

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### WHITEWASH

Robert Landori and Robert Landori

FriesenPress (732 pp.)

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## BOOK REVIEW

A thriller set in the period from WWII to the fall of the Soviet Union blends finance, politics, love, and survival.

In Landori's sprawling novel, which relies heavily on flashbacks to provide backstory and uses many international locales, much of the action takes place during the Cold War. A helicopter crash leaves intelligence agent Tom Karas with a new face and a new identity, allowing this "talented amateur" to serve his spymasters in a new way—and for him perhaps to begin a new life. Possessing extraordinary business acumen, Karas now fights with money instead of bullets—but a war of any kind eventually calls for guns. Karas is reborn as Alejandro Samos, a successful private banker in Panama. His mission is to become a player in the secretive world of private banking and money laundering and bring down or influence the criminals, communists, and revolutionaries (or shareholders) who benefit from them. A survivor of Nazi-occupied Hungary, some of Karas' most essential skills have nothing to do with currency. There will always be "the ten-year-old boy living inside him who survived the hardscrabble existence in post-war Budapest." Because of this, there isn't a scrape or jam he can't escape, whether it's a Cuban prison or an attempted hit, save for one: himself. He loves and trusts nobody. These character flaws keep him both wary and breathing, and except for brief encounters, it would best for everyone if he kept his distance from any romantic prospects. There's not much weaponry used here; instead, we have a bit of common sense and spycraft. We also have a fictional exploration of how complicated and shady the international finance system can be—and Karas learns that the people who use and benefit from this dark system can be surprising. The financially challenged may struggle with numbers and schemes, but gawking at the lavish lifestyles of the corrupt international elites is highly entertaining.

The dollar is as mighty as the sword in this well-researched, far-reaching saga.

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