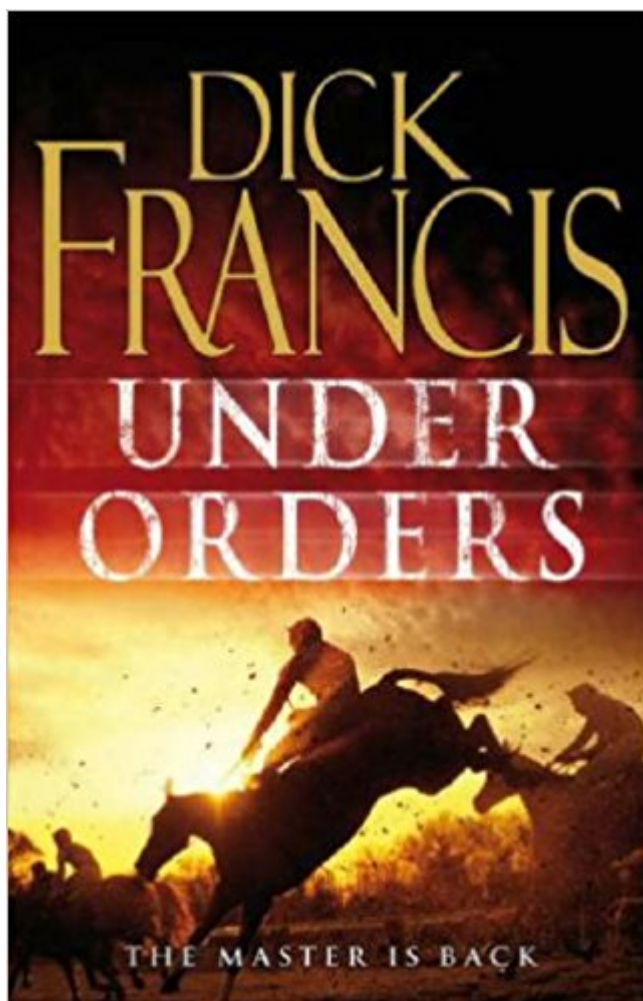


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# Under Orders Unabridged Compact Disc



## Synopsis

"Sadly, death at the races is not uncommon. However, three in one afternoon was sufficiently unusual to raise more than an eyebrow." It's the third death that really troubles former champion jump-jockey Sid Halley. He knows the perils of racing all too well - but in his day, jockeys didn't usually reach the finishing line with three .38 rounds in the chest. But this is precisely how he finds Huw Walker - the new winner of the Triumph Hurdle and Halley's friend. Now former friend. Walker was riding one of Lord Enstone's horses in the Hurdle and it was the inimitable owner who invited Halley in the first place. His brief: to make discrete enquiries into alleged race fixing. Are results being rigged? Are bookies taking a cut? And if so, are trainers and jockeys playing a dangerous game with stakes far higher than they realise ...Halley's quest for answers draws him ever deeper into the darker side of the race game, in a life-or-death power-play that will push him to his very limits - both professionally and personally.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Beloved series character Sid Halley, a champion jockey, makes a welcome return in the latest fast-paced crime novel from bestseller Francis (Come to Grief). When a crippling injury forces Halley into retirement, he begins a second career as a PI. Thanks to his doggedness and integrity, he attracts many clients, including a mysterious government figure who asks him to assess the unintended consequences of Britain's legalization of Internet gambling, and others who wish him to unravel the nest of puzzles surrounding the murder of a jockey, Huw Walker, suspected of throwing races. This time, the sinister forces arrayed against him have an unexpected

weapon—threats of violence against Halley's new significant other. The writing and action are as crisp as ever, though longtime Francis fans may find the plot a little familiar. BOMC and Mystery Guild main selection.(Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

After an absence of six years, Dick Francis comes thundering up the track with a thriller that resoundingly demonstrates that the acclaimed author, if anything, may have gained a few steps. Francis re-summons his most popular protagonist, Sid Halley, a champion jockey turned sleuth, whose racing career was shattered when a horse fell on him and then an adversary mangled his left hand. Last seen in *Come To Grief* (1995), Halley, who brings racing knowledge, spirit, and resilience to whatever case he tackles, remains one of the most exquisitely developed characters in crime fiction. This adventure starts with Cheltenham Gold Cup day, during which one racegoer drops dead, a horse collapses after a stirring win, and the victorious jockey is discovered shot to death in the parking lot. Juggling several sleuthing assignments, Halley finds himself working not only for the father of the slain jockey but also for a Lord who wants to know if the races his horses run in are being fixed. The plot keeps delivering shocks as Halley's investigation is derailed by threats and violence against his new love. And Francis once again proves himself a master of detail, seamlessly incorporating fascinating facts about DNA technology, myoelectric hands, Internet gambling, and even stitches. Wow. Connie FletcherCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I discovered Dick Francis 26 years ago, and the first book I read was the first Sid Halley--*Odds Against*. Francis does a fine job of updating Sid, Charles, and the rest as men of the 21st century. This is Francis's best book since *Straight*--and that's a mighty long time ago. It should be clear to all now just who was writing these books even if his wife, Mary, was his partner. This is vintage Francis--characters are introduced in a paragraph early on in such a way that you really know them when their time comes to act, die, or be of use to Sid. The dry humor is there--the compassion, the wit, the wisdom. We've gone 5 long years with no Dick Francis novels, and 15 without a really, really good one. I just sank into it and got lost in the world of British racing as seen through the eyes of one of my favorite authors. It's not for the uninitiated, though. There's plenty in the middle that is slow and personal--fans of Sid won't mind, but if folks haven't read Francis, this isn't the place to start. In truth, Francis reads especially well in order even though the majority of the books are stand-alones--the first five (*Dead Cert*, *Nerve*, *For Kicks*, *Odds Against*, and *Flying Finish*) are still

my favorites.

I've been reading Dick Francis books since about 1975 and own all of them written through the mid-90s, when I thought he had lost a little of his hop on the high hard one and, in general, I stopped reading thrillers. I bought this one recently out of curiosity and the fact that it seemed to have generally good reviews. It's taken me about three weeks to slog my way through and I am, overall, both surprised and disappointed. The plot, the characters, the narrative pace, the dialogue, the flow of the book in general -- none of these suggest to me that the author is the same person who wrote the earlier books. In the earlier books, Francis *\*showed\** the reader things -- here he *\*tells\** the reader about things. As in early science-fiction works when a character would stop the action and simply tell another character a 500-word essay about the history of some invention or other. This is sometimes referred to as a "data dump", and the more intrusive they are, the worse the level of writing. Robert A. Heinlein came along in the early '40s to fix this in the S.F. field, and Chandler and others did the same in the thriller field. And the earlier Francis books never suffered from this problem. This one does, however, in spades. And I ask you: Has there ever been a more contrived, or unbelievable, scene in any thriller than in this book, towards the end, when the hero locks a possible villain into a room and then videotapes the villain's abject confession? I doubt it. You will have to read it yourself in order to disbelieve it.... As to the question of WHO was writing the latter Dick Francis books, just skim through the other comments....

I've slowly collected Dick Francis's stories Because they make me happy. Best antidepressant I've found. Thank you, Mr. Francis!

Love all of books by Dick Francis. I am on the fifth read through starting with the first one, "Dead Cert", in chronological order. Amazing how much I learn each time.:) Highly recommend.

Dick Francis made this book intriguing and exciting! There were stories within stories and I had to really think to keep up. Sid Halley is a brilliant, brave character who is not larger than life, but realistic. His words give me a sense of how difficult it would be to function with only one hand. In that sense, he should be a sympathetic character, but he does not demand it. Instead, he demonstrates great strength and resolve in overcoming all impediments to truth and justice. Marina is exactly whom he needs and is a wonderful addition to the story line. I highly recommend this book.

The latest novel about ex-jockey turned PI Sid Halley. Many years have passed. Sid's investigations have moved away from the racing scene and he mainly does special investigations for a government agency and background checks on prospective employees for various clients. He is drawn back to the racetrack scene when the agency wants him to investigate gambling, particularly Internet gambling, because of pending legislation, and a horse owner wants him to investigate because the horses don't seem to be running as they should. There are questions about fixing results for the benefit of bookies or gambling syndicates. If you are gambling on the Internet, on a site that is probably operated offshore, how do you know you can trust the people running the computer?? If you are gambling at a race track, someone may have found a way to fix the race results. Sid Halley's investigations stir things up. People are killed. All is not as it seems, and there are some surprising discoveries about people who are involved. Sid is no friend of investigative reporters, but he is willing to use them when it suits his purpose, willing to give them a scoop if it exposes scum to the light of day. There are some interesting sidelights in the story, including the attitudes of the House of Lords about its members. You may learn enough about gambling to become cautious. In Sid Halley's words, his best tip is "keep your money in your pocket." The author draws on personal experience to write about horse racing, and the novel is well researched and well written. If you have an interest in the author, you might want to read his biography.

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