

Tony Hillerman's mystery fiction

The Blessing Way (1970)

When Lt. Joe Leaphorn of the Navajo Tribal Police discovers a corpse with a mouth full of sand at a crime scene seemingly without tracks or clues, he is ready to suspect a supernatural killer. And what he must stalk is the Wolf-Witch along a chilling trail between mysticism and murder.

Dance Hall of the Dead (1973)

Two boys suddenly disappear, and Lt. Joe Leaphorn sets out to locate them. Three things complicate the search: an archaeological dig, a steel hypodermic needle, and the strange laws of the Zuni Indians.

Listening Woman (1978)

The state police and FBI are baffled when an old man and a teenaged girl are brutally murdered. The blind Navajo Listening Woman speaks of ghosts and witches. But Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn knows his people and begins an investigation that leads to the most violent confrontation of his career.

People of Darkness (1980)

Sgt. Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police must use all of his powers of deduction and insight to extricate himself from a dangerous web consisting of a mysterious millionaire, a sinister, peyote-eating Indian cult and murder.

The Dark Wind (1982)

A corpse whose palms and soles have been "scalped" is only the first in a series of disturbing clues: an airplane's mysterious crash in the nighttime desert, a bizarre attack on a windmill, a vanishing shipment of cocaine. Sgt. Jim Chee of the Navajo Tribal Police is trapped in the deadly web of a cunningly spun plot driven by Navajo sorcery and white man's greed.

The Ghostway (1984)

Sgt. Chee of Navajo Police, a solitary, reflective man, investigates a deadly gunbattle between two crooks. Hampered by the FBI, Chee goes to Los Angeles to find the keys to the puzzling burial of one of the crooks, and the disappearance of an old Navajo and his granddaughter. In the meantime, he ponders the difficulties of a relationship with a white woman.

Skinwalkers (1986)

Navajo Tribal Police Officer Jim Chee and Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn investigate murders that lead them into the spine-tingling and mystical world of Navajo witchcraft. Three unsolved homicides and an attempt on Chee's life have left the Navajo Tribal Police baffled. Are the murders somehow connected, although they occurred 120 miles apart? Or are they random acts of violence? Chee and Leaphorn's efforts to solve the seemingly unrelated individual crimes leave them with clues that point toward one suspect, in this suspenseful mystery.

Thief of Time (1988)

When two corpses appear amid stolen goods and bones at an ancient burial site, Navajo Tribal Policemen Lt. Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee must plunge into the past to unearth the astonishing truth behind a mystifying series of horrific murders.

Talking God (1989)

A grave robber and a corpse force Navajo Tribal Police Lt. Joe Leaphorn and Officer Jim Chee to enter the dangerous land of superstition and ancient ceremony.

Coyote Waits (1990)

The car fire didn't kill Navajo Tribal Policeman Delbert Nez, a bullet did. Officer Jim Chee's good friend Del lies dead, and a whiskey-soaked Navajo shaman is found with the murder weapon. The old man is Ashie Pinto. He's quickly arrested for homicide and defended by a woman Chee could either love or loathe. But when Pinto won't utter a word of confession or denial, Lt. Joe Leaphorn begins an investigation. Soon, Leaphorn and Chee unravel a complex plot of death involving an historical find, a lost fortune...and the mythical Coyote, who is always waiting, and always hungry.

Sacred Clowns (1993)

This long-awaited new novel is Tony Hillerman at his best. In a taught and richly woven mystery set in the Navajo Southwest, Tribal Policemen Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee unravel the treacherous web of tribal politics that connects two murders.

The Fallen Man (1996)

Human bones lie on a ledge under the peak of Ship Rock mountain, the remains of a murder victim undisturbed for more than a decade. Three hundred miles across the Navajo reservation, a harmless old canyon guide is felled by a sniper's bullet. Joe Leaphorn, recently retired from the Navajo Tribal Police, believes the shooter and the skeleton are somehow connected and recalls a chilling puzzle he was previously unable to solve. But Acting Lieutenant Jim Chee is too busy to take an interest in a dusty cold case ... until the reborn violence of it hits much too close to home.

The First Eagle (1998)

The newest entry in Tony Hillerman's best-selling series finds legendary Navajo tribal policemen Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee on the trail of the killer of the researchers struggling to control a bubonic plague outbreak on the Big Reservation.

Hunting Badger (1999)

Three men raid the gambling casino run by the Ute nation and then disappear into the maze of canyons on the Utah-Arizona border. When the FBI, with its helicopters and high-tech equipment, focuses on a wounded deputy sheriff as a possible suspect, Navajo Tribal Police Sergeant Jim Chee and his longtime colleague, retired Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn, launch an investigation of their own. Chee sees a dangerous flaw in the federal theory; Leaphorn sees intriguing connections to the exploits of a legendary Ute bandit-hero. And together, they find themselves caught up in the most perplexing -- and deadly -- criminal manhunt of their lives.

The Wailing Wind (2002)

To Officer Bernadette Manuelito, the man curled up on the truck seat was just another drunk -- which got Bernie in trouble for mishandling a crime scene -- which got Sergeant Jim Chee in trouble with the FBI -- which drew Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn out of retirement and back into the old "Golden Calf" homicide, a case he had hoped to forget. Nothing had seemed complicated about that earlier one. A con game had gone sour. A swindler had tried to sell wealthy old Wiley Denton the location of one of the West's multitude of legendary lost gold mines. Denton had shot the swindler, called the police, confessed the homicide, and done his short prison time. No mystery there. Except why did the rich man's bride vanish? The cynics said she was part of the swindle plot. She'd fled when it failed. But, alas, old Joe Leaphorn was a romantic. He believed in love, and thus the Golden Calf case still troubled

him. Now, papers found in this new homicide case connect the victim to Denton and to the mythical Golden Calf Mine. The first Golden Calf victim had been there just hours before Denton killed him. And while Denton was killing him, four children trespassing among the rows of empty bunkers in the long-abandoned Wingate Ordnance Depot called in an odd report to the police. They had heard, in the wind wailing around the old buildings, what sounded like music and the cries of a woman. Bernie Manuelito uses her knowledge of Navajo country, its tribal traditions, and her friendship with a famous old medicine man to unravel the first knot of this puzzle, with Jim Chee putting aside his distaste of the FBI to help her. But the questions raised by this second Golden Calf murder aren't answered until Leaphorn solves the puzzle left by the first one and discovers what the young trespassers heard in the wailing wind.

The Sinister Pig (2003)

The victim, well dressed but stripped of identification, is found at the edge of the vast Jicarilla Apache natural gas field just inside the jurisdiction of the Navajo Tribal Police, facing Sergeant Jim Chee with a complex puzzle. Why did the Washington office of the FBI snatch custody of this case from its local agents, cover it with secrecy, and call it a hunting accident? What was the victim seeking among the maze of pipelines and pumping stations in America's largest gas field? Was he investigating the embezzlement of billions of dollars from the Indian tribal royalty trust in the Department of the Interior? On a level nearer to Chee's heart, did the photographs Bernie Manuelito took on an exotic game ranch near the Mexican border reveal something connected with this crime? Did Bernie, once a member of Chee's squad but now a rookie Border Patrol Officer, put herself in terrible danger? Tony Hillerman leads his readers through another of his intricate plots to the solution of this crime, with a cast of vivid characters: a Washington political mogul and his more-or-less renegade pilot; a customs official who bends the rules; a Mexican smuggler with a conscience; and, finally, "Legendary Lieutenant" Joe Leaphorn, now retired, who connects the lines on a dusty old map to find the answers - and the Sinister Pig - among the great scimitar-horned oryx grazing on the historic Tuttle Ranch.

Skeleton Man (2004)

Former Navajo Tribal Police Lieutenant Joe Leaphorn comes out of retirement to help investigate what seems to be a trading post robbery. A simple-minded kid nailed for the crime is the cousin of an old colleague of Sergeant Jim Chee. He needs help and Chee, and his fiancée Bernie Manuelito, decide to provide it. Proving the kid's innocence requires finding the remains of one of 172 people whose bodies were scattered among the cliffs of the Grand Canyon in an epic airline disaster 50 years in the past. That passenger had handcuffed to his wrist an attache case filled with a fortune in diamonds. But with Hillerman, it can't be that simple. The daughter of the long-dead diamond dealer is also seeking his body. So is a most unpleasant fellow willing to kill to make sure she doesn't succeed. These two tense tales collide deep in the canyon at the place where an old man died trying to build a cult reviving reverence for the Hopi guardian of the Underworld. It's a race to the finish in a thunderous monsoon storm to see who will survive, who will be brought to justice, and who will finally unearth the Skeleton Man.

The Shape Shifter (2006)

Since his retirement from the Navajo Tribal Police, Joe Leaphorn has occasionally been enticed to return to work by former colleagues who seek his help when they need to solve a particularly puzzling crime. They ask because Leaphorn, aided by officers Jim Chee and Bernie Manuelito, always delivers. But this time the problem is with an old case of Joe's - his "last case," unsolved, is one that continues to haunt him. And with Chee and Bernie just back from their honeymoon, Leaphorn is pretty much on his own. The original case involved a priceless, one-of-a-kind Navajo rug supposedly destroyed in a fire. Suddenly, what looks like the same rug turns up in a magazine spread. And the man who brings the photo to Leaphorn's attention has gone missing. Leaphorn must pick up the threads of a crime he'd thought impossible to untangle. Not only has the passage of time obscured the details, but it also appears that there's a murderer still on the loose.

Non-Series Novels

The Fly on the Wall (1970)

Reporter John Cotton was adept at remaining in the background. Then, his best friend was murdered, and John found his secret notebook, telling of a scandal involving a senatorial candidate. Soon John heard powerful people with something to hide.

Finding Moon (1995)

Hillerman departs his trademark terrain and applies his talents to a story he has wanted to tell for decades about an ordinary man thrust into total chaos. Until the telephone call came for him on April 12, 1975, the world of Moon Mathias had settled into a predictable routine. He knew who he was. He was the disappointing son of Victoria Mathias, the brother of the brilliant, recently dead Ricky Mathias and a man who could be counted on to solve small problems. But the telephone caller was an airport security officer, and the news he delivered handed Moon a problem as large as Southeast Asia. His mother, who should be in her Florida apartment, is fighting for her life in a Los Angeles hospital -- stricken while en route to the Philippines to bring home a grandchild they hadn't known existed. The papers in her purse send Moon into a world totally strange to him. They lure him down the back streets of Manila, to a rural cockfight, into the odd Filipino prison on Palawan Island and finally across the South China Sea to where Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge is turning Cambodia into killing fields and Communist rockets are beginning to fall on the outskirts of Saigon. Finding Moon is many things: a latter-day adventure epic, a deftly orchestrated romance, an arresting portrait of an exotic realm engulfed in turmoil, and a neatly turned tale of suspense. Most of all, it is a singular story of how a plain, uncertain man finds his best self.