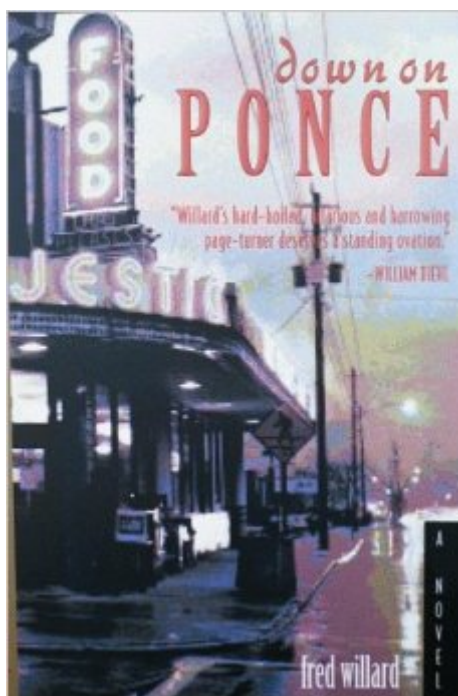


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Down On Ponce



Synopsis

This cracker-noir crime novel follows a crew of eccentric career criminals as they take down a powerful group of money launderers in Atlanta.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a native of Atlanta, now living in Austin TX, I often pick up "Down On Ponce" just to remind me of my home town. For those of you that have never had the opportunity to live in Atlanta, it is hard to explain the humor and reality of "Ponce" that Fred Willard has captured in his book. Unfortunately, there are far too many "novelties" and true to life characters that live, survive, reside, and make Ponce de Leon the adventure that it is. If fans of "Midnight In The Garden Of Good And Evil" enjoyed the factual tale of the darkside of Savannah, you will not want to miss the fictional adventures of "Down on Ponce". As another fan expressed, I also hope that Mr. Willard continues the saga of the characters that entertained us in "Down On Ponce". After finishing this book, (which, by the way I read while still living in Atlanta), I recognized several landmarks, possible inspirations, and definite realisms that take place on a daily basis down on Ponce. I also felt as though I had just been given a personal tour of what really happens after dark in the city "too busy to hate". I hope that word will spread, and the curiosity of the minions in Atlanta will pick up, and finally, have the opportunity to read a novel that accurately depicts the under belly of the International City of the South. Trust me y'all, if you want great adventure, page turning mystery and rib splitting humor, don't miss this read.

While some in Atlanta thought that a World Series championship or hosting the Olympics was what it took for the city to make it into the big time, a few of us knew the truth: As Parker did for Boston and Burke did for New Orleans, a writer must arise who could give the city its Spenser or Streak. Fred Willard has given Sam Fuller to Atlanta, and this southern city is in the big time at last. I have no idea whether Mr. Willard intends a series of Fuller stories, but I truly hope he continues writing set in and around Atlanta. Those who have lived in Atlanta will feel themselves walking around it as they read this great story. Indeed, Willard will take them where they may not have dared go in their flesh. His evocation of Ponce (forget your high school Spanish and say it "Pahnce", with no stressed syllable) brings not only the sights and sounds but the smells and tastes of this gritty part of the city to life as no-one else has ever dared. Willard's characters are as true to their locale as his scene-setting narrative is. These are people you probably wouldn't take home, but you might have sat at a bar with, watching poetry-spouting, beer can-crushing strippers at work. Wild, weird and warped, "Down on Ponce" is a story that arises naturally from its setting, from exploding houseboats to the mansions of Atlanta to tortilla joints on Ponce. The reader would suspect that Fred Willard had drug himself through these scenes one too many times had he not survived to write about it this way, proving himself the master of Cracker Noir.

Sam, a man with numerous aliases, knew it was time to leave town when his life seemed to free zone drop into utter chaos. It starts when James Shirley, a friend of an unnamed friend, asks Sam Fuller (the alias of the moment) to kill his wife, Anne Marie. Divorce is out of the question. Sam visits Anne Marie to warn her about James even as he keeps the \$30,000 retainer fee. Sam decides to leave town and start over in Atlanta. In Atlanta, Sam meets a new group of friends, who hope to begin a successful life as criminals. The motley crew plan to steal cash from a group that leads the South in laundering illegal money. However, this wannabe felony team is not a who's who on committing the perfect crime. Though he has joined the team, Sam wonders whether he has jumped into the fire just to escape the frying pan. DOWN ON Ponce is a strange but ultimately fascinating and intriguing mystery novel that highlights the shadier side of the peach tree. The lovable characters are as eccentric a group as anyone has placed in a novel in several years and the gritty story line is extremely fascinating and mesmerizing. Hopefully, this is the first of many Sam novels by Fred Willard, who makes Elmore Leonard look like the writer of a British cozy. Harriet Klausner

"Down on Ponce" is an engrossing, delightful read that kept me turning pages between chuckles. It is a refreshing tale that shows a shady side of the Deep South rarely seen in literature, complete

with flashbacks to the early Wild West-days of the Colombia/Florida smuggling trade. And unlike other crime mysteries, there are no cops, just bad guys with nothing to lose vs. bad guys who are more than happy to do anything to keep what they have. Willard assembles a memorable "crew" of societal outcasts to take on the big boys in a daring scheme spiced with a touch of Richard Brautiganesque lunacy underlying the story's many unanticipated turns. And the best part for many native Atlantans like me is that the book is set in a very real part of town that escaped urban renewal to preserve some character in a city sterilized by wrecking balls. In capturing the essence of "Ponce," Willard yanks up the city's shirt sleeve to entertainingly reveal the outrageous tattoo Atlanta leaders would rather you not see.

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