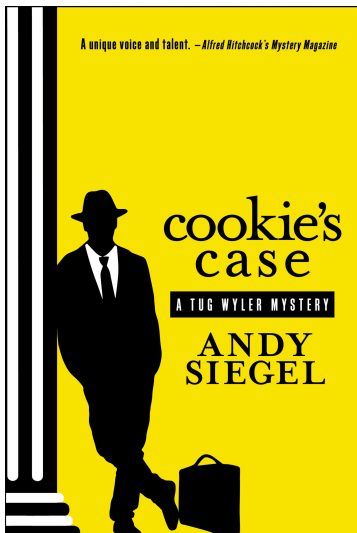




# Cookie's Case

By DavidPrestidge ◦ 15 March, 2015 ◦ 2 Mins read



**W**ritten by Andy Siegel — Here in the UK, personal injury lawyers have the same enviable reputation for frankness, honesty and personal probity as estate agents, party politicians and sellers of miracle anti-ageing cream. Therefore it was with a touch of reluctance that I started to read a tale centred on one such New York lawyer, Tug Wyler.

His latest client is an erotic dancer called Cookie. She has – literally – slipped on a banana skin, and the spinal surgery aimed at correcting the results of this injury goes badly wrong. Now she lives – and dances – in a neck and head brace screwed into her skull. Wyler is employed to exact the maximum compensation from the incompetent surgeon who caused Cookie to be in such

discomfort.

Wyler's task is far from simple. Cookie lives with a much older man, Doctor Major, whose only attractions seem to be that he is extremely wealthy, and that he can perform spinal taps on Cookie which extract the excess fluid which is causing her debilitating headaches. Additionally, Wyler is operating pro bono for a lumbering lad called Robert, who is a victim of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, and has also sustained a leg injury by being run over by a busload of Orthodox Jews. As the story progresses, Wyler uses his legal skills to ensure the best outcomes for his two clients while uncovering a deadly conspiracy which ends up jeopardising his own life.

Sometimes the sheer medical detail of Cookie's spinal injury threatens to become too intense but, with the skill of a conjuror, Andy Siegel always manages to throw in a funny one-liner or an acerbic comment to smooth a furrowed brow and produce a chuckle. The humour is not slapstick, but sharp and knowing. I loved the scene where the educated folk in the compensation hearing are desperately dancing around trying to find an inoffensive form of words to acknowledge that Robert is, well, one sandwich short of a packed lunch, but the boy's sharp-as-a-tack grandmother puts them all in a politically correct spin when she says, "My grandson over here is a little bit retarded."

Wyler's private investigator of choice is the delectable Pusska, and while she might fit the stereotype that all women from Eastern Europe are impossibly desirable, the reluctantly (on Tug's side) platonic relationship between her and her employer is described with much fun and subtlety. That Wyler's domineering wife happens to have the christian name Tyler is a touch worthy of Joseph Heller, and although she only features occasionally, her relationship with Tug has great comic potential.

Siegel himself is a lawyer specialising in medical malpractice claims, so if the character of Tug Wyler autobiographical, then it only lends credibility to the proceedings. On his website, Siegel lists a collection of mantras by which Tug lives his life. Most of these are neatly paradoxical such as 'Take the path of least resistance unless it really matters', but my favourite is 'If you lie, be truthful about it.' Siegel achieves what I thought was impossible: he takes a member of a despised profession, portrays him as a clever, cunning and devious operator, but also as a human being who is completely likeable and a fit and proper literary hero. The wit, humour and honesty of this book make it excellent, and I shall be looking to get hold of a copy of the previous novel, *Suzy's Case* (2012) as soon as possible.

Mysterious Press

Print/iBook

£9.99

**CFL Rating: 5 Stars**