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New Novel Explores Convict Leasing

A new book from Texan Mike Vance is set in Fort Bend and Harris Counties in 1901, and a primary backdrop to the story is the convict leasing system then employed by the state. Convict leasing has been a controversial subject in the Sugar Land area over the past few years, and the treatment of the topic in this historical crime novel is timely, accurate, and heart-breaking.

This novel is the first book in the Duckworth Historical Crime Series. The second book in the series, tentatively titled *A Convenient Scapegoat*, is halfway finished as the first book is released. The series revolves around a colorful Texas defense attorney who often stretches the boundaries in representing his clients in murder cases. The action takes place in the first decade of the 20th century as Texas is trying to transform from a rough frontier into the modern world. As the painstakingly researched novels illustrate, the state still has a ways to go.

A book launch party for *The Devil's Lease* will be held at Talyard Brewing at 1033 Imperial Blvd in Sugar Land on the evening of Wednesday, December 4. The author will be present from 6 to 8 PM, and books will be available for purchase and signing. The public is welcome. Vance wanted the book to launch in Sugar land since it is the primary setting for this fascinating story. *The Devil's Lease* will also be available online and through most bookstores beginning on November 20.

The Devil's Lease is released under the Dos Dogs Press imprint, and it is Vance's third historical fiction title. It follows ten non-fiction books related to Texas history or sports. He has also written, produced, and directed eight award-winning feature length documentaries on Texas history and well over 150 short films or television episodes on the state's past. His career as a published author began in 1994. Vance is now writing full time.

The jacket blurb for *The Devil's Lease* reads as follows:

“Will Ennis rules his sprawling plantation empire on the Texas prairie by holding his petty and capricious fist over a mix of sharecroppers and leased convicts. George Purdy is a tenant looking for a fair shake. Trouble feels inevitable.

When murder inserts itself into the already brutal landscape, irascible defense attorney J.B. Duckworth aims to set things right, but the lawyer's mercurial scruples do not always sit well with his peers in the legal community at the start of the 1900s. Though Duckworth is willing to face all comers, he often does so with an eye toward what plays well in the press. The ultimate question is what lengths Duckworth will travel to secure justice for his clients and what others will do to stop him.

If you enjoy richly human characters and enveloping drama, you will love this thoroughly American tale of our history's heartbreaking tangles.”

Mike Vance has won numerous awards for his writing, film making, history work, and humor. He toured much of the English-speaking world doing stand-up comedy and original music before spending time in television and radio. *The Devil's Lease* is his 13th book, ten of which are non-fiction with three historical novels. More books are forthcoming in 2025. Vance is a third generation Texan who has taught occasional history courses at Rice University's Glasscock School of Continuing Studies since 2010.

For more information about Mike Vance or the book *The Devil's Lease*, or to schedule an interview, contact Mike at mike@mikevancewriter.com or please visit the website at www.mikevancewriter.com A full media kit is available in the website footer. Please note that .pdf files of the book are available for media upon request.