

# Ventura Book Reviews

Where will  
the next book  
take you?

## A Single Shot

by Matthew F. Jones



Jones

First, I need to thank whoever donated this novel to the Mendon Public Library so that I could discover it at the bag sale. I went into *A Single Shot* prepared for a sub-par story that I was reading just to waste time, but Jones' story did not waste my time at all. I could not read this novel fast enough. Even in the calmer moments I was sucked in, anxiously waiting for what would happen next.

The one aspect of the story that makes it so intriguing is that it is not your typical crime/murder story that is told from the perspective of a police officer or detective. Rather it is written from a different type of characters point of view—a quiet southern man who made a mistake. The setting, I believe, is in Virginia where the author lives and the main character, John Moon, is your stereotypical back-woods southerner. He is self-efficient and in good shape from performing manual labor all his life but he is not the brightest. One place this is acknowledged in the novel is on page 118 where it says, “Suddenly he is aware of his own mental denseness, of his intellectual shortcomings. His stupidity looms like a

brick wall between uncentered anger and thought.” Since the author lets the reader know that John Moon is aware of his intellectuality, it helps to ease the frustration the reader may feel towards the character and some of the choices he makes. His “denseness” may have readers mentally scolding him but as the story goes on his decision-making abilities might seem to make more sense and the reader will feel the sympathy for him that I believe Jones wants readers to feel.

The chapters are broken into days of the week (the story only takes one week) and every day the reader is able to notice the signs that John Moon is struggling mentally, physically and emotionally with the aftermath of the incident that occurred on the first day. The pain, exhaustion, terror, paranoia, etcetera, that the main character experiences is shared with the reader and will make it difficult to put the book down. Another feature that I thoroughly enjoyed is the voice. It is obvious that Jones is a resident of Virginia because of how smoothly the southern dialect flows throughout. A reader can easily hear the southern drawl as they read which makes the story more realistic and enjoyable to read. One final note is that there are some descriptive sexual scenes that Jones seems to take right up to the line but does not cross over. I cringed at first, thinking that it might go overboard and the whole book would be full of sex scenes, but the few moments or comments on sex that are presented actually seem to add to the story and make it stronger and more realistic.

All in all, I was shocked that a book I snagged at the bag sale by an author I did not previously know of was so good. I can't wait to see what treasures will be at the bag sale this year.

Reviewed by Grace Ventura