

Book Review: No Prisoners
By Ellis Blake

Thanks to NetGalley and Putnam Books for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "No Prisoners" is scheduled for release on July 21, 2026.

I have a lot of issues with this novel from Ellis Blake, and I'll get into the specifics shortly.

The setting is New Mexico, just outside Albuquerque in 2008. Hannah Lyon, a brilliant physicist with a 10-year-old son, Joe, works at the New Mexico Institute. Her husband, Adam, is missing. And not just recently missing, as in a few days ago, but 4-5 weeks ago. Just disappeared off the face of the earth. This is on top of her father who also disappeared into thin air just two years prior.

Working the case is Detective Aloysius (Lou) Hunt. The verb *working* might be misleading as it doesn't seem Hunt has accomplished much since Adam's disappearance. Hannah, who insists her husband would never just leave, is frustrated by the lack of progress Hunt has made. In fact, Hunt has his own heavy baggage that seems to bog down any possible headway he might make in the case.

Snippets of breadcrumbs are periodically dropped, including Adam's possible involvement in drug trafficking, but the pieces of the puzzle don't come together smoothly. By that I mean there are almost as many questions raised as answered. Like why is Hunt's teenage daughter confined to a wheelchair (the subject matter is barely touched on)? Or how do you calculate the weight of a pickup truck from a security camera?

Perhaps most frustrating is the lack of interest or empathy that is generated for either Hannah or Hunt. Little backstory is provided, so we really don't understand who they are or what makes them tick. For example, when Hunt regularly experiences shortness of breath and his wife

asks if he took his medication, it's hard to really care whether he took the meds or not. Similarly, a red SUV has begun following Hannah, and she becomes ruthless in her pursuit of finding what happened to her husband. But nothing happened for 4-5 weeks? Why now?

The ending is anticlimactic. But more than that, it leaves behind a lot of loose ends. And in a narrative that often feels convoluted, that's a very unsettling feeling after trekking through 400 pages.

Just two stars for "No Prisoners."