

Publisher: Thomson Gale, ISBN 978 1 59414 553 7

*Reviewed by Karen Treanor, New Mystery Reader (3.5 BOLTS)*

Independent Senate candidate Joe LaCarta is an advertising executive's dream: tall, not bad looking, old enough but not too old, and has served his country as a Peace Corps Volunteer. He's got some ideas which have excited much comment in the media—including his proposal to suspend the War on Drugs and instead try to regulate the industry.

25 years ago Joe and some Peace Corps friends made off with what they thought was a Nazi fortune, millions of dollars in cash and art being transferred from Switzerland. Joe, Pancho, and Pete thought that this treasure should be used to fund health clinics for the poor of Venezuela, so they took it. They believed they got away clean, but one always leaves a trail, especially idealistic young men with more enthusiasm than cunning.

The first warning sign is the supposedly accidental death of Joe's old buddy, Pancho Morales. At the funeral, Joe's friend Pete tells him that he's had a threatening phone message, instructing Joe to attend a meeting about a 'not so well-kept secret'. Over dinner, a very frightening man tells Joe it would be in everyone's best interests if he quits the Senate race.

This is the start of a dangerous game in which Joe tries to outwit his shadowy enemies, aided only by a few old friends like Pete, and TJ, an ex-FBI agent. Joe suspends his senate race, hoping to buy time while he tries to find out what's behind the threats.

The plot becomes more complex with each chapter, as Joe and Pete track down old friends and contacts, find clues, and collect a few more allies, some of them unexpected. Joe feels he's on a roll, and will soon know the whole story and be able to get his life back on track. But that's before the man with the gun catches up with him in a dark courtyard in Cozumel.

This is an exciting story which gets an A for plotting, and a B for characterisations, with the truest line in the book coming when Pancho's daughter tells him her father used to talk about Joe and the work of the Peace Corps. Joe says "And you were interested? Nobody else ever seemed to be, once we returned (home)." Many RPCVs can vouch for that.