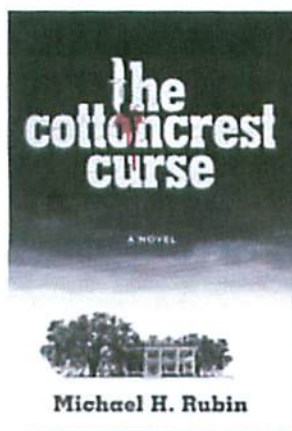


SUMMARY JUDGMENTS

REVIEWS, REVIEWS, REVIEWS!

Look Away, Dixieland



The Cottoncrest Curse
By Michael H. Rubin
Louisiana State University Press, 2014



Reviewed by Daniel A. Cotter

Life in the Old South had its own set of challenges. Racial tensions, cultural diversity, and plantation life were ever present in areas such as the bayou of Louisiana, the setting for Michael Rubin's debut novel, *The Cottoncrest Curse*.

Rubin is a lawyer and fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers, an adjunct law professor and nationally known legal ethicist and humorist. He weaves a story that gives us much to think about and includes a number of historically accurate elements, including African

American lawyer, Louis Martinet, who was instrumental in challenging the 1896 landmark case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, that upheld the constitutionality of state laws that required racial segregation in public areas under the "separate but equal" doctrine.

The story opens with the apparent suicide of Civil War Colonel Augustine Chastaine, who is found on the steps of the Cottoncrest Plantation on top of his young wife, her throat slit. The novel is set across several generations and takes place in modern times, looking back at the story of the Colonel and an apparent suicide two decades after the Civil War. The Colonel's father had committed suicide at the Plantation at the end of the Civil War. Does a curse exist at the Cottoncrest, or are other factors at work?

One cannot describe the plotlines in greater detail without spoiling it for future readers. Suffice it to say, the story is gripping, the writing is masterful, and is a page-turning thriller that will keep the reader engaged and thinking throughout.

Sheriff Raifer Jackson believes a double homicide has taken place, and itinerant merchant, Jake Gold, is the prime suspect. Rubin then takes the reader on a chase with the Sheriff and his racist deputy. Gold remains a step ahead of the pursuers and he eludes capture. Gold eludes his pursuers while focusing on one final promise he has made. Whatever has happened in the 1893 murder or suicide, owners of the Cottoncrest face continued violence into the 1960s.

Throughout the story, Rubin has the reader contemplating how southern justice was carried out to plantation owners and the descendants of slaves. Rubin beautifully and deftly writes this debut novel and it is apparent he has a deep knowledge of Louisiana, past and present.

The *Cottoncrest Curse* is highly recommended for its historically accurate portrayal of the south after the Civil War

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Presented by: CBA Law Practice Management and Technology

Illinois MCLE Credit: 4.75

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CBA President Daniel A. Cotter is Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary at Fidelity Life Association.

Participants include: Leila Kanani, Esq., Founder, Intermix Legal Group; Rachel C. Steiner, Associate, Pugh, Jones & Johnson; Katrice Hall, Hall Legal Agency; Zach Ziliak, Ziliak Law, LLC; Laura Hoover, Attorney at Law; Richard Dubin, Of Counsel, Schain, Banks, Kenny & Schwartz, Ltd.; and Catherine Sanders Reach, Director, CBA Law Practice Management and Technology Division.

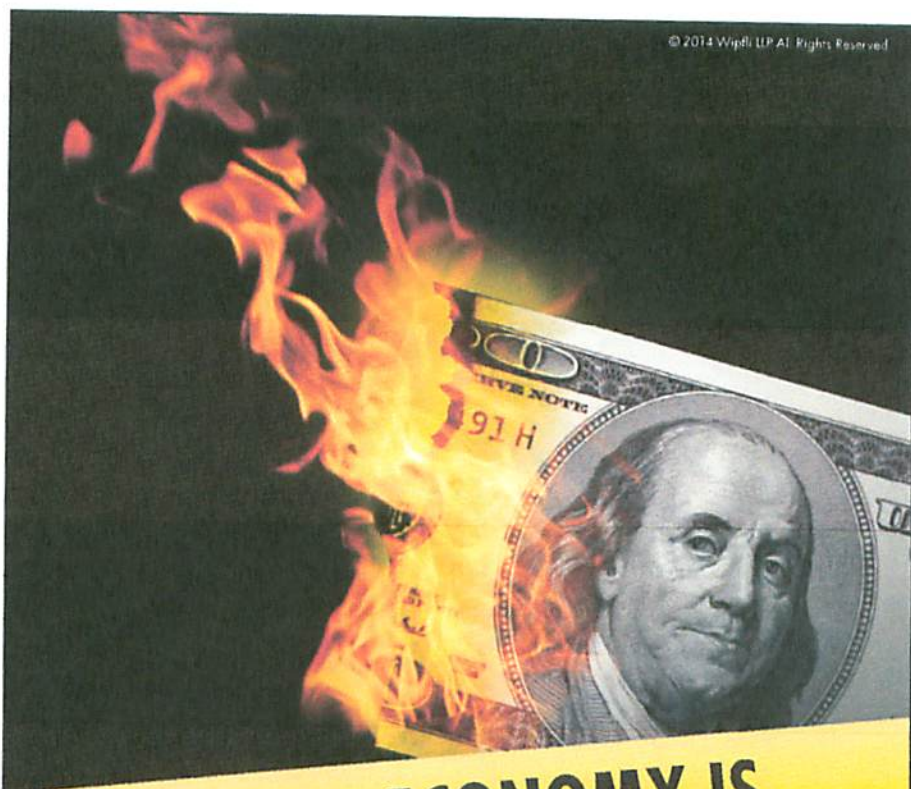
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and through the 1960s, as well as for its wonderfully told story. Rubin appears to have a bright future in fictional writing, and will be able to add this skill to his nonfiction and presentation talents. Rubin has struck "gold" in his debut novel. We look forward to future books by him. ■



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