

## Every Man a Menace

Patrick Hoffman

For his second novel (after *The White Van*), private investigator-turned-novelist Hoffman spins a complex, globe-spanning tale of the ecstasy trade that plays with time and perspective in striking ways. Raymond Gaspar is released from prison with instructions to moderate a rumored rift in the San Francisco MDMA pipeline, which runs through Gloria Ocampo, a well-dressed grandmother in her 50s. Hoffman then moves his story line back three months to introduce Miami club owner Semion Rosenstein, whose involvement in ecstasy smuggling takes a dark turn when he wakes up with the blood of a woman he'd become infatuated with on his mattress. That woman will reemerge, with a different name, as a free agent looking to cash in on Gloria's next shipment, which has become significantly more lucrative thanks to some fateful decision-making from Semion's contact in Bangkok. The novel's ambitious architecture is fun to work out and lends the final section a surprising amount of tension as all the pieces collide, but it comes at the cost of character development. None of them truly resonate once their final fates are sealed; then again, perhaps we're not supposed to connect too much to these scam artists. **VERDICT** A solid addition to most crime fiction collections from a promising author to watch.