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Posted on 10 July 2019 By John Enright

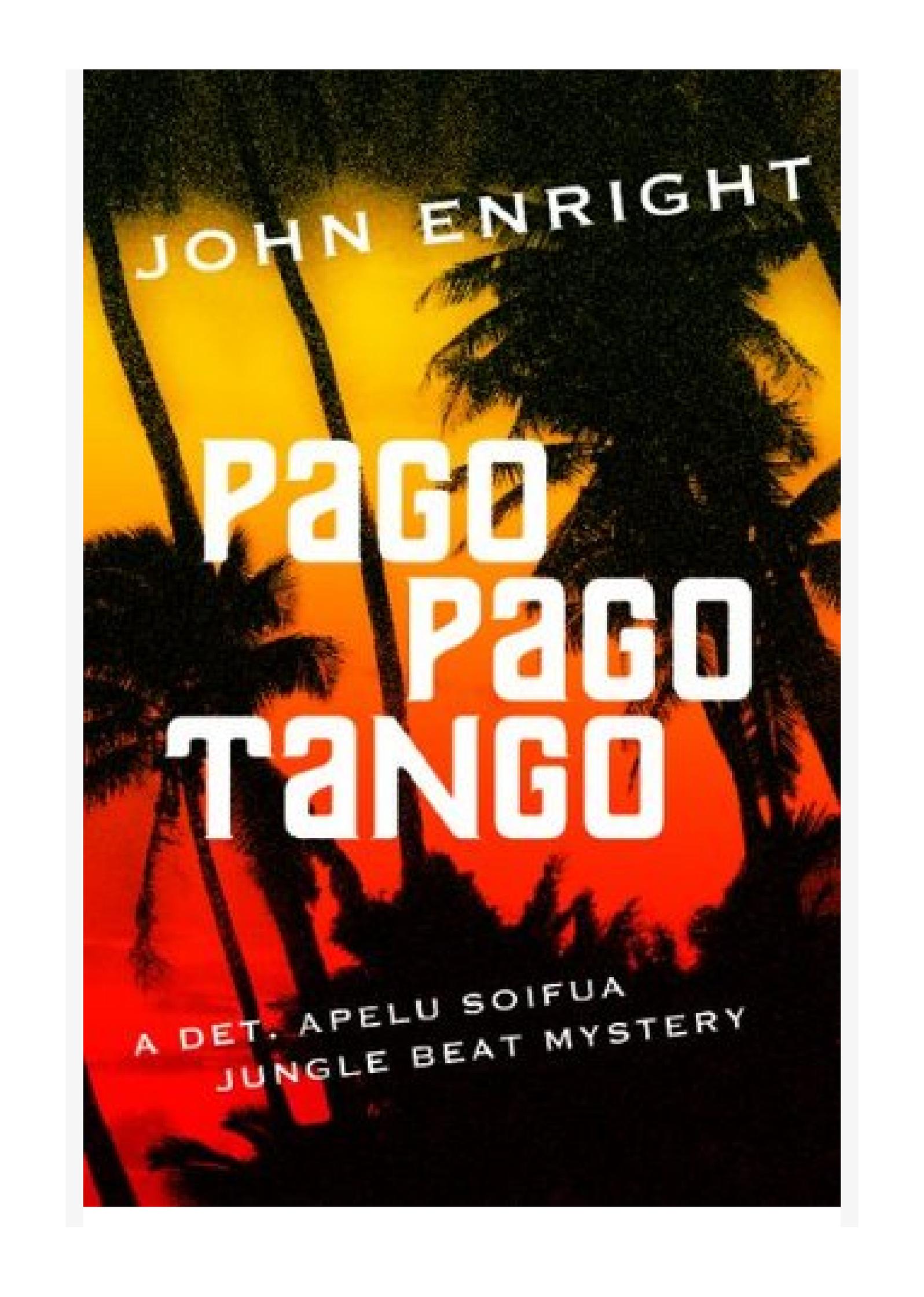
^READ EPUB ? Pago Pago Tango ? PDF eBook or Kindle ePUB free

Detective Sergeant Apelu Soifua is something of a Samoan Columbo, with his deceptive mannerisms disguising his keen mind I truly enjoyed this crime novel. What a find this

mystery turned out to be I found it by accident, as I was searching for books for my Read Around the World challenge It is set in contemporary American Samoa, and proved to be a welcome lesson in the culture and history of the island, as well as a strongly plotted mystery I really liked the main character, Det Sgt Apelu Soifua, or Pelu, for short A family man, with a scarred past as a former San Francisco cop and drug user, Pelu has returned to his native island, and reclaimed his life in order to become a dedicated father, husband and police officer He loves his culture, at least most of it and worries about the impact of many decades of white culture and inhabitants, on the island This book is as much about Samoan culture as it is a well constructed mystery And John Enright knows whereof he speaks A former journalist for Fortune, Time, and Newsweek, Enright spent twenty six years living on American Samoa, teaching college courses He is interested in cultural folklore, having studied it at UC Berkeley, and weaves Samoan stories and cultural tidbits throughout his book Pelu believes in many of the old ways, and actively practises them as part of his daily life This book saddened me at times, as Enright describes many of the negative effects white culture and economic endeavours have had on the island The tuna canning industry, represented by the famous Charlie the Tuna, of Starkist fame, does not come off favourably, in Enright s text The palangi , or whites have been having considerable impact on American Samoa since it was used by the Navy in 1907 as a base A huge population of wild dogs, a garbage plagued harbor with badly contaminated fish, severe damage to the island s reefs from cannery waste, declines in native birds and plants replaced by invasive species brought to the islands by white outsiders..the list of problems tied to white interference goes on and on There are two other books in this series I will be reading them, to continue to follow Pelu s career, and to learn about his people s culture, and to see if there are any solutions to be found for American Samoa s problems, perhaps suggested by Enright, based on his observations, having made the island his home for almost three decades. American Samoa is a place I am highly unlikely to ever get a chance to visit, so I ll probably have to settle for armchair tourism, and this debut mystery is my first visit The book is the first of what looks to be a projected series featuring Detective Sergeant Apelu, a Samoan who spent his childhood on the island and much of his adulthood in the US This included seven years with the San Francisco Police Department, which he was able to parlay into a job back in Samoa when he needed to come care for his dying father The story kicks off with a bit of a bang, in which Apelu is nearly killed while searching for a dead palangi Caucasian in a national park Thanks to that off the books investigation, he is reassigned to trivial duties, including a routine burglary call which entangles him in something much sinister.What that ends up being is not particularly complicated, as far as mysteries go, nor is it entirely convincing Or rather, it s just convincing enough not to spoil the book The real fun of the book is exploring the culture of modern American Samoa as it struggles to reconcile traditional systems and structures with the influences of America, Asia, and most of all, capitalism Unlike many stories set by outsiders Enright lived in

Samoa, but is not from there, these are woven into the fabric of the story and characters, and there are not passages that feel like info dumps from a guidebook. Apelu is a compelling protagonist, balancing his beliefs with his time in America, family life with work and the desire to have fun. His investigative style might be described as a kind of tropical Columbo, as he tends to just drop in on people for chats and then, just as he's leaving, pull out the old "Oh, one thing" card before delivering his real gotcha question. Good fun, and I'll look forward to the next in the series. Definitely recommended for those who read fiction for setting, less recommended for those primarily concerned with plot. I had the rare good fortune to have a job that allowed me to get to know the territory of American Samoa, the only flag flying part of the United States south of the equator. I visited the territory twice and was impressed by the beauty of the islands and by the strong American patriotism of the people. American Samoa has a unique relationship with the United States which allows its inhabitants to practice the Fa'a Samoa, or the traditional Samoan way of life. Samoa presents a challenging mixture of local and American values. The fond memories I have of American Samoa led me to this new book, *Pago Pago Tango* by John Enright. Pago Pago, the capital of American Samoa, is pronounced Pango Pango. Enright is a mainland American who lived in Samoa and taught at the American Samoa Community College which I visited for many years before returning to the United States. It was a pleasure to visit American Samoa again in this book with Enright as a guide. I recognized the places he describes: the government buildings, the American Samoa National Park with its rickety cable car which somehow I found the nerve to ride, the hotel, the cannery, the airport, the LBJ Hospital, the local jail and its culture, the small local shops and restaurants, and it was a pleasure for me while it will be a new world for most American readers. Enright has written a complex involved mystery centering upon a Samoan detective, Apelu Soifua Pelu, as he is called, spent much of his childhood in San Francisco followed by seven years as a detective on its police force before returning to his native island. Pelu's life and detective work shows the tension between mainland and Samoan culture, a tension mirrored in American Samoa itself. His story develops slowly and involves a complicated series of events and crimes beginning with a small break-in at a home in a compound reserved for mainlanders which gradually escalates and becomes tied in through Pelu's efforts to murders and a large clandestine drug operation. The crimes, and the manner in which Pelu investigates them, show a great deal about island life even though I found the story itself somewhat tangled and forced. The book is most valuable in describing the clash and accommodation of local and mainland American culture. It discusses the importance of the cannery to Samoa's economy, and the influx of different people on the island, including Koreans, New Zealanders, and residents of other Pacific islands, in addition to Americans. Enright contrasts well the close, communal character of traditional Samoan life and the interaction of the native population with the immigrants, who only rarely become fully integrated long-term residents of Samoa. The story has a wonderful sense of place and a feel for the people

of American Samoa It is possible of course to learn about American Samoa from the dry pages of a study, but few readers would be inclined to do so Even fewer people would have the opportunity to work with and visit American Samoa as I have done, and as Enright did to a much greater degree In Pago Pago Tango offers readers an opportunity to get to know American Samoa through a good suspenseful work of noir fiction The book offers an introduction to most Americans of an aspect of their country that will be new to them The book made me wish I could visit American Samoa again and see it with new eyes. Robin Friedman John Enright's Pago Pago Tango introduces readers to Samoan detective Apelu Soifua, returned to the Island after serving on the San Francisco Police Department Soifua's department has his hands full with a spate of murders except, Soifua has been assigned dealing with a robbery in a paalangi outsider, in this and most cases, American community Mystery readers will, of course, realize that a detective of Soifua's ability and the protagonist of the story won't be kept on the sidelines for long. Mr Enright has written 4 tales in this series I've enjoyed the first two, and hope that other readers discover him and his prized character Detective Soifua With a few readers, I'm sure we can be treated to a 5th and beyond book in the series. RATING 4 1 2 stars., upgraded to 5 stars where 1 2 stars are not acknowledged. I raised my rating to 4 stars after reading this again As a crime novel, it's fine, compelling, does the trick But I love this book have read it twice am continuing with the series because I work in American Samoa on the island of Tutuila, where this is based From that perspective, Enright does a superb job of portraying the culture history of American Samoa He should, as he is former Director of the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office I didn't know that upon my first read wasn't sure if he was getting all his facts right, since I hadn't heard much of it before But I've since been back to American Samoa, learned of his past life, listened again The I know about American Samoa, the better this book gets It reminds me of Arthur Conan Doyle's A Study in Scarlet, because much of that famous book is less mystery than a primer in the history sinister nature of early Mormonism in the U.S Similarly, Enright does a superb job of portraying the current state of American Samoan culture putting it in historical context I do love a pulpy detective novel that takes me around the world, but than that, I love when I can imagine every scene being described because I have been there know those streets Very well done I'm on to the next in the series so far, it's just as historically culturally exciting. The crime part was a OK, nothing special Detective Sergeant Apelu was a good character, eminently likeable and his views of the palangis were quite humorous Some very interesting insights into the culture of the Samoans and the problems facing them due to their reliance on US funds and the scourge of Ice. This book nails the atmosphere of Pago Pago and American Samoa. Brings back the feel of the place to me, as I lived there for a short time many years ago.



JOHN ENRIGHT

PAGO
PAGO
TANGO

A DET. APELU SOIFUA
JUNGLE BEAT MYSTERY

Detective Sergeant Apelu Soifua in Tafuna, American Samoa, makes distinctions between crimes involving Samoan natives and those involving palangi white people, pronounced puh LANG ee In the former cases, everyone knew what happened and why and usually the perpetrator would either be waiting for Apelu , already collared and ready to confess, or easily identified and apprehended Chapter 3 But with the palangi, the police rarely knew what had really happened When someone breaks into the upscale home of SeaKing Tuna executive Gordon Trurich and his vodka swilling trophy wife Karen, Apelu quickly realizes there are unknowns than usual First of all, the mode of entry differed from that of the recent string of robberies Secondly, why would burglars take a VCR and 50 videotapes, most just home made ones, and then dump the VCR on the edge of the property but take the tapes The same tapes that Mr Trurich forgot to mention on the police report This narrative is set in the early 1990s And why did neither Gordon nor Karen Trurich report the.357 that was stolen, as well a gun later used in a shooting at a nightclub Later on, even discrepancies and some mayhem emerge Apelu quickly realizes the case constitutes than a run of the mill burglary by teenaged gang members Himself a palangi who spent 26 years in the South Pacific, John Enright has created a great protagonist in Apelu, an imperfect man at odds with his people s missionary culture, his religious and strict wife, and his superiors at police headquarters Pago Pago is pronounced Pango Pango so that the title is said Pango Pango Tango that s perfect because Apelu finds himself dancing a very intricate dance between palangi and native cultures, between traditional views of honor and its modern consumerist bent, between his own sense of justice and his strained relationship with his superiors, between the overwhelming demands of his job and the needs of his family Enright has a great mystery with a suspenseful ending, of course, but what I really welcome was the chance to learn about American Samoa, about which I knew virtually nothing Enright has created a valentine to with this debut novel while not shying away from the sordid aspects of life in a supposed paradise the subverting of native culture, the destructiveness of inter village rivalries and resentments, the corruption and nepotism involving the traditional chiefs As with the novels of Robert van Gulik, Pago Pago Tango provided this armchair traveler a chance I d not otherwise get to see another faraway culture from the inside.The next book in the so called Jungle Beat series, Fire Knife Dancing, appears later this month I can t wait for a return visit to Tafuna. ^READ EPUB ? Pago Pago Tango X Detective Sergeant Apelu Soifua Spent Seven Years In The San Francisco Police Department, Where The Job Was Just A Job And Solving Crimes Required Cool Detachment But Back Home On American Samoa, Life Is Personal Especially For A Cop Because On A Small Island Where No One Is A Stranger And Secrets Are Widely Known But Never Discussed, Solving Crimes Requires A Certain FinesseHere, Apelu Must Walk The Line Between Two Cultures Samoan Versus American, Native Versus New And That Gulf Never Yawns Wider Than When A White Family S Home In Pago Pago Is Burglarized And What Appears To Be A Simple, Open And Shut Case Turns Out To Anything But As The Evidence Piles Up, Apelu

Follows A Tangled Trail Between Cultures, Dead Bodies, Hidden Codes, And A String Of Lies On His Hunt For The Ugly Truth Buried At The Heart Of Paradise Set Against The Steamy Backdrop Of The Samoan Jungle, This Thoughtful Whodunit Introduces A Memorable New Gumshoe To The Ranks Of Detective Fiction

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