

***The Doorman*, by Chris Pavone**

Reviewed by Cindy Kennedy

Chicky Diaz, the titular lead character of Chris Pavone's urban thriller, *The Doorman*, has been guarding and opening the front door of the Bohemia for 28 years. Every resident's idea of the perfect doorman, Chicky, a former Marine, is "unerringly patient and relentlessly upbeat.... He never calls in sick, never leaves early, never arrives late."

The Bohemia, on Manhattan's Central Park West, is home to celebrities and the ultra-wealthy. Ethel Frumm, the widow of a producer whose Hollywood blockbuster still generates revenue from adaptations, has lived in 6D for decades, along with a series of small yappy dogs. Mrs. Frumm has a collection of 17th century Dutch paintings reportedly worth millions.

Whitaker Longworth, CEO of a defense-contract company, and his socialite wife Emily own 11C-D, a sprawling penthouse which had combined two apartments. Longworth made his immense fortune by bilking the US government and selling body armor to unsavory foreign clients. To assuage her liberal guilt, Emily volunteers at a Harlem soup kitchen.

For years, Chicky has kept the secrets of countless Bohemia residents, but his personal life is largely unknown. Julian Sonnenberg, an art dealer who lives in 2A, is the only inhabitant who knows that Chicky's wife Tiffani had passed away after a long illness, leaving the doorman grieving and saddled with huge, unpaid medical bills. (The two men had known each other as kids on opposing teams in the same Upper West Side Little League.) Chicky is proud of his three daughters attending colleges away, but their scholarships do not cover the full cost.

Although the Bohemia "looks like a Middle Ages castle, with 21st century floodlights and security cameras," Chicky is ever vigilant, watching out for trouble. When a Black man is killed by cops near the uptown food pantry where Emily volunteers, protest demonstrations break out all over the City. Chicky understands that danger lurks everywhere: "Even here on fancy Central Park West with even fancier Fifth Avenue on the far side, on these streets that are home to millionaires and billionaires and the biggest museums of the greatest city in the whole wide world. Even here, danger is right there."

Anyone who has lived in a Manhattan high-rise—or enjoyed the "Only Murders in the Building" TV mini-series—will appreciate *The Doorman's* atmospheric details. Some, however, might be put off by the scenes of erupting violence. Chris Pavone's spot-on skewering of the societal divide between New York City's "haves and have nots," nevertheless, is masterful. All in all, *The Doorman* is a sizzling summertime page-turner.