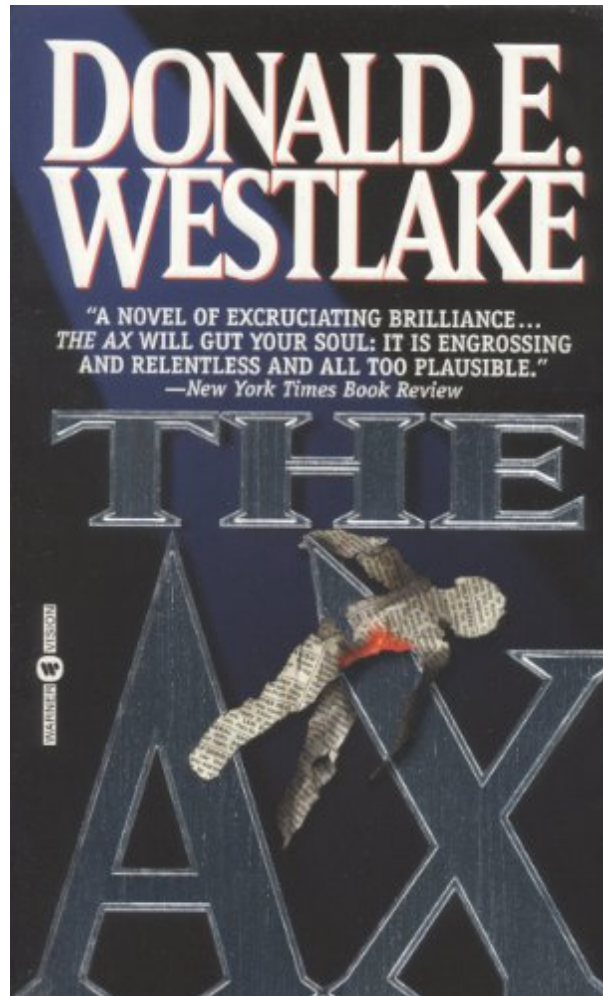
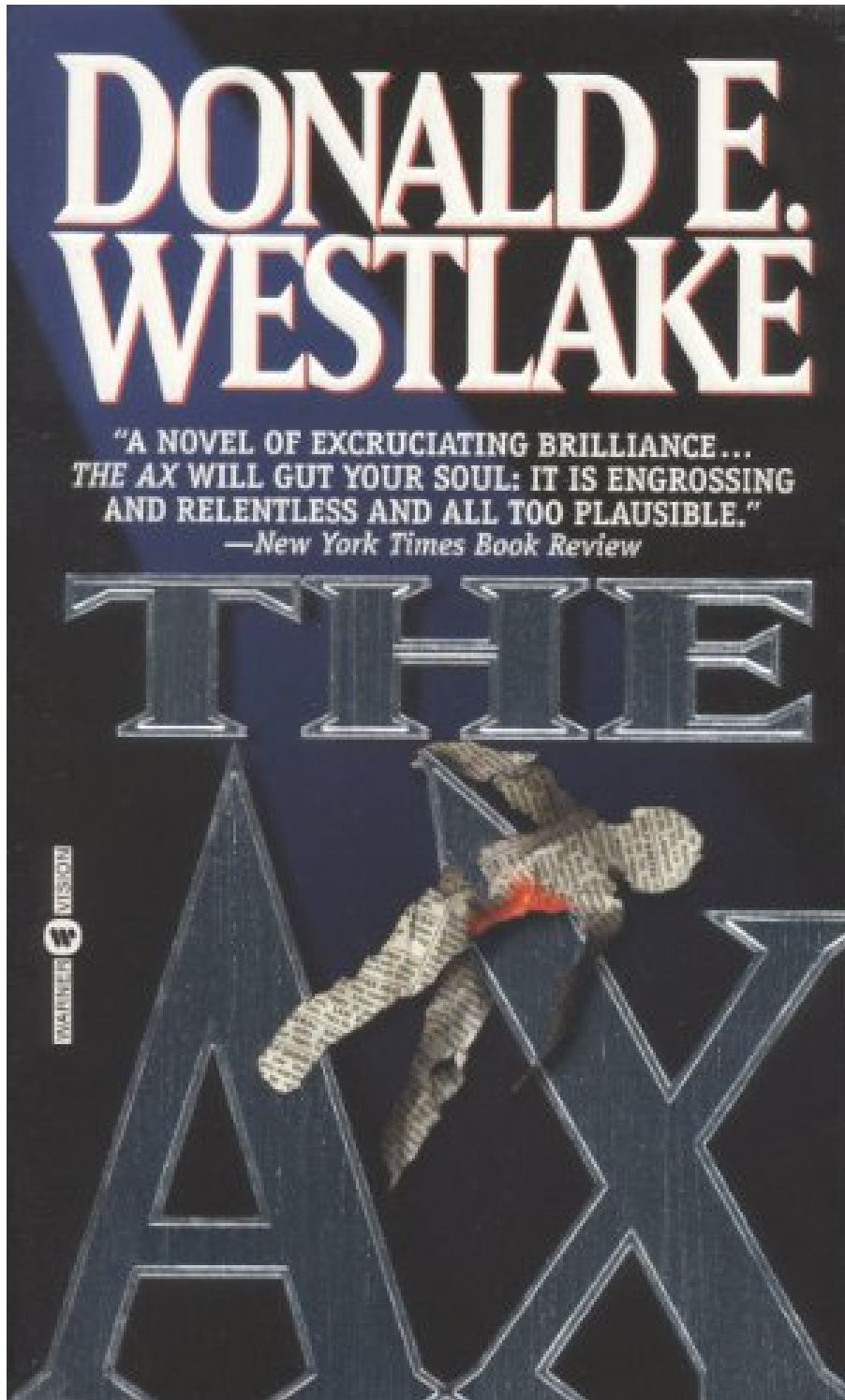


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From Booklist

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THE AX BY DONALD E. WESTLAKE PDF

The multi-award-winning, widely-acclaimed mystery master Donald E. Westlake delivers a masterpiece with this brilliant, laser-sharp tale of the deadly consequences of corporate downsizing.

Burke Devore is a middle-aged manager at a paper company when the cost-cutting ax falls, and he is laid off. Eighteen months later and still unemployed, he puts a new spin on his job search -- with agonizing care, Devore finds the seven men in the surrounding area who could take the job that rightfully should be his, and systematically kills them. Transforming himself from mild-mannered middle manager to ruthless murderer, he discovers skills he never knew he had -- and that come to him far too easily.

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- Published on: 2001-04-11
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- Format: Kindle eBook

Amazon.com Review

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Joanne Wilkinson

Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Fast moving & highly entertaining!

By Amazon Customer

Burke Devore, a victim of corporate downsizing, has been out of work for two years. He had put in 25 years of loyal service in a specialized field, as a paper mill manager. After two years of job seeking, he has become desperate enough to commit murder. He conceives a plan to weed out the competition for the job he wants. He ends up stalking and killing a number of people who have better qualifications than he for his dream position. The premise could be believable, but I felt the author could have done more to develop the gradual loss of morality in his character. The reader never knows what kind of man Devore was before the downsizing. The story begins when Devore has already apparently suffered through two long years of agonizing disappointments. He has become a murderer in his mind at the time the book opens. Later into the book, the author does go back and fill in some of the missing development. He also shows how the numbing of Devore's values has affected his marriage and the way he handles the situation when his teenaged son gets in trouble for burglary. The book definitely had a message. I'm just not sure I liked the message. I didn't find Devore to be very likeable, which to me, was the weakness of the story. Nevertheless, I think it's a very well-done book, and I recommend it to those people who will look for a deeper meaning as well as those who will just read it as an adventure. I'd enjoy hearing from other readers, to discuss what you thought of Devore's character...

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful.

A MODERN DAY MORALITY TALE...

By lawyeraau

What do you do when you are over fifty years old, and the company for which you have worked for nearly a quarter of a century is downsizing and gives you the ax? One would think that you would simply get another job. Wrong! In this era of corporate downsizing and fierce competition, that may be easier said than done. Ask Burke Devore.

Burke Devore, unemployed now for nearly two years, would like nothing better than to get a job commensurate with his experience as a product manager for a paper mill corporation, but as I said, competition is fierce. Desperate in his quest for the American dream that seems to have turned into a nightmare from which he cannot wake, his middle class life is spiraling out of control. He must regain control by whatever means necessary. Burke Devore, thinking out of the box, simply decides to eliminate the competition...literally. Our erstwhile serial killer is mad as hell, and he isn't going to take it anymore.

This darkly satirical and provocative novel is a veritable page turner. Moreover, there is an underlying social commentary that permeates the plot, which serves to make the reader complicit with the protagonist, as he moves forward with his deadly agenda. Well written and original in concept, it makes for a book well worth reading, especially by those who enjoy mysteries and novels of suspense.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

A very different Donald Westlake novel.....

By John R. Linnell

As I started through this novel, I kept finding myself listening to the rational and sympathetic justification for becoming a serial murderer and finding it somewhat compelling. Because the focus of the book, Burke Devore, a downsized paper mill production manager seems otherwise normal, even "someone like us", you become caught up in the madness and nearly find yourself tending to excuse it. Will there be a day of reckoning for the innocent lives so callously taken?? That my friends is one of the beauties of the book. It is unsettling reading...but it sure could happen. I hope Mr. Westlake will return to his previous style of writing, but he sure has proved his versatility.

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