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Novelist Reimagines Six Nations-Caledonia Clash

KINGSTON, Ont., 10 Mar 2021 — On April 1, Kingston author R.B. Young is releasing his debut novel *Crimes of Disrespect*. Alongside its main mystery plot, the book has a storyline inspired by Southern Ontario events — the 2006-2007 flare-up of the Grand River land dispute. That quarrel periodically resurfaces between Six Nations of the Grand River and its neighbouring town Caledonia (and ultimately the Government of Canada). Kirkus Reviews fittingly deems the novel a "well-paced, topical whodunit." However, the First Nations aspect is just one facet of the story, which bonds several subplots—involving a child-abuse survivor, alcoholism, and sexual orientation—under the theme of respect.

Synopsis: A brilliant Mohawk girl, found dead at Woodmore Academy, an elite private school in Oakville, Ontario. The body of her bigoted tormentor, rotting at the border of Coyote River First Nation, a nearby reserve. A troubled janitor fearing he'll be the scapegoat. A cop who wonders if the deaths are simple racial tit-for-tat or something more sinister. And a land protest pitting Coyote River against the neighbouring town, with stones and fists flying. From this volatile mix, R.B. Young builds a story of people and their actions, good and bad, driven by respect — or the lack of it. Respect for themselves. Respect for the "other." Beneath the idyllic setting of Woodmore Academy, treachery and worse have gone unpunished. Will an ex-con janitor and a cop who doesn't trust him unravel the truth?

Background and Review: In 2006, on hearing news reports about violence in the Caledonia dispute, Young was mystified. A white Canadian, he didn't have a clue why it was happening or what was at stake, yet he'd grown up a mere one-and-a-half-hour drive away. His ignorance troubled him; he wanted to learn about Six Nations and to explore a similar—though fictional—land quarrel and its effect on his characters. He visited the reserve and read up on its history. From talking to First Nations writers, he knew the events of 2006-2007 left a toxic atmosphere that remains today. So, in drafting *Crimes of Disrespect*, he created the fictitious reserve Coyote River and town Ewing. The artistic goal was to explore how made-up characters on both sides might react and grow amid a related murder inquiry.

Kirkus Reviews suggests Young met his objective: "Throughout, the author succeeds at creating diverse figures who are flawed in minor and sometimes-major ways. The initial mystery is compelling, and a third death, later in the story, only heightens the suspense." (See the full review at <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/rb-young/crimes-of-disrespect>.)

Availability: *Crimes of Disrespect* (Bard Owl Books) is available in paperback through Indigo, big-box retailers, and independent bookstores. Online, Amazon offers both e-book and paperback versions.

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