



MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA

S O U T H E R N C A L I F O R N I A

May • 2013

The March of Crime

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PLEASE READ

If you print your newsletter and want to save ink, printer preferences give you the options of printing in black and white and printing a legible draft. Also make sure to click to print beyond margins.

Books. I was inundated with books and authors at the *LA Times* Festival of Books at the end of April. It's a place to catch up with the many author friends I've made over the years, writers who live in far flung places across the country and beyond. But it's also a chance to meet readers. I get a kick out of people dropping by whatever booth I'm signing at and telling me how much they love my character (you mean you've heard of him?). And, of course, selling and signing books.

Just walking around the campus at USC gives me a special thrill of seeing so many people who have come to listen to authors on panels, explore the many bookstore booths, and *buy books!* Print is not dead, my friends. It is still alive and kicking. And speaking of print vs. digital, there is this interesting article in *Scientific American* (<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=reading-paper-screens>) that seems to suggest readers have a better retention rate for the content they read when it appears on paper rather than on digital screens. This might be insignificant when it comes to novels but starts to become a problem when we talk of eliminating print textbooks for our kids.

Yes, digital a cheaper format and can be updated much easier, but if kids can't actually retain the information are we incrementally dumbing down upcoming generations? I don't think we can afford to do that. Now, I work at my computer all day and read everything, including my own work this way. But I admit — when I want to go over my draft one last time, I print it out. Do I subconsciously understand that I can assimilate the information better through print? Food for thought as we move further into this digital age.

We have some splendid events coming up for our members. Save the date for

President's



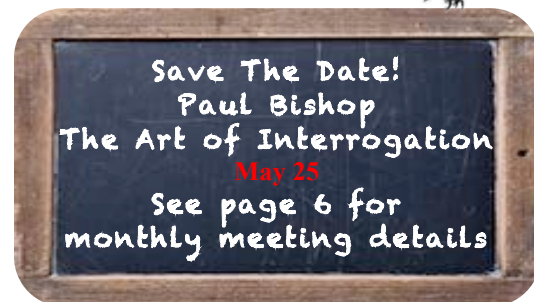
Jeri Westerson

Rap Sheet

Saturday May 25. Note the time. We'll begin at 10 am. We're meeting at the El Segundo Library with interrogator Paul Bishop. He'll give us the truth behind interrogation techniques. Don't miss this free event.

Yes, that's in El Segundo. Because our members are so far flung throughout Southern California (and, indeed, in Arizona, Hawaii and Vegas) we are mixing it up with events all over the southland, sometimes with luncheons and sometimes not. Maybe when we show up in your neighborhood you will be encouraged to stop in and see what we're offering. It's all about making us better writers and giving us a leg up in the industry.

See you there!
Jeri Westerson





Dear You!

First off — thank you for taking the time to read your MWA SoCal newsletter! It's nice to be able to provide you with a useful tool that allows you to see what's going on in your community and hopefully something that will encourage and inspire you in your every-day writing.

It was so fantastic to meet so many of you at the MWA luncheon in April! What a great meeting! I brought a member of my writing group I started six years ago — hopefully she'll become a member. The panel members provided great enthusiasm and inspiration! I figure if we all bring a friend to the meetings, we can double the membership in no time! I was so impressed by the candor and caliber of the speakers involved — I learned a lot. And laughed a lot — they were all so funny!

It was more than 15 years ago when I was a member of NorCal MWA, and I loved attending the meetings in foggy San Francisco evenings and having the camaraderie of other writers. It's so nice to have community again. I'm out in San Diego — and writing community is hard to find unless you build it yourself. So, it was nice to be among other writers and talking about writing with all of you — thank you!

There was a long break between NorCal and SoCal MWA memberships while I was writing books that took realistic, empowering and sometimes...even frightening looks at the future of technology — a future that's now here. This month's Tek-Tok is about cellphone surveillance that can be done via *your* cellphone by anyone who can send you an email you might open, or have the briefest of access to your nomadic device. As a hacker, I can tell you that it's far too easy for anyone to gain access to your world.

This series is meant to scare the hell out of you, and also to give you the facts that can bleed into your novels and short stories regarding technology and how it can be used to cause pain, extort...and even kill. I mean, if someone has live access to your cell phone (they hear what you hear, see what you see — and can even hear and see what's going on around your cellphone), it's pretty easy for someone to kill you...er, uh, one of your characters, that is.

I also want to thank our new columnists for coming on board — and our regulars for being as on time as fog in June. Thank you, it does take a village.

This month has been tumultuous at best. My trip

to the Edgars was cancelled for a meeting with a cable network — which didn't have any show slots for another two years, but they invited us back to pitch (something else). So, that wasn't all bad, they let us (my team) know they might even have another channel by then. And that was very good news, indeed!

My world was in a tailspin for a few days when my father had a heart attack, but all is mending well and he's recuperating fine. Mix in a deadline for a group presentation to a group in China regarding network security and a few other deadlines — life with a six-year-old and a teenage chem major we send off across the country in August (thank goodness I have a wonderful, understanding husband I am grateful for every day!) and you have a picture of what my month has been like. Sorry the newsletter is late. This column is the very last thing I write, so I'm on the homestretch.

I so wanted to attend Mysterious Galaxy's Birthday bash — especially since it was local. Several of our own authors attended the successful all day event. I couldn't be two places at once, and I was scheduled to attend the Literary Guild of Orange County's Festival of Women Authors event — headlined by our very own members — Julia Spencer-Fleming and Nancy Pickard. It was a stellar event put on by our very own Joan Hansen, also powerhouse creator of the spectacular local Men of Mystery event (<http://www.menofmystery.org/>) attended by people all over the country. Wow!

Tonight as I sit here at Do' Thai restaurant in Old Town, San Diego, taking a breather after an Internet radio show I guested on a live feed from the El Campo Santo Cemetery next door at twilight (welcome to my reality — yes, I write paranormal), I breathe a sigh of relief, grateful that I work with such gifted people on the TMOO staff and that this newsletter will be out soon. I am especially thankful tonight for Jeri Westerson who has walked me through the process of putting this newsletter together. Without her guiding hand, this newsletter would have been mucked up something fierce quite a few times over.

It's almost June and I'm just getting this May issue out, and the June issue will either be combined, or lighter issues. I'll be finishing up an iPhone app, on a book deadline and doing a cross country tour filled with speaking engagements, including speaking about mediumship through the millennia and ghost hunting and technology from Physicist William Crookes' (1832-1919) to today's Ghost Hunters (the show & craze) and how those eras parallel — complete with artifacts and Powerpoint presentations that will take me to Indiana's Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp (founded 1886) and Lily Dale, NY. So you'll know where I'll be — probably the same as many of you — in back of a podium, a steering wheel or on the seat of a plane.

Have a fabulous mid-summer, and I hope you'll keep those letters and suggestions coming in. If you like, we still have room for more columnists and editors — we'd love to have you!

Be abundantly productive and amazingly successful in your summer writing adventures!

Sally

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If you feel the need to complain about anything in this publication, please remember the Golden Rule your Momma taught you. Instead, please volunteer to help. We are looking for others to work with. As Mahatma Gandhi once said, "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." We'd be happy to have you!

Turning Anxiety into Creativity

By Dennis Palumbo



An old deodorant commercial on TV once proclaimed, “If you’re not a little nervous, you’re really not alive.”

Pretty sage advice, even though the only thing at stake was staying dry and odor-free. But there is something to be said for accepting — and learning to navigate — the minor turbulences of life. I’m talking here about common, everyday anxiety. The jitters. Butterflies.

This is particularly true for writers, whose very feelings are the raw materials of their craft. No matter how mundane, the small anxieties can swarm like bees and make work very difficult. Those everyday distractions, like an impending visit from the in-laws, money worries or that funny noise the Honda’s been making.

Then there’re the more virulent, career-specific anxieties, shared by few in other lines of work: Your editor has just changed publishing houses. Your agent hasn’t returned your phone calls. You’re three weeks past deadline with your latest draft.

In other words, you’re the stereotypical struggling writer — bleary-eyed, sleep-deprived, staring pathetically at a blank computer screen, hoping for inspiration and yearning for another cup of coffee and maybe a nice piece of cheesecake. A dozen nagging, self-mocking thoughts echo in your head...You’re untalented, a fraud. You’ll never have another good idea. You’re getting old and fat. No woman (or man) will ever want to sleep with you again. Your life is over.

These kinds of feelings are tough to deal with, to be sure, even if validated (and then gently challenged) by a supportive therapist, mate, good friend or fellow author who has *been there, done that*. These deeply embedded, childhood-derived, seemingly inescapable dark-night-of-the-soul feelings can, in fact, be crippling, regardless of your level of craft or years of experience.

And, as I’ve said countless times to the writer patients in my practice, struggling with these doubts and fears doesn’t say anything about you as an artist. Other than that you are an artist.

Frankly, this difficult emotional terrain is where a writer lives much of the time — in a matrix of triumphs and defeats, optimism and despair, impassioned beliefs and crushing deflations. In the end, it’s all just grist for the creative mill.

Believe me, this is equally true for both beginning writers and accomplished, battle-hardened veterans.

But there’s another kind of anxiety that emerges occasionally in a writer’s life — the kind of gut-wrenching, dizzying upheaval from within that throws everything you think you know into doubt and that scares you to the very

core. A puzzling, alarming career dive. A shattering divorce. The death of a family member. A spate of sudden, dizzying panic attacks.

Then, what balm is there to offer — or to receive — that doesn’t seem trivial or woefully inadequate? Catharsis and validation, the foundation of most psychotherapeutic work, suddenly feel like mere word games. Medication, while often clinically appropriate, seems at best an armoring against something primal that’s working within you.

What is a writer to do with that level of anxiety? Use it.

Because, for a writer, when all that’s left is the work, the work is all that’s left.

What is a writer to do
with that level of
anxiety?
Use it.

What kind of work? Maybe numbed-out and shapeless at first — chaotic and unsatisfying. Maybe dark and ugly or self-pitying and shameless. Maybe a blind, angry clawing at the air with inchoate feelings and inexplicable images.

The important thing to acknowledge, to accept and to make use of, is the fact of this anxiety — its weight, its size, and its implacability at this time in your life. For whatever reason, it’s there. As immovable as a brick wall, as deep and fathomless as a sea.

And, for now, it isn’t going anywhere.

So you, *The Writer*, must ask yourself this question — Is there a character in the story I’m working on who feels such anxiety? Who feels as overwhelmed, as out of control, as terrified as I do? These are the raw materials of the work, the interior world of the character whose narrative you’re building.

Then, if you’re willing to do so, plunge headlong into creating the hell out of that character, giving him or her your voice, your fears, your dreads. Create situations and scenes in which these anxieties are dramatized, exploited, “acted out.”

Create monologues, rants, vitriolic exchanges between characters, letting passions and behaviors emerge that may astound or alarm you; that stretch or distort or even demolish the narrative you’ve been working with. These problems can all be dealt with, deleted, perhaps even woven into the story later, in the cool light of day, when you have

some kind of perspective.

Because to truly be in the eye of the emotional storm — to create from a state of anxiety — is to surrender any fantasy of perspective. In fact, in the purest sense, it’s the ultimate act of creative surrender from which, out of the crucible of your deepest pain, you might discover a joyful, wonderful surprise.

Do this: put those trembling fingers on a keyboard, *right now*, and start stringing words together that reflect how you feel...without context, or narrative, or character. Just raw feeling, in as many vivid, living words as you can call forth.

Then look at what you’ve written. Feel whatever it is you’re feeling. And hit that keyboard some more. Soon, I believe, you’ll have a sense of the logjam cracking. You’ll feel the urgency of creative expression, the palpable release of banked anxiety. Without judging what comes, without needing it to be anything, I think you’ll find yourself creating something---even if that’s just defined, for the moment, as putting words down on a page.

Does the idea of this exercise itself make you anxious? Doesn’t surprise me. We’re all pretty scared of creating, or making art, out of the very emotional space we’d most like to avoid or deny.

It’s human nature.

Besides, as famed psychiatrist Rollo May reminded us, real creativity is not possible without anxiety. In many ways, it’s the price of admission to the writer’s life.

Which means, for those writers who have the courage to embrace their own fears, to co-exist with potentially crippling anxiety and create anyway, the rewards can be significant. They use who they are — all of who they are — as the wellspring of their creativity.

Moreover, when all that’s left is the work...the work is all that’s left.

So trust it. Trust yourself. Like it or not, you’re all you have.

And the good news is, that’s enough.

Formerly a Hollywood screenwriter (My Favorite Year, Welcome Back, Kotter, etc.), Dennis Palumbo is now a licensed psychotherapist and author of Writing From the Inside Out (John Wiley). He also blogs regularly for The Huffington Post and Psychology Today.

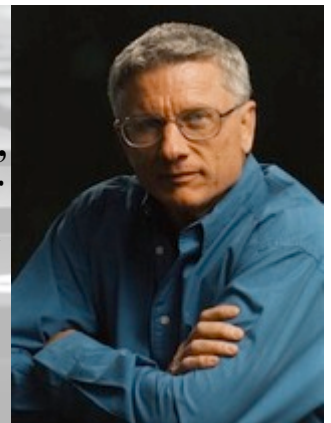
His mystery fiction has appeared in Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine, The Strand, Written By and elsewhere, and is collected in From Crime to Crime (Tallfellow Press). His acclaimed series of mystery thrillers (Mirror Image, Fever Dream, and the latest, Night Terrors), feature Daniel Rinaldi, a psychologist who consults with the Pittsburgh Police. All are from Poisoned Pen Press. For more info, please visit www.dennispalumbo.com

The Pro Shop

In each installment of *The Pro Shop*, John Morgan Wilson interviews a chapter member about crime writing and writing in general

This Month — Doug P. Lyle, M.D.

By John Morgan Wilson



A practicing cardiologist, Doug P. Lyle is the author of half a dozen books for crime writers on medical and forensic investigation, including *Forensics for Dummies*, *Forensics & Fiction*, *More Forensics & Fiction*, and *Howdunnit: Forensics*. His nonfiction has earned him a Macavity Award and nominations for Edgar, Agatha, Scribe, and USA Best Book Awards. In the thriller category, Doug is the author of the Samantha Cody series and the Dub Walker series, and has also written media tie-in novels inspired by TV's *Royal Pains*.

JMW: To what degree does your medical background figure into your fiction?

DPL: Medical and forensic science play a big role in most of my thrillers. This is particularly true of my Dub Walker series. Dub is a forensic science and criminal behavior expert of sorts. He is called in on complex and difficult cases and tends to solve them by his understanding of how evidence fits together and how criminals plan, execute and attempt to cover up their crimes. His insight into both the science and the psychology of criminal activity is his strength. In my Samantha Cody series, there is less medical science and more forensic science simply because Sam is a cop. But she is also very smart and has a big dose of common sense. In those stories medical issues arise because there always illnesses and injuries that involve the characters within the tale. And of course, in the two *Royal Pains* books I wrote, medicine plays a big role since Hank, the main character, is a physician who runs a concierge practice in the Hamptons. So the stories always revolve around medical issues.

JMW: You're a doctor, but many other crime writers get the medical details wrong. Why?

DPL: I think the biggest mistakes come from not knowing science — either medical or forensic science. Most writers think they know how things work simply through word of mouth, family lore, misinformation from family and friends, and, of course, television. Unfortunately these sources are often wrong.

JMW: Examples?

DPL: How many times in a movie have you seen the character slugged in the jaw, knocked unconscious and then remain out for hours? How many novels have you



read where the hero is bopped on the head, placed in the trunk of a car, driven far away, removed from the trunk and then revived with a splash of water to the face? The problem is that while a simple blow to the head might render someone unconscious, what we call a simple concussion, the victim will awaken in a few seconds or at least a few minutes. If he is out longer than that, something serious is going on inside

his brain bucket. Little things like an intracerebral bleed or a subdural hematoma. But it's not just in the arena of science that writers fall down. Everyone is smart in something and not so smart in something else. Where I might know a good deal about medicine and forensic science, there are other areas where I am clueless. A writer should never be afraid to ask questions of those who know more about a particular topic. It helps get things right and allows the author to craft a story that is believable and accurate.

“The problem is that while a simple blow to the head might render someone unconscious, what we call a simple concussion, the victim will awaken in a few seconds or at least a few minutes. If he is out longer than that, something serious is going on inside his brain bucket.”

— D.P. Lyle, M.D.

JMW: What are some of the more important changes made in forensic investigation in recent years?

DPL: Many revolve around DNA. An example would be that now only tiny

Hollow Points

By
Gregory
Von Dare



A Writer's Guide to Instruments of Violence

A darkened warehouse, late night. Smells of oil and gasoline and something else. Blood? Our hero is in a tight spot, bad guys to the left and right, then a footstep behind. She turns and raises her gun.... But which gun?

Like the cars they drive or the clothes they wear, the weapon in your character's hand should tell readers a great deal about that fictional person. A signature weapon is not only the right choice for your character but one which iconizes them. Think Sherlock Holmes and his sword cane, or Indiana Jones and the bullwhip. To choose a signature weapon for your character, you must have a fairly broad knowledge of weaponry.

Let's imagine we have access to a "weapons profiler" who could tell us a great deal about a person from the weapon that person used. We will consult our profiler from time to time and have him pontificate on various weapons, and how they reveal character.

For example, James Bond originally preferred the .25 caliber Beretta Jetfire semi-automatic pistol (Ian Fleming carried one in WWII) because it was so small and light, but "M" thought it ineffectual, *a lady's gun*. The Jetfire used a stamped-steel magazine, holding eight cartridges or rounds. A .25 caliber was a weak load that could be fatal if perfectly placed, but a strong man who was drunk — or on PCP — would hardly notice these slugs unless they were in vital areas. Many professionals consider the .25 useful only as a

second or third back-up gun.

So, "M" gave Bond the famous Walther PPK, in 7.65mm or .32 caliber. That elegant German pistol with its sleek profile, low-rise hammer, large trigger and light weight became the handgun most closely associated with fiction's ultimate spy. The semi-automatic, double-action PPK had a magazine capacity of seven shots in .32 caliber and six shots in .380. Once out of the holster, it could be fired quicker than most automatics. Shooting a .32 hollow-point, the PPK was certainly deadly but required accuracy, which its small sights made difficult. Today, "M" would probably recommend a lightweight Glock 9mm with it's fourteen-shot magazine and enough power at close range to kill someone by shooting them through a car door.

"M" might also have liked the Walther P99 — which Bond did carry in the later films and novelizations. Like the Glock, the P99 has a polymer (plastic) frame and a double-stack magazine holding up to fourteen rounds of 9mm Parabellum. The P99 is also available chambered for the Smith & Wesson .40 cartridge, a hot modern load with magnum power in a case slightly larger than a .38 caliber.

Our weapons profiler would look at the P99 and say, A European bias and a less elegant and cosmopolitan weapon than the PPK, also larger, heavier and harder to conceal. Times change, after all. But now, men are wearing

tight suits again and the big calibers are more difficult to hide.

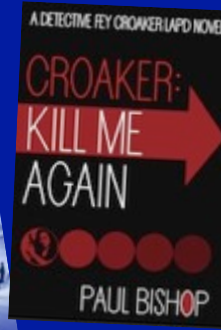
Phillip Marlowe used a small, anonymous Colt .38 Police Positive. It had a dark blue finish and small, curved, wooden grips. Known as a "belly gun," it was not very accurate but spat out a hot hunk of lead that was lethal at close range — meaning twenty-feet or less. This revolver had a six-shot capacity and fired the reliable, American made .38 Special cartridge. Our profiler would say that Marlowe didn't like guns, that he didn't want to spend much money and that he had been a cop himself, years ago, and probably just kept the sidearm he used when working for the DA's office. Marlowe's usual approach was to mouth-off or insult a dangerous, not-too-bright character and then duck when the shooting started.

Although the field of weapons is huge, let's confine ourselves to handguns at first, then we can branch out to rifles and exotica.

However, similar to the Karate Kid, we've have to cover some basics before getting to the good stuff — the common attribute of all guns, and perhaps their major distinguishing feature...caliber.

Gregory Von Dare comes from Chicago and was raised on crime, corruption and clout in the big city. He has written non-fiction books, magazine articles and radio scripts, as well as stories, plays and screenplays. He once worked as a pyro detonator and talent manager for Universal Studios Hollywood.





JOIN US!
SoCal MWA

The Art Of Interrogation

Saturday May 25

Join us for a conversation and interview with a master interrogator and learn the ins and outs of a good grilling of all types of criminals. Thirty-year LAPD veteran, and two-time detective of the year, Paul Bishop will be our guide through his techniques for performing interrogations — *and* writing about them. A detective specializing in interrogations, Bishop is also an accomplished novelist who knows what makes a good and believable scene of the third degree. As a nationally recognized interrogator, he appears regularly as one of two principal interrogators on the hit ABC reality series *Take The Money And Run*. He will be in conversation with writer Eric Beetner and will take your questions afterward.

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. El Segundo Library

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Plotting the Impossible

By Barry H. Wiley

*Melancholike persons, and madde men, imagin many things which in verie deede are not.
Men which are dull of seing and hearing imagin many things which in verie deede are not so.*
Ludvig Lavater, *De Spectris*, Geneva, 1570



I have a stone on my desk next to my computer taken from the Precinct of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. At moments of pause, meditation, or just confusion in coming up with *what happens next* I often pick it up, run my fingers over its rough yellowed surface and reflect back on that stunning visit to Delphi three years ago — a fertile place for mystery plots of almost any age. Standing a few yards from where the Pythia, sitting on her sacred tripod, dispensed her famous predictions and obscure advice to rulers, rich merchants, and just needy people with enough money to buy *promanteia*, or preference, it was relatively straightforward to construct a preliminary plot for my series mentalist-detective, John Randall Brown.

Brown is a retired high-tech executive who, after cashing in his options and no longer needing money, looks for a new challenge. He had enjoyed once being an amateur magician, but card tricks seemed trivial. As a former senior marketing executive, JRB was familiar with several aspects of the art of deception. After watching a mentalist stun an audience, including JRB, with a convincing demonstration of apparent telepathy and clairvoyance, JRB becomes a professional mentalist/mindreader — and also becomes, at odd times, a reluctant detective. He lives at 13 August Alley, San Francisco, just across the street from Chinatown.

JRB, of course, is a stage name. JRB's real name could be spelled a least seven different ways, and mispronounced almost the same number of times — thus he settled on the pronounceable and spellable, John Randall Brown.

There is a ruined amphitheater that existed at the time of the Pythia further up Mount Parnassus, about a hundred yards above the Temple of Apollo that is still occasionally used today for music groups and Greek theater troupes. Surrounded by the accumulated stones and debris of twenty centuries, the Theater of Dionysius is also an area of unpredictable and sometimes deadly rock slides, as happened two days before my visit. And, the Theater is an ideal place for a televised presentation of JRB's paranormal wonders with the Gulf of Corinth shimmering in rich Grecian blue far down at the base of the mountain in the background. The view from Delphi is like the cover of a fantasy novel.

And then there is the mysterious Tholos, a beautiful ruin of a circular structure in the Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia that one passes on the road up the mountain to the Temple of Apollo. Three pillars remain standing of the original twenty. It dates from 380 B.C. No one

knows what its function was, but it was certainly chthonic — another venue for JRB to exploit.

But in the midst of all this mystical enchanting beauty, mentalist John Randall Brown is a fake.

Faking the paranormal, for me, is more interesting than the *real thing*, assuming that there is a real thing. Having performed a mindreading act in my early college days (I was a fake) and knowing several professional mentalists now, creating the illusion of psychical powers is a more challenging premise that can lead to situations in

Faking the paranormal, for me, is more interesting than the *real thing*, assuming that there is a real thing.



which the reader can be brought into understanding the creation of the illusion, which provides a clear demonstration of Ludvig Lavater's centuries-old insight.

What I took away from my long ago career as a mindreader was the understanding that people will believe what they need to believe, often in spite of the evidence, even to the point of asking a seventeen year old mentalist to tell their fortunes.

Kreskin allowed me to use the following to open *Thought Wings Onward*, the first JRB story, *I suppose that anyone who calls himself a mentalist invites participation in strange affairs* — The Amazing Kreskin.

In his first published story, JRB discovers murder in the mind of the man sitting next to him on a flight into San Jose. The man, who had been

in the audience at one of JRB's earlier shows and a convinced believer, challenges JRB to discover what it is that is so disturbing his mind, what is destroying his sleep. The reader of the story then discovers, alongside JRB, how the mentalist creates the illusion of telepathy while at the same time coming to understand that the presence so disturbing to the man is his wife's dead body. The homicide lieutenant in San Jose is nonplussed as JRB describes the revelation. The reader knows how it was done, the police believe it is the real thing.

Plotting the paranormal, plotting the impossible can be treacherous. Give your protagonist whose powers are genuine, too much power and the novel loses all tension and interest. Create too many limitations and leave too many chunks of Kryptonite lying about, and your story becomes obvious and silly. Making your character a fake can be a far more interesting exercise in the art of deception.

I knew Walter B. Gibson who created one of the most famous of all mystery characters, The Shadow. Walter was the incarnation of the word prolific, writing two *Shadow* novels a month and ghostwriting other books and articles in his "spare time." He wrote 286 *Shadow* novels. We talked at various times about the evolution of *The Shadow* in print and on the radio where Orson Welles first brought the character to life (and, as every *Shadow* fan knows, the Shadow's real name was not Lamont Cranston). In print, *The Shadow* was lethal, resourceful, creative, relentless, and knowledgeable of many bizarre secrets — but he could not become invisible.

On the radio in 1930 in his first incarnation, the Shadow could be invisible and could read minds. Walter, who never wrote a script for the radio show (they were all rejected) pointed out that the radio Shadow was initially unsympathetic and dull. With his powers, the radio Shadow could never be defeated with only the commercials standing in the way of justice. Listener interest grew as the mind reading was eliminated and the role of Margo Lane was expanded. The Shadow became a man who could make mistakes. In fact, Margo Lane became such an important character in the radio version that Walter was finally forced to introduce her into the print version.

The key concern in plotting the impossible is productive vulnerability, the believable ability of the paranormal character, real or otherwise, to make mistakes, to recover from the resulting threats in a productive manner, and, as a result of learning from his/her experience, triumphing in the end, which is how the JRB stories generally progress. His reputation as a mentalist is

What you need to know to remain a viable author in today's techno universe

Cellphone Spyware — What You and Your Protagonist Need to Know

By Sally Richards

Do you have any idea how powerful your cellphone *really* is? Sure, it can call people. Other electronic devices can call it. It takes messages. You can order things like movie and concert tickets. It can help find you the perfect soul mate...or hookup. You can tell it to order refrigerated chocolate covered strawberries delivered to your door in 24 hours, bid on a jacket worn by James Dean in 1955, monitor your home to see what Fluffy's up to via cameras while you're away...and even get up to the minute sig alerts to keep your roads clear for high speed chases. There's *even* an app to turn your cellphone into a flashlight.

Yeah, *that's the good news*. What you might not know is that it can also be the electronic conduit that allows someone to *see* and *hear* what you're doing—real-time—24/7. *Really?* You ask. Yes, really.

You and your protagonist better figure it out soon, so at the very least you can check and see if your own phone *is* running spyware, and he/she can use spyware in their own arsenal of surveillance tools.

Let's face it, anyone can download spyware that can review all incoming and outgoing instant messages, texts and emails, browser history, listen (and record) every call made or received, listen live to cell phone surroundings, review all photos and videos made and track the cellphone's whereabouts, even when traditional GPS tracking fails. Yep, that's right — and that smart little program will send it directly/live to whomever installed the software—all on the QT and for about \$120 a month, or free...some plans complete with 24-hour support.

Spyware is cheap online, popular and it even can be sold legally. If the individual or entity owning said device wants to spy on a minor (if they are the legal guardian), no sweat. It's legal, though it hardly seems right. And employers can use the software to monitor employees if they've supplied the cellphone and "notified" employee they are being monitored.

Potential employees usually sign a very brief blanket release allowing employers to obtain their private and public information, permission to conduct drug tests, or any other monitoring the employer feels necessary during the length of the employee/employer relationship. This document is usually signed by potential employees *before* they're even hired — consent is given by signing an employment application...read the small print more carefully next time.

Any other use of *legit* spyware use is prohibited unless you have the consent of those over 18-years-of-age.

It's not just about spyware you may have on your phone placed there by people you know, and perhaps even trust...or complete strangers, cellphone companies have been tracking our every use of the devices for more than a decade, and the result of every text we send and every intimate photo shared is stored indefinitely in databases.

Long after your first cellphone has been forgotten, and you've switched companies many times trying to find the right fit, your data — attached to you via your Social Security number —

When you have the ability to surveil someone's means of communicating with their private and public worlds — you have control. For a character in a book, that can mean a whole new way of wreaking havoc.

remains in that company's database waiting for it to become valuable. We're not talking anonymous data regarding demographics and your app use, although there's that, too...we're talking *everything* you've ever done with that phone. Everything.

Cases where cellphone networks send a custodian of the records to testify in court are routine, and cell companies are paid to produce these documents and for the time of their expert witness who explains how the company's technology is acquired and every *last* detail about your data. Have you ever wondered about those candidates who dropped from a race suddenly claiming *health issues* or *personal reasons*? Yeah, *I bet they're personal*.

Did I mention most of this stealth technical subterfuge — if you don't meet legal requirements — is punishable under Federal law? Finding a clever way around this is up to you, the author.

So, is there a way to tell if one has commercial spyware installed on your phone? Absolutely. As with a regular landline, a user of a hacked cellphone will hear clicks, beeps or other unusual sounds during conversations. They will also note a major drain on their battery. Is the phone and screen light going off and on at random times? These are telltale signs that something is up.

Check the cellphone's usage records (billing) — if there is a higher usage of data minutes than usual, this is a good tipoff spyware is working its magic. This activity could go undetected forever if the user doesn't scrutinize the details of their unlimited data plan billing every month. If someone is tapping in during the evening for hours, the battery will drain at times when there is no obvious reason.

Suspecting users should leave cellphones out of their chargers overnight on a full battery, and check the battery level in the morning. Regular standby use will normally not leave cellphones drained. Watch for strange SMS messages with no clue of what they are, or where they came from. Look for odd files, although this checkpoint is no use for a novice. Updates and approved app/Internet downloads change system files constantly. Spyware files are made to look mundane and will not usually be labeled *spyware*.

If yes to any of the above symptoms, it could be

spyware, a virus or, perhaps, a paranormal incident for those of you writing in that genre. Viruses and keylogger software is often unknowingly downloaded by users via texts, instant messaging and email. Keylogger software records all keystroke data and sends it back to the virus' homebase to be deciphered via software that fishes for websites, account numbers and passwords. Most keylogger software is thrown to the wind in millions of harmless looking spam emails each day ranging from those telling you there is a million dollars waiting for you in Mozambique to a cute virus carried in JPG files sent by friends who didn't know that cute dog meme was carrying the kiss of death for your bank accounts. You open these in your cellphone — or computer — and that's it. New spyware is written every day and virus catchers can't detect it all, especially if it's so new they have no fix.

Anyone knowing any personal details of an individual can also compose an intriguing email handle (an email address that includes, for instance, the name of the victim's child's school so that the file is quickly opened and executed without detection), subject line, message and file name. Some spyware automatically opens due to careless privacy settings by the cellphone user. Keylogger software is available online for individual download for anyone to send to you. All you need is the cash. And that spyware I talked about earlier? The guys who do this stuff for a living — they don't need to download the spyware physically to your phone. That's right, they can do it from anywhere without ever touching your phone.

Removing some spyware data is as easy as doing a factory reset that restores a phone's software to the virginal condition it was in the day it was purchased. Doing an install of the OS update will do the same thing, but it won't delete all of the data such as email, text, photos, ringtones, music, etc. Don't use files on a computer's OS backup of your phone, it could be compromised and might have even penetrated the user's network and gone to every device in the house connected to your network — what all good spyware should do.

How does one avoid having spyware installed on a cellphone in the first place? Never give anyone your cellphone number who isn't trusted enough to have it. Never publish your cellphone number. Never open unfamiliar email on your phone. Even scrutinize email from friends. Check your settings and don't allow anything to automatically open (what it normally does when it comes up in your mail queue. Never let your cellphone out of your sight. It only takes seconds to upload spyware. A secretary or coworker could even lift the phone off a desk during a victim's bathroom break or meeting, and upload software from a laptop at their own desk, or install it from a micro flashcard in seconds.

There are always people who'd give their eyeteeth to hear their boss' pillow talk, or after-

**Sisters in Crime & SoCal MWA Present
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**California
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CONFERENCE**

Every two years, the Southern California chapters of the Mystery Writers of America (SoCal MWA) and Sisters in Crime (SincLA) get together and put on the California Crime Writers Conference (CCWC) in Pasadena, California. The 2013 conference features two of the biggest names in crime fiction — Sue Grafton and Elizabeth George. Add to that a solid faculty of stellar authors — many of whom are SoCal MWA members themselves — and you've got an exciting opportunity for new and established writers to learn and network with some of the best writers and professionals in the crime fiction business. See www.ccwconference.org

Special Guests Sue Grafton & Elizabeth George

“I keep journals for every novel I write, and I start my workday by logging in, talking to myself about where I am in a novel and how I feel. I focus on the scene or story moves coming up. I worry about pacing and suspense. I revise.”
— Sue Grafton



“It’s important for beginning writers to learn the craft, the basics, of writing. You can’t teach somebody to be a creative artist, to have talent or passion, but you can teach somebody craft.”
— Elizabeth George

- Revision Techniques:** Shaun Morey, Jeri Westerson, Daryl Wood Gerber, Johnny Shaw (moderator)
- Contracts 101:** Les Klinger and Jonathan Kirsch
- Forensic Plot Clinic:** Elizabeth Smith (LASD) and Denise Bertone (Coroner's Office)
- Killer Tracks—Producing Your Own Audio Book:** Pamela Samuels Young and Jessica Kaye
- Finding Your Process:** Elizabeth George
- Agents—Can't Live With Them, Can't Live Without Them:** Ann Collette, Helen Breitwieser, David Hale Smith, Susan Kandel (moderator)
- Interactive Crime Scene Investigation:** Elizabeth Smith (LASD), Denise Bertone (Coroner's Office)
- First Timers—What They Wish They'd Known Before Their First Novel Debuted:** Matt Coyle, Edith Maxwell, Terri Nolan, Hank Phillippi Ryan (moderator)
- Techniques From Other Genres That Help Us Write Crime:** Deborah Reed, Rob Kroese, William Link and Mike Buckley
- The 12 DOs and DON'Ts of Mystery and Thriller Writing:** Ann Collette
- Homicide Investigation for Writers:** Detective John Pearsley, El Cajon PD
- Nuts and Bolts of Self-Publishing:** Brett Battles and Elyse Dinh-McCrillis
- What I Wish Someone Would Have Told Me:** Hank Phillippi Ryan
- The Care and Feeding of Your Editor:** Kendel Flaum, Colleen Dunn Bates, Annette Rogers, Dana Isaacson, Dianne Emley (moderator)
- Inside the FBI:** Special Agent Thomas J. Leighton
- The Good, The Bad and The Ugly:** Marketing Your Book and Your Brand: Gay Kinman, Rebecca Dahlke, Sue Ann Jaffarian, Christopher J. Lynch, Christa Faust (moderator)
- Bringing Characters to Life:** Deborah Reed
- Author Idol:** Ann Collette, David Hale Smith, Annette Rogers, Dana Isaacson, Kendel Flaum, Harley Jane Kozak (moderator)
- Arson Investigation:** ATF Special Agent Mike Matassa (retired)
- Reviews and Blurbs—Getting Them, Writing Them and Taking Advantage of Them:** Susan Kandel, Andrew Kaplan, Nancie Clare, Darrell James, Diane Vallere (moderator)
- Hardboil (or Noir) Your Mystery:** Eric Beetner, Paul Bishop, Gary Phillips and Seth Harwood (moderator)
- Take Your Manuscript From Good to Great—12 Things You Must Do to Make Your Novel "Unrejectable!":** Michael Levin
- Queries, Samples, and Dumb Author No-Nos:** John DeDakis, Kristen Weber, Rochelle Staab, David Hale Smith, Tammy Kaehler (moderator)
- Page Turning Techniques:** James Scott Bell
- Tips From the Trenches—A Book Publicist Tells All:** Kim Dower
- Prosecuting Homicides—A Step-by-Step Primer:** Anthony Manzella, L.A. Deputy D.A., Major Crimes Division (ret.) and partner Ruth Arvidson Curry.
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- Savvy Marketing for Fiction Writers: Never Too Late—Or Too Early—to Promote Your Book:** Carolyn Howard-Johnson
- Anatomy of a Murder—Taking Down a Mexican Mafia Hitman:** Anthony Manzella, L.A. County Deputy D.A., Major Crimes Division (ret.) and partner Ruth Arvidson Curry.
- Outlining v. Seat-of-the-Pantsing:** Gar Anthony Haywood, Georgia Jeffries, T. Jefferson Parker, Tyler Dilts, Craig Faustus Buck (moderator)

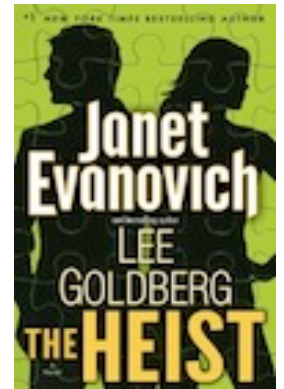
Over the Transom

Do you have announcements for your fellow SoCal MWA members? Do you have a new book or story out? Won an award? Is your book-signing coming up and you'd like to see familiar faces? Are you a publisher with a call for content? Do you have an event our members might be interested in? Do you have a mantra that guarantees a bestseller? Let us know! Send your announcements to The March of Crime to TheMarchOfCrime@gmail.com

Primetime Emmy winner Michael R. Perry's crime thriller *The Voices* is filming in Berlin at Studio Babelsberg (built in 1911, it's one of the oldest large-scale studios in the world; Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Josef von Sternberg's *The Blue Angel* were filmed Babelsberg). Perry was on the set of the film directed by Academy Award nominee Marjane Satrapi (*Persepolis*) and starring Ryan Reynolds, Gemma Arterton and Anna Kendrick. *The Voices* tells the story of a man struggling against the murderous recommendations of his verbally abusive cat. Perry's rap sheet includes *Eerie, Indiana*, *New York Undercover*, *American Gothic*, *The Practice*, *Millennium*, *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*, *FreakyLinks*, *The Guardian*, *The Dead Zone*, *House M.D.*, *Persons Unknown*, *The River* and *NYPD Blues*. No doubt Perry and his film will be in the running for some awards.



Lee Goldberg's (CBS Executive Producer, *Monk*, writer of *The Dead Man* series — check out the very cool music video <http://vimeo.com/47562703>) new novel *The Heist*, co-written with Janet Evanovich (#1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the Stephanie Plum novels), is the first in a new series that makes its much awaited debut June 18th. The powerhouse duo are already hard at work on the second series and a few novellas featuring the series' characters — a female FBI agent who teams up with a fugitive conman (she's supposed to be in pursuit of) to solve crimes with.



May 7 marked the release of Rochelle Staab's (mystery writing veteran and former record industry executive whose book's *Bruja Brouhaha* won the 2013 Watson Award for best sidekick) *Hex on the Ex* — the third novel in bestselling *Mind for Murder Mystery* series. In *Hex on the Ex*, the past comes back to haunt psychologist Liz Cooper in a bitter clash with a former rival whose murder casts a shadow on Liz as suspect number one. She enlists her family, friends, and a colorful defense attorney to help clear her name, but only Liz's boyfriend — occult professor Nick Garfield — has the key to decipher the cryptic, devilish clue the murderer left behind. <http://rochellestaab.com>



Wrap-up

MWA Stars Shine at the Literary Guild of Orange County's 20th Anniversary Festival of Women Authors

Saturday, May 11th marked the Literary Guild of Orange County's 20th Anniversary of its Festival of Women Authors event.

The event, drawing nearly 500 readers on Mother's Day weekend, was a day of triumph for founder Joan Hansen as she beamed proudly at what her 20-year effort to bring readers and authors together had become.

Hansen, a SoCal MWA member who was given MWA's Raven Award in 2006, has a soft spot for mystery, and included our sisters Nancy Pickard (*The Scent of Rain and Lightning*) and Julia Spencer Fleming (*Through the Evil Days*) who spoke brilliantly, eloquently and made us proud to be affiliated with them.

It was an incredible event filled with delightful presentations by other famed authors as well, including Amy Dickinson (*Ask Amy, Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me* and her novel *The Mighty Queens of Freevile*), Fannie Flagg (*Fried Green Tomatoes*), Elizabeth Letts (*The Eighty Dollar Champion*), Sere Prince Halverson (*The Underside of Joy*), Tatjana Soli (*The Lotus Eaters*) and poet-novelist Sonya Sones.

From the first presentation to the last, the speakers' talks were filled with infectious energy and inspiration. Amy Dickinson's candor about her reminisces of her remarkable mother who'd recently passed

brought down the house, and no one had dry eyes. No one. It was a day of women sharing experiences that only women could truly understand, though there were a few brave men there as well.

Readers had a chance to attend breakout sessions with their favorite authors and purchase books in the book room wo-manned by the folks at Mystery Ink who kept things really moving and organized for such a large event. Everywhere one went you could hear people asking for pens as authors were running out of ink mid-signature.

Hansen spoke from her cloud of joy over the spectacular success of that day. "I'm ecstatic about today's event!" she said, but was already moving on to the details of the next event — the 14th Annual Men of Mystery which will feature the famous Scottish surgeon and writer, Alexander McCall Smith, who is launching his latest volume in his series, *The Number 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* set in Botswana. This mystery icon will be joined by fifty other gentlemen of the genre of mystery at the Irvine Marriott Hotel on November 16th.

Hansen is a voracious reader of books of many genres and her love of the written word is legendary — she loves books and authors so much that she decided to bring authors — in person — to those who love their books, and to introduce readers to new authors.

Along with these two literary affairs, she has also organized many children's author events. She's like a fairy godmother granting readers wishes of meeting their favorite authors — and authors the wish of not only meeting their public, but expanding their readership.

Hansen, once a primary school teacher — introduced new generations of readers by introducing them to authors they would one day introduce their own children to. One can only imagine how many people Hansen has introduced into the book buying public — perhaps even readers of your own books.

As for the upcoming Men of Mystery event in November? Hansen encourages potential Men of Mystery, as yet undiscovered by she and her team of readers who will choose the 50 men to be honored at the prestigious event, to contact her via email with their book titles at jhansen36@juno.com. Go to <http://www.MenOfMystery.org> for further information and updates. You may also contact her with your postal address to receive a flyer in September.

Previous Men of Mystery include Michael Connelly, Bruce DeSilva, Darrell James, Andrew Kaplan, Dennis Palumbo, Thomas Perry, Gary Phillips, Travis Richardson, James Rollins and the list goes on...maybe even with you soon joining the roster.



After the event get-together with Julia Spencer Fleming, Joan Henson, Tammy Kaehler and Nancy Pickard.

Save The Date! SoCal MWA July

Noon, July 13 at the La Jolla Library

An Afternoon of True Crime with Caitlin Rother
Cathy Scott and Former Homicide Detective
Thomas Basinski

Event is FREE! Refreshments will be available

Wrap-up



Joan Hansen with two of the high school students who were able to attend the Literary Guild of Orange County's 20th Anniversary Festival of Women Authors event through its community outreach programs.



Founder and MWA sister Joan Hansen at the after-event party celebrating the day's success with the speakers who took part in the spectacular 20th anniversary event.



MWA Literacy Outreach

Nineteen percent of high school graduates cannot read. Each year they leave school and merge with the 14 percent — 32 million — adults in America who can't read. Every year, some of those adults who cannot read add to the 63% of inmates in the US who can't read. Please, help us break the cycle. MWA is a strong advocate of programs that promote books, literacy, libraries and reading. Over the years through our Kids Love A Mystery and MWA Reads programs we have been involved in outreach to encourage the next generation of readers, writers and productive members of our society. Our current focus is twofold: Reader to Reader, a program that connects libraries in need with people who have books to donate, and our Educator's Page, with links to mystery-based reading and writing exercises for all levels from elementary school through university courses. Turn a kid on to reading mysteries — and you can change their future for the better.

Go to <http://www.readertoreader.org/>



Over the Transom



(L) Our very own Jeff Marriott with the Raven Award at Mysterious Galaxy's birthday bash. Photo courtesy of Mysterious Galaxy.

(B) Mysterious Galaxy birthday party attendees on May 11 toasting good wishes for many more good years to come! Happy birthday Mysterious Galaxy! Photo courtesy of Mysterious Galaxy.



enhanced in each story as he takes ever greater performing risks, as JRB strives to reach the top as he had in high-tech, while at the same time encountering risks of a more mundane and deadly nature – even in the late evening silence of Delphi. In addition to the stories, a novel, *The King of Pentacles*, is in-progress that incorporates JRB's global high-tech background as well as his mentalism.

Naturally, some of the above thoughts are outside the realm of pure fantasy material where all the rules of encounter can be changed at will at any time by the writer. However, in one of the great fantasy novels of all time, never out of print since its first publication in 1887, Rider Haggard's *She*, [bragging point, I have a VG first edition of *She* with the color plates of the shard] the protagonist Ayesha tells Holly, "How thinkest thou that I rule this people? ...it is not by force...My empire is of the imagination."

Which is, of course, true of our novels and stories as well.

Barry H. Wiley is a retired high-tech executive, now traveling the world for research for his second career. He has written and lectured on the history of mindreading and Spiritualism at the Magic Castle and other venues. Wiley is currently completing Shadow of the Tiger, the second novel of his Adventures in Second Sight trilogy (Kindle). His most recent book, The Thought Reader Craze (McFarland) is available in print and Kindle.



FODDER ON... Because you never know where your next plot will come from

From the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, or IC3's, Annual Report (2012). The number of complaints is very low, seems hardly worth the effort to have an entire division. But, for what it's worth (the scams are entertaining and it's interesting to see there are still gullible people out there) — here it is.

Hit Man Scam

The IC3 began receiving reports about the hit man/extortion e-mail scheme seven years ago, and over time the content of the hit man e-mails has changed, but the intent remains the same — to defraud people through disturbing e-mails.

The scam originated as a person sending an e-mail portraying himself as a hit man hired to kill the victim. The e-mail instructed the recipient to pay an amount of money to ensure the hit man did not carry out the death contract. Although the e-mails were unnerving for the recipients, the IC3 did not receive reports of loss of life or money.

More recently the scammers started to utilize social media to gather personal information about the recipient. Popular social networking sites provide a wealth of information for scammers. Limiting the amount of personal information published online is a good practice for consumers seeking to minimize the chance that they will be exploited by scammers.

Below are highlights of how the hit man scam has evolved over the years.

2007

The e-mails claimed they were sent by the FBI in London, advising the FBI recently arrested an individual for the murders of several citizens in the United States and the United Kingdom. The e-mails claimed the recipient's information was discovered on the arrested subject, identifying him or her as the next murder victim.

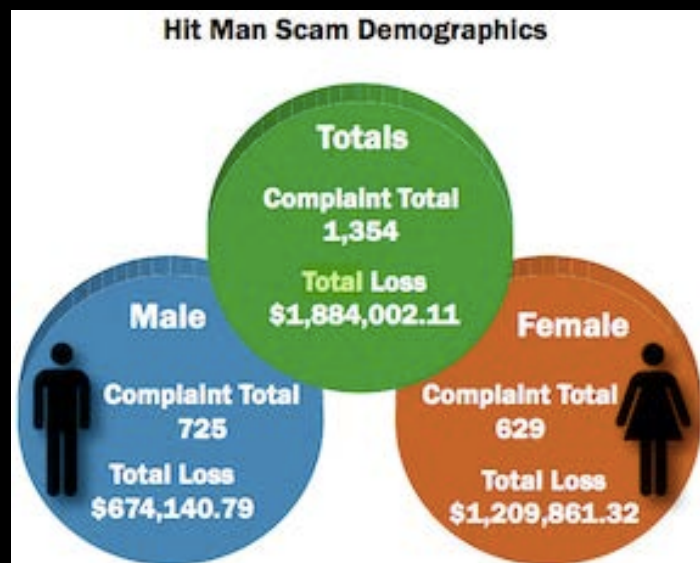
2008

The recipient was advised to call a specified number for additional information and instructions. This new twist claimed the recipient, or a loved one, would be kidnapped unless a ransom was paid within 48 hours. Personal identifying information such as name, address and telephone numbers were included to sway the recipient into believing the sender knew his or her

The recipient was advised to call a specified number for additional information and instructions. This new twist claimed the recipient, or a loved one, would be kidnapped unless a ransom was paid within 48 hours. Personal identifying information such as name, address and telephone numbers were included to sway the recipient into believing the sender knew his or her locations.

2009

The scammer started to use the names of international terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda and the Ishmael Ghost



Islamic Group. The hit man claimed to be an “Islamic hired killer” and a “suicide aid..” The and a “suicide aid.” The recipient was advised to send money within 72 hours or pay with his or her life. Hotels and other businesses started receiving e-mails that claimed they were on a list of bombing targets.

2011/2012

- The e-mails claimed that a team had been hired to assassinate the recipients or their families unless they converted to Islam or paid a fine of \$8,000 within five business days. The threat also claimed the sender was part of a “jihad operation to cleanse the United States and Europe of all religions different from Islam, especially the Christians and Jews.”

E-mails claiming to be sent by “Agent Bauer” of the International Intelligence Bureau offer the recipient a chance to purchase a security alarm. Potential victims are told that when the device is activated, representatives of the International Intelligence Bureau will come to his or her rescue.

Other reported e-mails claim that the potential victim will be killed and the death will be staged to appear accidental.

For a complete PDF download of this study, go the FBI's webpage at http://www.fbi.gov/news/news_blog/ic3-releases-2012-internet-crime-report



Tek-Tok from 8

hour moans of pleasure as the compromised cellphone broadcasts via live feeds while the spy listens from the comfort of their own home as the unaware boss' cellphone listens from its cradle on a nearby nightstand. And, *oh, yes*, there are some hacks that allow for visuals to go along with that sexual raucous.

Accessing camera software on your devices is far too easy. Someone could be watching you on your laptop camera right now, you'd never know it, but, that's for another column. Be aware, all of the IP addresses (Internet account data and location) the data is being transferred to can also be tracked, though there are anonymous browsers and offshore Internet hubs one can run through to avoid being found. Though if the spy doesn't know what they're doing, they can be discovered while they're observing, or even years afterward. It's very much like leaving your DNA behind at a crime scene.

Never leave a cellphone unattended, always have a password — and never give the password to anyone, though passwords can also be hacked around in a few minutes, but only by someone who really, *really* wants the data. Think CEO of a Fortune 500 company; the data has to be extremely valuable for someone to go through that much trouble and expense...and risk of getting busted for a Federal offence. These folks have security people on their staff constantly checking for security anomalies and work closely with the FBI regarding corporate espionage, but that's for an upcoming column.

One suggestion for your protagonist to keep their own privacy private is to throw a battery operated cellphone/GPS jammer in their glove box, purse or pocket. They're small, nearly silent and can be had on the Internet for about \$50, or less. Let it be known it is against the law to use jammers, even on your own person, and carries up to \$120,000 in fines and Federal jail time. Companies get away selling them under the same premise that allows police radar

detector companies to continue to sell product—there are warnings all over them stating they are not to be used to defy existing laws.

Cellphone data attached to your Social Security number is certainly “unofficially” available by now to high-end intel and black ops companies, hackers, government agencies, rogue agents and employees looking to make a little extra on the side. One day it will also be commercially available.

Think about it — visits to gentleman's clubs, homes of felons, massage parlors, a known dealer's location, former and present lovers...an old murder scene newly discovered (with your GPS prints all over it, and the not-so-distant future when all cops, or anyone else with cash, will be able to do is run a GPS location through the computer and find anyone who was at or near that location, even thirty years after the crime happened) — all of it will be out there for the world to see, ponder and make public if one should ever run for president, or has power needing to be leveraged.

Even a marginally intelligent protagonist—or bad guy — always uses a disposable phone purchased with cash at a location not connected with the user's actual location area, and fueled with minute cards purchased with the same anonymous care. Though, remember, some agencies use equipment where they need only get physically near a suspect to detect a suspect's anonymous cellphone number. Once a

number is noted, the data attached to it is no longer anonymous. Remember, all the Feds have to do now is contact the rest of the numbers connected to that number and squeeze those people for the name attached to your number. This is the reason why hitmen use one throwaway phone per contract.

The time has come when we have no privacy and warehouses of data grow larger every day — by data contributed by us and about us. Folks, we are way past 1984...in so many ways. Ways the general public will never know, or believe until it's too late.

Sally Richards is a technologist, hacker and author of several books including, FutureNet (Wiley, 2002) that outlined what is happening today as far as technology being used against the user and privacy violations being committed in the name of commercial profit and government protection. She also wrote the first book about the tech bubble — before the crash and is a consultant to startups and investment groups on technology viability. Sally is also a paranormal researcher, investigator and author, her book Ghosthunting Southern California (Clerisy Press) came out in 2012. Tek-Tok — a Writer's Tech Guide series will appear in more detailed form as Kindle singles in 2014. She is available for free (for a nod in the acknowledgements) consultation regarding fictional characters and their use/misuse of technology in-worlds.

The Tony Hillerman Prize

Co-sponsored by St. Martin's Press, the Tony Hillerman Prize is awarded annually for the best first mystery set in the Southwest. The winner receives a contract with St. Martin's Press for publication of the novel and \$10,000! Submission deadline is Jun 1, 2013.

Go to <http://www.wordharvest.com/contest.php> for complete details

“CIA Personality Test” on the <https://www.cia.gov/careers/> website (make note of the *reading a best-selling novel* option)

CIA Recruiting

Are you — or your character — looking for a job with the CIA? Looks like The Agency is either lowering its standards, or setting traps for applicants? After all, they're just going to throw you on a polygraph machine, anyway. Remember when the CIA would not accept previous illegal drug users, or people from violently questionable backgrounds? So are they just building up dossiers of people who want to be agents (I'm sure they fill some kind of dangerous individual CIA profile) or is this because they're offering far less than the same positions in the private sector? From The Agency's recruitment page:

The Agency recognizes no one is perfect. Agency security officials consider the nature, extent, seriousness, and recency [stet] of past behavior. They weigh the potential risk and benefit of each individual — the whole person — with utmost care.

To be considered suitable for Agency employment, applicants must generally not have used illegal drugs within the last 12 months. The issue of illegal drug use prior to 12 months ago is carefully evaluated during the medical and security processing.

Over the Transom



Save The Date! SoCal MWA July

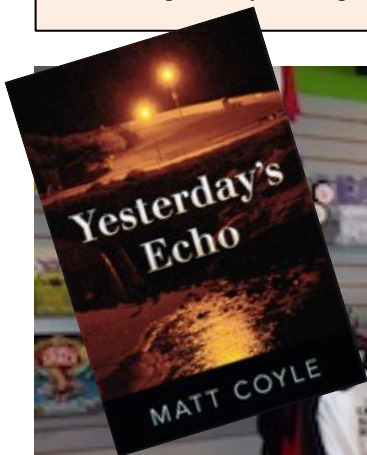
Noon, July 13 at the La Jolla Library

An Afternoon of True Crime with
Cathy Scott, Former Homicide
Detective Thomas Basinski and
Caitlin Rother

Event is FREE! Refreshments will be available

Call for Authors

Call for Articles! *Mystery Readers Journal* looking for Author! Author! essays for 2013 issues. Themes: Chicago; Medical; & Murder in Transit. 500-1500 words, first person, up close and personal, about yourself, your books and the 'theme' connection. **MRJ does not publish fiction.** Short reviews and articles focusing on the theme of the issue are welcome. Reviews of a single book should be 200 words or less, articles around 1000 words. If you are writing an article or essay, please also provide a title. MRJ is a wonderful source fans to find new authors that they might enjoy. Go to the org's page <http://www.mysteryreaders.org/journal.html> to see sample essays from past themed issues. Email Publisher & Editor Janet Rudolph @ janet@mysteryreaders.org.



Our very own Matt Coyle launched his book *Yesterday's Echo* at Mysterious Galaxy, San Diego, on May 4. *Yesterday's Echo* is Coyle's first in his series with protagonist Rick Cahill. About *Yesterday's Echo* — Rick Cahill was never convicted of his wife's murder, but he was never exonerated either. Not by the police. Not by the media. Not even by himself. Eight years later, police suspicion and his own guilt remain over his responsibility in his wife's death. When he meets Melody Malana, a beautiful yet secretive TV reporter, he sees a chance to love again. When she is arrested for murder and asks Rick for help, the former cop says no, but the rest of him says yes and he grasps at a chance for redemption. But Rick's attempt to help turns terribly wrong, and he becomes a suspect in the murder and the target of a police manhunt. On the run, Rick encounters desperate people who'll kill to keep their pasts buried. Before Rick can save himself and bring down a murderer, he must confront the truth about his own past and untangle his feeling for a woman he can never fully trust.

For more about Matt Coyle see his webpage at <http://www.mattcoylebooks.com>

Wrap-up

Honing the Craft & Sharing the Knowledge

By Matt Coyle

On Saturday, April 13, writers of all levels had an opportunity to learn the art of honing their craft at Maria's Kitchen in Encino. An overflow crowd of forty-five or so writers showed up at the SoCal MWA hosted event to learn from some of the best mystery/thriller writers in the business. The guests had a nice meal — the meatballs were fantastic — and then were treated to delicious tidbits of information about the writing process from the five writer panel.

Daryl Wood Gerber, author of the *A Cookbook Nook Mystery* series, as well as, *A Cheese Shop Mystery* series under the pen name of Avery Ames, served as moderator to Edgar Award winner, Thomas Perry, New York Times bestselling Mystery/Romance author, Kate Carlisle, Watson Award winning author, Rochelle Staab and Eureka Award winner, Darrell James.

Whether they are outliners or blank pagers, write seated, standing up, or even lying down, all the authors stick to an individual routine they've developed over many years of writing. All five writers start each day early, but some differ on how they handle the dreaded time-suck — emails. Darrell and Thomas get emails out of the way first and then get down to the business of writing...in completely opposite ways. Darrell writes on a laptop while lying down on a sofa and Thomas writes his first draft in longhand standing up. Rochelle sets a timer for two hours before she allows herself to peak at her email. Kate and Daryl try to wait until after the writing is done.

As with any discussion on writing among novelists, the subject of outlining came up, *Do you or don't you?* Daryl does and they are very detailed with plot lines for every character. Rochelle starts with a two-page outline, but, invariably, when the writing starts her characters grab the helm and take the story where they want it to go. Darrell starts with a scene or an idea that pose questions which he tries to answer in his first draft. Kate brainstorms over basic plot and story questions with other writers twice a year in Las Vegas —no really, they're working — and writes out a twenty-five page synopsis when she gets home. Thomas doesn't like to adhere to an outline because he feels he'd be restricting himself to the best ideas he'd come up with in three days instead of using ones thought up over 365 days.

Opinions on the difference between what makes a mystery versus a thriller weren't too varied among the authors. Rochelle thinks of a mystery as a puzzle while a thriller is a ticking time bomb. Darrell sees a mystery as a who-done-it. With a thriller we know who's doing it, but have to find out how the conflict is resolved. Tom doesn't really pay attention to all that. He says that genres are for booksellers and that you should break the rules. A rebel...with an Edgar.

Between the five of them, the panel has authored well over forty books, so the issue of coming up with fresh story ideas is not taken lightly. Kate's protagonist is a bookbinder specializing in rare book restoration. So, Kate always starts with the book her hero will be restoring. Daryl chooses a topic that interests her within the worlds of her series characters.

Thomas keeps things fresh by writing about characters he doesn't understand. Characters he wants to grab and ask, "What the hell is wrong with you?" He figures if he knows his characters too well, he'll get bored and so will the reader. Darrell is much the same way. He looks to character first and has to find something that thrills him. Rochelle also has to find a topic that interests her, but is not afraid to make a change when necessary. Her book involving baseball superstitions became one about devil worship. Some may feel the Yankees are involved in both.

Finally, the panel contemplated what they feared in their writing lives. Of course, writers block came up, but Daryl and Thomas advised to push through it or write something else. Just keep writing. Rochelle has feared that her best writing is behind her. She fights through that by writing in a different point of view for a while to get a different look at the story. Darrell does the same thing when he fears that his story isn't as good as he's hoped. Not surprisingly, as a multi-series author, Kate has a fear of deadlines. But her legions of fans should be able to put an end to her fear that her writing is too shallow.

Though they have different methods and write in different genres, all five authors would agree that your book will never be completed without you sitting down and writing it.



Calendar

2013



May 26 Noir at the Bar
8pm, Mandrake, 2692 S. La Cienega
Culver City

“We book the authors ahead of time, but are always looking for new blood. Our next event is already scheduled for July 14th and we have a full lineup. We sell books through Mysterious Galaxy that comes out and sets up a table — which is great! We feature the night’s authors as well as Noir at the Bar alumni for sale. People can find us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/NoirAtTheBarLa> and Twitter @NoirBarLA and get in contact directly if they'd like to read.”

SOLD OUT!

Sign up early in 2015!

June 22 & 23

Sisters in Crime & SoCal MWA Present California Crime Writers Conference at the Hilton Pasadena, 168 S. Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, CA. Special guests are Sue Grafton and Elizabeth George. A weekend of outstanding workshops geared to the needs of both emerging and established mystery writers



Did You Know?

According to the CDC's Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2011 Annual Report (most recent)
This is how the stats on America's 2,468,435 deaths break down

Death Rate 799.5 deaths per 100,000 population

Life Expectancy 78.7 years

Infant Mortality Rate 6.15 deaths per 1,000 live births

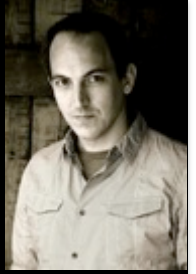
Number for Leading Causes of Death

Heart disease 597,689 • Cancer 574,743 • Chronic lower respiratory diseases 138,080
Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases) 129,476 • Accidents (unintentional injuries) 120,859
Alzheimer's disease 83,494 • Diabetes 69,071 • Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis 50,476
Influenza and Pneumonia 50,097 • Intentional self-harm (suicide): 38,364

NOIR AT THE BAR

Los Angeles' Crime Clubhouse

By Eric Beetner



It's hard to think of any good to come out of so many bookstore closings, especially one as dear to my heart as The Mystery Bookstore in Westwood, but from that tragic loss came my notion to steal an idea so our gathering place wouldn't be lost. Yes, steal. What do you expect, I'm a crime writer!

Noir at the Bar originally began in Philadelphia for a brief time, then resurfaced in St. Louis spearheaded by authors Scott Phillips and Jedidiah Ayres. The idea is simple – create a night for writers and readers to gather together and mingle, schmooze, read and listen. We've even added selling books to the mix.

I floated the idea to several crime writers in L.A. who I missed seeing at The Mystery Bookstore because I knew unless we had a place to gather we might not leave our dark writing caves and never see each other again. When author Stephen Blackmoore said he'd been thinking the same thing in conjunction with go-to crime fiction man Aldo Calcagno, I knew we had the momentum.

Much in the same way the MWA does, Noir at the Bar strives to bring writers together to meet and network, hang out and swap stories. We try to get together about every two months or so, sometimes a little longer, and we try whenever possible to get touring crime writers to come out and read for us. It gives authors another place to go while in Southern California since so many of the bookstore options have gone away and we've been thrilled to see our night become a coveted stop on book tours for authors from as far away as Canada.

I'm proud to say we've had a tremendous turnout for all our events, but then we knew Los Angeles was prime real estate for a night of Noir. We usually have five readers per night, with about ten-minute, or so, reading times. We have locals and out of towners, we've shown short films, had guest actors read stories with the authors — we'll do it all.

With Noir at the Bar we also try hard to get a mix of seasoned veterans like Megan Abbott, our own SoCal president Jeri Westerson, Duane Swierczynski, Chuck Wendig, Johnny Shaw to read alongside up and comers and unpublished writers alike.

And we love to see our writers succeed. Our own Holly West read a section from her then unpublished manuscript back in 2011, and now has secured a publishing deal and we get to see the book published soon!

Since we stole the idea and had such success, Noir at the Bar has popped up in New York, Denver, New Orleans, San Diego and there are talks of many more.

So consider this your formal invitation to all MWA members to come on out to the next Noir at the Bar event this May 26th at 8pm. Our bar is called Mandrake and it is located at 2692 S. La Cienega in Culver City. The event is always free and we will have our very special booksellers — Mysterious Galaxy — on hand to sell books from the night's readers as well as Noir at the Bar alumni.

This May features Seth Harwood and his new book *In Broad Daylight*. Dan O'Shea from Chicago reading from his debut *Penance*. Joe Clifford and Tom Pitts both down from San Francisco, and I'll even be reading a little something from a super secret project I've been working on.

If you come once, you'll be back again.

Eric Beetner is the Treasurer for MWA SoCal and author of *The Devil Doesn't Want Me*, *Dig Two Graves* and the story collection, *A Bouquet Of Bullets*. He is co-author (with JB Kohl) of the novels *One Too Many Blows To The Head* and *Borrowed Trouble* and has written two novellas in the popular Fightcard series, *Split Decision* and *A Mouth Full Of Blood*. His award-winning stories have appeared in over a dozen anthologies and he was voted 2012 Most Criminally Underrated Author by the Stalker Awards. For more visit ericbeetner.blogspot.com.

May 26
8pm
Mandrake
2692 S. La Cienega
Culver City



Holly West



Jeri Westerson



Stephen Blackmoore



The evidence



The Crime Scene

NOIR AT THE BAR

May 26
8pm
Mandrake
2692 S. La Cienega
Culver City

samples are needed to construct a DNA profile. Theoretically, only a single cell. This is what allows the so-called “touch DNA” to be so useful. When a criminal touches something and leaves behind a fingerprint, it can be used in many circumstances to obtain a DNA profile. Fingerprints are simply the deposition of the oils, dirt, and cellular material that contaminate the finger pads on an object such as a broken window or coffee cup. The cellular material within the print supplies DNA. There have also been great strides in shortening the time required for DNA analysis, down from several weeks to a matter of hours. Another area that has significantly evolved is electronic forensics — computers, digital cameras, cellphones, etc. The information gleaned not only from the devices themselves but also from the data they transmit from place to place is astounding.

JMW: Can you recommend any research sites that can help crime writers stay up to date?

DPL: Some of my favorites are listed on my website under the INKS button at <http://www.dplylemd.com/DPLyleMD/Links.html>.

JMW: You also offer a consulting service. Tell us about that.

DPL: I answer questions for writers and screenwriters all the time and for simple story questions there is no fee. If someone needs more extensive help such as creating a plot, going over multiple scenes to make sure that the scientific materials and medical dialogue is correct, or other more involved help with a manuscript, then I must charge a fee because the time required can be significant. These services are explained on my website and anyone who is interested in sending along a question or retaining me as a consultant can find the information they need there.

John Morgan Wilson is the author of eight Benjamin Justice mysteries, including Simple Justice, an Edgar winner for Best First Novel. His short stories have appeared in EQMM, AHMM and several anthologies.

LAST WORD



“Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality.”

— Edgar Allen Poe