

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Fatal Judgment.

By Andrew Welsh-Huggins

Apr. 2019. 264p. Swallow, \$26.95 (9780804012119); e-book (9780804041027)

Readers who love old-fashioned detective novels will be in hog heaven as they tear into Welsh-Huggins' latest adventure featuring Andy Hayes, the former Cleveland Browns quarterback who spent time in the slammer for point-shaving and is trying now to establish himself as an investigator. Clues. Conversations in code. Cryptic one-liners. Mysterious phone calls. Strange lights and noises. Torn bits of paper. Finally, deductive sparks fly, and it's almost a downer when we understand the heart of the mystery: a tough judge, Laura Porter, with a shady past, which includes a long-ago affair with Andy, has been kidnapped, and it's up to Andy to rescue her. The villainy has a been-there-before look: dastardly developers are seeking control of protected marshland, and kidnapping the judge, who is set to rule on a suit environmentalists have brought against the project, is just the beginning. The bad guys are threatening to expose the fraud that her entire luminous career is built on. There's a little less of Andy's glib humor here than in *The Hunt* (2017), but readers will lap up "the thrill of the chase."

— *Don Crinklaw*