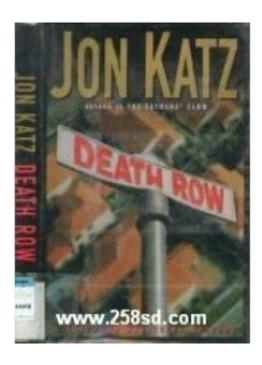
Death Row



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From Publishers Weekly Kit DeLeeuw, the "Suburban Detective" whose last appearance was in The Fathers' Club (1996), still presents himself not only the primary caregiver for his suburban New Jersey family but also the last sensitive male. Thankfully, however, he also holds on to his role as sleuth in this series of nimbly plotted mysteries. Kit's closest friend, octogenarian Benchley, has had a stroke that leads to a stay at Elston Manor, a maximum security managed care facility, owned by a prominent politician, which boasts pristine lawns and a fine reputation. But Kit, who experiences initial difficulty in getting information about Benchley and then finds his friend acting scared, wonders what the staff and administration are being so secretive about. His investigation turns up a charge of incompetence leading to death (settled out of court) and the recent dismissal of the director for accepting kickbacks

from a drug company. Kit discovers that the drug involved in the fatality is still in use and that the fired doctor is still on the premises; then he himself is threatened and shot at. After Benchly dies from an overdose, Kit lines up a team of unlikely associates to carry out a neat sting operation. While the pacing is slick, getting past Kit's vapid and sometimes pompously delivered worldview isn't easy. Readers may sympathize with Kit's daughter who directs a teenage surliness towards her dad. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist In this fifth entry in his Suburban Detective series, Katz's PI Kit DeLeeuw takes a stroll down death row--a macabre nickname for nursing homes and assisted-care facilities. DeLeeuw's best friend, Benchley Carrolton, has suffered a stroke and is taken to Elston Manor, one of the better-run facilities in New Jersey. Its owner, a state legislator, wants to retire on his string of nursing homes, but his plans may be in jeopardy when DeLeeuw begins to suspect that Carrolton has met with foul play while at Elston Manor. Katz's writing is particularly solid. Not only does he do a terrific job of portraying modern suburban life, but his mystery is so well plotted, and so shrouded in ambiguity, that the reader can barely guess what crimes have been committed, much less how they will be solved. Also nice is Katz's way with characters--nothing cardboard here. And DeLeeuw's first-person musings on life as boomer sandwiched between sullen adolescents and ailing parents will ring true for many mystery fans. Ilene Cooper See all Editorial Reviews

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