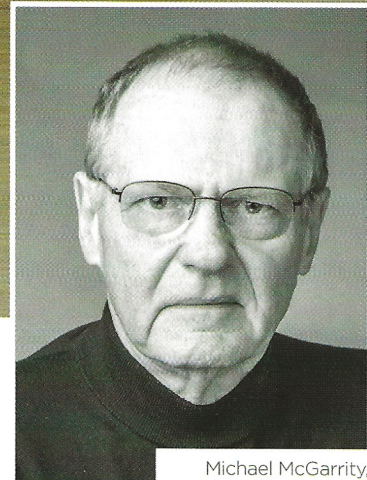


BOOK REVIEW

Mystery in High-Mountain Country



Michael McGarrity,
photo by Daniel Quat

By **Wolf Schneider**

With the recently-released "Residue" (W.W. Norton & Company, October 2018), New York Times bestselling author Michael McGarrity returns to his New Mexico-based mystery series revolving around fictional former police chief Kevin Kerney. Set against the high-mountain country of Santa Fe, Silver City, Las Cruces, Mimbres and Deming, "Residue" shows off McGarrity's knowledge of his home state with wry perceptive flair. A roadside diner on Santa Fe's Old Las Vegas Highway is where "geriatric transplants to Santa Fe climb out of their shiny SUVs" and a bar in Deming caters "to real and faux-cowboys, serious drunks and casual drinkers." Silver City reminds Kerney of Santa Fe "with a historic, interesting core," and driving nearby, "The canyon widened, with mountains beyond and some overgrown fenced pastureland on either side of the bone-rattling road."

In "Residue," we learn more about Kerney and his estranged half-Apache son, Lieutenant Clayton Istee. The two become entangled in a complex plot when the bones of Kerney's long-ago college girlfriend are unearthed during construction at a Las Cruces artists-in-residence colony, and Kerney becomes the prime suspect in her decades-old murder. Both Kerney and Istee have their reasons for solving the troubling tale of the girl's demise, with repercussions aplenty for those still alive including murder, blackmail, fugitive ranchers, a deadly plane crash, and shoot-outs.

McGarrity, a former deputy sheriff and psychotherapist himself, lives in Santa Fe and demonstrates muscular prowess in his prose as well as a command of character motivation and New Mexico settings. A flamboyant Santa Fe lawyer makes a charismatic addition to the characters as the action intensifies in the rugged Gila Wilderness where dirt roads and water tanks are as civilized as it gets. It's all plenty vivid and violent as "Residue" reaches its resolution. ■