

Praise for Colin Campbell

“Very real. And Very good.” - *Lee Child*

The Resurrection Man Series

“A cop with a sharp eye, keen mind, and a lion’s heart.” - *Reed Farrel Coleman*

“Campbell writes smart, rollercoaster tales with unstoppable forward momentum and thrilling authenticity. The Resurrection Man series is a blast.” - *Nick Petrie*

“Grim and gritty and packed with action and crackling dialogue.” – *Kirkus Review (Jamaica Plain)*

“Action packed. Tough-as-nails. The pages fly like the bullets, fistfights and one-liners that make this one of my favourite books of the year. Top stuff!" – *Matt Hilton (Jamaica Plain)*

“Campbell’s wry maverick Grant never fails to entertain.” – *Kirkus Review (Montecito Heights)*

“Harkens back to the gritty action series of the 70s and 80s, with a stylish noir voice.” – *Kirkus Reviews (Adobe Flats)*

“Crackerjack entertainment: taut, gritty and full of devilish twists.” – *Kirkus Reviews (Snake Pass)*

Montecito Heights

"Campbell's BEACON HILL is a great tale of violence and intrigue, stretching across the Atlantic and back again. In it, Jim Grant proves he is the real deal." – *Reed Farrel Coleman (about Beacon Hill)*

"The Resurrection Man series is a blast, and BEACON HILL tops the list -- until the next one." – *Nick Petrie (about Beacon Hill)*

UK Crime Novels

"This is police procedural close-up and personal. A strong debut with enough gritty realism to make your eyes water, and a few savage laughs along the way." - *Reginald Hill (about Through The Ruins Of Midnight)*

"An excellent story well told. A mixture of The Choirboys meets Harry Bosch." – *Michael Jecks (about Through The Ruins Of Midnight)*

"Campbell's 30 years as a Yorkshire policeman infuse this unusual procedural with grim reality and the harsh humor that helps keep the coppers sane." – *Kirkus Review (Blue Knight White Cross)*

"Every detail feels authentic, and Campbell's dark, muscular prose suggests the best pulp writers of the '50s." – *Kirkus Review (Northern Ex)*

Colin Campbell

Also by Colin Campbell

Resurrection Man

Shelter Cove

Beacon Hill

Snake Pass

Adobe Flats

Montecito Heights

Jamaica Plain

Vince McNulty

Northern Ex

UK Crime

Blue Knight White Cross

Ballad Of The One Legged Man

Through The Ruins Of Midnight

Children

Gargoyles – Skylights And Roofscapes

Horror

Darkwater Towers

Montecito Heights

For Dad
...still in my heart
And for Mam
...still here

PART ONE

“Lying by omission is still lying. I prefer
to be more open and up front.”

- Jim Grant

ONE

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THE GIRL WITH THE pierced nipples and the row of tattooed stars either side of her crotch squatted beside the cream leather settee and began to kiss the man's hairy chest. The hairs were sparse and wiry and matched the ones covering his back and shoulders. This was not a young man. The girl was maybe eighteen or nineteen. He was toned and well preserved. She was slim and gorgeous. Her short black hair, gelled into a short spiky cut, bobbed slightly with the movement of her head. Her small firm breasts didn't move at all.

She slid one hand up the side of the guy's stomach and made small circling movements just out of reach of where he really wanted her to circle. The strain of crouching next to him brought cords of muscle to the surface of her soft tanned skin. Her stomach looked flat and solid, testament to hours in the gym or a very active outdoor lifestyle. Riding would be a good guess.

The thing she would soon be riding trembled into life. Slowly. This was not a young man.

He moaned as her hand accidentally brushed his manhood. One of those accidents that are destined to be. Destined because that's what having sex is all about. She let the hand curl up like a crab until only her fingertips touched his skin. Long sharp nails, painted black, scraped his stomach. Sparks of excitement twitched his manhood even more. The hand flattened, the palm feeling warm on his flesh as it slid down his stomach bypassing the erection that was finally beginning to grow, and caressing his inner thigh all the way down to the knee.

Her lips kissed and sucked his chest. Hairs tickled her nose but she didn't stop. A wet pink tongue flicked out. She worked her way from his chest to his stomach then paused. The girl was staring victory in the face. A bobbing head that would have smiled if it had a mouth. She had a mouth. She blew gently, the cold air making the glistening head twitch. Her face remained impassive. Following the example of her hand she bypassed the erection and began kissing his thigh. Licking it a couple of times for good measure.

Then the scenic window behind them opened smoothly on its runners and another woman came in. She appeared shocked to see the couple performing on the couch. Behind her, sunshine bathed the garden in warm light. A decorative arch framed downtown Los Angeles in the background. She closed the door quietly and watched for a few seconds. The girl had worked her head between the man's thighs and was licking all the way up to his testicles. Whenever her tongue flicked the sagging pink balls his member twitched into full erection.

The woman near the window couldn't wait any more. She unzipped her dress and slipped it from her shoulders, revealing a skimpy bra and a sequined triangle that barely covered the triangle beneath it. Her breasts were much bigger than the girl's and strained at the fabric of the bra. She quickly released

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them with a flick of the catch. The weight pulled the strap apart and she dropped it to the carpet.

The man was oblivious to the intruder. He was focussing elsewhere. Until the woman knelt beside him on the settee and dangled her breasts over his face. That got his attention. Her nipples were hard as bullets, the crinkly aureole dark and inviting. He didn't need a second invitation. He craned his neck upwards and clamped his lips over the first nipple he could reach.

The girl finally crawled up the man's thigh and licked his shaft. For an older guy it was borderline impressive. She wet her hand with spit and encircled him. Her lips nibbled and teased all the way up to the head then she opened her mouth and...

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JIM GRANT PRESSED EJECT. The DVD stopped and the disc tray eased out the front of the machine. He'd seen enough. He took the disc and clicked it into the display case. The cover was gaudy and colorful, with naked women and erect penises and big red lettering. *The Hunt For Pink October*. He dropped the box on the smoked glass coffee table and sat back on the Chesterfield settee. Dark leather, not cream. Old school, not modern.

The study was large and airy. The windows looked out onto a garden that was well tended and bordered by pine trees and palms. Grant thought the contrast looked strange, but this was Los Angeles. Everything he'd seen since he got here looked strange. There was a full height bookcase against the back wall and a grandfather clock beside the door. A solid wooden desk with green leather inlay stood in front of the bookcase. The furnishings screamed money. The room should have smelled of cracked leather and cigar smoke but instead the air

was filled with the scent of flowers from the garden. One window was open. Grant could hear a lawnmower droning in the background. “No need to ask which one’s your daughter.”

“No.”

Dick Richards wasn’t sitting behind the desk. The fifty-nine year old senator sat in a matching Chesterfield chair, one leg draped lazily across his knee. He was dressed casual in slacks and an open-necked shirt but his body language was anything but casual, despite the draped leg. He turned the TV off using the remote but didn’t bother getting up to close the cabinet built into the bookcase.

Grant didn’t speculate on what having two Dicks in your name must have been like growing up. The senator had obviously done alright for himself. Having his daughter working in the porn industry was proving more difficult. That was why Grant was here. Saving US Senators from their excesses was becoming a habit for him. At least this time he was being paid. Not exactly official but still a cop. Sort of.

As always, he went for the direct approach. “Why don’t you just ask her to stop?”

Richards dropped the remote on the coffee table. “Do you have children?”

“No.”

“Well, if you did, you’d know that asking a teenager to do anything results in them doing exactly the opposite.”

“So, ask her to keep making porn films.”

“Movies.”

“Yeh. I keep forgetting. When I was a kid, me and some mates used to go to the pictures. Saturday morning matinees. Old black and white serials, a bunch of cartoons, and a short feature. It was always a Picture House not a Cinema.”

“They are called motion pictures for a reason.”

“They move. Yes, I get that. But in Yorkshire it was still, the pictures.”

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“You come highly recommended. I hope you have assimilated now.”

“With the American culture? I get by. It’s not what you know, it’s knowing who to ask.”

“Asking implies other people being involved. Nobody must know about this.”

“Her picture’s on the video sleeve.”

“DVD. Not an angle you’d recognise her from.”

“True. She not using her given name?”

“A pseudonym.”

“And the makers don’t know who she is?”

“I believe that is the case. Yes.”

“That’s a start then.”

The lawnmower was growing louder. The expanse of grass outside was the size of a soccer pitch. The gardener must be getting towards the end nearest the house. The mansion, Grant corrected himself. A helicopter throbbed away in the distance. Since he’d arrived in L.A. he didn’t think there’d been a single hour without an eye in the sky chopper buzzing around, either police or news. Between that and the constant airline traffic from LAX the sky was alive with the sound of engines. Add in the intermittent sirens and the ever-present freeway traffic and you had a recipe for mechanical exhaustion.

Senator Richards uncrossed his legs. “Discretion is paramount.”

“Like the studio?”

“Essential.”

Grant detected a hint of disdain. The wealthy man talking down to his servant and not liking the servant’s tone. Grant didn’t like to be talked down to. He didn’t like people who thought they were better than everyone else. But this was a job. “Discretion is my middle name.”

“You weren’t very discreet in Boston.”

“Twenty-four hour news. They got that down here?”

“They showed that everywhere.”

Grant leaned forward and picked up the glass of Pepsi he'd been drinking. Ice and lemon. The ice had almost melted. The lemon was still fresh. Senator Richards' butler or manservant or whatever he was couldn't provide a pint of Tetley's. It was too early for beer anyway. He took a swig and felt the coolness sooth his throat. Dry heat always did that to him. He'd been in drier and hotter places. Dusty and dangerous places. Putting the arm on a porn movie producer should be a piece of cake. He nodded as he spoke. “Looks like if you can't get her to stop, we'll just have to persuade the film company it's in their best interests to find somebody else.”

“Movie Company.”

“I think that's elevating the porn industry a bit. Don't you?”

Grant put the glass down and picked up the DVD case. The sleeve was faded and badly printed. A pirate copy. He opened the box and checked the disc. Same thing, badly printed adhesive disc label. He turned the case over and read the back. Phoney cast names and a ridiculous plot summary completed the low rent nature of the business. He remembered a disc jockey in Yorkshire who called himself Big Dick Swelling. It got a laugh on a Saturday night. He doubted Big Dick Richards would see the funny side.

What Grant was looking for wasn't there. Address of the production company that made the film. It might have been there on the original sleeve but this copy was so bad any small lettering disappeared in a haze of smudged ink and penises. Or was that peni? He gave up trying to read it. “Better give me her address.”

“I'd rather you didn't speak to her about this.”

“And I'd rather be six feet four and built like a brick shithouse.”

“You are six feet four.”

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“True. We sometimes get what we wish for. So, I won’t talk to her. Just a precaution. After I’ve talked to the producer, *he* might want to talk to her. Helpful if I can head him off at the pass.”

Richards stood up and went to the desk. He scribbled an address on a notepad and tore the top page off. He was tall and slim and had obviously been into sports as a young man. Probably ex-military. Many politicians were. He handed the address to Grant who folded it without looking. He’d need to refer to the map back in his hotel room anyway. The first thing he bought wherever he went. He got up from the hard leather. “You don’t know what a brick shithouse is, do you?”

“I think the name is descriptive enough.”

“Terrace houses in Yorkshire, before inside toilets. They’d have a brick built privy out back. Bottom of the garden or end of the yard. Big solid square things. Being built like one means you’re big and solid.”

“That’s two parts of your wish came true then, isn’t it?”

Richards pressed a button on the desk and a bell rang somewhere in the house. Grant picked up the Pepsi and finished it in one gulp. The ice rattled in the glass. The lemon stuck to the side. “Bet there’s no outside toilets here.”

“I’m sure there are places in L.A. you might find some. Not up here though. I doubt you’d find many in England either. Nowadays. It’s called progress. And the wonders of modern plumbing. It’s only bears that shit in the woods.”

“Touché.”

Grant put the glass down. Richards didn’t offer to shake his hand but he did come round the desk and lead Grant towards the heavy wooden door. “Please. I love my daughter. She needs protecting from this vile industry.”

Grant was almost moved by the display of parental concern. It would have been more convincing if the daughter’s indiscretion wasn’t so harmful to Richards’ career in politics.

The door opened and the guy who'd served Grant his Pepsi waited to take the guest out. Butler or manservant or whatever he was. Richards ruined the illusion of being a loving father.

"Be discreet. You come highly recommended."

Grant didn't answer. Sometimes discretion was the better part of anger. He followed the butler into the hallway and almost bumped into the most beautiful woman he'd ever seen.

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IN KEEPING WITH THE pretension of greatness the hallway was bigger than most people's houses. It wasn't exactly *Gone With The Wind* impressive but the expanse of polished wood flooring and the sweeping staircase came pretty close. The entrance hall was wide enough to park three cars with room to spare. Wood panelling and guilt-framed oil paintings completed the picture. This place reeked of money.

There was so much room that bumping into your host's wife was almost impossible. Grant wasn't surprised she'd been hanging around near the study door. His reading of wealthy families was that there were always secrets. He wondered if the mother knew that the daughter was making hardcore porn flicks.

He dodged sideways to avoid the collision.

"Sorry."

The Englishman in him. Even though he considered himself a Yorkshireman. He always held the door open for ladies. Gave up his seat for the elderly. And apologised even when it wasn't his fault. She reciprocated. "No, no. My fault. Sorry."

Maura Richards' voice was as gorgeous as her face. It dripped sex appeal. The throaty cadence was deep and rich and nowhere near as affected as her husband's political delivery. She was tall and slim and elegant but Grant

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suspected the elegance was something she had to work at. Money helped. Being drop dead gorgeous helped even more.

Their eyes locked for three seconds then the moment passed. The wealthy senator's wife and the man in faded jeans and an orange windcheater. A new one but nowhere near as pristine as the woman's summer dress. Mrs Richards climbed the stairs as if on an escalator. Glided more than walked. Grant was escorted out the front door. It slammed shut behind him.

He stood on the front steps for a moment and took a deep breath to remove the oppressive atmosphere of the study. The smell was the same, flowers from the border either side of the door, but fresh air and sunshine lifted the day. The lawnmower had stopped. He listened to the silence until it was broken by birdsong and the buzzing of insects. There was no traffic noise. It must have been the only place in Los Angeles where you couldn't hear the constant drone of the freeway.

Grant relaxed. This was the first commission in his new role and if it wasn't what he would have chosen at least being part of American law enforcement took the sting out of no longer being a West Yorkshire copper. He trotted down the wide stone steps and crossed the gravel turnaround in front of the house. Sun beat down. The sky was blue. Not a hint of clouds on the horizon.

He should have known better.

He walked down the driveway between rolling lawns and well-groomed pine trees. Swaying palms reminded him this was Southern California. It was a long walk down the hill to the nearest bus route. He preferred public transport; especially in L.A. where driving in a strange city was a nightmare times ten. The ornate gate slid open on silent runners as he approached. He waved to the cameras.

Ten minutes later he was halfway there. He hadn't seen a single pedestrian. He wondered if wealthy people did any

walking at all. He could imagine the twitching curtains and urgent phone calls to the police reporting the stranger in the orange jacket skulking around their neighborhood.

When the car pulled up beside him he wasn't surprised. He turned round to explain to the cop what he was doing, then stopped. It wasn't a cop car. The passenger door opened and a big guy got out. He was smiling but the smile wasn't friendly.