olaf Petersen, Cooper Falls’ police chief, into the story; he likes cigars and brandy. We also meet Arthur Brenner, the long-time Cooper family lawyer, who likes cigars and brandy. Soon the village erupts in violence: the librarian is murdered, there is another attempt on John’s life, and the courthouse and library are blown up, along with lawyer Brenner’s front door. Cooper’s Falls has gone from zero murders in forty years to several deaths, several more attempted murders, and severe mistreatment of municipal property. Someone is feeling threatened, but by what—and why?

We follow John and Olaf as they try to find the answer. Their search takes them on Cyril’s last-known travel itinerary—to Buenos Aires, Munich, and England. More deaths occur, but Cooper and Petersen press on. Clearly, life insurance agents should be alert when Cooper arrives! And, indeed, a Scottish insurance agent is part of the story. Eventually they learn what had piqued Cyril’s interest, and the search gains focus, leading them to secrets global in significance and worth killing to hide.

Be assured that Gifford will cleverly draw you along into the wee hours of the night with his complex narrative and his ability to tell a story. This is a very good thrilla with a chilla.

Four stars.

Dan says

Nazi/Fourth Reich conspiracy novels were kind of a thing in the 1970s, Ira Levin's "The Boys from Brazil" being a popular example. In Gifford's 1975 version, a man's realization that his long-dead sister might still be alive leads to his discovery that Nazis are not only also still around but are -- gasp -- still plotting to take over the world. There are several international locales and some plot twists, but the hero is kind of dull and the pace seems slower than it may have 40-plus years ago. Okay, but not the best of its genre.

Jack Freedman says

Great read

Mind challenges abound ...works on many levels on par with Sinclair Lewis for alienated protagonists...worth a look...well worth it enjoy!

Feliks says

If you're dismissing this now-obscure thriller as weak or undistinguished; consider this: you're maybe not as dedicated to the genre as much as you might be.

There's many fine qualities in this work which casual readers typically bypass. For one thing, it was very nearly released as a major motion picture. Give it its due--consider how hard it is to bring a thriller to the screen and just how close this one came. You can see the film production specs on the book cover! This attests to the fact that someone in Hollywood saw merit in it; and merit was not easy to earn in the mid '70s.

For another: it was the first--or among the very first--modern novels of international intrigue which was truly 'international' in scope. The incredible plot traverses multiple continents and locales; from sleepy towns in the American mid-west to the exotic capitals of Europe and South America. This is done routinely these days, but Gifford was an early pioneer in bringing broad, world-wide scope to this kind of tale.

Gifford's writing itself is of a respectably high caliber. Smooth; textured; effortlessly-flowing; personal; vivid; evocative.

He succeeds where most of his peers fail, combining a very fast paced, violent mystery with vivid 'everyday'-type characters; resonant emotions; and credible motivations. His lead character is not James Bond or Superman; (in fact he is continually making mistakes and almost getting himself killed).

There's also a special bonus in the story's two romances. Most thriller fiction contains women which are faintly/thinly conceived. But both 'Paula' and 'Lisle'--and what happens to them--are hauntingly drawn. Themes of loyalty, too: Detective Olaf Peterson, (*a character- name I can still recall years later, as I'm*

writing this review) is one of the genre's great supporting sidekicks.

And you simply have to give a nod of respect to a story which involves giant submarines and men in possession of their own private islands. The story also has some of the best 'wintry weather' any writer has ever described.

Conclusion: sure, maybe this is Gifford's only real 'standout work' --but if he only has this one; its certainly enough to mention him in the top tier with Follett and Forsyth. Ranked against all other thrillers which deal with neo-Nazism, "Wind Chill" is clearly the best of breed. Better than 'The Formula'; better than 'The Odessa File'; even better than 'The Quiller Memorandum'.

Jut gotta love this thriller written in the best manifestation of 'classic thriller style'. Dark, bitter, twisted, grim.

Eureka-Gardener says

Good thriller that I read when it first came out. Added interest because some of the story takes place in my home state of Minnesota.

Miriam says

Well, that was... increasingly surreal.

Otto Penzler says

The Wind Chill Factor is the first great Thomas Gifford thriller and quickly became a New York Times best-seller with more than a million copies sold. He further enhanced his position as an international master of espionage ficition with his 1978 novel The Glendower Legacy (made into a dreadful 1981 movie titled Dirty Tricks). Cooper's family history is deeply connected with the Nazis – his grandfather was a powerful industrialist and staunch Nazi supporter in the 1930s. Now the family's dark legacy has caught up to him, and it is up to him to set the world right once and for all. The Wind Chill Factor is a powerful, terrifying, and suspenseful thriller executed by a true master in the field. Strongly recommended for anyone interested in political thrillers, crime, suspense, historical, and conspiracy novels.

mike coulter says

Are they all this good?

My first T. Gifford book. It is excellent. Lots of twists and turns. Plenty of blood and violence too. It's not overdone, just rounds out the story. Or stories?

