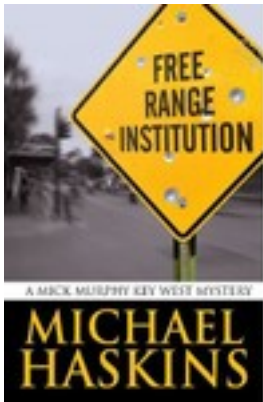


In Print:FREE RANGE INSTITUTION

Written by Jackie Houchin

Friday, 04 February 2011 14:28 - Last Updated Tuesday, 08 February 2011 14:35



"Free Range Institution"

by Michael Haskins

Five Star, February 2011, \$25.95

Following on the heels of his exciting debut novel, *Chasin' the Wind*, comes Michael Haskins' second Key West Mystery, featuring the incurably curious, magnet-for-trouble journalist, "Mad Mick" Murphy, whose propensity for bluffing his way into a situation to get a good story, often lands him in hot water ... or maybe that's boiling oil.

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In *Free Range Institution* the action starts before the reader has a chance to turn the first page. While window shopping with his girlfriend, Mick sees a falling body smack down onto the roof of a car. He guesses the man's identity from the distinctive straw hat that floats down after him. He's a wannabe snitch for the local cops.

Mick insinuates himself into the crime scene by saying he knows more about the fellow than he actually does. That fabrication and the ones that follow tangle him in a web of evil and violence so horrendous he barely escapes with his life.

It's a given that Columbians smuggle drugs into Florida, but now a new killer variety, one that brings certain, tortuous death for its users, is heading for Key West and Mick wants to stop it. But with suspicious cops, dirty DEA agents, and powerful politicians standing in his way, he's defeated before he starts.

Good thing he has a strong-willed lawyer girlfriend, a former buddy in an unnamed "black-ops" organization with friends in even higher places, and a spooky, chain-smoking pal named Padre Thomas, whose angelic visions describe past and future events with uncanny and unerring accuracy. But it's even better that he has the luck o' the Irish when the bullets start to fly.

Haskin's writing is tight and lean; his plots riveting, full of action and suspense and packed with fascinating subplots that work their way through the story and end as either surprising twists or tantalizing teasers for future books. His characters are vivid and seem to reach from the pages

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to either shake your hand or shoot you in the back.

His images of the tourist and underworld sides of Key West tickle the senses, from the balmy breezes, aromas of sizzling food and tropical flowers to the "thunk" and burn of slugs pounding flesh and the stink of cordite and death.

It's a hard book to put down, and once you do, you can't wait for the next installment.

Available on Amazon: <http://amzn.to/ftDIbs>