

KIRKUS REVIEWS

SUZY'S CASE (reviewed on July 15, 2012)

The plot twists keep coming in this legal thriller by Siegel, a first-time author who calls on his own experience as a personal injury and malpractice lawyer.

Hero and narrator Tug Wyler is a hard-boiled Manhattan lawyer who specializes in personal injury but usually winds up with robbers and murderers as clients. As a favor to an associate, he takes on the not-very-promising case of Suzy, a young sickle cell patient who suffered a brain-damaging stroke during hospitalization. Nothing initially points to malpractice, but Wyler's instincts tell him that a key witness is lying. His search for the truth is accompanied by a few false leads, three separate attempts on his life and a potential love affair with Suzy's mother. Instead of a climactic courtroom scene, Siegel delivers a final set of revelations after the case has been settled. Only in the final pages does Wyler discover all the key characters' backgrounds and piece together what really happened in the hospital and why he survived those three murder attempts. The book's fast-moving plot makes it a quick, enjoyable read, with some colorful characters, including a mysterious neighborhood avenger. The author's background gives a ring of truth to the plot twists and litigation scenes, and he avoids going off on legal tangents unless the plot requires them. He only trips up by trying too hard to establish Wyler as a rogue and a ladies' man: Some of his office behavior seems to verge on sexual harassment, and he's prone to dropping the phrase, "At least I admit it" every few dozen pages. (On the other hand, a more subtle running joke—Wyler keeps meeting people who share their names with famous television characters—works fine.)

If Siegel can only make his hero a tad less obnoxious, he will have a good potential series on his hands.