

Chris Blackwater

April 2022

Chris Blackwater is an engineer-turned-writer. His first novel, *Emergency Drill*, set on a North Sea oil rig, was shortlisted for the CWA Debut Dagger Award and is now published by Dark Edge Press

The Panelists:

<https://www.mysterypeople.co.uk/>

<https://www.jeffdowson.co.uk/>

<https://leighrussell.co.uk/>

<https://lindareganonline.co.uk/>

Newsletter

Portsmouth Book Festival

In March, I was invited to join a contemporary crime panel at the Portsmouth MysteryFest. Surrounded by experienced and successful authors I felt out of my depth. I needn't have worried. Like all the crime writers I've met so far, they were amazingly friendly and supportive. Writing about murder obviously gets those nasty emotions out of your system and makes you a much nicer person. My therapist recommends it!



The Contemporary Crime Panel



Books for Sale



On the far left is moderator Dot Marshall-Gent from Mystery People. Next is producer, director, screenwriter and novelist, Jeff Dowson. Leigh Russell on my right, is a million-selling crime writer. On my left is actor and novelist, Linda Regan.

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Emergency Drill

Available in Paperback or Kindle

[Emergency Drill](#)

Emergency Drill on Tour

So, what is a blog tour, I hear you ask. I'm still not entirely sure. Emergency Drill went on one, but I had to stay home and watch on my laptop. That's the virtual world for you. Reviewers took it in turns read the book and post their comments online. Fortunately they all liked it, though it was interesting to read some very different takes on the story.



Lots of excellent reviews. Including the one below from Donna Morfett, who also interviewed me online:

<https://music.amazon.co.uk/podcasts/3a4f5968-8be3-41b7-8ffe-cfe97fa5b757/episodes/f4850088-53b7-4ac9-9067-4ff55f2096e1/little-miss-morfett-chats-to-authors-chris-blackwater>

REVIEW

Wow what a cracker of a read this is. This book was nominated for a debut dagger award and I can totally understand why.

The action begins almost from the off and doesn't let up, not at any point, quite a feat to achieve. A new medic is flown onto an oil drilling platform and almost immediately, not only is the platform cut off by the horrendous weather, but odd things start happening, which look like sabotage. When people start getting hurt Danny has to try and get to the bottom of it, if he's allowed to. Gemma is probably my favourite character, she's abrasive, rude, sarcastic and takes no nonsense. However you can tell this is purely an act to survive the "banter" in a 90% male working environment. There is a heart underneath, but most of the time it's nice to see the boys put in their place.

As the clues start piling up, not much becomes clearer. Everyone is a suspect. It can only be those contained on the platform but with nearly 100 suspects, its not easy to narrow down.

One of the most engrossing, engaging reads I've read so far this year. One I will be shouting about and telling everyone else to read.

having spoken to Chris I believe there will be more. I certainly hope so and look forward to them I'd that's the case.

Nicki's Life of Crime



This gripping, atmospheric thriller is voiced entirely from the perspective of Danny Verity, a newly qualified offshore medic who's quest to earn some much needed cash results in him finding himself trapped on a Scottish oil platform with a group of strangers and a very resourceful and devious saboteur/murderer. As mistrust and suspicion creeps its way along the dimly lit corridors and begins to infect the various members of the crew, Danny is compelled to channel his inner detective and try to figure out what the hell is going on, who the killer is and the motive behind their actions. With a fierce storm raging outside, the air within the rig crackling with undercurrents of tension and mutiny and a vicious killer managing to keep one step ahead of their pursuer, Danny finds himself in a desperate race against the clock to find the fugitive before time runs out for the platform and everyone trapped onboard.

I really really liked Danny, I loved his wicked sense of humour and sarcastic comments, I loved how the author had added depth and dimension to his character by giving him various character flaws and a realistic backstory. He wasn't perfect but he was gutsy, intelligent and determined to uncover the truth behind the events that were unfolding aboard the Cuillin Alpha. He started the story a bit of a loner and I loved witnessing the changes in his thoughts and feelings for certain members of the crew as the story unfolded. I also thought that Gemma Gauld was a fantastic character, she was loud and brassy Scottish lass who refused to take any crap from any of the men aboard the platform. The rest of the crew members were a eclectic mix of vivid individuals, some likeable and trustworthy, some not so likeable and prepared to turn on a person quicker than you could flip a switch on one of the many control panels.

The plot included some fascinating and informative information about the inner workings of an oil platform, just enough to give the reader a understanding of the setting but not so much that it caused you to lose interest in the story. There was also some references to the explosion and sinking of the Piper Alpha on the 6th of July 1988 which resulted in the tragic deaths of 165 of the men onboard.

Emergency Drill is a fast paced, action packed, thrill ride that hits the ground (or should that be platform) at top speed from very early in the story. The reader is hardly given an opportunity to draw in a breath as the story rockets through various twists and turns as it works it's way towards the unveiling of the killer's unexpected identity. I would love to watch a movie or tv adaptation of this addictive thriller and if I could, I would award it far more than five stars. A absolutely bloody brilliant debut that's very very highly recommended.

