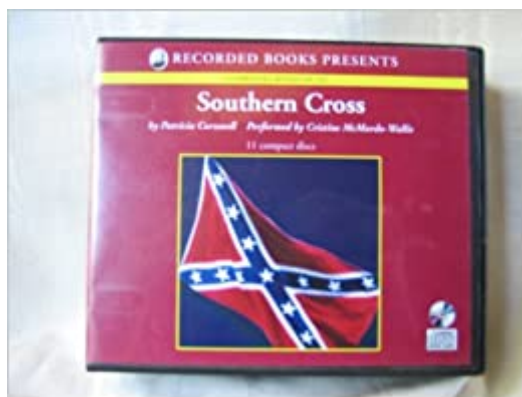


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Southern Cross: Complete & Unabridged



Synopsis

From the number-one New York Times bestselling author of *Hornet's Nest*, Patricia Cornwell, comes an all-new, page-turning novel about big-city police, in a story of corruption, scandal, and robberies that escalate to murder. This time, the setting is Richmond, Virginia, where former Charlotte police chief Judy Hammer has been brought by an NIJ grant, to clean up the police force. Reeling from the recent death of her husband and resented by the Richmond police force, city manager, and mayor, Hammer is joined by her deputy chief, Virginia West, and rookie Andy Brazil on the most difficult assignment of her career. In the face of overwhelming public scrutiny, the trio must find the link between the desecration of Confederate president Jefferson Davis's statue and the brutal murder of an elderly woman. A testimony to the singular versatility and narrative power of one of the country's best-read storytellers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In their first appearance (*Hornet's Nest*, 1997), Chief Judy Hammer, Deputy Virginia West, and reporter-turned-rookie-cop Andy Brazil battled a serial killer in Charlotte, North Carolina. Now, in Patricia Cornwell's *Southern Cross*, the trio are dispatched to Richmond, Virginia--via an NIJ (National Institute of Justice) grant--to quell the growing gang problem and modernize the beleaguered Richmond PD. They bring with them a sophisticated computer program for tracking criminal activity and a tried-and-true methodology for reforming Richmond's men and women in blue. Unfortunately, Hammer, Brazil, and West could not have been prepared for the resentment they would confront... or the bizarre cast of characters they would find upon their arrival: Lelia

Ehrhart--wealthy (and nose) chair of the Blue Ribbon Crime Commission--whose heavy European accent renders her English dangerously hilarious; Butner "Bubba" Flunk IV--tobacco industry worker, gun collector, and UFO aficionado; Smoke--the sociopathic leader of the Pikes gang; and Weed Gardener--14-year-old painter turned master graffiti artist. Unlike Cornwell's usual fare, *Southern Cross* is driven almost exclusively by an interest in these strange personalities and their surreal hometown, rather than in fast-paced thrills. The novel becomes a satire on city politics, Southern culture, the ever-tense relationship between the police and the public, and the struggles of the average man and woman with computer technology. Cornwell does fall down in a few places. First, her description of the computer virus that somehow infects police department Web sites from Richmond to New York seems a bit far-fetched. Also, her narrative, divided among three major characters, loses its focus and sags at several points. In the end, though, *Southern Cross* is redeemed by Cornwell's inimitable renderings of police work and the quotidian life of Richmond's many odd denizens. --Patrick O'Kelley

It's fortunate that Cornwell has a new Kay Scarpetta thriller (*Black Notice*) coming out in July, because this second novel featuring southern police chief Judy Hammer is as disappointing as last year's *Hornet's Nest*. The problem is elementary. Cornwell, who writes the Scarpetta novels in a first-person voice that blazes with passion and authenticity, lacks control over the third-person narration here. The tone is all over the place, veering from faux-Wambaugh low-jinks to hard-edged suspense, and the plotting is, too. Hammer and her team of deputy chief Virginia West and greenhorn cop Andy Brazil have moved via a federal grant to Richmond, Va., in order to set straight that city's policing. If only they could bring order to the narrative, which twists into an unwieldy welter of subplots. Early on, for instance, Hammer and West misconstrue as malevolent an overheard phone conversation between a local redneck, Butner (Bubba) Fluck IV, and a coon-hunting pal. From there Cornwell spins seriocomic descriptions of Bubba at work, Bubba on a hunting trip, Bubba arguing with a black cop. Among these events and those of other subplots (stymied love between West and Brazil; sabotage of the cops' Web site; the jailing of a police dispatcher; etc.) runs a more dominant plotline--the only one in the novel that exerts dramatic force--about a talented boy artist strong-armed into a gang by a sociopathic teen. There's a lot of broad, often slapstick, social commentary (mostly about class warfare) larded into all the goings-on. If Cornwell's intention is to reproduce with a snicker the chaos of a big southern city, she has succeeded all too well. 1 million first printing; Literary Guild, Mystery Guild and Doubleday Book Club main selections; foreign rights sold in France, Germany, the U.K., Italy and Norway. (Jan. 11). FYI: In May, Putnam will

publish Cornwell's first children's book, *Life's Little Fable*. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This story was very hard to follow. The characters names were hard to identify. The story did not flow well. It seemed to skip around and confused the reader

...I'm so glad I did. I liked the Hammer, West and Brazil characters very much in *Hornet's Nest*, and found all the characters in *Southern Cross* to be well-drawn, believable, and either very endearing or appropriately distasteful, yet intriguing. The whole story hinges on a series of increasingly funny miscommunications, which all collide at the climax near the end. There is only one scene of truly shocking violence, as opposed to the many you might find in a Kay Scarpetta story, and it's a very good example of the sheer wastefulness of most crimes. I'd say that the only slight drawback is the odd way the West/Brazil relationship is handled. Still, it's interesting, and I am looking forward to seeing what is in store for them next, in the new book about them, which is due out in October of this year. (2001)

I was also disappointed in this novel. I do realize that authors must try different directions once in a while to remain fresh and explore their limits, but *Southern Cross* was filled with forgettable characters, a forgettable and fragmented plot, and a forgettable ending. I did find it humorous at times, but the whole book didn't quite make it into satire territory. As much as you don't want to, Ms. Cornwell, please return to Kay Scarpetta. We miss her and the excellent writing you did for her.

What can i say Pat Cornwell is daggone entertaining and this book doesn't disappoint..I have read everyone of her mysteries... GREAT STUFF I recommend them

I must confess - I have not completely read this book - I've struggled through 18 chapters and am only doing so out of loyalty to an author that I have followed since the begining of her career. This book can scarcely hold reader interest for more than 1 page at a time. The character names are annoying; I'm still waiting for something more interesting than neighborhood vandalism and petty theft; Let's make this short and sweet - I hate this book.

Unlike the characters in the Scarpetta series, these people just don't connect to anyone. The only one who comes near to connecting is the traveling police chief. However, having been married to a

law enforcement officer for over 20 years, I know that even this scenario is messed up! Either she's the absolute worst chief in the world, or she's just got wanderlust and that's not believable.

I am a mystery fiction fanatic, and I really enjoy the Cornwell series, including the Brazil ones! Great way to pass a day at the beach!

Don't know if this is just on the kindle edition, but there are ALOT of writing errors,, words used incorrectly . Gave it 2 stars because of the author. Was hard to read because of all the errors.

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