

## We Also Suggest ...

### **Cloaked in Doubt**

By Michael J. Diamondstein  
*iUniverse, 2006, 247 pages, \$16.95*

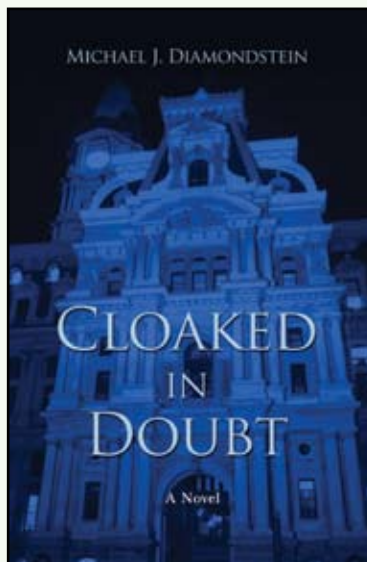
If you are looking for a good legal thriller, look no further. *Cloaked in Doubt*, written by local lawyer Michael Diamondstein, is a fast-paced, entertaining story that is easy to read. With small chapters, it is a great book for any busy attorney who can read for only short breaks of time or during the commute.

The first page catches the reader's attention with a teaser explaining that the narrator remembers three dates because of a memorable event. As the reader anxiously reads on, it is discovered that the memorable event is the brutal murder of a woman with whom he had an intimate relationship. And the prime suspect is the mayor of Philadelphia.

The author's intimate knowledge of Philadelphia culture and politics shines through the unfolding of the murder investigation and prosecution. The author includes sites of Philadelphia as well as fictional places and provides detailed descriptions of both. He also refers to the well-known symbols of Philadelphia, such as cheesesteaks, Love Park and South Street.

The story's narrator, Jimmy DiAnno, is a 34-year-old successful assistant district attorney who drinks and smokes excessively to deal with his problems. He takes great pride in his work and strives to get the recognition he thinks he deserves. Jimmy is described in enough detail to get to know him and understand some of his issues.

Jimmy's life changes when he meets a beautiful woman, Alesa Wex, whom he was prosecuting in criminal court. Although she is not the ideal citizen, the author portrays her as a good person, one whose flaws can be overlooked. After seeing her only a few times, Jimmy falls madly in love with her and can't stop thinking of her. Jimmy has finally found a woman with whom he has a future. Jimmy's dreams of life with Alesa come to a



halt, however, when she is found brutally murdered in her Fairmount apartment.

A few days after the murder, Mayor Jerry Savitch, who is in a tight re-election campaign, is arrested for Alesa's murder. Savitch is "America's Mayor," a man who single-handedly saved Philadelphia. He is also known as a "ladies man," and besides being cocky, he has a bad temper.

The district attorney selects Jimmy to prosecute the case. As an attorney who

values his ethical obligations, he struggles with the dilemma of seeking justice for Alesa's murder and his responsibility to reveal his relationship with her. His struggle continues throughout the book as he meets Alesa's parents, interviews possible witnesses who may have known of his relationship with Alesa, and learns of evidence found at the crime scene that is directly linked to him. Jimmy is constantly on edge because his career could be ruined at any moment, but his obsession with punishing the love of his life's killer overcomes his fears.

As Jimmy works with investigators and other assistant district attorneys in his office, he does everything he can, including risking his life, to uncover what really happened that dreadful night. Twists and turns throughout the investigation keep the reader on edge, asking, what happens next?

Diamondstein weaves a basic understanding of the different aspects of a criminal trial into the narration, which may be boring to a criminal attorney but is helpful to other readers. In parallel to the many legal shows on television, the story focuses on the more exciting parts of the trial and does not burden the reader with the more mundane details. As the trial progresses, the suspense builds, and it is difficult not to keep reading until the very end.

This is a well-written, entertaining story that is suspenseful throughout, keeping the reader turning its brief 247 pages. The story is over before you know it. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone and, in particular, to those who enjoy legal thrillers. ■

— Reviewed by Kim R. Jessum

## Letters to the Editor

Your comments are welcome on any topic relating to the law, the profession, the Philadelphia Bar Association or *The Philadelphia Lawyer* magazine. Editors reserve the right to condense for clarity and space considerations. Letters must be signed, but names will be withheld upon request.

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