

Suggested Reading

REVIEWED BY HON. HARLIN D. HALE

He Watches All My Paths

Written by Hon. Stacey G. C. Jernigan (2019)

Bankruptcy Judge **Stacey G. C. Jernigan** of the Northern District of Texas recently published an excellent novel about the legal system, one that should be of particular interest to bankruptcy judges and professionals. *He Watches All My Paths* is her first legal thriller, if you don't count her many memorable written opinions.

First, a disclaimer. The undersigned book reviewer is a colleague, courthouse neighbor and friend of the author. I like Judge Jernigan a lot, and I really enjoyed her first book.

Set in Texas, the story has a real Lone Star flavor to it. The reader will get a full taste of Dr. Pepper, high school football and The University of Texas, among other things.

The novel begins with a threatening letter received by Judge Avery Lassiter, a federal trial judge with experience in bankruptcy cases, at her home in a Dallas suburb on the day before Thanksgiving. The letter declared, "I am watching you always." That threat is deemed credible by the FBI, triggering around-the-clock protection for the judge and her family by the U.S. Marshals.

Over the following months, the judge and her staff receive several other messages, each more sinister than the last, building up to a final confrontation with people disillusioned with the American justice system. All the while, Judge Lassiter must do her jobs as a judge, a mother and a wife, albeit under armed guard.

After about a year of cat-and-mouse, with clues finally coming together, the scary tale culminates in

an explosion while the judge is attending an annual bankruptcy conference held each November in Austin, Texas. Think about that the next time you sign up for an ABI conference! Perhaps setting the reader up for part two, the story ends with a cliffhanger.



Hon. Stacey G. C. Jernigan

Weaved into the tale is a history of the U.S. Marshals and the good service they do for our nation, and the book contains much about the legal system and insolvency world. In fact, without giving too much away, in many ways the story turns on the insolvency cases of a casino and a Catholic diocese. Bankruptcy folks will immediately recognize

many references to famous cases. How many novels talk about *Johns-Manville*?

He Watches All My Paths reminds one of the works of John Grisham. It is a real page-turner that is hard to put down. It is a whodunit up to the very last pages. On another level, the book gets into the workings of a bankruptcy court where real people with real problems seek solutions to their financial disputes, but are sometimes greatly disappointed. There are plenty of eccentric debtors, complex cases, and good and bad lawyers to remind one of a normal day at the courthouse.

Finally, it is a tribute to the judges, lawyers, U.S. Marshals and others who serve our great system of justice. At the end, the book rightfully praises the work of the men and women in law enforcement who put their lives on the line each day so that justice may be served. **abi**



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