



# Hostage: A Novel

By Robert Crais

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## Hostage: A Novel By Robert Crais

The bestselling author of **Demolition Angel** and **L.A. Requiem** returns with his most intense and intricate thriller yet.

As the *Los Angeles Times* said, Robert Crais is “a crime writer operating at the top of his game.” His complex heroes and heroines, his mastery of noir atmosphere, and his brilliant, taut plots have catapulted him into the front rank of a new breed of thriller writers. **Hostage** proves his earlier success was no fluke. It’s an unstoppable read.

An ex-con with delusions of grandeur and his tagalong brother unwittingly team up with a psychopath one wrong word away from meltdown. When their late afternoon joyride turns into a random act of violence, they take a family hostage in the affluent bedroom community of Bristo Camino. Enter Chief of Police Jeff Talley, a stressed-out former LAPD SWAT negotiator who is hiding from his past. Plunged back into the high-pressure world that he desperately wants to forget, Talley soon learns that his nightmare has only begun.

The hostages are not who they seem, and the home contains secrets that even L.A.’s most lethal and volatile crime lord, Sonny Benza, fears. As Talley tries to hold himself together and save the people inside, the full weight of Benza’s wrath descends on him, putting the police chief and his own family at risk. Soon, all involved are held hostage by the exigencies of fate and the only one capable of diffusing the standoff is the least stable of them all.

**Hostage** is a blistering stand-alone thriller with superb characters in crisis, multistranded plotting, and pitch-perfect Southern California sensibility.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## Hostage: A Novel By Robert Crais Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #45621 in eBooks
- Published on: 2009-07-22
- Released on: 2009-07-22
- Format: Kindle eBook

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Robert Crais is the real thing: a writer who keeps topping himself. Last year, after eight popular books featuring private eye Elvis Cole (including *L.A. Requiem* and *Voodoo River*), he produced *Demolition Angel*, his first standalone suspense novel. Its complex, multidimensional hero was a damaged cop haunted by her past failures. It worked in that book, and it works even better in this one.

Jeff Talley, the police chief in a small Southern California town, still has nightmares about the young hostage who died when he made the wrong call in his previous job as a negotiator for an LAPD SWAT team. Now, three smalltime punks go on the run after a grocery store robbery and killing in Talley's town. Soon his deputies have surrounded the house where the inept robbers have taken Walter Smith and his two children hostage, and Talley's back in his worst dream again: until the county sheriff's full-fledged SWAT team arrives and takes over, he has to negotiate for their lives.

Crais keeps the point of view moving from Talley to the punks to the hostages as the situation unfolds in the house and on the ground. Then he ratchets up the dramatic tension: there's something in Walter Smith's house that a ruthless Mob boss wants, and he'll sacrifice anyone to get it--which puts Talley's own family in danger. The action speeds to its climax with the velocity of a heat-seeking missile, which makes it almost criminal to slow down long enough to savor the great writing. Take this passage, from a scene when Talley's face-to-face with the man who's holding his own wife and daughter hostage:

Talley ... had stepped into the Zone. It was a place of white noise where emotions reigned and reason was meager. Anger and rage were nonstop tickets; panic was an express. He had been all day coming to this, and here he was: the SWAT guys used to talk about it. You went to the Zone, you lost your edge. You'd lose your career; you'd get yourself killed, or, worse, somebody else.

Crais belongs in that tier of writers whose novelistic gifts transcend the thriller category--writers like Michael Connelly, Dennis Lehane, and James Lee Burke. *Hostage* is a breakout. --Jane Adams

### From Publishers Weekly

The title of Crais's fiery third thriller (after *L.A. Requiem* and *Demolition Angel*) can refer not just to the two sets of innocents held at gunpoint in the story but to the reader, who will be wired tight to the book. The novel launches with a familiar (as familiar as *Demolition Angel*) premise: a soul-scarred cop here, former L.A. SWAT hostage negotiator Jeff Talley, now chief of police of smalltown Bristo Bay, Calif. plunges into an assignment that forces him to confront his demons. The devil clawing Talley's brain is the dying gaze of a young hostage he failed to save in L.A. Now three outlaws two lowlife brothers and a homicidal maniac have, after botching a robbery-homicide, taken refuge in a swank house in Bristo Bay. At their mercy are the family's dad, whom they've knocked unconscious, and his teen daughter and preteen son. The whopper of a complication is that the dad serves as bookkeeper for Sonny Benza, West Coast mob kingpin, and Benza will do whatever's necessary to retrieve the incriminatory records secreted in the house before the cops storm the place. The narrative ticks with suspense as Talley negotiates with the three outlaws, and as they and the kids they're holding respond with panic, fear and courage to the escalating tension. It snaps into overdrive as Benza and his goons snatch Talley's wife and daughter, holding them ransom for the records; the flow is marred only by a couple of cheap turns obviously devised for the silver screen. Thriller vets will have seen a lot of this before, but every virtuoso is allowed variations on a theme, and Crais, with his record and with the

smart suspense offered here, has proven himself nothing less. (On-sale date: Aug. 7)Forecast: Crais sells more with each title, and this will prove no exception. A 15-city author tour will enhance his visibility, as will forthcoming film versions of *Demolition Angel* and of *Hostage*, which has already been bought for Bruce Willis and MGM; Crais is writing the screenplays for both films.

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From Library Journal

Crais's *Demolition Angel* (LJ 5/1/00) proved that he could successfully move outside his popular Elvis Cole mystery series, and his latest, also a stand-alone, is no less powerful and well written. When three thieves botch a robbery, they take refuge in a nearby home and hold its owner and his two children hostage. Suburban police chief Jeff Talley, a burned-out former LAPD SWAT leader and hostage negotiator, is unwillingly drawn into the standoff. Crais, a TV and film script veteran, adds complications and surprises at every turn: one of the robbers turns out to be a serial killer, the homeowner has mob ties, Talley's wife and child are kidnapped, and no person or thing seems stable. Given the novel's mounting tension, memorable characters, and skillfully drawn plot, it is no surprise that MGM and Bruce Willis have bought the film rights. Highly recommended for all popular fiction and suspense collections. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 4/1/01.]Roland Person, Southern Illinois Univ. Lib., Carbondale

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#### **Kathleen Edwards:**

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#### **Mark Spears:**

Now a day people who Living in the era just where everything reachable by connect to the internet and the resources in it can be true or not need people to be aware of each data they get. How a lot more to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the answer is reading a book. Studying a book can help people out of this uncertainty Information specially this *Hostage: A Novel* book as this book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the knowledge in this book hundred % guarantees there is no doubt in it you may already know.

**Vera Harris:**

Hostage: A Novel can be one of your starter books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Hostage: A Novel but doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource details that maybe you can be among it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand new stage of crucial pondering.

**Gary Lopez:**

Is it a person who having spare time in that case spend it whole day by simply watching television programs or just lying on the bed? Do you need something new? This Hostage: A Novel can be the response, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your time by reading in this brand-new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these books have than the others?

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