

From the New York Times:

Heloise Lewis runs “a boutique lobbying firm whose mission statement identifies it as a nonprofit focused on income parity for all women.” It is called the Women’s Full Employment Network. “And when people hear that, they never want to know a single thing more about Heloise’s business,” Laura Lippman writes, “which is exactly as she planned it.” That’s because Heloise’s business is running a prostitution ring. But neither she nor Ms. Lippman’s new novel, “And When She Was Good,” see it as strictly tawdry. Instead this book’s emphasis is on Heloise’s impressive acumen and the levelheaded thinking that has gone into her entrepreneurial model. If only she could manage her life half as ingeniously as she fine-tunes her work.

Miami Herald:

Lippman’s mesmerizing *And When She Was Good* delves deep into a suburban madam’s life to show the humanity and motives of a woman who felt that line of work was her only option. *And When She Was Good* works well as story about choices, sexism and unconditional love. Without glamorizing or judging prostitution, Lippman delivers an insightful character study of a woman who has learned self-preservation at all costs.

NY Daily News:

“And When She Was Good,” a stand-alone, is a smart, chilly novel, hard-edged in all the right places.

USA Today:

Lippman's novels, like those of some of her contemporaries including George Pelecanos and Richard Price, superbly chronicle, through fiction, the times in which we live.

Seattle Times:

textured and compulsively readable, peopled by full-blooded characters and driven by a riveting plot. "And When She Was Good" is Lippman at the top of her game.

- 1) The title is drawn from the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem entitled “There was a little girl.” I applaud the creepiness. What inspired the connection? Had you always been a fan of the poem?

There was a little girl,
Who had a little curl,
Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good,
She was very good indeed,
But when she was bad she was horrid.

- 2) According to the Chicago Tribune: It's not chick-lit; nor is it crime fiction. It's a little of each.Although her latest expands her traditional focus on crime, it succeeds for the most part primarily because of Lippman's nimble style and her delight in irony and inside jokes.

Much has been made about this book as a departure from straight crime fiction. Do you think that's true? Was it what you set out to do consciously?

- 3) One review discussed at length the connection between your own personal life and your focus on family matters in this book. The idea seemed to be: Now that she's focused on family in real life, she writes about mothers. I wondered whether reviewers make these kinds of claims about male writers?
- 4) Heloise Lewis appeared in two of Lippman's earlier stories. One, the novella "Scratch a Woman," focused on her twisted relationship with her half sister, Meaghan, who has a minor role in "And When She Was Good." What made you keep circling back to Heloise?