

## BOOK REVIEW: Moscow Bound

4 May 2015 By [Jonathan Rayner \(URL=/jonathan-rayner/4624.bio\)](#)

The murder of an impotent victim in *Moscow Bound's* opening pages merely whets the appetite. It is swiftly followed by an abduction carried out by a thuggish military that is so chillingly confident it acts with impunity.

The action continues against a backdrop of post-Soviet Russia, with a cast of oligarchs, rival security forces and secrets long buried. Ordinary citizens count for nothing. Closed cities, oblivious of Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika, remain closed. The snowfall is unrelenting.

English solicitor Adrian Churchward's novel combines the tension of an action thriller with the insight of a lawyer who lived and practised in Moscow, Budapest and Prague from the mid-1980s to the late-1990s. These were the years when the Berlin Wall fell and Eastern Bloc countries found liberty from Soviet rule. They were also years of anarchy, when Communist economies collapsed and oligarchs, under the reign of Boris Yeltsin, became unimaginably wealthy in the cut-throat commercial world that replaced it.

Author: Adrian Churchward

Publisher: SilverWood Books (£9.99)

Without giving too much away, the core of Churchward's story reaches back even further, to the Vietnam war and the US's role in it. American servicemen reported missing in action, or so it was rumoured, may have been traded by North Vietnam to Russia, where their expertise with advanced weaponry was exploited. Is there any truth in such rumours? And why has the world's press not reported on it?

This is the mystery explored by the novel's protagonist, UK human rights lawyer Scott Mitchell. He has just successfully represented Chechen clients in a case against the Russian state at Strasbourg's European Court of Human Rights. His faith in the rule of law, however, shatters as the body count mounts. And what exactly is the motive of the beautiful heroine, the estranged wife of a ruthless oligarch?

*Moscow Bound* is the first novel in a trilogy that explores state abuse of power.

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