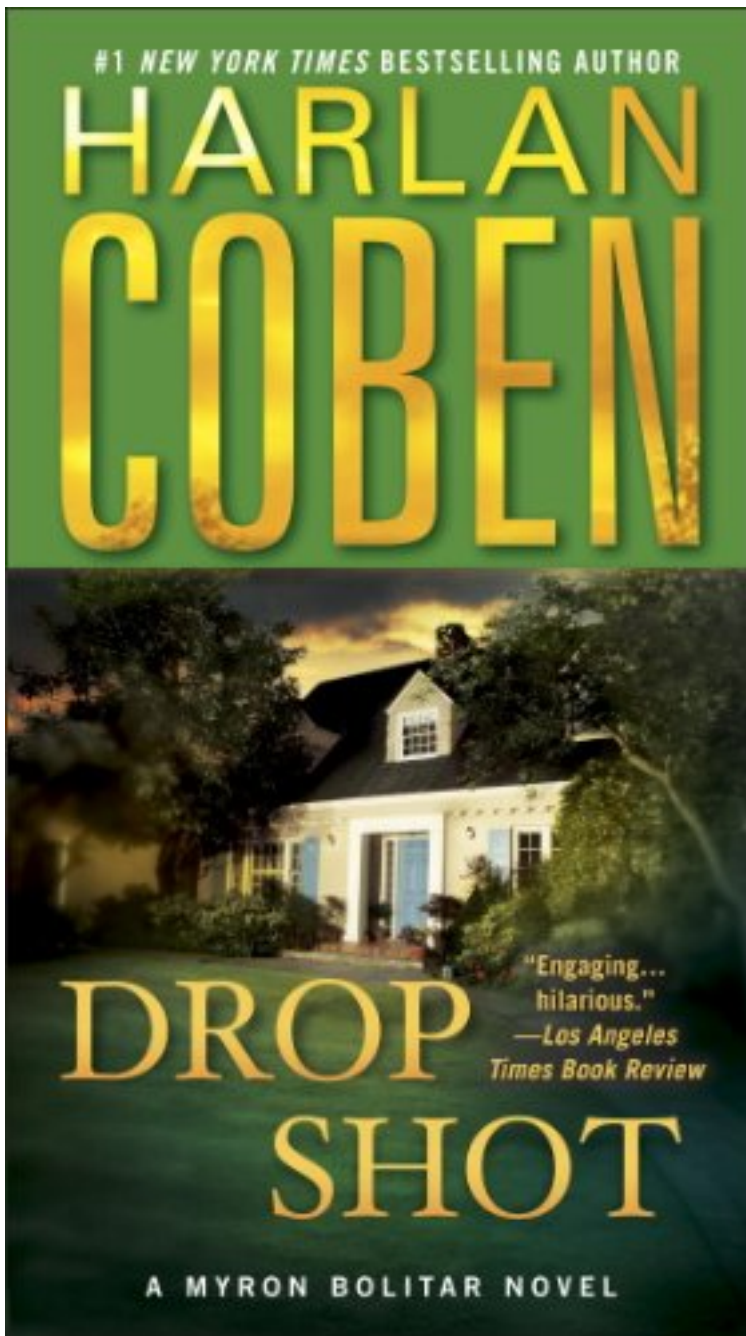


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Drop Shot: A Myron Bolitar Novel



Par Harlan Coben

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Description : Description du produitValerie Simpson is a young female tennis star with a troubled past who's now on the verge of a comeback and wants Myron as her agent. Myron, who's also got the hottest young male tennis star, Duane Richwood, primed to take his first grand slam tournament, couldn't be happier. That is, until Valerie is murdered in broad daylight at the U.S. Open and Myron's number one client becomes the number one suspect.Clearing Duane's name should be easy enough. Duane was playing in a

match at the time of Valerie's death. But why is his phone number in Valerie's black book when he claims only to have known her in passing? Why was she calling him from a phone booth on the street? The police stop caring once they pin the murder on a man known for having stalked Valerie and seen talking to her moments before the murder. But Myron isn't satisfied. It seems too clean for him. Myron pries a bit and finds himself prying open the past where six years before, Valerie's fiancée, the son of a senator, was brutally murdered by a juvenile delinquent and a straight-A student was subsequently gunned down on the street in retaliation, his death squandered in bureaucratic files. And everyone from the Senator to the mob want Myron to stop digging. The truth beneath the truth is not only dangerous, it's deadly. And Myron may be the next victim. In novels that crackle with wit and suspense, Edgar Award winner Harlan Coben has created one of the most fascinating and complex heroes in suspense fiction--Myron Bolitar--a hotheaded, tenderhearted sports agent who grows more and more engaging and unpredictable with each page-turning appearance.

Presentation de l'auteur In the second Myron Bolitar novel from Edgar Award winner Harlan Coben, a young woman's tragic death spirals into a shattering drama of menace, secrets, and rage. Suddenly Myron is in over his head and playing the most dangerous game of all. Engaging . . . hilarious. Los Angeles Times Book Once, Valerie Simpson's tennis career skyrocketed; now, the headlines belong to a player from the wrong side of the tracks. But when Valerie is shot dead in cold blood and dropped outside the stadium at the U.S. Open, sports agent Myron Bolitar investigates the killing and uncovers a connection between the two players and a six-year-old murder at an exclusive mainline club. As Myron is drawn into the case along with a dirty U.S. senator, a jealous mother, and the mob he finds himself caught between a killer and the truth. Harlan Coben is the modern master of the hook-and-twist. Dan Brown Extrait Chapter One Cesar Romero," Myron said. Win looked at him. "You're not serious." "I'm starting off with an easy one." On Stadium Court the players were changing sides. Myron's client, Duane Richwood, was shellacking the number-fifteen seed Ivan Something-okov, leading 5-0 in the third set after winning the first two sets 6-0, 6-2. An impressive U.S. Open debut for the unseeded twenty-one-year-old upstart from the streets (literally) of New York. "Cesar Romero," Myron repeated. "Unless you don't know." Win sighed. "The Joker." "Frank Gorshin." "The Riddler." Ninety-second commercial break. Myron and Win were keeping themselves busy with a scintillating game of Name the Batman Criminal. The TV Batman. The Batman starring Adam West and Burt Ward and all those Pow, Bam, Slam balloons. The real Batman. "Who played the second one?" Myron asked. "The second Riddler?" Myron nodded. From across the court Duane Richwood flashed them a cocky smile. He sported garish aviator sunglasses with loud fluorescent green frames. The latest style from Ray*Ban. Duane was never without them. He had become not only identified by the shades but defined by them. Ray*Ban was rather pleased. Myron and Win sat in one of the two players' boxes reserved for celebrities and players' entourages. For most matches every seat in the box was filled. When Agassi played the night before, the box had overflowed with his family, friends, suck-ups, young lasses, environmentally correct movie stars, hair weaves-like an Aerosmith backstage party. But Duane had only three people in the box: agent Myron, financial consultant Win, and Duane's coach, Henry Hobman. Wanda, the love of Duane's life, got too nervous and preferred to stay home. "John Astin," Win answered. Myron nodded. "How about Shelley Winters." "Ma Parker." "Milton Berle." "Louie the Lilac." "Liberace." "Chandell the Great." "And?" Win looked puzzled. "And what?" "What other criminal did Liberace play?" "What are you talking about? Liberace only appeared in that one episode." Myron leaned back and smiled. "Are you sure?" In his seat next to the umpire's chair Duane happily chugged down a bottle of Evian. He held the bottle so that the sponsor's name could be clearly seen by the television cameras. Smart kid. Knew how to please the sponsor. Myron had recently signed Duane to a simple deal with the natural water giant: during the U.S. Open Duane drank Evian in marked bottles. In return Evian paid him ten grand. That was water rights. Myron was negotiating Duane's soda rights with Pepsi and his electrolyte rights with Gatorade. Ah, tennis. "Liberace only appeared in that one episode," Win announced. "Is that your final answer?" "Yes. Liberace only appeared in that one episode." Henry Hobman continued to study the court, scrutinizing with intense concentration, his line of vision swinging back and forth. Too bad no one was playing. "Henry, you want to take a guess?" Henry ignored them. Nothing new there. "Liberace only appeared in that one episode," Win repeated, his nose in the air. Myron made a soft buzzing sound. "Sorry, that answer is incorrect. What do we have for our player, Don? Well, Myron, Windsor gets the home version of our game plus a year's supply of Turtle Wax. And thank you for playing our game!" Win was unmoved. "Liberace only appeared in that one episode." "That your new mantra?" "Until you prove otherwise." Win-full name: Windsor Horne Lockwood III-

steeped his manicured fingers. He did that a lot, steeping. Steeping fit him. Win looked like his name. The poster boy for the quintessential WASP. Everything about his appearance reeked arrogance, elitism, Town and Country Parties Page, debutantes dressed in monogrammed sweaters and pearls with names like Babs, dry martinis at the clubhouse, stuffy old money-his fine blond hair, his pretty-boy patrician face, his lily-white complexion, his snotty Exeter accent. Except in Win's case some sort of chromosomal abnormality had slipped through the generations of careful breeding. In some ways Win was exactly what he appeared to be.

But in many more ways-sometimes very frightening ways-Win was not. "I'm waiting," Win said. "You remember Liberace playing Chandell the Great?" Myron asked. "Of course." "But you forgot that Liberace also played Chandell's evil twin brother, Harry. In the same episode." Win made a face. "You cannot be serious." "What?" "That doesn't count. Evil twin brothers." "Where in the rule book does it say that?" Win set his jutting jaw in that certain way. The humidity was thick enough to wear as undergarments, especially in Flushing Meadows's windless stadium court. The stadium, named strangely enough for Louis Armstrong, was basically a giant billboard that also happened to have a tennis court in the middle. IBM had a sign above the speedometer that clocked the velocity of each player's serve. Citizen kept both the real time and how long the match had been going on. Visa had its name printed behind the service line. Reebok, Infiniti, Fuji Film, Clairol had their names plastered wherever there was a free spot. Sodie Heineken. Heineken, the official beer of the U.S. Open. The crowd was a complete mix. Down low-in the good seats-people had money. But anything went in the dress department. Some wore full suits and ties (like Win), some wore more casual Banana Republic-type clothes (like Myron), some wore jeans, some wore shorts. But Myron's personal favorite were the fans who came in full tennis gear-shirt, shorts, socks, tennis shoes, warm-up jacket, sweatbands, and tennis racket. Tennis racket. Like they might get called on to play. Like Sampras or Steffi or someone might suddenly point into the stands and say, "Hey, you with the racket. I need a doubles partner." Win's turn. "Roddy McDowall," he began. "The Bookworm." "Vincent Price." "Egghead." "Joan Collins." Myron hesitated. "Joan Collins? As in Dynasty?" "I refuse to offer hints." Myron ran episodes through his mind. On the court the umpire announced, "Time." The ninety-second commercial break was over. The players rose. Myron couldn't swear to it, but he thought he saw Henry blink. "Give up?" Win asked. "Shhh. They're about to play." "And you call yourself a Batman fan." The players took the court. They too were billboards, only smaller. Duane wore Nike sneakers and clothes. He used a Head tennis racket. Logos for McDonald's and Sony adorned his sleeves. His opponent wore Reebok. His logos featured Sharp electronics and Bic. Bic. The pen and razor company. Like someone was going to watch a tennis match, see the logo, and buy a pen. Myron leaned toward Win. "Okay, I give," he whispered. "What criminal did Joan Collins play?" Win shrugged. "I don't remember." "What?" "I know she was in an episode. But I don't remember her character's name." "You can't do that." Win smiled with perfect white teeth. "Where in the rule book does it say that?" "You have to know the answer." "Why?" Win countered. "Does Pat Sajak have to know every puzzle on Wheel of Fortune? Does Alex Trebeck have to know every question on Jeopardy!" Pause. "Nice analogy, Win. Really." "Thank you." Then another voice said, "The Siren." Myron and Win looked around. It seemed to have come from Henry. "Did you say something?" Henry's mouth did not appear to be moving. "The Siren," he repeated, his eyes still pasted to the court. "Joan Collins played the Siren. On Batman." Myron and Win exchanged a glance. "Nobody likes a know-it-all, Henry." Henry's mouth might have moved. Might have been a smile. On the court Duane opened the game with an ace that nearly bore a hole through a ball boy. The IBM speedometer clocked it at 128 mph. Myron shook his head in disbelief. So did Ivan What's-his-name. Duane was lining up for the second point when Myron's cell phone rang. Myron quickly picked it up. He was not the only person in the stands who was talking on a cell phone. He was, however, the only one in the front row. Myron was about to disconnect the power when he realized it might be Jessica. Jessica. Just the thought quickened his pulse a little. "Hello." "It's not Jessica." It was Esperanza, his associate. "I didn't think it was." "Right," she said. "You always sound like a whimpering puppy when you answer the phone." Myron gripped the receiver. The match continued without interruption, but sour faces spun to seek out the origin of the offending ring. "What do you want?" he whispered. "I'm in the stadium." "I know. Bet you look like a pretentious asshole. Talking on a cellphone at the match." Now that she mentioned it . . . The sour faces were glaring daggers now. In their eyes Myron had committed an unpardonable sin. Like molesting a child. Or using the salad fork on the entree. "What do you want?" "They're showing you on TV right now. Jesus, it's true." "What?" "The TV does make you look heavier." "What do you want?" "Nothing much. I thought you might want to know I got you a meeting with Eddie Crane." "You're kidding." Eddie Crane, one of the hottest tennis juniors in the country. He was seeing only

the big-four agencies. ICM, TruPro, Advantage International, ProServ. "No joke. Meet him and his parents by court sixteen after Duane's match." "I love you, you know." "Then pay me more," she said. Duane hit a cross-court forehand winner. Thirty-love. "Anything else?" Myron asked. "Nothing important. Valerie Simpson. She's called three times." "What did she want?" "She wouldn't say. But the Ice Queen sounded ruffled." "Don't call her that." "Yeah, whatever." Myron hung up. Win looked at him. "Problem?" Valerie Simpson. A weird, albeit sad case. The former tennis wunderkind had visited Myron's office two days ago looking for someone anyone to represent her. "Don't think so." Duane was up forty-love. Triple match point. Bud Collins, tennis columnist extraordinaire, was already waiting in the gangway for the postmatch interview. Bud's pants, always a Technicolor fashion risk, were particularly hideous today. Duane took two balls from the ball boy and approached the line. Duane was a rare commodity in tennis. A black man. Not from India or Africa or even France. Duane was from New York City. Unlike just about every other player on the tour, Duane had not spent his life preparing for this moment. He hadn't been pushed by ambitious, carpooling parents. He hadn't worked with the world's top coaches in Florida or California since he was old enough to hold a racket. Duane was on the opposite end of the spectrum: a street kid who had run away at age fifteen and somehow survived on his own. He had learned tennis from the public courts, hanging around all day and challenging anyone who could hold a racket. He was on the verge of winning his first Grand Slam match when the gunshot sounded. The sound had been muffled, coming from outside the stadium. Most people did not panic, assuming the sound had come from a firecracker or car backfire. But Myron and Win had heard the sound too often. They were up and moving before the screams. Inside the stadium the crowd began to mumble. More screams ensued. Loud, hysterical screams. The court umpire in his infinite wisdom impatiently shouted "Quiet, please!" into his microphone. Myron and Win sprinted up the metallic stairway. They leaped over the white chain, put out by the ushers so that no one could enter or leave the court until the players switched sides, and ran outside. A small crowd was beginning to gather in what was generously dubbed the "Food Court." With a lot of work and patience the Food Court hoped to one day reach the gastronomic levels of, say, its mall brethren. They pushed through the crowd. Some people were indeed hysterical but others hadn't moved at all. This was, after all, New York. The lines for refreshments were long. No one wanted to lose their place. The girl was lying facedown in front of a stand serving Motch champagne at \$7.50 a glass. Myron recognized her immediately, even before he bent down and turned her over. But when he saw her face, when he saw the icy blue eyes stare back at him in a final, unbreakable death gaze, his heart plummeted. He looked back at Win. Win, as usual, had no expression on his face. "So much," Win said, "for her comeback." From AudioFile Sports agent Myron Bolitar has under contract one of the hottest young male tennis players around. When a young former tennis star is murdered (shortly after Myron met with her), he finds that the two cases may be connected--and that he's involved. Showing his talents in a story that moves from high society to lowlifes, Jonathon Marosz ably shifts characters and pace, and captures the wry humor of Myron and the grittiness of the physical threats and violence he encounters. Solid narration brings out the best of the characters. M.A.M. copy AudioFile 2000, Portland, Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, Maine