



Book review: The Silence of the Wave, By Gianrico Carofiglio, trans. Howard Curtis

A former anti-gang prosecutor takes his crime fiction down into an even darker place

Jane Jakeman

Friday, 4 October 2013

Whereas most crime writers rarely do anything more dangerous than sallying forth for cocoa, lawyer-turned-novelist Gianrico Carofiglio is one of that brave band of prosecutors who have been facing down some of the most dangerous criminals in Europe.

Get this book at the discounted rate of £8.54 from the [Independent Bookshop](#) or call 0843 0600 030

Formerly a prosecutor in the Adriatic city of Bari, he became adviser to the Italian parliament's anti-Mafia committee. Previous novels have featured his series investigator Guido Guerrieri, advocate in Bari, and explored not only criminality but its effect on those who pursue it. We left Guerrieri on a dark note, drifting through louche bars, struggling with the problem of how those who come into contact with evil can remain undefiled.

Now Carofiglio turns the screw in a work whose main character is operating even closer to the criminal underworld. Moral investigation is taken to an even deeper level as he explores the mind of a policeman driven to seek psychiatric help. Roberto, now himself addicted to cocaine, was forced as an undercover detective not only to witness but to participate in the crimes of narcotics gangs. The guilt still haunts him. He can, of course, justify his actions superficially: by posing as a drugs dealer he was able to send many criminals to trial. But can this truly relieve him of the deep involvement that attended his underworld life?

Roberto's covert code name was "mongoose", symbolic as an animal that can kill snakes. But the reason a mongoose is deadly is not merely that it can attack and kill with dizzying speed: it has an inbuilt immunity to cobra venom. Roberto comes to realise that he was supreme at the job of bringing down criminals because, like the mongoose, he possessed the same deadly affinity. He came to enjoy theft and drugs. But how far did this affinity take him? Gradually, the more horrific episodes in his past come to light as he scrutinises each for his own degree of participation. The plotting is immaculate. Interspersed with Roberto's accounts of his adult adventures are his dreams of childhood.

Into Roberto's wretched world a new theme begins to intrude in the person of Emma, a fellow-patient with whom he scrapes an acquaintance. Gradually secrets in her past are revealed, their relationship deepens, and Roberto begins to emerge from his despair, perceiving the circular nature of experience as he returns to the sea. This is a remarkable piece of work: crime fiction as a profound exploration of the human psyche.

The Silence of the Wave by Gianrico Carofiglio

Marcel Berlins

Published at 12:01AM, September 21 2013

Admirers of Gianrico Carofiglio's four novels featuring the Bari lawyer Guido Guerrieri should know that *The Silence of the Wave* is not another one. It's very different, but just as absorbing and beautifully written, and a work of considerable subtlety and depth. Its main character, Roberto Mariás, is a policeman, currently inactive because of his mental frailty. Once he'd been an adept undercover operative, a posting that ended unhappily. He now pays weekly visits to his psychiatrist in Rome during which, slowly, his telltale memories surface. During his period of treatment he meets Emma, a lively and attractive woman with her own problems. Their clumsy burgeoning friendship is conveyed with moving delicacy. The crimes that qualify the novel for the label crime fiction only emerge towards the end, a neat conclusion to highly satisfying read.

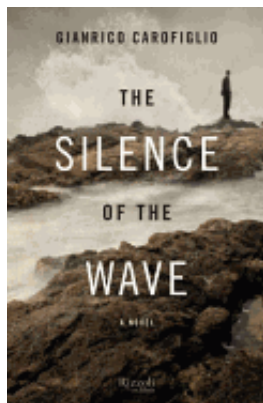


Home > Reviews > 978-0-8478-4125-7

[FICTION](#) [NONFICTION](#) [CHILDREN'S](#) [RELIGION](#) [COMICS](#) [AUDIO](#) [WEB EXCLUSIVE](#) [PW SELECT](#) [SEARCH](#)

The Silence of the Wave

Gianrico Carofiglio, trans. from the Italian by Howard Curtis. Rizzoli Ex Libris, \$24.95 (304p) ISBN 978-0-8478-4125-7



A desperate search for human connection is at the heart of this moving novel from Carofiglio (*The Past Is a Foreign Country*). Roberto Marias, who infiltrated major drug cartels during his time as an undercover Italian cop, is on leave after coming close to blowing his own head off. His calendar has only two fixed points, his twice-a-week therapy appointments. Roberto, who drifts through life in a haze with minimal interactions with others, sometimes finds that “remembering and thinking are not beneficial activities” for him. A chance encounter with Emma, an attractive woman he recognizes from a TV condom commercial, may offer a chance of relief from his malaise. Some chapters related from the perspective of someone named Giacomo, who’s entranced by a classmate named Ginevra, add suspense, as the relationship of this subplot to the main one doesn’t become clear until the end. The author subtly and simply conveys the backstory to Roberto’s suicidal ideation. (Sept.)

Reviewed on: 06/24/2013
Release date: 09/17/2013

ALSO BY THIS AUTHOR

- [The Past Is a Foreign Country](#)
- [A Walk in the Dark](#)
- [Involuntary Witness](#)
- [Temporary Perfections](#)
- [Reasonable Doubts](#)

RELATED

- [More about Gianrico Carofiglio](#)
- [More about Howard Curtis](#)
- [978-0-8478-4125-7](#)
- [More about Rizzoli International Publications](#)
- [More in Reviews -> Fiction](#)

Show other formats

Mystery Fanfare

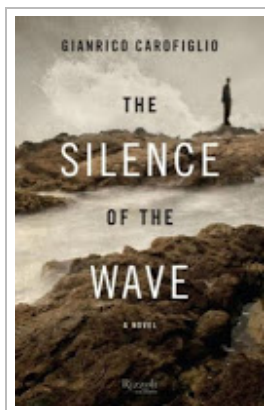
News, Events, Books, Thoughts from Janet Rudolph

[Home](#) [About Me](#) [Mystery Readers Journal](#)

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2013

GIANRICO CAROFIGLIO: The Silence of the Wave

Today I welcome Italian thriller writer **Gianrico Carofiglio**. Gianrico Carofiglio was born in 1961 in Bari where for many years he has worked as an anti-Mafia prosecutor. From 2008 to 2013, he served as senator of Italy's Democratic Party. He is best known as the author of the award-winning **Guido Guerrieri** crime novels that include *Involuntary Witness*, *A Walk in the Dark*, *Reasonable Doubts* and *Temporary Perfections*. [The Silence of the Wave \(Rizzoli Ex Libris\)](#) will be published in September in the U.S. Translated by Howard Curtis. Carofiglio has also written a stand-alone, *The Past is a Foreign Country*.



Gianrico Carofiglio: The Silence of the Wave



I've have always been fascinated by psychotherapy and its different approaches - about five hundred, as far as I know. For a long time I thought about writing a story inspired by the dialogues between a psychiatrist and his patient, so when I set about to writing *The Silence of the Wave*, I wanted to feature a psychiatrist who specializes in word therapy.

To explain the title I will refer first to the main character in the novel, Roberto, a man whose life has been devastated and who tries to achieve a true rebirth. He is visiting the doctor twice a week, and in these sessions silence is all around them - between them at times, but also in Roberto's soul and in the city the novel is set in, Rome. He

Janet Rudolph's Other Blogs

Dying for Chocolate



Chocolate Prices Soar In Dark Turn - Horrors!! From the **Wall Street Journal**, written by

Leslie Josephs and Neena Rai **Consumers from California to Switzerland are developing a taste for da...*

15 hours ago

Team Building Talk



The Ultimate Interactive Culinary Team Building Activity - This is definitely the

**ultimate interactive culinary team building activity *!* LOL!

1 week ago

Janet Rudolph on Twitter

[Follow Janet Rudolph on Twitter](#)

Subscribe via email

[Subscribe to Mystery Fanfare by Email](#)

Blog Archive

▼ 2013 (364)

▶ September (39)

▶ August (46)

▼ July (39)

[Eion Colfer's Artemis Fowl to the Big Screen](#)

[Book Geek](#)

crosses the streets of Rome everyday in endless and lonely walks, and the city acts as the perfect mirror of his mood. The psychiatrist Roberto sees twice a week tries to explain his mental disorder and existential discomfort by using the metaphor of the wave. Sometimes, he says, life is like ending up underwater. The important rule is to be reassured that, sooner or later, the wave will pass and we will come out of it. Life has a swinging rhythm. One should be able to float, to take a breath at the right moment; if you panic you will easily drown. Roberto perfectly understands this reference as he used to surf with his father when he was a young boy. He knows that to be a good surfer, you need to be in tune with the motion and the energy of the wave. It demands that you become a part of its force, so that you can conquer it. It is a pursuit that is solitary in nature, but reveals much about character; it is not enough to be a wave watcher. There is a moment when you are under the weight of the water, gliding along and in balance, and then you fall off the surfboard. A good surfer is compelled to get back up on the surfboard to catch another wave, but no two waves are alike.

On a personal note, I am attracted to surfing, even though I have never tried to stand on a surfboard or catch a wave. I once tried bodysurfing in the ocean and found it to be very exciting, exhilarating. My passion for surfing comes from movies, namely *Big Wednesday*, a cult favorite, and *Point Break*, ironically, a story about an FBI undercover agent, like Roberto, starring Keanu Reeves. Surfing represents to me the myth of eternal adolescence. And here is how I come to my other character, Giacomo. The original idea was to tell the story of a melancholy boy who lives in his dreams rather than in the reality. Then I decided to connect this story to Roberto's pain: the challenge was to put together two stories that were in no way related to each other.

Giacomo and Roberto, their loneliness and redemption, connect their stories and Rome serves as the perfect backdrop; is there a better city than Rome to walk through and get lost in? **My novels are usually set in Bari but recently I've been spending more of my time in Rome, so I felt ready to write about it.** *The Silence of the Wave* is about awareness, about finally opening your eyes. And making it in the most beautiful city in the world is such a great opportunity: Roberto lives surrounded by incredible wonders, and he doesn't recognize them. He will discover them along with the story.

Like { 0

Posted by [Janet Rudolph](#) at [11:27 AM](#) 

Recommend this on Google

Labels: [Bari](#), [Gianrico Carofiglio](#), [Guido Guerrieri](#), [Italian](#), [Rome](#), [The Silence of the Wave](#)

No comments:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

[Leighton Gage Obituary from SOHO Press](#)

[Cartoon of the Day: Why I'm not getting any writin...](#)

[Leighton Gage: Fiction vs. Reality vs Fiction](#)

[Leighton Gage: R.I.P.](#)

[Marcus Sakey: Chicago](#)

[Cartoon of the Day: Publicists](#)

[Where Are We Now? guest post by Les Roberts](#)

[1958 Ian Fleming Raymond Chandler Interview](#)

[DENNIS FARINA: R.I.P.](#)

["Storefront" Police Station in Public Library](#)

[Sofa Bookshelf](#)

[Theakstons Peculiar Crime Novel of the Year](#)

[Edward Finstein: The Wine Doctor](#)

[San Francisco: The True Home of Fremont Jones by D...](#)

[Dianne Day: R.I.P.](#)

[Masterpiece Mystery! Endeavor star Shaun Evans vid...](#)

[CRIME WRITERS' ASSOCIATION: DAGGER AWARDS](#)

[Gone Girl on the Big Screen](#)

[REVOLVER CAMERA](#)

[Bastille Day: Mysteries set in France](#)

[Thriller Awards: ITW](#)

[Vintage Library Poster](#)

[GIANRICO CAROFIGLIO: The Silence of the Wave](#)

[Tel Aviv Beach Library](#)

[Le French Book Bastille Day Sweepstakes](#)

[STRAND MAGAZINE CRITICS AWARD](#)

[Richard Helms: The Mojito Coast](#)

[I'm Not the One With the Accent: Simon Wood Guest ...](#)

[Vintage Library Poster](#)

[Kevin Whately \(Inspector Lewis\) video about the fi...](#)

[Fourth of July](#)

[MACAVITY AWARD NOMINEES 2013](#)

[Fourth of July Crime Fiction: Fourth of July Myste...](#)



Book Brahmin: Gianrico Carofiglio

[Gianrico Carofiglio](#) is the author of the forthcoming *Silence of the Wave*, which stands alone from his bestselling series starring defense lawyer Guido Guerrieri.

On your nightstand now:

Antifragile by Nassim Nicholas Taleb. I had already read his previous books – *Foiled by Randomness* and *The Black Swan* – and very much appreciated them. This book, and the others by Taleb, is about how our lives are influenced by randomness and how we can gain advantage from understanding this truth.

Favorite book when you were a child:

White Fang by Jack London. Because of the great adventure, because of the animals (I love animals, especially dogs), because it was the first real reading of my life. I loved all of the book.

Your top five authors:

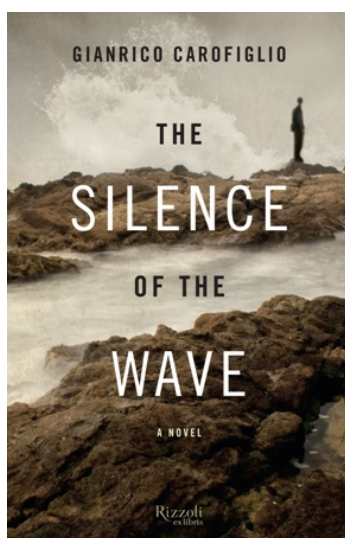
Franz Kafka, George Simenon, John Steinbeck, Italo Calvino and Thomas Mann.

Book you've faked reading:

Finnegans Wake by James Joyce. I always talk about this book as if I have read it. Nobody, until now, has unmasked me, for the simple reason that nobody (that I have met until now) has really read this book.

Book you're an evangelist for:

Stoner by John Williams. I discovered the author and the book last year. It's the story of an ordinary man and nothing special, apparently, happens. Nonetheless the book is a page turner because of the incredibly deep insight of the author.



Book you've bought for the cover:

Loneliness by John Cacioppo and William Patrick. The cover was so essential and at the same time meaningful and fortunately also the book was good...

Books that changed your life:

White Fang by Jack London, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain, *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* by Robert Pirsig, *Il Cavaliere Inesistente (The Nonexistent Knight)* by Italo Calvino, *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, but most importantly, *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway. It was when reading this book that probably I really decided that I wanted to be a writer.

Favorite line from a book:

"All this happened, more or less" Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five*

Book you most want to read again for the first time:

Three Men in a Boat (To Say Nothing of the Dog) by Jerome K. Jerome, I will hardly laugh so much again in my life!