

The Whites

Richard Price, writing as Harry Brandt

Loyal readers have been waiting seven years for the next masterpiece from Richard Price (following 2008's *Lush Life*), who delivers his latest crime opera under the Brandt pen name. Sgt. Billy Graves leads the Night Watch squad in Manhattan, prepping overnight crime scenes for morning detectives, when he begins investigating a fatal slashing at Penn Station. Billy discovers the victim has links to his old team, the Wild Geese, a group of young cops working violent crime back in the early 1990s. They've all moved on from the department except Billy, but they get together every month to have dinner and obsess, Ahab-like, on the Great White Whales who eluded their capture and continue to haunt their dreams. Thing is, a lot of their Whites seem to be dying at a surprising rate, and Billy can't ignore that his fellow Geese may be involved. Meanwhile, a fellow officer with a long-simmering vendetta against Billy's wife is about to complicate things even further. VERDICT This "debut" novel from Brandt hews closer to the tropes of standard police procedurals than much of Price's best work, but whichever name appears on the cover, his books, with their crackling dialog and panoramic view of urban life, remain essential reading for all fans of crime fiction.

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