

A FAST PACED MARINE MYSTERY  
FROM THE AUTHOR OF *IN COLD DAYLIGHT*

PAULINE  
ROWSON

IN FOR  
THE KILL

## IN FOR THE KILL

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## **PAULINE ROWSON**

Pauline Rowson was raised in Portsmouth and is a frequent visitor to the Isle of Wight, the setting for this marine mystery thriller. In addition to being a crime writer she is the author of several marketing, self-help and motivational books. She lives in Hampshire and can never be far from the sea for any length of time without suffering withdrawal symptoms. This is her third marine mystery and she plans many more...

## **BY THE SAME AUTHOR**

### **Crime Fiction - Marine Mysteries**

*Tide of Death*

*In Cold Daylight*

### **Non-fiction**

*Communicating With More Confidence*

*Being Positive and Staying Positive*

*Marketing*

*Successful Selling*

*Telemarketing, Cold Calling & Appointment Making*

*Building a Positive Media Profile*

*Fundraising for Your School*

*Publishing and Promoting Your Book*

## **Praise for *Tide of Death* featuring DI Andy Horton and his sidekick Barney Cantelli**

‘Rowson manages to mix criminal and maritime worlds into a fast paced thriller, from police stations to Bavaria yachts the reader is fixed.’ *Julian Gowing, Opal Marine.*

‘With the Harley Davidson riding Horton living on a yacht and the various harbours and marinas around Portsmouth playing a major part in the action this is ideal reading - just check out that yacht in the next berth.’ *Sail-World.com*

‘If you are looking for a gripping read, to while away the time between sailing, try murder mystery *Tide of Death.*’ *Yachts and Yachting Magazine*

‘Rowson’s marine mystery series can do for the Solent what Inspector Morse did for Oxford.’ *Daily Echo*

‘Hoist the sails for DI Andy Horton and his sidekick Barney Cantelli. A series with a fair wind behind it and destined to go far.’ *Amy Myers*

‘A detective novel with a cutting edge. A great marine mystery with action.’ *Marine Update*

## **Reader Reviews for *Tide of Death***

‘Marvellous! A detective story that kept me enthralled to the end.’

‘This is the first detective crime novel I have read and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Can’t wait to read the next one!’

‘Andy Horton is great. Can’t wait to find out what happens to him in the next book.’

‘Pauline Rowson has combined the glamorous yachting world on the south coast with the seedy criminal world in a fast moving, easy to read marine mystery. The reader is transported straight into the world of deception and intrigue. I could not put this book down. It is a must read.’

## **Praise for *In Cold Daylight* – A Marine Mystery fast paced thriller**

‘Twists and turns described this perfectly. I enjoyed it and couldn’t put it down. Can’t wait for the next one. I’m hooked.’

‘I really enjoyed this. It kept me turning the pages.’

‘Great! I was up until 3am to finish this.’

‘This is a fast-paced and enjoyable book with many twists and turns. The characters are well defined and the plotting is excellent. For the reader who likes an atmospheric novel together with a good mystery, Rowson is one to watch.’

*[www.reviewingtheevidence.co.uk](http://www.reviewingtheevidence.co.uk)*

*For Jackie*

*Mine honour is my life: both grow in one;  
Take honour from me, and my life is done.*

**Richard II Act 1. Scene 1.**

## PROLOGUE

*April*

There is before and after, like one of those slimming adverts you see in magazines and newspapers. Only my before and after had nothing to do with diet, unless you counted prison food. Before prison I had been confident and successful. I had a family and a career. I had friends. And after? Well, here I am standing outside Camp Hill on the Isle of Wight getting high on the smell of diesel and petrol fumes, hesitant, with a prison pallor and a prison stoop.

For forty-two months, one week and two days I had dreamt of this moment. Now that it had arrived I felt a flutter of panic that almost had me scurrying back to the gates of Camp Hill pleading to be allowed back in. Goodness knows what lifers must feel!

‘Hey, Alex! Over here.’

I pulled myself together and headed towards the black Mercedes. Remember who you once were I said to myself. But that Alex Albury had vanished one September when, in the early hours of the morning, the police had burst into my home on the Hamble and had arrested me for something I hadn’t done.

I climbed into the waiting car and glanced at my defence lawyer. Miles gave me a brief nod before pulling out into the traffic. We didn’t speak. As the prison receded my breathing became easier. My pulse settled down and I felt the tension drain from my body. As we climbed Brading Down, the sparkling blue of the Solent in the distance stole the breath from my body.

It was then that I knew no matter what the cost I would find James Andover. I would ask him why he had framed me. And then I would destroy him as he had destroyed me.

## CHAPTER 1

‘To freedom and the future.’ Miles Wolverton peered at me over the rim of his glass.

Chink. I swallowed and pulled a face. I’d forgotten how dry champagne is. I stared around my immaculately clean houseboat, courtesy of Miles’s cleaning lady, Angela. It didn’t seem real. This was a dream and at any moment I would wake up and find myself back in my cell.

‘So what now?’ Miles asked, easing himself down on the blue and white striped cushioned bench that ran either side of my narrow lounge.

He stretched out his short legs, eyeing me curiously with those green penetrating eyes that I had seen so often across the courtroom and in the prison visitors' centre. I thought how out of place he looked in his pin-striped suit. And, to me, his broad physique, bull neck and rugged face made him much more a candidate for the building site than the law courts. I hadn't wanted him to meet me from prison; I would have preferred to be alone, but Miles had meant well. I guess he still felt guilty for not getting me off the charges of fraud and embezzlement.

I turned to stare out of the patio doors at a scene I had dreamt of so many times in my prison cell. The tide was rushing out of Bembridge Harbour, carrying with it a small yacht, its sails as yet unfurled, its diesel engine chugging gently. To my right, on the curving sandy beach, a woman was throwing a ball into the sea for a liver and white spaniel.

'Now I find the truth,' I said, quietly.

'Alex, it's over. Put it behind you and move on.'

I spun round. 'Move on? Where? Doing what?'

'You can work for us.'

I gazed at him disbelievingly.

'I've told your probation officer and I've squared it with my partners.'

'I can't –'

'You don't even have to come to the mainland for the partners' meetings. I can get our marketing manager to e-mail anything that's required and you can start by writing some press releases and articles for us.'

'No.'

'You needn't start right –'

'Miles, you don't understand. How can I go back to being a PR man when my reputation has been destroyed? Andover's still out there somewhere and I have to find him – whoever he is – otherwise how do I know that he won't frame me again? And I need to know why he hated me enough to have me convicted for five years.'

I poured myself another glass of champagne, but didn't drink it. I'd finally been given parole two-thirds of the way through my sentence. I'd had to tell the parole board that I was sorry I had swindled three prominent businessmen out of one million pounds each, and admitted that Andover had been my partner and had absconded with the money.

'*Words,*' my cellmate, Ray, had said, '*mean nothing. Only action counts.*'

Well, now *I* was going to take some action and it wasn't finding myself a job. I had some money from the sale of my mother's house on her death and the houseboat was in my name. It wasn't

much, but it was enough to keep me going until I got to the truth. Or, at least, I hoped it was.

Miles shifted his squat body and scowled at me. 'I don't think the parole board will like it.'

'Then we'll just have to keep it from them,' I replied sharply, and then almost instantly relented. It was hardly Miles's fault. He'd done his best to keep me out of prison.

'What if you never find Andover?'

'Then I'll die a bitter, frustrated man.'

'I understand what you must be feeling, but —'

'You don't!' I rounded on him. 'How can you? You haven't lost your wife and your children, your home, your future, your reputation, your freedom. You've lost nothing. I've lost everything, even my sodding confidence.'

My words fell into a pool of silence. I stared at the photograph on the narrow shelf behind the bench seat. My sons smiled back at me, their hair ruffled by the wind, their faces tanned, red lifejackets swamping their small chests. The picture had been taken on my boat during our last holiday before my arrest. David was aged ten then, dark-haired and two years older than Philip. God, how I missed them!

A tight band gripped my chest and I pushed back the patio doors and stepped onto the deck, trying to catch my breath. An unseasonably warm

April breeze caressed my face, bringing with it the smell of seaweed and sand. A large white butterfly settled for a moment on the guardrail, opened its wings and then took off again. I followed it with eyes that were moist and a lump in my throat the size of a golf ball. Before prison I wouldn't have noticed it if it had perched on the end of my nose!

I took a few deep breaths and told myself that big men don't cry, but my heart had been weeping since the day they had taken away my freedom.

Miles's voice came quietly from just behind me. 'I let you down, Alex. I should have found a way to get you off, or at least get you a community sentence, but your trial came at the wrong time.'

Yes, January is always a dry month for news. And I had to be made an example of, the PR man who had swindled three respected businessmen. It was a good story.

I turned to face Miles. 'You did your best.'

'And it wasn't good enough.'

No, it wasn't.

'Joe Bristow couldn't trace Andover and neither could the police, so how can you?' he asked.

Joe had been the private investigator that Miles had hired on my behalf. He had stopped looking for Andover just over a year ago. Joe had told me

to save my money. As far as he was concerned Andover had flown.

‘I have to try,’ I said.

Miles sighed in capitulation. He saw that he wasn’t going to get me to change my mind. ‘If there’s anything I can do to help find him just say the word.’

Before I could answer his mobile phone rang. Miles went inside to take his call.

My mind trawled through the events of my arrest and trial, just as it had done a thousand times before. Each time I hoped for some clue that could tell me why Andover had framed me and each time I drew a blank.

It had started long before my arrest. Six years ago James Andover had set up a registered charity to raise money to research into the causes of heart disease. Andover had named himself, me and two other businessmen as his fellow trustees. He had complied with all the regulations of the Charity Commission and filled in the forms. Then he had targeted three men: Couldner, Westnam and Brookes, all of whom had donated over a two-year period the sum of one million pounds each. The money had gone into the charity bank account, and then into another bank account in my name, only I hadn’t opened it. The money had then been transferred, all electronically

without me even being aware of it. Where it was now I had no idea, though the police had thought differently. When Couldner had died in a car accident in the May before my arrest, his daughter had become suspicious over her father's dwindling bank account and reported it to the police. They had traced it to the charity and hence to me. Andover had disappeared, and the other trustees had proved to be fictitious, names taken from gravestones, signatures forged. The registered office of the charity had been my mother's house in Bembridge. A divert had been put on the mail though, to another address which was an empty one-room office in the middle of London, registered in my name. The two surviving businessmen, Roger Brookes and Clive Westnam, swore they had been contacted by me and had donated money in good faith. I was left as the one tangible person to carry the can.

I'd never heard of the charity and neither had I ever been a trustee. Of course the police didn't believe that; not with the overwhelming evidence they uncovered. The Hi Tech Crime Unit had also discovered deleted e-mails from me to Andover on my computer hard drive. I hadn't sent them. No one believed me. They were on the computer therefore it had to be true. Computers didn't lie. Humans did. I'd since

discovered that a computer hacker could easily have hacked into my computer via the Internet and put them there.

‘I’ve got to go,’ Miles said, interrupting my thoughts. ‘Crisis with a client. Will you be all right?’

‘I’ll be fine,’ I replied, trying to hide my relief. ‘Thanks for the lift and the champagne.’

‘You sure you don’t want to come over to Portsmouth? You can stay with me.’

‘No. Thanks.’ Company was the last thing I needed after sharing my life with almost six hundred men.

Miles opened the boot of his car and reached for a mauve folder. ‘The press cuttings you asked for.’

‘Are they all there?’

‘Yes.’

He looked as if he wanted to ask me why I needed them. It wasn’t to start a scrapbook.

I watched the Mercedes glide towards St Helens, past a black van with tinted windows parked on the slipway. It was the same van that had followed us across Brading Down. I wasn’t sure if it had been behind us before then. It could just be a coincidence, but I was edgy. What if the police were watching me? I didn’t want them dogging my footsteps in my search for Andover.

And I didn't want them anywhere near me when I found him.

I wouldn't have put it past DCI Clipton to have me tailed. He'd never believed in my innocence. How I hated that man for the torment he had put me through. My conviction had been a feather in his cap, a step up to Detective Superintendent, and head of the Specialist Investigations Unit in south Hampshire. Well, I hoped his workload was so huge that it gave him sleepless nights and ulcers. If he had detailed someone to keep an eye on me, then somehow I would have to shake him off.

I put the press cuttings file on the houseboat, pushed a baseball style cap low over my face to avoid being recognised by any of the villagers, and went back out into the sunshine. It was too good a day to waste and I needed to stretch my legs.

At the end of the Embankment I ducked down onto the beach by the Toll Gate café, where a handful of holiday-makers were sitting at the wooden picnic benches making the most of the April sun, and I struck out along the beach. I resisted the urge to remove my trainers and socks and feel the soft sand between my toes. I would save that pleasure for another day just as I would the sensation of cold seawater on my feet and body. Now I simply delighted in hearing sounds

that had been lost to me for so long: the calling of the seagulls, the gentle ripple of the sea as it rolled onto the shore, and the rustle of the breeze through the trees as I stepped up onto the coastal path. I nodded at the occasional dog walker but didn't meet anyone I recognised. I removed my cap and lifted my head higher.

Soon I was striding across Bembridge Airfield on my way to Brading, feeling the sun on my back and the gentle breeze on my face. I thought I was in heaven. But I couldn't relax, not with Andover hanging over me.

Why had Couldner, Westnam and Brookes given so generously and willingly? Why had Andover chosen *them* as victims? There had to be a reason, some kind of connection between them, and I had to find it. There had been no hint at my trial that they had been blackmailed by Andover, even though my barrister had put it to Westnam and Brookes. *I* knew they had, because I knew I was innocent. All three men couldn't have been so modest that they hadn't wanted their donations to be made public! Whatever Andover had threatened them with it had to be something big enough for them to pay up and then remain silent when questioned under oath. Joe Bristow hadn't discovered it, though he had dug deep into their affairs, I might

not either, but I had to try.

I pushed back the door to Brading church and found myself face to face with a vision of such beauty that she made me go weak at the knees. Embarrassingly I found myself blushing, something I hadn't done since a teenager. I guessed she was in her early twenties. Her legs seemed to stretch up into infinity and her shoulder length hair was so thick and golden that it reminded me of a field of ripe corn. Despite my best efforts at self-control my body responded to three and a half years of enforced celibacy. I cleared my throat and tried to speak but the words wouldn't come. If she noticed my discomfort she didn't show it. Instead she smiled and said:

'It's incredible that there was once an Anglo-Saxon village here, right where we are standing.'

I think I mumbled something in reply, but wouldn't swear to it. I felt like a bloody adolescent schoolboy.

'I'm a historian,' she added, apparently undaunted by my silence. 'I get carried away sometimes, occupational hazard. I think I live more in the past than the present and that's not very healthy.'

Tell me about it I thought, her words striking a chord with me. Had she just given me a

message: stay away from the past, from Andover, or else? No, that was ridiculous.

‘Are you researching the church’s history?’ I finally found my voice. I was curious about her.

‘No. I’m writing a book about the Island during the Second World War.’

‘That shouldn’t take you long,’ I said jokingly. The Island was very small, only twenty-three miles from east to west and just over thirteen miles from north to south. Its population of about a hundred and twenty thousand increased by many in the summer holiday season. I didn’t know much about the part the Island had played during the war, apart from the tales Percy Trentham used to spout about the radar station. I hadn’t really been interested.

‘On the contrary,’ she said, ‘The Island is most fascinating and the past can often help us put things into perspective. We’re all so self-obsessed with our own petty problems today, and yet in a hundred years’ time we’ll all be dead and what we thought so important will be forgotten.’

‘It’s a point of view.’

‘And one you don’t share?’ She gazed at me curiously. I saw amusement in her sapphire blue eyes.

‘No,’ I replied. My problems were important now because I had to live now and not in the

past or the future. Someone other than myself had rewritten my future because he had radically altered my past. I had to know why. I had to set the record straight not only for myself but more importantly for the future of my boys, and their children.

She looked as if she wanted to challenge me, but something in my expression must have made her reconsider.

Abruptly she said, 'Well, I mustn't disturb you.'

With a smile she was gone. The church felt cold and dark after she had left as though she had taken the sunshine with her. I closed the heavy oak door behind me annoyed with myself for being so inept. The smooth-talking easy-going Alex Albury had evaporated over the last few years, leaving a tongue-tied idiot in his place.

As I walked back across the marsh and through the woods to Bembridge I examined her words. It was as though there were a subtext to her conversation. Was it some kind of warning? Or was I just being paranoid? I couldn't be blamed for having a persecution complex. Perhaps she really was a historian and the meeting pure coincidence. I had to get a grip on myself. I couldn't see suspicion everywhere I looked.

I had reached the airfield again when I heard the throb of an engine behind me. I glanced over

my shoulder and saw that a light aircraft was just coming into land. I picked up my pace. I had time to reach safety.

The aeroplane throttled back. I looked again in its direction, more anxiously this time. It seemed to be approaching with alarming speed. I walked faster, but it was getting nearer. It was closing rapidly on me. Jesus!

I broke into a run cricking my neck over my shoulder. It was heading straight for me. Couldn't the bloody idiot see me? But then my blood ran cold, of course he could. I was the prey.

I swerved but still it came. The sweat was pouring down my face. My breath was coming in hisses and gasps. My feet were striking against the hard hummocky turf. Desperately I tried to keep my balance, the uneven surface jarring my knees and twisting my ankles. The hedgerow and safety seemed as far away as ever.

Suddenly the throb of the engine was in my ears, inside my head. It was so loud that it must be on top of me. I dropped to the ground flattening my face in the wet grass. It swooped over me with a roar, almost brushing my hair. I didn't have a moment to lose, certainly not to lie here panting. I sprang up and tore across the remaining strip of grass.

The aeroplane was flying in the direction of

the harbour across the bird sanctuary. It dipped its wings as it turned. It was coming back, but I would be out of its reach by then. Already my calf muscles were telling me I was climbing the hill to the windmill and safety. The pilot must have seen this because the aeroplane turned round and headed out to sea.

I walked quickly back through the village and along the Embankment, hoping I wouldn't see anyone I knew. My head was spinning with what had just happened. Had the pilot intended killing me? It would have been a clumsy way to do so and would probably have resulted in his own death. I didn't think even the most desperate of men would commit suicide over me. But why attempt to frighten or injure me? The answer was simple; it was a warning, just like that woman's in the church. Forget the past. Do nothing and you'll be allowed to live. But doing nothing wasn't a choice I had. No amount of warnings was going to frighten me off. I had been out of prison less than twelve hours and already Andover was running scared. That was good.

I let myself into the houseboat feeling optimistic. Joe Bristow had been wrong. Andover hadn't flown the country. He was right here in England, perhaps even on the Isle of Wight. Now all I had to do was find him.