

THE JOE PICKETT MYSTERY SERIES

BY C.J. BOX



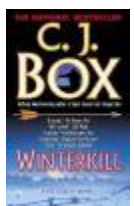
Open Season [2001]

Few first mysteries have been welcomed as enthusiastically as *Open Season*, or with better cause. "When a high-powered bullet hits living flesh, it makes a distinctive – pow – WHOP – sound that is unmistakable even at tremendous distance". And so it begins for Joe Pickett, a Wyoming game warden who, with the shot of a rifle, is thrust into a race to save not only an endangered species, but also the life and family he loves. C. J. Box knows the wilderness and he knows how to create a wonderfully authentic, vividly alive sense of place. Most of all, he knows how to create a memorable new hero: a man who is full of failings, but strong and honorable.



Savage Run [2002]

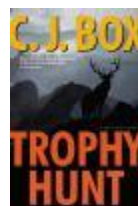
When a massive explosion occurs deep within the forests of Twelve Sleep County and a colorful environmental activist appears to have perished in the blast, Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett is called to the scene to help investigate. Pickett soon discovers clues that lead to a deadly conspiracy—one that will test his courage, his survival skills, and his determination to "do the right thing" despite all costs.



Winterkill [2003]

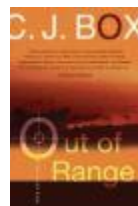
It's an hour away from darkness with a bitter winter storm raging when Joe Pickett finds himself deep in the forest edging Battle Mountain, shotgun in his left hand, his truck's steering wheel handcuffed to his right—and Lamar Gardiner's arrow-riddled corpse splayed against the tree in front of him. Lamar's murder and the sudden onslaught of the snowstorm warns: Get off the mountain. But Joe knows this episode is far from over. Somewhere in the dense timber, a killer draws back his bowstring—with Joe as his prey. Joe's pursuit of the killer through the rugged mountains that surround the snow-

packed town of Saddlestring takes a horrifying turn when his beloved foster daughter is kidnapped. Now it's personal—and Joe will stop at nothing to get her back.



Trophy Hunt [2004]

It's an idyllic late summer day in Saddlestring, Wyoming, and game warden Joe Pickett is fly-fishing with his two daughters when he stumbles upon the mutilated body of a moose. Whatever-or whoever-attacked the animal was ruthless: Half the animal's face has been sliced away, the skin peeled back from the flesh. Shaken by the assault, Pickett begins to investigate what he hopes is an isolated incident. Days later, after the discovery of a small herd of mutilated cattle, Pickett realizes this is something much bigger. Local authorities are quick to label the attacks the work of a grizzly bear, but Joe knows otherwise. The cuts on the moose and the cattle were too clean, too precise to have been made by jagged teeth. Are the animals only practice for a killer about to move on to a different, more challenging prey? Joe's worst fears are realized when the bodies of two men are discovered within days of each other, their wounds eerily similar to those found on the moose and cattle. There's a vicious killer, a modern-day Jack the Ripper, on the loose in Saddlestring—and it appears his rampage is just beginning.



Out of Range [2005]

Joe Pickett is attempting to enjoy -- all right, survive -- his mother-in-law's wedding to a local big-shot rancher when he receives some disturbing news: Will Jensen, a fellow Wyoming game warden and a good friend, has killed himself. And Joe's been picked to temporarily run Jensen's Teton district. Jackson, Wyoming, is a far cry from Joe's hometown of Saddlestring – it's the epicenter for many environmental extremists and an elite playground for the rich and powerful—and Joe quickly finds himself in

over his head. Yet despite the pressures of his new job, he can't get his friend's suicide out of his mind. By all accounts, Will had changed in the last few months, becoming violent and unpredictable. The closer Joe comes to the truth about Will's death, the more his own life spirals out of control-and he realizes that if he's not careful, he may end up as Jackson's next victim.



In Plain Sight [2006]

J. W. Keeley is a man with a score to settle. He blames one man for the death of his brother: Joe Pickett. And now J. W. is going to make him suffer. Spring has finally come to Saddlestring, Wyoming, and game warden Joe Pickett is relieved the long, harsh winter is finally over. However, a cloud of trouble threatens to spoil the milder weather-local ranch owner and matriarch Opal Scarlett has vanished under suspicious circumstances. Two of her sons, Hank and Arlen, are battling for control of their mother's multi-million-dollar empire, and their bitter fight threatens to tear the whole town apart. Everyone is so caught up in the brothers' battle that they seem to have forgotten that Opal is still missing. Joe is convinced, though, that one of the brothers killed their mother. Determined to uncover the truth, he is attacked and nearly beaten to death by Hank Scarlett's new right-hand man on the ranch-a recently arrived stranger who looks eerily familiar. A series of threatening messages and attempts to sabotage Joe's career follow. At first, he thinks the attacks are connected with his investigation of Opal's disappearance, but he soon learns that someone else is after him-someone with a very personal grudge who wants to make Joe pay . . . and pay dearly.



Free Fire [2007]

Joe Pickett investigates the mass murder of a group of campers in a back-country corner of Yellowstone National Park. But not only has the killer gleefully confessed, he's gotten off free. The reason is an absolute shocker — and absolutely believable.



Blood Trail [2008]

In the wake of an elk hunter's grisly murder, Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett is directed by the governor to investigate the relevance of a mysterious poker chip found at the crime scene.



Below Zero [2009]

Wyoming game warden Joe Pickett is forced to relive the tragedy of his foster daughter April's apparent death six years earlier when his daughter Sheridan starts receiving text messages from someone claiming to be April. The nightmare ratchets up a step when whoever is sending these messages is discovered traveling with suspected environmental terrorists.



Nowhere to Run [2010]

Joe Pickett's in his last week as the temporary game warden in the town of Baggs, Wyoming, but there have been strange things going on in the mountains, and his conscience won't let him leave without checking them out: reports of camps looted, tents slashed, elk butchered. And then there's the runner who simply vanished one day.

**This list prepared as a handout for the
Just Desserts Mystery Discussion Group**

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