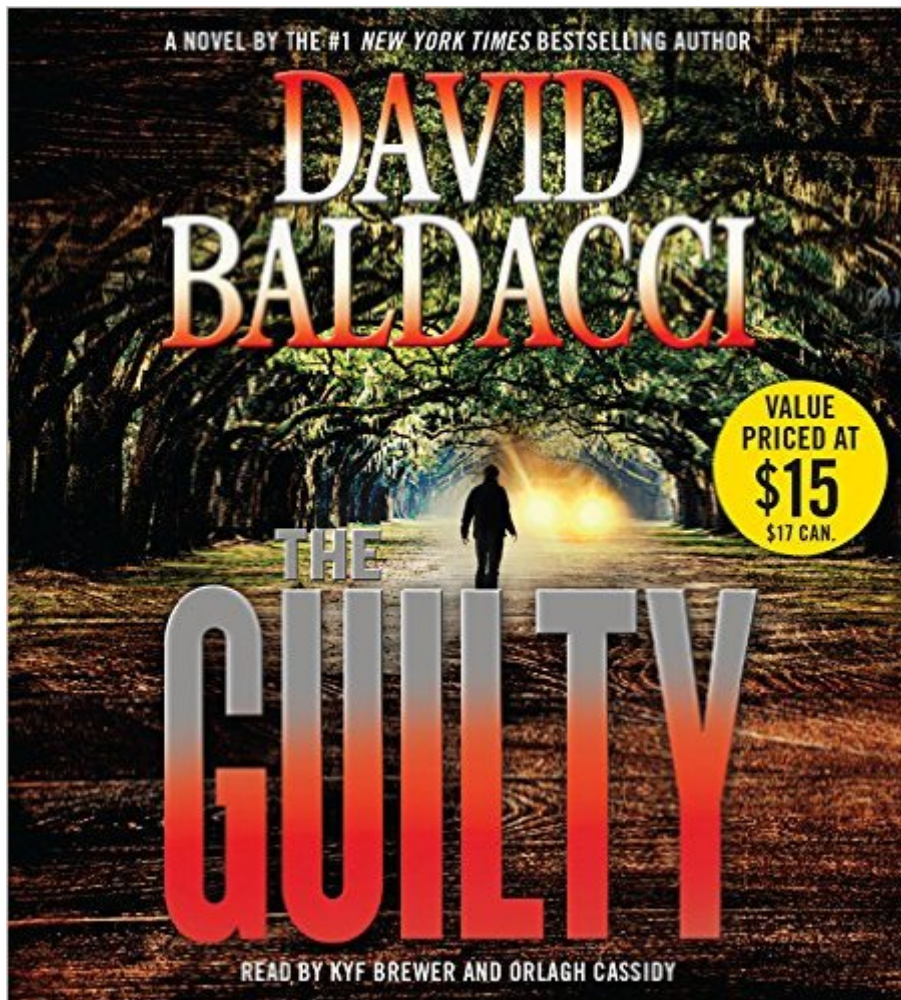


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# The Guilty



## Synopsis

Will Robie is the government's most professional, disciplined, and lethal assassin. He infiltrates the most hostile countries in the world, defeats our enemies' advanced security measures, and eliminates threats before they ever reach our shores. But now, his skills have left him. Sent overseas on a critical assignment, he fails, unable to pull the trigger. Absent his talents, Robie is a man without a mission, and without a purpose. To recover what he has lost, Robie must confront what he has tried to forget for over twenty years: his own past.

**THE GUILTY** Will Robie escaped his small Gulf Coast hometown of Cantrell, Mississippi, after high school, severing all personal ties, and never looked back. Not once. Not until the unimaginable occurs. His father, Dan Robie, has been arrested and charged with murder. Father and son haven't spoken or seen each other since the day Robie left town. In that time, Dan Robie--a local attorney and pillar of the community--has been elected town judge. Despite this, most of Cantrell is aligned against Dan. His guilt is assumed. To make matters worse, Dan has refused to do anything to defend himself. When Robie tries to help, his father responds only with anger and defiance. Could Dan really be guilty? With the equally formidable Jessica Reel at his side, Robie ignores his father's wishes and begins his own desperate investigation into the case. But Robie is now a stranger to his hometown, an outsider, a man who has forsaken his past and his family. His attempts to save his father are met with distrust and skepticism . . . and violence. Unlike the missions Robie undertook in the service of his country, where his target was clearly defined, digging into his father's case only reveals more questions. Robie is drawn into the hidden underside of Cantrell, where he must face the unexpected and possibly deadly consequences of the long-ago choices made by father and son. And this time, there may be no escape for either of them.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is #4 in David Baldacci's bestselling series about Will Robie, the hit man with a conscience. I had wondered how Baldacci could keep this kind of series going. His answer is to make it personal and go back to Robie's early days. While a major hit by Robie is successful, the collateral damage of the death of a young girl by the same bullet is too emotional for Robie to take. He is not able to complete his next assignment where a young boy is in the same room as his target. His controller tells him to take a break and get himself together again. At the same time, he tells him that his estranged father has been arrested for murder. Reluctantly Robie goes back to the small Mississippi town that he left over 20 years ago to find out what has happened. Robie has to face up to his past and the estranged father who physically and mentally abused him for so many years. I enjoyed the first half of the book (3.5 stars) as Robie adjusts again to life in the small deep-south town he abandoned a long time ago. Many things have changed. His father is now a Judge, has remarried a beautiful woman around Robie's age and has a 3-year-old son (so Robie now has a stepmother and half-brother). He starts to come to grips with the past and tries to work out if he can help his father - the only way to get his father released is to find the actual murderer. But his father is not very enthusiastic about his help. The second part of the book is basically a third-rate whodunit (2 stars). When his colleague Jessica Reel comes to help him the body count escalates. Robie and Reel discover more murders, blackmail, pedophilia, incest, and consanguinity. Of course along the way they get ambushed and chased by the baddies.

This is a review I never imagine posting. It actually pains me to write this about someone who had once been one of my favorite authors. There was a time when David Baldacci was my second favorite author. He slowly dropped from #2 but remained in my top 5. Then he dropped somewhere between 6 and 10. Now? Now I sadly can state I'm close to giving up on him completely. His novels have become formulaic. Characters interchangeable. It almost feels like he uses the same template and then just inserts whichever character. (Am I the only one who feels there no difference between King and Sean Maxwell and Will Robie?) I will say that, for some reason, I never got into The Camel Club series. That was okay, though because I loved John Puller as well as King and Maxwell and Robie and Reel. His standalones were good. But even those always felt like it could have been one in a series. Lately, the only novels of his I've enjoyed are the John

Puller books. • The Forgotten, • which was the first Baldacci book I ever read, as well as • Zero Day™ and • The Escape™ were great novels. However, the last several non-Puller books I came across were really struggles to get through. First Family (K & M) was a big disappointment. The president's family was so unbelievable the book was almost laughable. But I suffered through it cause well, it's Baldacci. I read • Split Second,™ the first K & M book. I finished it mostly due to the fact it was interesting to see how K&M started out. The story, the plot and the writing was a bit of a struggle. But I read it cause well, it's Baldacci. • The Innocent • was the first Will Robie novel. I found it awful, especially Robie's sidekick who was 13 going on 35.

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