A Secret Santa gift with a body count: solicitor's comic crime novel about office life

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Leicestershire solicitor offers his legal murder mystery as the Secret Santa present for anyone who works in an office

Drafts, Disclaimers and Deaths, given four stars by the Law Society Gazette, mixes workplace humour with a whodunnit set in a small Midlands law firm

A practising Leicestershire solicitor is hoping his comic crime novel finds its way into a few office Secret Santa bags this Christmas, on the basis that anyone who has sat through a compliance refresher or a meeting that could have been an email will recognise the world it describes. At £7.99 for the paperback, it also fits inside most Secret Santa budgets.

Steven Mather's Drafts, Disclaimers and Deaths follows Jamie Cross, a solicitor at a small Midlands law firm who copes with the absurdities of office life by being funny (or trying to be funny) about it online. Posting anonymously about clients, compliance culture and the daily grind of High Street practice, he builds a following by saying what a lot of professionals only think.

Then one of those clients is found murdered, and Jamie's light-hearted posts start to look rather less light-hearted. What felt like harmless wit begins to look, under scrutiny, uncomfortably close to motive.

The novel was reviewed in the Law Society Gazette, the solicitors' professional magazine, by David Pickup, who gave it four stars, said it "brilliantly describes the internal politics of the high street firm" and called it "an excellent debut". Since publication it has found readers well beyond the legal profession, among people who work in offices of every kind and fans of cosy crime in the vein of Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club.

"Secret Santa is a slightly odd tradition," says Mather. "You've got a small budget and you're buying for someone in another department you've spoken to twice, usually about the printer. A book about office life with a murder in it seemed like a reasonable answer to that problem. I accept I'm not a neutral party."

Although it is set in a law firm, the book is not really about the law. "Most workplaces look calm on the surface," Mather says. "Underneath, there's always more going on. You spend years alongside the same colleagues and clients, and you see ambition, loyalty, awkward meetings, small moments of kindness and some genuine oddness. That human side of working life is what I wanted to capture, and it's the same whether you work in a solicitors' office, an accountancy practice or a call centre."

The story also touches on something most professionals now think about, which is what happens when the things you post online are read in a different light. "Plenty of people build an audience online now, and the line between private humour and public consequence is very thin," says Mather. "A professional reputation can take years to build and minutes to question."

Jamie himself offers a warning to readers: "If you are reading this because you enjoy cosy murder mysteries, I should probably warn you. This one involves written policies, compliance demands, and at least one meeting that could have been an email."

Mather is now writing the second Jamie Cross novel, Royalties, Reviews and Revenge, the middle book of a planned trilogy, so readers who get the first one in their stocking won't be left hanging for ever.

Drafts, Disclaimers and Deaths is available now in paperback (£7.99) and ebook from Amazon, and any bookshop can order it in. Review copies, interviews and extracts are available on request.

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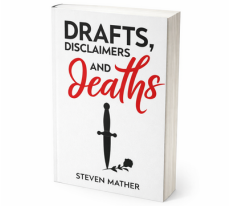



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Notes to editors

Steven Mather is a solicitor based in Leicestershire who has practised for around 18 years, most of it advising owner-managed businesses on buying and selling companies. He is a trained mediator and served three years on the Law Society Council as the member for Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, stepping down in October 2026. He writes regularly on LinkedIn about legal and working life. His other books include Game On!, a sports mindset book for children, Selling Your Business and The Lawyer's Prompt.

Drafts, Disclaimers and Deaths is the first book in the Jamie Cross series. Steven is available for interviews on the book, on writing fiction alongside a legal practice, and on office life more generally.

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