

Quincannon *by* Bill Pronzini



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ISBN:	1405682396
ISBN13:	978-1405682398
Author:	Bill Pronzini
Book title:	Quincannon
Other Formats:	rtf lit txt mbr
Publisher:	Gunsmoke Westerns; Facsimile edition edition (March 1, 2009)
Language:	English
Size PDF version:	1389 kb
Size ePub version:	1178 kb
Size fb2 version:	1459 kb
Category:	Genre Fiction

Secret Service agent John Quincannon has found little joy in his life since the day his stray bullet killed an innocent young woman and her unborn child. But he'll have to buck up - and sober up - for his next mission.



Reviews of the *Quincannon* *by* Bill Pronzini

Dyni

I really enjoyed Quincannon! It is an excellent combination of a western and detective story. It is the introduction of the characters of John Quincannon and Sabina Carpenter who are the partners in a detective agency set in San Francisco in the 1890s. It tells how John and Sabina met.

I highly recommend this book and the Quincannon/Carpenter series!

Qwne

Only so-so.

Tegore

"He belonged to no part of society,not anymore.He was a man alone,who answered to no one on this earth,not even the United States Government;who would answer only to God."

It wasn't the author's name or even the title that attracted me to this book;because,quite frankly they were both unfamiliar to me. I read a lot of Westerns, and particularly like some of the great artwork on the covers. It was the artwork that immediately caught my attention in this case. If you've read any of my reviews,particularly those on the "Longarm" or "Trailsman" series;you will see that I prefer Westerns that stick with being a Western and are not too much of a Mystery,Detective or a Whodunnit.I prefer to have the outlaw pretty well identified early on,and then a fast-action saga,with lots of gunslinging,street,canyon,and saloon fights and shoot-outs.This coupled with some near impossibl life threatning experiences of survival,all in the pursuit and bringing outlaws to justice in the Old West style.Therefore character development and description are more to my liking than mystery convolutions,analysis and explanations.I also like to find a good amount of history of the time sprinkled throughout ,yeah,some real and some stretched,and legendary.

This is the first novel I've read by Pronzini.He is a great writer;and keeps your interest flowing from beginning to end.This novel has a good storyline and the main character John Quincannon is a one of a kind.

You have to get used to the idea that he is not a Gunslinger,a Marshal,a Texas Ranger,or a Bounty Hunter ;but basically a Detective or sleuth working as an investigator for the Secret Service. Historically,the Secret Service was created in Washington DC in 1865 (this story is set in 1893),with its prime function to protect against counterfeiting,and part of the Treasury Department.As the years went on, it was given the responsibility of protecting the President(after McKinley's Assassination).Then ,as the years went on, it also took up the role of many types of fraud,which has expanded greatly with the expansion of communications ,computers and electronics.In 2003 ,with the new War on Terrorism,they are now no longer under Treasury,but now in the Department of Homeland Security.

I very much enjoyed this historical element of this novel and in spite of my preferences;I found it a great read.

So;if you want to read a Western with a somewhat different slant,and you enjoy the combining of mystery and the Old West,with some interesting historical connotations thrown in,you should like this one.

The age of the Old West was coming to a rapid end at the time of this saga,1893.Though in this novel,the railroads and telegraph were still the modern thing, elecrticity,which would bring electric lighting,the telephone,motor vehicles and everything else,would result in unimaginable changes to the Old West,virtually overnight.

Little wonder Quincannon was ready for a lifestyle change at the end of the tale.

Akirg

Quincannon is packaged as a Western ,which given its setting and period, namely Idaho in the 1880's and early 1890's ,is understandable but it also works as a crime novel cum spy story as its hero ,John Quincannon ,is a US secret service agent on an undercover mission .He is a deeply troubled man ,having taken refuge from his guilt at accidently killing a pregnant woman in Virginia City some years previously by means of hitting the bottle big time .He still retains the confidence of his superior in the San Francisco area and is chosen for an assignment in Silver City ,Idaho where a counterfeit currency gang is operating .The sole clue is a note found clutched in the hands of a murdered informer ,saying simply "Whistling Dixon".Dixon is a simple cowjhand who is murdered soon after Quincannon's arrival in Silver City.The unravelling of the mystery is told in a brisk and propulsive prose and involves ,among other things an opium den ,a siege of a deserted mine and an enigmatic female named Sabina .

This is a rattling good read for lovers of the Western and devotees of the crime and spy yarns who are looking for something a bit unusual in terms of time and setting for those genres .Pronzini is a master professional and skilled storyteller and his gifts are well in evidence in this slick and enjoyable tale

Swordsong

This book just could not hold my interest. Read 50% then tossed it. Too slow and dialogue was unrealistic.

Fast Lovebird

This master storyteller has crafted another masterpiece. The tale could fit in either the "Detective" or "Western" genre and is set in the silver mining area of Idaho's Owyhee Mountains. Pronzini devotes great effort to technical accuracy and lifestyles of the 1890's. In addition to pleasing the reader he educates on the details of counterfeiting, opium addiction and silver mining. His principal character, as in THE PINKERTON EYE, is an imperfect and flawed detective that manages to succeed despite his faults. This is an excellent story and I recommend it highly.

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