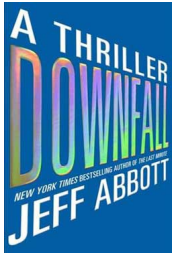


DOWNFALL: Graphic violence overpowers thriller

Written by BY TERRY MATHEWS, NEWS-TELEGRAM ARTS EDITOR
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Jeff Abbott's publisher sent an advance copy of his new book, "Downfall," for review. It was my first encounter with Abbott's hero, Sam Capra.

Capra was driven out of the CIA, his career in shambles. He owns a string of bars across the world, while raising his son, Daniel, from his home base in New Orleans.

When a young woman bursts into The Select, Capra's San Francisco establishment, and says, "Help me," his world unravels and the body count goes through the roof.

The young woman's mother has disappeared and the only clue she has is connected to Capra's bar.

As we learn, the mother is a hired gun for a very, very bad man named Belias (an ancient name for the devil), who controls the fortunes of some of the world's most powerful people.

Grand Central Publishing may be eyeing the vacancy left by the recent death of Vince Flynn. Abbott is certainly violent enough to fill the gap. I really didn't know there were that many ways to obliterate another human. After the first dozen or so, the effect wore off.

Not sure I'll follow the Capra series. I never connected with the character and a shrug was all I could muster when he survived to fight another day.