

# Aversion Therapy

There is no cure for some crimes.

It is a time when the immeasurably burgeoning crime rate has driven the city straight to hell. The epidemically overcrowded prison system has long passed emergency levels and meant the drastically early release of even the most habitual and dangerous offenders.

With crime rampant and gangs roaming the streets, engaging in a virtually unchecked reign of terror, the state finally relents and concedes to more radical and controversial options – and soon the DTACP ‘Department of Technological Achievements in Crime Prevention’ implement a contentious mind control program designed to cure criminals of their crime and leave even the most sadistic monsters of society dumb and defenceless as de-fanged, de-clawed animals.

Within time their endeavours payoff, but, despite the benefits, there is fervent opposition from various fractions of the social order including human rights activists, who see it as the beginning of a dehumanisation of society, up to the mob, who have the most to lose should the city gone mad reach a state of normalcy again.

With tragic irony, the DTACP’s immense success leads to the ruthless assassination of two of their leading members. The department’s youngest constituent, fanatically ambitious Jack Delaney, is so tunnel-visioned in his quest for success, so fervently determined, that he is widely feared to be next on the hitman’s target list.

Unfortunately for Jack, it is a danger far different than that of a sniper’s bullet that touches him when his twitchily ebullient foster brother, Wesley Haughton, re-enters his life after a spell in incarceration. To Jack’s surprise his shifty, morally repugnant, brother has put his time behind bars to good use, garnering two degrees and designing and building a radical – even by Jack’s standards – virtual reality/deep hypnosis system which, he promises, will surpass anything Jack has ever seen.

Intrigued but unconvinced, Jack ultimately makes the dubious decision to try out the system himself before deciding whether to recommend it to the board. Confident in the knowledge he has no dark side there to be exploited Jack is disturbed, to say the least, to find his virtual fantasy within Wesley’s little mind-bending toy is strangling a cool young blonde woman to death with his necktie.

When his waking world goes on to become plagued by recurring nightmarish visions Jack soon he realises that he has been duped by his vengefully scheming brother.

After tracking him down, Wesley tells Jack about the added ingredient that makes his tool so effective – the aversion therapy code – any criminal relieving his ingrained habitual behaviour in the device will be plagued by haunting visions of his victims and his crimes from there on in. Thereby giving the guiltless man guilt, the soulless man a soul. It transpires Wesley’s main motive for cornering Jack is to force him to do what he can to revoke his previous conviction and restore his reputation in the eyes of his overbearing malignant nightmare of a mother Constance Haughton.

But before Jack can even give in to the grotty little blackmail plot the lines between fantasy and reality are to become even more inextricably blurred as the increasingly tortured Jack, despairing and distraught, takes solace in the company of a luminescent young blonde woman and, to his utmost horror, wakes to find her dead the following morning – strangled to death with one of his neckties.

Running from the law, while making a desperate bid to prove his innocence, Jack must track down the domineering bitterly caustic Constance, as well as her snivelling morose son, and, piece by piece strip back layers of lies and deception that form his whole world until a chilling story emerges that will rock the foundations of everything he thought he knew about his family, his career, his sanity and his life.