

Are you (like me) part of the problem?

 By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

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Cherry by Nico Walker is "a work of fiction, these things didn't ever happen, these people didn't ever exist".



Conveniently though, this *entirely made-up story* about a young American who failed out of college, went to fight in the Iraq war, came home with a drug addiction and ended up robbing banks to pay for his heroin habit, was written by a young American who joined the army, served in the Iraq war, became an addict and is now serving an 11-year prison sentence for bank robbery.

All similarities between life and fiction purely and conveniently (since it is distasteful, if not downright illegal to profit off a crime) are coincidental.

It's a good read. Gritty and gripping, and dripping with the pointless horror of so much that is rotten beneath the surface of the so-called American dream. (War is hell, and the American dream is built on it.)

I enjoyed reading it.

It's not him, it's me

However, after I had put the book down, I realised that by spending my money and time purchasing and reading this work of fiction, I too have played a small part in perpetuating the problem.

As much as I feel for Nico and how his life turned out (and as much as I sincerely hope he still has the opportunity to get a fair chance at a second start at an honestly happy life after he's done his time - which should be around now, in 2021), the fact remains, I happily paid a bank robber to tell me about his crime. I proved that crime does pay *and that I was willing to pay for it*.

And I was not the only one.

Crime pays (if we want it to)

Not only did robbing banks get Nico a book deal, but he's also landed himself an Apple TV series for his troubles.

This should give us all pause for thought. Whatever we spend our time and attention on, *we encourage more of*.

And, while I am delighted to keep on encouraging writers and invest in more books, perhaps I should not be encouraging bank robbery (however entertaining the story may be). But that's on me.

As for you? Well, whatever you choose to spend on, you can expect more of it.

ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

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