

WHEN DICK SCHROEDER READS NEWS OF THE DEATH OF CABLE NETWORK JOURNALIST MAURA HERBERT—AN OLD GIRLFRIEND—HE DECIDES TO REVEAL TO HIS WIFE DELLA A BIZARRE INCIDENT MAURA ENTANGLED HIM IN ALMOST FORTY YEARS EARLIER IN AUSTRALIA. DELLA IS THE FIRST PERSON HE HAS TOLD THE STORY TO, HAVING MAINTAINED SILENCE ALL THESE YEARS TO PROTECT MAURA (AND THE REPUTATION OF A TOP-LEVEL AUSTRALIAN POLITICIAN DEAD UNDER COMPROMISING CIRCUMSTANCES).

DICK, 83, IS A FORMER NEWSPAPER REPORTER AND EDITOR. DELLA, 78, IS A SEMI-RETIRED EPISCOPAL PRIEST—WHICH IS WHY DICK ALLOWS HIMSELF TO DESCRIBE THE EVENT TO HER IN DETAIL, CONFIDENT SHE WILL NEVER RECOUNT IT, “UNDER THE SEAL OF THE CONFSSIONAL.”

IN FACT, DICK REMAINS TORN ABOUT HIS ACTIONS THAT STRANGE NIGHT IN SYDNEY. WERE THE JOURNALISTIC ETHICS HE BUILT A CAREER ON VIOLATED BY THE MACHINATIONS HE AND MAURA UNDERTOOK OUT OF MIXED MOTIVES? IS HIS TALE A CONFESSION, AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OR A RECONCILIATION?

DAVID OLLIER WEBER HAS BEEN A NAVY DESTROYER OFFICER, A NEWSPAPER REPORTER, A PUBLIC RELATIONS REPRESENTATIVE, AN EDITOR AND AN AWARD-WINNING FREE-LANCE MAGAZINE JOURNALIST. HE LIVES IN THE SIERRA FOOTHILLS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. *CONFESSION* IS HIS TWELFTH NOVEL.

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