

Proving Ground

Peter Blauner

In the latest from Edgar Award winner (*Slow Motion Riot*) and TV producer (*Blue Bloods*) Blauner, an Iraq war veteran returns home to New York following the murder of his father, an activist attorney who was suing the FBI for the “enhanced interrogation” of his Muslim client. Nathaniel Dresden, armed with a law degree and barely suppressed postwar rage, turns to his father’s law partner Ben Grimaldi for a chance to work on the case. His efforts catch the attention of Brooklyn detective Lourdes Robles, in need of redemption after a public embarrassment that nearly ended her career, and her inscrutable partner Kevin Sullivan. As Natty’s personal investigation begins to expose secrets such as old flames and killed witnesses, all of Natty’s loyalties—to himself, to Ben, even to his father—will be challenged. Blauner writes with depth but with urgency, especially in the revelatory final chapters, and his characters are vividly drawn. **VERDICT** As complex and as gritty as a Richard Price book, Blauner’s first novel in more than ten years was worth the wait.