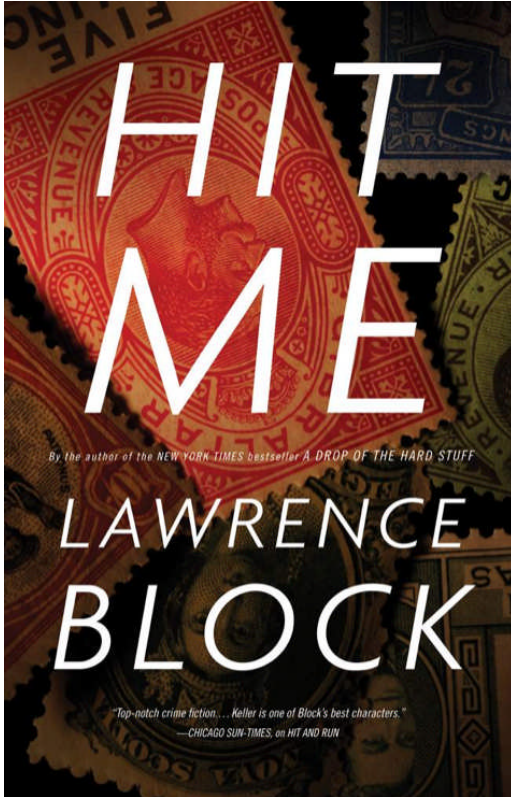


## ***Hit Me* by Lawrence Block**

Book Review by Stan Cronwall

A few years ago, we left our eclectic anti-hero John Paul Keller from the "Hit Man" series of books by renowned mystery writer Lawrence Block.



Block manages to keep three different mystery series going at the same time.

When we last saw Keller he was a bachelor living in a small apartment in New York City. Advance the story by a few years and there have been major changes in his life. He still collects stamps (non U.S. up to 1940) but no longer gets the big financial rewards he received from being a free-lance killer. He hasn't had an "assignment" in quite some time.

The woman who acted as the clearing house for his "work" apparently died in a tragic house fire. She was the one who accepted or rejected the "jobs" and lived on a percentage of what was paid for Keller's services.

Keller has changed his name, moved to New Orleans, married and has a young daughter. Even though he squirreled away a lot of money from his former life, he needs to have some source of income. And, yes, he still collects stamps although not as he did as a bachelor earning big money.

After hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, there was plenty of work for enterprising people to clear debris, buy and re-build houses and re-sell them. Our anti-hero went into the business of acquiring

damaged houses, rehabbing and re-selling them.

It was a highly profitable business until the banking bubble burst. Nobody could get loans whether for mortgages or construction so that was the end of that.

It had been years since his phone rang with an offer to resume his former double life. But the phone does ring one day, and on the other end of the line was his former go-between with a possible "assignment." She had not died during the house fire, but instead moved away, changed her name and started a new life.

He takes on the "assignment" and travels to the city where the "work" is to be done. The only problem is that as he was laying his plans, someone else "took out" his target.

Now what?

As Paul Harvey used to say, to learn "the rest of the story" you'll have to buy, download, or borrow a copy of "Hit Me" by Lawrence Block. A good, fast and easy read.

As you consider whether or not buying, or otherwise laying hands on the book, keep in mind that Lawrence Block is a stamp collector, and that he was a feature writer for *Linn's Stamp News* for about a year. The experiences that Keller has in doing business at stamp auctions, shows and with dealers come directly from the author's personal knowledge.