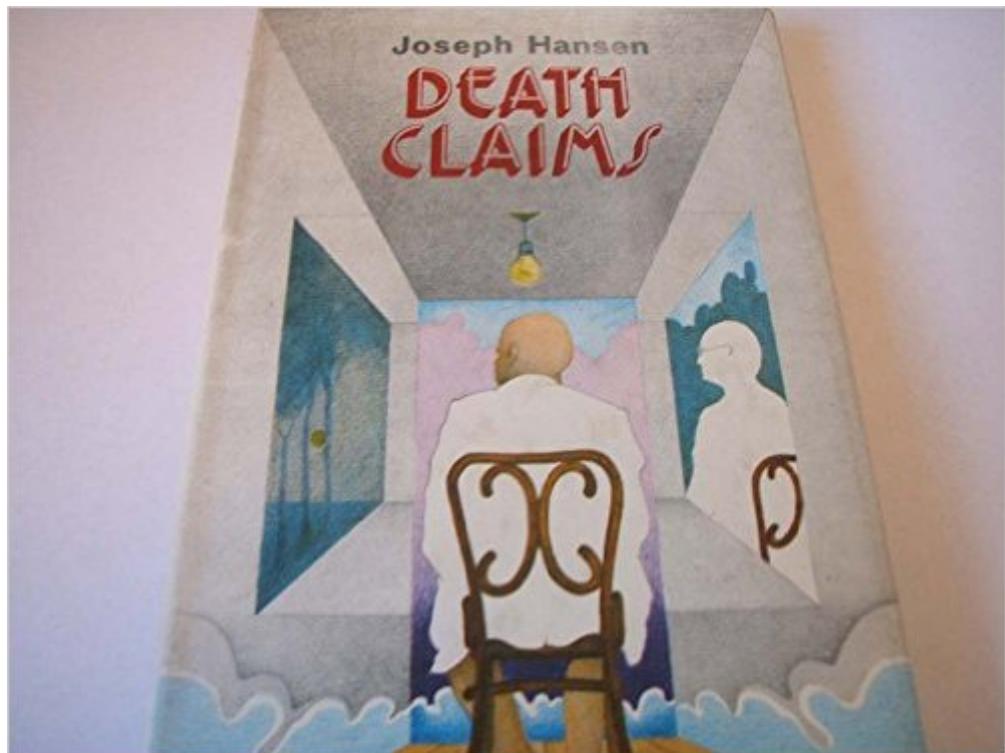


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# Death Claims



## Synopsis

This second book in Joseph Hansen's groundbreaking, critically acclaimed Dave Brandstetter mystery series finds Dave sifting through the elaborate lies surrounding the murder of John Oats, whose drugged body was found washed up on the beach. Left behind are April Stannard, John's lover, and his son Peter, who was the beneficiary of his life insurance policy. The trouble is, Peter is missing. Joseph Hansen is the author of more than 25 novels and is a renowned short story writer. The winner of the 1992 lifetime achievement award from the Private Eye Writers of America, Hansen is also the author of *A Smile in his Lifetime*, *Living Upstairs*, *Job's Year*, and *Bohannon's Country*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 166 pages

Publisher: Harper & Row; 1st edition (1973)

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ISBN-10: 0060117516

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Product Dimensions: 8.1 x 5.8 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars See all reviews (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,740,383 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Mysteries #15026 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Literature & Fiction > Fiction > Romance #34768 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Crime

## Customer Reviews

Bookseller John Oats has been found dead in the Pacific Ocean. The death has been ruled accidental, perhaps suicide. This explanation doesn't satisfy insurance claims investigator Dave Brandstetter. He comes to believe Oats was murdered for his considerable policy and sets out to find the culprit. Whodunit? Oats's elusive son? The closeted, all-American TV star? A washed up screenwriter? Or maybe even Oats young lover, a woman who took care of the man until his dying day? This is a beautifully written page turn, very smooth and very engaging. Brandstetter is no angst-torn hero despairing of the state of the world. He's a solid, mature professional out to do his job (though not without his own personal problems). Though the killer's identity should be obvious, Hansen weaves the story in such fashion that we are still surprised to find out who done it. If Hansen has a flaw as a writer, it might be his relentless need to describe all exteriors and interiors, even

those that play a scant role in the story. The abundance of detail and description bogs the story down some. But not much. After all Hansen is doing his storyteller's duty to put the reader into the world he has created.

There are 13 mysteries in this series and they should be read in order to really enjoy the progression. Writing is spare and top notch. Set in California, they were written long enough ago that the settings have a "retro" feel but without the writing being dated. Also, if you are looking for salacious sex scenes masquerading as plot, this isn't the mystery series for you. Interesting mysteries, giving a glimpse of gay life and culture at a time when "Don't ask. Don't tell" could and did drive plot, when AIDS was "new" and Rock Hudson was still "straight"!

Dave Brandstetter, a claims investigator for Medallion Life Insurance Company, is checking into bookseller John Oat's 'death by misadventure.' The misadventure was a drowning that took place in the ocean. At night. During a rainstorm. After Oats decided to change his insurance policy so that his son wouldn't inherit. Yeah, it's a little suspicious, and it doesn't help that the son is now missing. Maybe this doesn't sound that thrilling (insurance claims? ), but Hansen, frequently compared to Hammett, Chandler and MacDonald, catches your attention from the first line: "Arena Blancas was right. The sand that bracketed the little bay was so white it hurt the eyes." And he never lets go, never wanders off track through an unexpectedly twisty tale of betrayal and murder. Hansen is that rarity, a brilliant stylist who actually has something to say. Sure, the message is unrelentingly liberal, but it is also tempered with commonsense and compassion. Most impressively, the man knows how to tell a good story. DEATH CLAIMS, book two in the Brandstetter series, is one of the best.

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