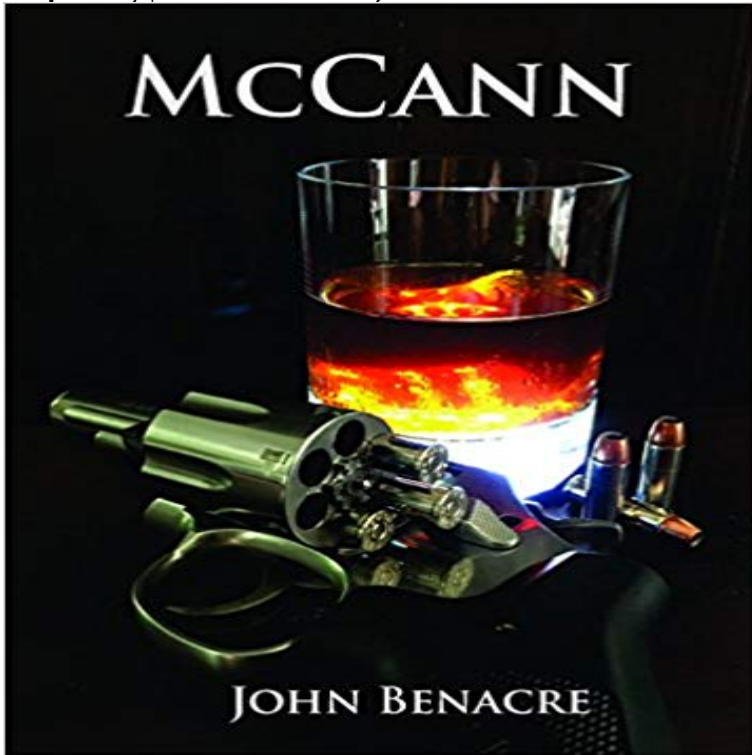


## McCann: Volume 1 of Cleanskin Short Stories (The Cleanskin Apologues Book 2)



This collection of forty-seven short stories traces the life, times and upbringing of Michael McCann, the central character of the novel *Easter, Smoke and Mirrors*. He is an Irish Republican Army Cleanskin (sleeper terrorist with no criminal record), living and working under deep cover in London while he prepares to carry out an IRA Spectacular attack on the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin. The short stories begin in 1968 (and the beginning of *The Troubles* in Northern Ireland) and eventually merge in 2015 with the opening chapters of *Easter, Smoke and Mirrors*. They explain how, why and when he grew into the man he became - driven by revenge, vanity and misplaced ideology to become one of the first global monsters of the 21st Century - and they paint vivid pictures of how he is able to ply his trade through charm, passion and guile. They also create stark images of his relentless manipulation of ordinary people to conceal chillingly extraordinary events. They provide the color, texture and backdrop to both the novel and its sequel, but they are also compelling stand-alone tales in their own right. They are a study of human nature at its most basic, of human frailty at its most dangerous, and of mankind's infinite capacity for its inhumanity to fellow man. Kirkus Reviews talks of the book's dynamic harrowing imagery; of how the stories showcase Benacre's knack for description; and of how the book's historical backdrop, too, is first rate. It said, 'The first-person short story *A Picture To Keep* is a standout... as it explores a bomb's devastating aftermath. These stories are a Must Read for all students of human nature, for all voyeurs of life, and for anyone interested in the intelligence machinery and sleight of hand of everyday counter-terrorism. John Benacre MBE QGM was born in the suburbs of London and raised in Kent. He served for thirty-five years in the British

Army and held every rank from Private soldier in the Parachute Regiment to Lieutenant Colonel in the Intelligence Corps. Most of that time was spent on counter-terrorist duties. Easter, Smoke and Mirrors was his debut novel. McCann is the first volume of a collection of associated short stories. Shape, Shine and Shadow is the sequel novel.

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