

THE UNDERBELLY

Gary Phillips

The explosion of wealth and development in downtown L.A. is a thing of wonder. But regardless of how big and shiny our buildings get, we should not forget the ones this wealth and development has overlooked and pushed out. This is the context for Phillips' novella *The Underbelly*, as a semi-homeless Vietnam vet named Magrady searches for a wheelchair-bound friend gone missing from Skid Row—a friend who might be working a dangerous scheme against major players. Magrady's journey is a solo sortie where the flashback-prone protagonist must deal with the impact of gentrification; take-no-prisoners community organizers; an unflinching cop from his past in Vietnam; an elderly sexpot out for his bones; a lusted-after magical skull; chronic-lovin' knuckleheads; and the perils of chili cheese fries at midnight. Combining action, humor and a street level gritty POV, *The Underbelly* is illustrated with photos and drawings.

Plus: a rollicking interview wherein Phillips riffs on Ghetto Lit, politics, noir and the proletariat, the good negroes and bad knee-grows of pop culture, Redd Foxx and Lord Buckley, and wrestles with the future of books in the age of want.

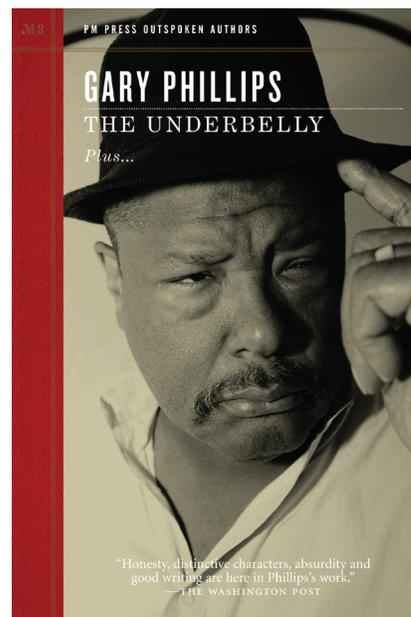
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Phillips writes tales of mayhem and menace. In other pursuits he's been a union rep, run a nonprofit begun as a response to the '92 L.A. riots, taught incarcerated youth, was a community organizer in South Central Los Angeles where he was born and raised, toiled as a printer, worked for one of those shadowy 527s, and delivered dog cages. Please visit his website at: www.gdphillips.com.

ACCOLADES

"...honesty, distinctive characters, absurdity and good writing—are here in Phillips's work."

—*The Washington Post*



SUBJECT CATEGORY
FICTION

PRICE
\$14.00

ISBN
978-1-60486-206-5

PAGE COUNT
160

SIZE
7.5 X 5

FORMAT
PAPERBACK

PUBLICATION DATE
09/10

DISTRIBUTED BY
Independent Publishers Group
(312) 337-0747
www.ipgbook.com

◆ **PM PRESS** ◆
P.O. Box 23912
Oakland, CA 94623
www.pmpress.org

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