

Interview: Author Lorraine Evanoff on Her New Novel 'Devil's Ledger'

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CHICAGO – The Devil is in the Details. The old adage, which primarily describes accounting, is the basis for author Lorraine Evanoff's third novel in her Louise Moscow Spy Thriller series, "Devil's Ledger." This time, her intrepid financial sleuth Louise Moscow investigates the failure of the world's oldest bank ... a mystery that may also contain the key to a hidden treasure.

"Devil's Ledger" is set ten years after Evanoff's previous Louise Moscow adventure in "Pinot Noir." Louise is keeping a low profile in her new home in Burgundy, France, when the CIA recruits her for their financial crimes division. She remains undercover as a restaurateur and lavender farmer, but she finally gets a case that brings her back to the surface. Italy's Banca Monte del Paschi in Siena, widely considered the world's oldest bank, is close to failure, in proximity to an ongoing Russian money laundering scheme at the highest levels. Featuring contemporary scandals, an eccentric tech billionaire name LaFontaine and conflict with her own father, Louise Moscow is at her most adventurous and intriguing as she pursues the unvarnished truth.



'Devil's Ledger' by Lorraine Evanoff

Photo credit: [LorraineEvanoff.com](#)

Award-winning author Lorraine Evanoff has as much intrigue in her own life, which began when she was born in Chicagoland. A graduate of DePaul University, Evanoff moved to Paris after college and was involved in the European film industry while she lived there, even garnering a small role in the Krzysztof Kieślowski classic "The Double Life of Veronique." She switched gears and pursued finance on her return to the U.S., including a stint as CFO of National Lampoon, Inc. Evanoff reinvented herself again as a Spy Thriller novelist in 2015, with the release of her first Louise Moscow novel, "Foliage." She followed up with "Pinot Noir" in 2019 and released the "Devil's Ledger" two months ago. She currently lives in Los Angeles.

Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com talked to Lorraine Evanoff recently about her latest release, and the background to her devilish details.

HollywoodChicago.com: So, at the end of your last novel 'Pinot Noir' it was the early 2000s, and you had your sleuth protagonist Louise Moscow resolving a major financial case and sex scandal. In 'Devil's Ledger' she goes undercover in the CIA and doesn't have a major case again until ten years later. What was behind your decision to advance Louise's history so much further?

Lorraine Evanoff: I used the same timeline after the events in 'Foliage.' My second novel 'Pinot Noir' started about ten years later and ended in 2002-2003 ... 'Devil's Ledger' is about the same, ten years later. Other than that, my mindset was to bring it up to current day as quickly as possible. At the same time, it seems a natural pattern, these major scandals that I highlight seem to happen every ten years. That's purely coincidental. Or is it?

HollywoodChicago.com: The title 'Devil's Ledger' is specific to a character in the book. What led you to that provocative title and how does it neatly fit into the context of the story?

Evanoff: Title creation is one of the more fun and trickier parts of publishing. Once you know, it just seems to work. I had a list of titles that I ran by my beta readers, editor and other authors. Only one person chose 'Devil's Ledger' and his argument made me love it, mostly because he reminded me that my books are thrillers and not romance novels, and that the alliteration was fantastic. Also, my books are about financial intrigue, so 'ledger' is one of the few accounting terms that everyone has heard before.

HollywoodChicago.com: The main financial story involves one of the oldest banks in history, the Siena bank in the Tuscany region of Italy. What fascinated you about the real story of that bank that is behind the fiction of your novel?

Evanoff: I don't know why it surprised me, but the fact that a modern bank was founded 600 years ago, and still exists was fascinating. My instincts were correct. When I dug in, I learned that the basis of most all banking services including the concept of the 'pawnbroker' came from the Monte dei Paschi bank in Siena, but with a much more positive and humane original intention than the word connotes now.



Louise Moscow Spy Thrillers
Photo credit: LorraineEvanoff.com

HollywoodChicago.com: The circumstances of Russian interference into our American political system is anticipated in this story. What aspect of this interference spurred you to address it in the book three years before the election of Donald Trump?

Evanoff: That was only incidental. I didn't really delve too much into that aspect in the book. I only included a reference to Trump within the vast network on players and events. Leaving him out might have been strange, but I didn't want to make it a political statement in this book. I

just let the information speak for itself.

HollywoodChicago.com: You asserted in other interviews that Louise Moscow is a direct extension of the life experiences you’ve had as an internationalist and working in the finance industry. What characteristics of Louise do you wish you had in the sense that you invented them for her?

Evanoff: First and foremost, I wish I had Louise Moscow’s abs! [Laughs] Other than that, I’m pretty much Louise, except for being affiliated with the FBI or the CIA.

HollywoodChicago.com: One of the best sub features of the book is Louise’s amazing team, which in this book also includes a female, after the male centricity of the teams in the first two novels. What intrigues you about the “it takes a village” scenario for creating justice?

Evanoff: This was something that really came from the whole caper concept that developed while writing the book. But you bring up a good point. Louise has always been a team player. She makes connections and networks. She especially appreciates strong, intelligent women, who have always been featured in her stories ... the characters of Diana, in ‘Foliage,’ and the girls she rescued in ‘Pinot Noir,’ among others.

Another parallel between Louise and me is our fluidity in relationship to the sexes. When I was younger, I tended to hang out with men more, maybe because I grew up with three brothers, and had sisters afterward. But later in life I began to have amazing girlfriends.

HollywoodChicago.com: Finally, what most satisfies you about where and who Louise Moscow is in ‘Devil’s Ledger,’ that you never thought would happen when you first created her in ‘Foliage’?

Evanoff: There was something that happened to me while writing ‘Devil’s Ledger’. My meditation and life seemed to bring me to a point where things started to make sense for me. All my life’s hard work seemed to start coming to fruition and I have found peace. It’s one of those things you see happen to others and never imagine you would get there. But now I finally feel like I don’t have to feel like everything is a constant struggle.

This is not complacency or arrogance. That’s something I will never have. It’s more a sense that I caught up with my aspirations and we are equal. Not that I really achieved everything I have set out to accomplish. It’s more like, I understand what I want and even if I don’t get there, I am equal to those dreams just as I am.

For another Lorraine Evanoff interview with Patrick McDonald of HollywoodChicago.com about her previous novel, click [PINOT NOIR \[24\]](#).

“Devil’s Ledger,” by Lorraine Evanoff, is available on Amazon.com by [clicking here](#). [25] For more about author Lorraine Evanoff, including access to her previous novels “Foliage” and “Pinot Noir,” click [LorraineEvanoff.com](#) [26]



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