



MYSTERY WRITERS OF AMERICA

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

The March of Crime

INSIDE

- President's Rap Sheet • 2
- Editor's Corner • 2
- Write Mind • 4
- MWA Edgar's Week • 5
- SoCal MWA Luncheon • 6
- Fresh Blood • 6
- The Pro Shop • 7
- Tek Tok • 8
- California Crime Writers Conference • 9
- Over the Transom 10 • 11 • 12 • 14 • 18
- Tucson Festival of Books • 13
- Art as a Job • 16
- Calendar • 17
- Last Word • 18

Things are going gangbusters! Our new newsletter editor, Sally Richards, is going monthly with our newsletter, something that hasn't been done for a very long time. We are such a busy chapter, we really needed to go monthly to tell our members about all our events. If you'd like to buy an ad, let her know!

Not long ago I returned from the Tucson Festival of Books, a great event! The weather didn't cooperate as it should have and we had rain on and off all day on Saturday and cold temps, but it was warm and sunny on Sunday. Crowds were strong, though. We only have a moment to breathe before we head on over to the USC campus for the L.A. Times Festival of Books. There are still some spots to fill for volunteers to come man our booth, so don't be shy. Email me at contact@socalmwa.com.

Don't forget to come to our April 13th event in Encino, "Honing Your Process." I don't know about you, but I'm always looking for a few good tips for making the writing process that much easier.

And by the way, you can find our members on various websites with

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.



President's



Rap Sheet

informative essays and short stories. Take a look at sites like <http://www.criminalelement.com>. Let us know when a member makes it into print, ink or ether. We love to see those names.

I'll be talking to you soon!

Jeri Westerson



Sign-ups for volunteering at our booth for the LATFOB continues. The fest is April 20-21 at the beautiful USC campus. We have a lovely spot in the shade. Volunteering to man the booth, talking up MWA, selling our swag (t-shirts, book bags, mugs and caps) are good ways to network with fellow members. More Info? Send them to contact@socalmwa.com



Hey guys, I just want to thank you all for the kudos and camaraderie you've offered while we've been transitioning over a new staff and going to a monthly pub — you've been wonderful and I've received some *really* encouraging emails and calls! And *Advertising!* Not to mention the support of our returning and new columnists! I'm humbled by all of your generosity and kindness!

And, hey —without *you*, there would be no *us* — so thanks for being out there. And *there*, might I add, is an interesting place. I picture some of you writing your true crime books and interviewing killers, drug dealers and...bankers. Others, I see snuggled up with a mug of chamomile in an overstuffed chair at your desk writing your cozies with your cats slowly taking over every letter on the keyboard. Some of you must be strutting around your desk in stilettos, puffing madly away on skinny cigarettes held tightly between your lips with a long ivory holder, giving your computer the third-degree as you tell it, *Give it up! I need those words — now!*

All this to create your compelling stories that will not only be read, but judged. Judged by the public — hopefully millions, many of whom you don't know from Adam (and hopefully not a stalker among them) — and your friends, family...and lest not forget the many mystery reviewers and award panels — and possibly even your *next* editor from your *next* publishing house, or film director of your *first*, or *next*, huge blockbuster movie.

Let's face it, you really have to have a metaphorical set on you to put yourself out there like this. So either you're a masochist, or you have faith — unconditional faith — in yourself *and* in the kismet of the universe. And an unwavering belief in that story that you either had to pull out of yourself slowly and painfully like a spoiled tooth from hardened gums with blackened tendrilled strands struggling to keep the rotting canine in place, or it bursts out of you like in the 1979 movie *Alien* when John Hurt's (Kane) baby alien burst forth, teeth bared, from his

stomach during a party. Some of you, I imagine, even have an easy process of it — and boy, do I need *you* writing a column!

It takes all types, and charged with this energy of creating something useful for *all* of you, I began the process of trying to unravel the mystery of what *you* might need — what *you* might be looking for in the way of content that could help inspire and inform you. I'm hoping to get as far away from *sucks* as I can.

In order to succeed — I need you to send me your wish list. Who do you want to see interviewed? Are you a new author looking for nuts and bolts advice? Are you established and want to know how this shift from paper publishing to electronic devices is going to work so you won't be left out? Do you want to know if, in this Kindlefied world, you still need an agent?

I mean, did you hear about the author Hugh Howey (Google him) who Kindleized himself, got himself to number one, sold the film rights to 20th Century Fox, got an agent who sold the physical book rights in a rumored seven-figure deal to Simon Schuster *and* retained online rights? *Wow!* My goal is to tell you more of these kinds of stories. All writers need to hear good news amidst the gloom and doom of withering deals and marketing budgets and a market that is splitting itself down the middle.

Do you have a FB page? Do you need one? Do you have one — and has it consumed you? My recent book has received little push from the publisher as far as hard book sales outside of Barnes & Noble and some indies who like me. Despite this, my ebook sales have climbed, and I'm now one of the publisher's best-sellers. Why? Because I love technology and I know how to use it.

So, how do you help your publisher market your books? Are they really expecting you to have a base of 3,000 FB friends *and* maintain a community while writing 5,000 sellable words a week? *Really?*

Between social media, blogs, radio blogs, web radio networks where for a flat monthly fee you can be the host of your own show (and collect ad revenue without lifting a finger!), RSS feeds, TV, satellite radio, books in every kind of digital format with as many devices to read them on...we've yet to see the tip of the iceberg. Yes, the future *is* so bright I *do* have to wear shades, especially first thing in the morning.

Keep those letters and announcements coming — and if you can find the time, we'd love to see a column from you.

Au revoir for now, hope you enjoy this issue. Have a productive month and send all your news! I hope to see you at the luncheon on April 13th and at the Edgars®!

—Sally

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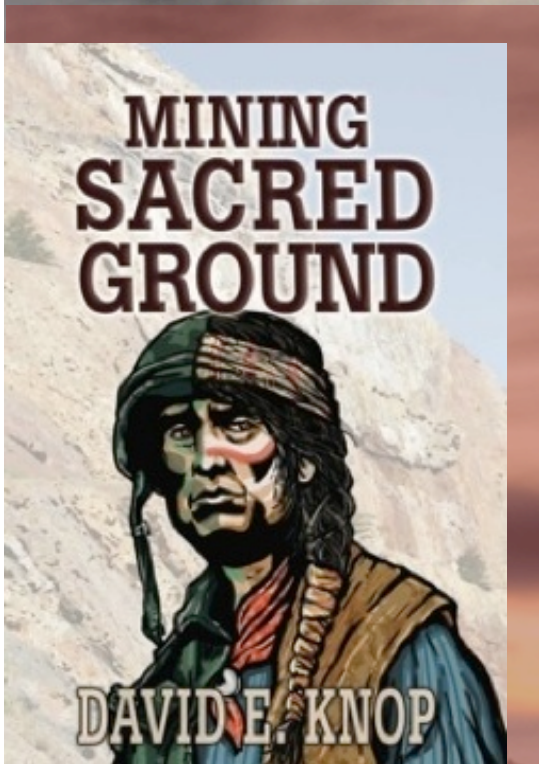


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Deadline Reminder

Deadline for May Calendar & Over the Transom is April 22.



From
Author
David E.
Knop

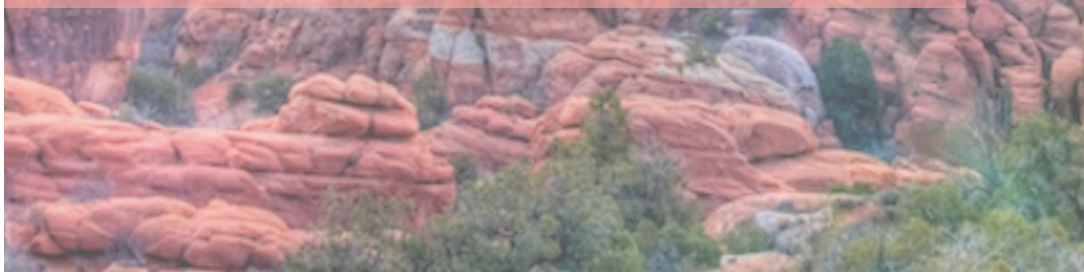


As a life-long student of Native America and a career Marine, David E. Knop is uniquely qualified to tell the often violent yet spiritual stories of the American Southwest.

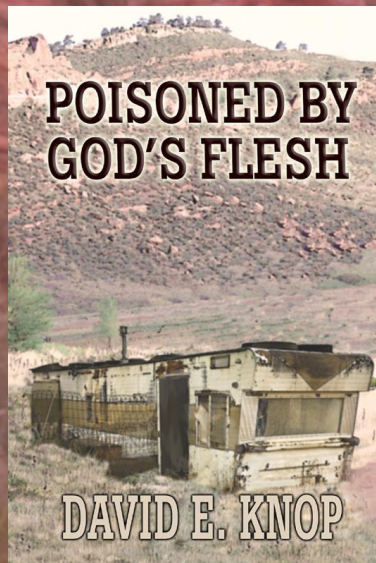
Mining Sacred Ground explores the beauty of the land, the people, and the violence of the hunt for threatened Aztec, Anasazi and Apache treasures. Readers of Tony Hillerman and Margaret Coel will agree, *Mining Sacred Ground* is an exhilarating adventure into the heart of our lesser-known past.

Wow! Make yourself plenty comfortable before you start reading David Knop's *Mining Sacred Ground*, because this beautifully written story will take you places no one in his right mind would go. Knop has invaded territory formerly the exclusive property of Tony Hillerman, and you'll get not only a native-American view of the world, but a chilling ride alongside a worn out ex-Marine trying to do the right thing even though he's pretty sure he'll die in the attempt.

— Gene Riehl, author of *Quantico Rules and Sleeper*
FBI thrillers from St. Martin's Press



Cochiti Police Officer Peter Romero finds the teen daughter of his former love, Adelina, poisoned by Psilocybe Mexicana, or "God's Flesh," but evidence leads off the reservation. Against the demands of his wife, Costancia, and warnings by the FBI, Romero pursues the case. A series of outwardly unrelated events: a drug sting gone bad, the brutal murders of innocents and police, and the kidnapping of Costancia and Adelina, point Romero to the most intricate yet violent confrontations of his career. Romero struggles with his fear of death and summons the powers of a hidden realm. This new empowerment brings purpose to his hardships as he realizes his strength to defeat those trying to take him down lies in the spirit world.



Now available on Kindle, Nook, Sony eBook & iTunes
Find out more about David E. Knop at <http://davideknop.net>

Write Mind

The Girl with the Evil Psychiatrist



By Dennis Palumbo

Two iconic images, from two classic films: in *Now, Voyager*, kindly therapist Claude Rains walks in the garden with troubled patient Bette Davis. He's paternal, insightful and obviously knows what's good for her.

In *The Three Faces of Eve*, psychologist Lee J. Cobb helps Joanne Woodward parse out the three distinct personalities tormenting her. Like Claude Rains before him, he's a model of the patriarchal culture, a clinician of unquestionable motives and unimpeachable authority. One of the good guys.

Now, flash forward 40 or so years, to *The Silence of the Lambs*, in which Anthony Hopkins plays Dr. Hannibal Lecter, a psychiatrist with an unusually carnivorous interest in his patients, or anybody else crossing his path, like that poor census taker who once knocked on his door. ("I ate his liver with some fava beans and a nice Chianti.")

More recently, in Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *The Girl Who Played*

with Fire, and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*), we have evil psychiatrist Peter Teleborian. Not only does he sexually molest adolescent Lisbeth Salander while she's under his care, he's also addicted to Internet kiddie porn.

Which begs the question — How did we get from Claude Rains to Hannibal the Cannibal, from Lee J. Cobb to Peter Teleborian?

Because, with rare exceptions, that's where we are. Look at how male therapists are now depicted in mainstream Hollywood films. Instead of being shown as caretakers, they're portrayed as troubled, sexually predatory, even psychotic. In the past two decades, we've had Bruce Willis in *The Color of Night*, Robert DeNiro in *Hide and Seek* and Brian Cox in *Running with Scissors*. And of course, as mentioned above, the wearily omnipresent Dr. Lecter, in *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Hannibal*, *Red Dragon* and most recently, *Hannibal Rising*.

Things aren't much better on the small screen. On TV shows like *Law and Order: SVU*, *The Closer* and *CSI*, a male

psychologist or psychiatrist is as likely to be the bad guy as any garden-variety contract killer or spurned lover. And now we even have a TV series called *Hannibal*, in which the cannibalistic Dr. Lecter is the protagonist.

Of course, as a former screenwriter myself (now a licensed psychotherapist), I know enough to be skeptical of Hollywood's notion of any profession... but still, I can't help wondering what's going on.

What makes this trend even more irksome is the contrast with the predominant depiction of female therapists on-screen: in recent years, we've had Barbra Streisand's Dr. Lowenstein in *The Prince of Tides*. Lorraine Bracco's Dr. Melfi on *The Sopranos*. Carolyn McCormack's earnest Dr. Olivet on the above-mentioned *Law and Order* franchise. And, just recently, Julia Ormond as Vincent D'Onofrio's therapist on *L&O: Criminal Intent*, as well as Callie Thorne as a sports psychologist on USA's *Necessary Roughness*. In some attempt at balance, I guess I should mention *Birds of Prey*. The

Write Mind to 17

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Mystery Writers of America

2013 Edgars Symposium Week MWA/National

May 1, 2013

Learning the Trade

How Agents Adjust to the New World
 Moderator: DANIEL J. HALE, MWA Executive VP
 Panelists: DAN CONAWAY, Writers House
 DAVID HALE SMITH, InkWell Literary Management
 BARBARA POELLE, Irene Goodman Literary Agency
 VICTORIA SKURNICK, Levine Greenberg Agency
 PAIGE WHEELER, Folio Literary Management
 Let There Be Write
 Who Helped Create You as a Writer
 Moderator: HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN, MWA National Board Member and Author (The Other Woman)
 Panelists: KIM FAY, 2013 Best First Edgar® Nominee (*The Map of Lost Memories*)
 DANIEL FRIEDMAN, 2013 Best First Edgar® Nominee (*Don't Ever Get Old*)
 SUSAN ELIA MACNEAL, 2013 Best First Edgar® Nominee (*Mr. Churchill's Secretary*)
 CHRIS PAVONE, 2013 Best First Edgar® Nominee (*The Expats*)
 MATTHEW QUIRK, 2013 Best First Edgar® Nominee (*The 500*)

The New Mean Streets: Will Future PIs Remember Chandler?

Moderator: REED FARREL COLEMAN, Former MWA EVP, 2-time Edgar® Nominee (*Onion Street*)
 Panelists: ACE ATKINS, 2013 Best Novel Nominee (*The Lost Ones*)
 KRIS MONTEE aka P.J. Parrish, 2013 Edgar® Banquet Chair (*Heart of Ice*)
 WALTER MOSLEY, 2013 Best Novel Nominee (*All I Did Was Shoot My Man*)
 OTTO PENZLER, 2013 Best Critical/Bio Nominee (*In Pursuit of Spenser*)

Is Any Subject in Juvenile/Young Adult Off Limits?

Moderator: JESS LOUREY, Chair, MWA Literacy Committee (*The Toadhouse Trilogy: Book One*)
 Panelists: KATHRYN BURAK, 2013 Best YA Nominee (*Emily's Dress and Other Missing Things*)
 ART CORRIVEAU, 2013 Juvenile Nominee (*13 Hangmen*)
 JACK FERRAILOLO, 2013 Best Juvenile Nominee (*The Quick Fix*)
 KAT ROSENFELD, 2013 Best YA Nominee

Creatures We Write...

Where Monsters Came From and Where They Will Go

Moderator: DANA CAMERON, Multi-Award Winning Author (*Seven Kinds of Hell*)
 CHARLAINE HARRIS, 2013 MWA President (*Dead Ever After*)
 TONI L.P. KELNER, Author, (Blast from the Past) S.J. ROZAN, Two-time Edgar® Award Winning Author (*Ghost Hero*)
 BEN H. WINTERS, 2013 Best PBO Nominee (*The Last Policeman*)

From the Writer's Desk:

Q&A with Ken Follett & Margaret Maron

Interviewer: OLIVE COGDILL, 2013 Raven Award Recipient
 Panelists: KEN FOLLETT, 2013 Grand Master
 MARGARET MARON, 2013 Grand Master

MWA Literacy Outreach

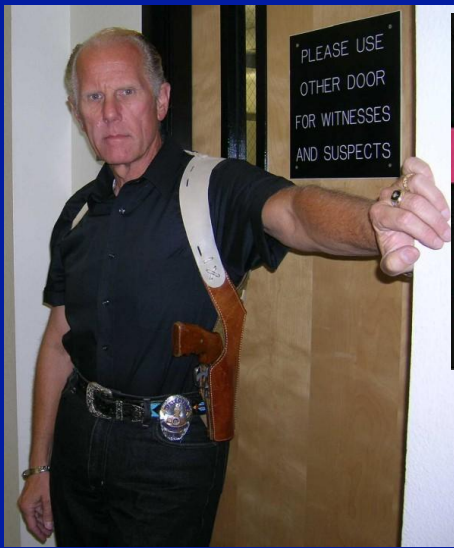
Nineteen percent of high school graduates cannot read. Each year they leave school and merge with the 14 percent — 32 million — adults in America who can't read. Every year, some of those adults who cannot read add to the 63% of inmates in the US who can't read. Please, help us break the cycle.

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/>





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GRAVE
SINS**



A DETECTIVE FEY CROAKER LAPD NOVEL
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KILL ME
AGAIN**



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The Art Of Interrogation

Saturday May 25

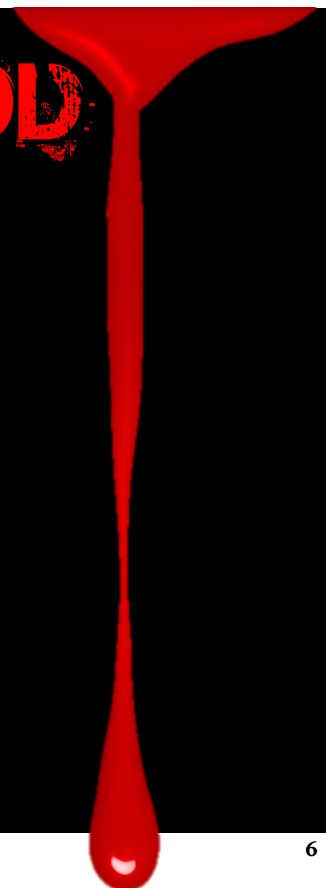
Join us for a conversation and interview with a master interrogator and learn the ins and outs of a good grilling of all types of criminals. Thirty-year LAPD veteran, and two-time detective of the year, Paul Bishop will be our guide through his techniques for performing interrogations — *and* writing 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 appeared 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
111 W. Mariposa Ave. • El Segundo, CA. 90245 • 310.524.2722
Free parking! Free event! Light refreshments!
Send RSVP to contact@socalmwa.com

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SoCal MWA Welcomes

- Karen Elene Dellabarca, Active
- Loren Latker, Affiliate
- Tinker Lindsay, Affiliate
- James. W. Ziskin, Active



The Pro Shop

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

By John Morgan Wilson



This month John Morgan interviews Author Harley Jane Kozak
www.harleyjanekozak.com

Kozak was a successful stage, film and TV actress in 2004 when she made her author debut with *Dating Dead Men*, which was honored with Agatha, Anthony, and Macavity Awards for Best First Mystery Novel. She's gone on to write three more novels in her popular series featuring greeting-card artist Wollie Shelley, as well as short stories that have appeared in a number of anthologies. Harley recently branched out into darker, supernatural territory with *Keepers of the Moon*, the second novel in the new Keeper series, which she's writing with two co-authors.

JMW: "As an actress with a thriving career, what attracted you to writing, and writing mystery novels in particular?"

HJK: "I've had a lifelong passion for writing, and in the mid-'90s took some writing classes at Santa Monica Community College and UCLA. And although I'd expected to act for the rest of my life, at some point I found myself at the movies or in the theatre thinking, *I wish I'd written that script*, rather than my usual, *I wish I'd played that part*, and that was my first clue that I was having some big midlife vocational shift. As for mysteries, I have had a love affair with them as long as I can remember — just like everyone reading this, I expect."

JMW: "As I recall, you worked on your first novel for something like ten years before *Dating Dead Men* came out in 2004. Why so long and what was the catalyst for the writing breakthrough?"

HJK: "Well, during that decade, I was still working at my day job — acting, got married and had three kids in the space of two years. But even so, I'm a slow writer. Or, maybe I'm a fast writer who rewrites incessantly. The breakthrough? I actually finished the novel."

JMW: "You chose to go lighter, rather than dark. Was that humorous tone conscious, or did the voice and style evolve and show itself to you as you wrote, which is so often the case?"

HJK: "The latter. I have aspirations to write profound, meaningful, poignant and even tragic prose, but it generally comes out...folksy."

JMW: Has your acting background been helpful to you as an author? Any processes that overlap?

HJK: I could do dialogue all day long, and character. I started, as most actors do, in theatre, where it's all *dialogue, dialogue, dialogue*. I love the minutiae of words, phrases, even punctuation. That's the genesis of character, the only real clues the actor has as to what the playwright intended, so that's my starting point. What I've had to work much harder at is plot structure, pacing, theme. The Big Picture stuff. If I were a director rather than an actor, I suspect it would be the other way around.

JMW: After four lighter Wollie Shelley mysteries, you've written *Keepers of the Moon*, which has just been published as part of the female-driven, supernatural Keeper series that you created with two co-authors. How did that come about?"

HJK: "I was invited by my friends Heather Graham and Alexandra Sokoloff to join them in writing a four-book series, with a



paranormal world we'd invent amongst ourselves. It sounded like too much fun to pass up. Mine is the second book in the series, although each book works as a standalone. We share settings, but have our own protagonists (who are cousins to one another) and overlapping secondary characters. I got to invent my own version of a mythical creature. I've always loved fantasy and science fiction and never thought I could write in the genre, but at heart it's just another murder mystery — with, in this case, some tall, sexy elves thrown in."

JMW: "Your work is available in hardcover, paperback, and as e-books. What challenges have you experienced in the new world of Internet publishing? Any advice for neophytes?"

HJK: "Yes! Neophytes, find someone more savvy than I am to advise you — that's my advice. I feel like I was the last one to hop on the train before it left the station and the whole landscape changed. It's been ten years since I sold my first novel and everything's different now. Some talented authors dropped out, bookstores closed, publishing companies merged, royalty statements transformed, with paperback and e-book sales trading places, and no one knows when the dust will settle. I have friends who saw opportunity and are doing exceptionally well in the world of digital publishing, but I find it easier to write books than learn new marketing skills. I probably should get over that."

JMW: "What's next for Harley Jane Kozak?"

HJK: "I've returned to my old stomping grounds, UCLA Extension, this time learning screenwriting — one more artistic venture that's harder than it looks, but obsessively fun. And when the screenplay's done, I'll go back to novels. I have three of them knocking around in my head, all of them mysteries. I find it difficult to write anything longer than a short story that doesn't have a corpse in it."



John Morgan Wilson is the author of eight novels in the Benjamin Justice series, including *Simple Justice*, which won an Edgar for Best First Novel. His short fiction has appeared in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine* and several anthologies.

TEK TOK

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

EDR "Black Box" Technology — What Your Protagonist Should Know....

By Sally Richards

Gone are the days when you could — in your novels, that is — kill someone in the wee morning hours, stick them in the trunk of their own car, drive it to the lonely cliffs off Hwy 1, or somewhere off of Mulholland, drag them into the driver's seat drenched in cheap whisky, place a brick on the gas pedal and roll them off the cliff with a full tank of petrol and watch them explode into flames licking the night sky. A crime such as this would certainly be called a tragic accidental death on the back pages of the *L.A. Times*. Not!

That's no accident — not now. Not ever again. Why? Because Big Brother is riding right along with most drivers — with a recording device filled with evidence that will hold up in a court of law...even if the box is the only witness. Funny thing? The driver owns that data, but has literally no way to get to it until it's sending them to prison, or saving their ass from a life sentence. They won't even know which until the data is pulled out and officially entered as evidence.

Turns out those fiction-based stories cooked up by the amphetamine-gnawed paranoid mind of Philip K. Dick weren't so fictional after all. The stories he wrote in the '50s, '60s and '70s didn't make it to the screen until after his death in the '80s, but *Blade Runner*, *Total Recall*, *A Scanner Darkly*, *The Adjustment Bureau* and *Minority Report* — all mysteries in their own right — warned us about *this* future. A time when we would be watched 24/7 by governments that needed to control crime and dissidents — electronically. When I originally read his stories I knew this wasn't the world the Jetsons promised me...it was *something* else. And although the movies were entertaining, for those in the know, it left us feeling *uneasy*. Why? Because, even way back then, we could see PKD's words slowly coming to pass with every line of code we wrote that seemed to start having a life of its own.

What does all this have to do with *you*? You need to know about *all* of it. You and your characters should become well versed in the technology that will become part of the law. You see, the *black box* is not some witness that can be threatened into changing testimony, killed, or disappeared. It can't even be sent to into witness protection to have its VIN ID changed. You're stuck with this witness, no matter what.

The masses will start seeing the cases going on right now, albeit thinly disguised, in *Law & Order* and *NCIS* episodes in the upcoming seasons...and you'll have lost your chance to be the cutting edge author who saw it all coming. The devil is in the details — and you and I both



Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray's little accident. He lived, he lied and the Black Box testified.

know that if you don't get it just right the people who are up on this stuff will be writing their Amazon reviews for your next book from their i6's — *and* sending you those unbearable slash letters ripping your work to shreds because of a single glitch about a car accident...a car accident where there was a new car involved — and *no* witnesses.

According to the Electric Frontier Foundation (EFF), a technology-based privacy advocacy group, the vast majority of new cars sold in the United States contain a device that continuously monitors the driver's behavior and vehicle performance. This so-called "black box" or Event Data Recorder (EDR) records at least the last several seconds of vehicle and driver data before and during a crash, ostensibly for use by crash investigators. But that's not the box's only use...not by far.

Here's some background; in 2006, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) laid down the rules that it would mandate EDRs in all new cars and light trucks. On the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) website, they explain it like this — *The NHTSA proposed a new standard that would capture valuable safety-related data in the seconds before and during a motor vehicle crash. The proposed rule would require automakers to install event data recorders (EDRs) — devices that collect specific safety-related data — in all light passenger vehicles beginning September 1, 2014.*

NHTSA opted out of notifying consumers about their black box friend riding around with them — people who purchased a car didn't even know they'd just paid for black box technology. They had *no idea* at all — it's not even in the manual. Maybe one of them was you? NHTSA gave manufacturers six years to comply. That time is nearly here. Now everyone is scrambling to decide what the box can collect and who is in charge of the data.

This is no future technology we're dealing with — this is the here and now. EDR data has been used to prosecute drivers all around the world — even when the black box is the only witness. Ninety-six percent of the newer cars on the road already have EDR technology in them — at least 150 million cars made by GM and Ford since the mid-1990s are driving around collecting data, some of it being used in criminal cases. It comes in handy to know when, exactly, you hit the brakes...before, or after, you drove through the crosswalk and plowed into a Boy Scout troop.

Many other countries, including the UK and Canada, have gone the same route. There is one country that has not adhered to the policy — German manufacturers have fought hard against complying because the installation of EDR is in direct defiance of their government's privacy laws.

On that same NHTSA site, they also have a very small sample of data that the black boxes would be mandated to collect — vehicle speed, whether the brake was activated in the moments before a crash, crash forces at the moment of impact, information about the state of the engine throttle, air bag deployment timing and air bag readiness prior to the crash and whether the vehicle occupant's seatbelt was buckled. But, of course, the small sample of items listed did not put a ceiling on the data the EDR could collect it just simply put a floor in place.

Nearly anyone can obtain this information with or without a warrant (thanks to The Patriot Act). You could find you're receiving notices on your radio/GPS panel, or your email/cellphone letting you know, for example, you're exceeding safe speed limits, or an add from a tire manufacturer reminding

— Tek Tok to 15



So You Want to be a Crime Fiction Writer?

Well then, have I got a conference for you...

By Holly West



Every two years, the Southern California chapters of the Mystery Writers of America (SoCalMWA) 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 SoCalMWA 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.

Personally, I have fond feelings about the CCWC. Back in 2009, I’d just finished the first draft of my first novel. At that point I’d only recently joined the MWA, and I was ready to start meeting other members, learning more about the craft of writing, and putting myself “out there.” The CCWC was the perfect place to do that.

Laurie R. King and Robert Crais were the keynote speakers at that first conference. I remember listening to their speeches, mesmerized and inspired. I learned craft in sessions led by writers like Gary Phillips, Bill Fitzhugh, Naomi Hirahara and Gayle Lynds. Though I wasn’t ready to query agents, I attended a session with agent Jill Marsal of the Marsal Lyon Literary Agency and later introduced myself at the agents cocktail reception. I even learned some basics about firearms from an NRA gun demonstration.

Subsequently, I’ve become more involved in the organization of the CCWC. In 2011, I coordinated the manuscript critiques for the conference. One of the attendees who paid for a consultation not only signed with the agent who critiqued his manuscript, but subsequently got a book deal. Not all critiques are this successful, of course, but meeting agents and editors and getting individual feedback from professional writers is a valuable experience.

The manuscript critique option for the 2013 conference is now closed, but attendees will have plenty of opportunities to pitch their projects to agents and editors during the conference, especially at the agents cocktail reception taking place on Saturday night.

As I look over the program for the 2013 CCWC, I can’t help but be impressed. Sessions like *The Road to Hollywood Screen Writing Tricks for Authors*, led by writer Alexandra Sokoloff, *Queries, Samples, and Dumb Author No-No’s*, featuring authors John deDakis, Rochelle Staab and Tammy Kaehler, editor Kristen Weber, agent David Hale Smith and *Inside the FBI* with FBI agent Thomas J. Leighton all offer writers

“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

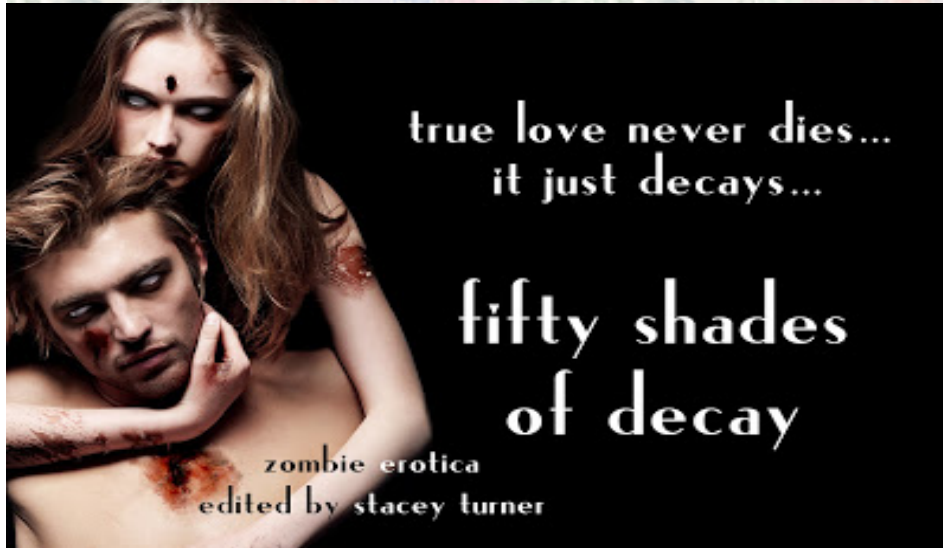
important information and an opportunity to ask questions directly. *First Timers — What They Wish They’d Known Before Their First Novel Debuted* features authors Matt Coyle, Edith Maxwell, Terri Nolan and Hank Phillippi Ryan, and *Hardboil (or Noir) Your Mystery* promises an enlightening and entertaining conversation with authors Eric Beetner, Paul Bishop, Gary Phillips and Seth Harwood. This is just a small sampling of the sessions offered at the 2013 California Crime Writers Conference.

To learn more about the CCWC and to register online, visit <http://ccwconference.org>. For the 2013 conference, I’m coordinating the manuscript critiques again and I’m also the registration coordinator. The extra work is well worth it — as I imagine other volunteers will agree. As great as that first conference was, the CCWC has evolved into an event I’m truly proud to be a part of. Are you attending the conference and interested in volunteering? Email ccwconference@gmail.com. I look forward to seeing you there!

Holly West is a crime fiction writer based in Venice, California. Her short stories appear in several anthologies and her debut novel, a historical mystery set in 1678 London, will be published by Carina Press in early 2014. Find her online at <http://hollywest.com>.

Over the Transom

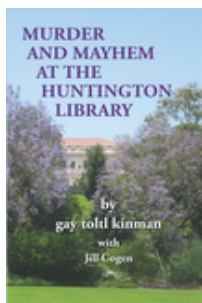
Do you have announcements for your fellow SoCal MWA members? Do you have a new book or story out? Won an award? Is your book-signing coming up and you'd like to see familiar faces? Are you a publisher with a call for content? Do you have an event our members might be interested in? Do you have a mantra that guarantees a bestseller? Let us know! Send your announcements by April 22 to be include in the May issue of The March of Crime to TheMarchOfCrime@gmail.com



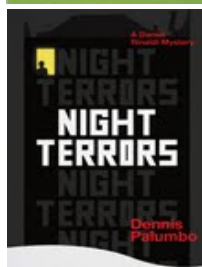
Congratulations to Craig Faustus Buck — his short story *2 is for Taboo* has been accepted for an anthology of zombie erotica entitled *Fifty Shades of Decay* published on Valentine's Day by Angelic Knight Press!

John Morgan Wilson has a short story, *The Bald and the Beautiful*, in the May issue of *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, which should be out shortly. Meanwhile, John has sold film rights to another story, *Edward at the Edge*, published years ago in *Ellery Queen*, to publisher and filmmaker Stephen Soucy. Well done, John!

Congratulations to Andrew Kaplan! His *Scorpion Deception*, the latest internationally bestselling Scorpion series, will be published May 28 by HarperCollins. The most recent Scorpion book, *Scorpion Winter*, debuted as the #5 bestselling fiction book on Amazon and the #10 bestselling ebook in the U.S. In response to a request from HarperCollins and Twentieth Century Fox TV, Kaplan has agreed to write an original novel to be published by William Morrow based on the award-winning red-hot television series, *Homeland*, starring Claire Danes, Damian Lewis and Mandy Patinkin. No final title yet for the book, for the moment HarperCollins/William Morrow is just calling it *The Homeland Novel*. This prequel (the action takes place before the series began), which is the official series tie-in novel and an original exciting thriller on its own, will be released on September 3rd, to coincide with the upcoming premiere of Season three of the series.



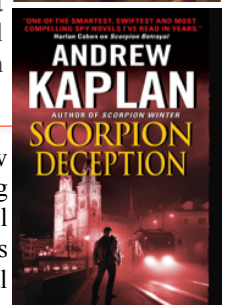
Gay Tolt Kinman's new book *Murder and Mayhem at The Huntington Library* is now available on Amazon in print and on Kindle. The book is a collection of short stories featuring three characters — Jane Jillson, Investigator; Spyder, an inept thief; and two library school students who use what they've learned to solve crimes in the library. Almost all of the stories have been previously published, and each is available individually on Kindle. Gay Tolt Kinman has a story *The Cat* in the new anthology *Death and the Detective* published by Elm Books, and will be signing with the other authors at the Pasadena Litfest on Saturday May 11 from 10 - 5; and at the Book Release Party at Book 'Em Mystery Bookstore on Sunday May 19 at 2 p.m.



Coming in May! Congratulations to Dennis Palumbo on his book *Night Terrors*, the third book in the acclaimed series, psychologist and police consultant Daniel Rinaldi is asked to treat a retired FBI profiler tormented by terrifying nocturnal visions. Available soon, pre-order now on Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com and your local independent bookstores.

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.



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Congratulations!

The Edgar Allan Poe Awards honor the best in mystery fiction, non-fiction, and television, published or produced in 2012. The Edgar® Awards will be presented to the winners at our 67th Gala Banquet, May 2, 2013 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City. We want to applaud our local SoCal nominees D.P. Lyle, MD and Kim Fay!!! Best First Novel: *The Map of Lost Memories* by Kim Fay (Random House Publishing-Ballantine). Best Fact Crime: *More Forensics and Fiction: Crime Writers' Morbidly Curious Questions Expertly Answered* by D.P. Lyle, MD (Medallion Press).

Congratulations, Kim and Doug!



You *must* check this out!

Share with all your friends who don't have an agent! Share it with all the writers you know! Rochelle Staab and Daryl Wood Gerber created this great how-to video about how to (and how not to) get an agent. It's a fabulously entertaining short worthy of a nod at Sundance — check it out!
<http://www.rochellestaab.com/curiosities.php>

Sisters in Crime & SoCal MWA Present California Crime Writers Conference

June 22 & 23

At The Hilton Pasadena, 168 S. Los Robles Avenue,
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Special Guests Sue Grafton & Elizabeth George

A weekend of outstanding workshops geared to the needs of
both emerging and established mystery writers

See www.ccwconference.org



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

Over the Transom



Los Angeles Times
FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

SoCalMWA is hosting a booth again at the fabulous Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on the campus of USC this April 20 and 21. Our booth is nestled in what I like to call the "mystery section" with the Sisters in Crime LA booth and Mystery Ink bookstore. Our booth is number #377 and you can find out more details at <http://events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks/>. There are still a few spots left to volunteer at our booth on Sunday. If you are interested, email us at contact@socalmwa.com



Do you have a service? Own a business? Teaching a class? Offering editing services? Creating office feng shui? Trying to land an agent? Have a matchmaking service for mystery lovers only? Want to put a full-page picture of your latest book right here for your fellow members to see? Reach industry professionals & eager readers — all right here!

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Over the Transom

Arizona Daily Star



with The University of Arizona Tucson Festival of Books

By Jeri Westerson

The fifth annual Tucson Festival of Books is done. For one weekend in March, the campus of the University of Arizona is taken over by tents full of authors, publishers, bookstores, gift items and more.

This was my first time at the festival, and like many who traveled from other states, I was expecting Arizona snowbird weather. But instead, fest-goers and booth-sitters were rushing around with plastic tarps valiantly covering their wares from the rainy weather. Saturday was cold. But we braved it anyway. I signed in a few booths — the Desert Sleuth Phoenix chapter of Sisters in Crime, and two indie bookseller booths; Mostly Books and Tucson's only mystery indie, Clues Unlimited. We spent a lot of time wiping down the books and moving tables further back into the tents. It didn't seem to deter the crowds, though old-timers told me the attendance was down from what they experienced in the past. Not only was the weather not cooperating but the university was also hosting one of its last basketball games of the year. (They won, by the way. Go Wildcats!)

Characters in costume right out of popular children's books, strolled the campus, competing with the aroma of kettle corn in the air as well as the shouts of rabid evangelistic students brandishing hostile signs. The full breadth of humanity on display, to be sure.

That evening, I had the pleasure of meeting some of our fellow Arizona chapter members, and we chatted over guacamole and margaritas, singing along with the mariachis on the restaurant's stage. I encouraged our Arizona members to plan a local event that our chapter can sponsor. My twofold reasons for this were to open awareness to other local authors about our organization in the Arizona area, and also to let the Arizona members know that we care about *them* and want their active participation. Since the majority of our

Tucson to 14



Panel with David Polin, Michael Palmer, Dana Stabinow and Jeri Westerson.



From the MWA tent, Darrell James, Travis Richardson and Linda Joffe Hull.
Photo by Travis Richardson



(L) Rebecca Dalke, Darrell James, Deborah J. Ledford, Leslie Kohler. (R) Jeri Westerson, Roni Olson, Susan Cummings-Miller, Teresa Wong, Travis Richardson.
Photo courtesy of Darrell James

Over the Transom

Tucson from 13

chapter members are situated in Southern California, L.A. is where most of our events will likely happen. But we mustn't forget our chapter members who are scattered across Arizona, Las Vegas, and Hawaii.

Our booth was mostly manned by chapter and national board member Darrell James and chapter member Travis Richardson. Those intrepid fellows risked wind and rain to stand their ground, and my hat's off to them. We handed out brochures, talked up MWA and its benefits, and sold some swag, too (t-shirts, book bags, mugs, and caps with our social logo), adding to our chapter's coffers.

Sunday dawned clear and warmed up nicely. I had three panels, all on Sunday, yucking it up with the likes of Michael Palmer, Dana Stabinow, Gregg Hurwitz, Alan Jacobson, Thomas Perry, and Andrew Gross, and reconnecting with authors whom I have only virtually met before. All the panels and workshops seemed well-attended, with some even having to close their doors to prevent overfilling the room.

The readers I ran into seemed to truly appreciate the event. With only a few bookstores in the area, it is normally tough to get to see their favorite authors. Having them all gathered in one spot was a, "Real treat," said one enthusiastic reader.

SoCalMWA has participated in the festival for a few years now and I definitely see us continuing at this valuable resource. I recommend jotting the date on your calendar for next year and taking the trip. You can man the booth and sign your books. It's a great way to open yourself to new readers and at the same time, alert attendees about our fabulous organization.



Robert S. Levinson follows *The Beauty with the Million-Dollar Brains*, in the May issue of *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* with another story set during the Golden Age of Hollywood — *In the Land of Make-Believe* — scheduled for the forthcoming July/August double-issue of *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. *Make-Believe* marks the reappearance of detective Chris Blanchard, MGM Studio "fixer" Howard Strickling, and others who figured prominently in Bob's 2012 novel, *A Rhumba in Waltz Time*. Levinson will be signing *Rhumba* and his current novel, *Phony Tinsel* at various LA Times Festival Book Fest events.



Los Angeles Times
FESTIVAL OF BOOKS
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



SoCalMWA is hosting a booth again at the fabulous Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on the campus of USC this April 20 and 21. Our booth is nestled in what I like to call the "mystery section" with the Sisters in Crime LA booth and Mystery Ink bookstore. Our booth is number #377 and you can find out more details at <http://events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks/>. There are still a few spots left to volunteer at our booth on Sunday. If you are interested, email us at contact@socalmwa.com

Tek Tok from 8

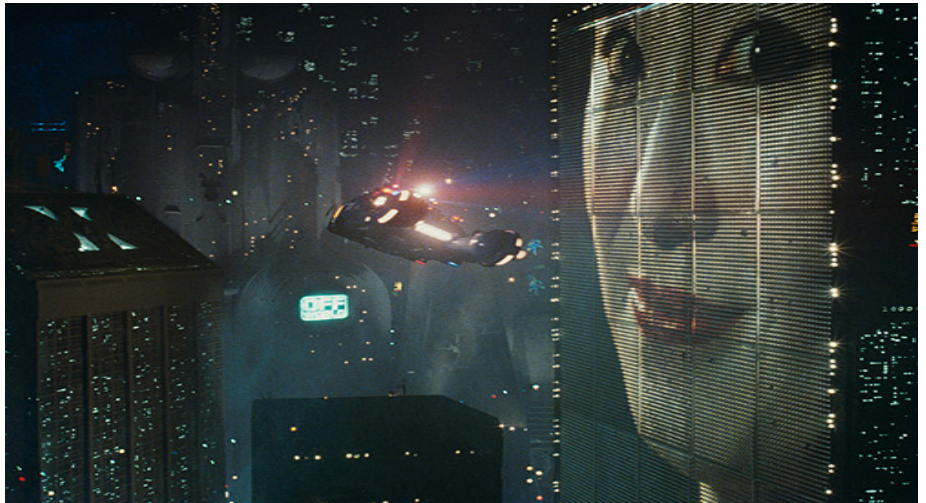
your tread or an ad from Firestone reminding you to buy new tires. Will speeding notices be sent from your insurance carrier who might even be adjusting your premiums mile by mile? What happens if you lend your special edition Ferrari California 30 to a friend who decides to open it up on the 15 going to Vegas? Are you responsible when you get a notice that your insurance has been cancelled due to speeds in excess of 120 mph — and what about that ticket in the mail for \$5,000 (thanks to all of the triple-fine construction zones) from the Nevada Highway Patrol in the mail? The technology is in place to do all of this.

Don't say, *It ain't so...* its already happened. Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray of Massachusetts totaled a government-owned vehicle in 2012. Of course, he told police that he was wearing a seatbelt — and was not speeding before the crash. Through the black box data retrieved from his car, police found he was speeding at 75 mph in a 65 mph zone, before accelerating to more than 100 mph — and definitely was *not* wearing his seat belt. Murray was not issued a citation at the time of the collision, but after police examined the vehicle's black box they issued him a \$555 ticket for speeding in excess of 100 mph.

Car rental companies have already begun seeing how far they can get with their black box data. Last year, a national car rental agency located in Connecticut began charging its customers for "excessive wear and tear on car" each time a driver sped in excess of 79 mph for more than two-minutes. When that occurred, a charge of \$150 — justified by a tiny font clause in the rental contract the driver had signed — was charged and hit the customer's credit card immediately...again and again. Many customers returned home early from trips because their credit card limit had been reached before they'd even gotten to their hotel. Cases regarding the use of this kind of data to charge fees are being heard by judges all over the country at this very minute.

And if that's not bad enough, just like anything else — anyone can bleed money out of your personal data. Imagine electronic billboards changing as you drive up because they know you like to buy Big Macs at the McDonald's drive-thru — and there's one coming up on the next exit. The billboard has your name on it, perhaps even an image from your last visit (they are already filming you) with an offer for a half-price Big Mac meal. Targeted advertising would finally be defined. This isn't the future, all of the data to do this is here, especially in states like California where your Social Security number is now attached to your driver's license ID number, and the DMV has no problem selling your data to anyone who will pay a background company to do so. They will gladly sell your data in bulk to advertisers, whether or not that includes your Social Security number is yet to be seen, but just about everyone else has it. Remember HIPAA? You should see what that *privacy policy* allows them to do with your data! Believe me, everyone has your data now.

If insurance companies could cut down on sending people out to accident scenes when all they'd have to do is look at the data from your black box and the box of the car you hit? *Whew!* That would save them some money (no need for law firms to hire PI's looking for witnesses except in rare cases). Did you know the insurance industry is one of the strongest lobbying forces in America? Insurance comes up right under guns, pharma and banks (guns, drugs & money) and cell/cable companies. They put a lot of cash into politicians' pockets (campaign and otherwise).



Philip K. Dick's future world in *Blade Runner* where someone is always watching

So who owns the evidence? It is clear that the EDR is part of the vehicle, and the data in the EDR belongs to the vehicle owner. Police, insurers, attorneys and investigators may only gain access to the data with owner consent. Without consent, they will need a court order or a discovery process (Federal Rule 34 or 45, or similar request) to allow access to inspect and download the data from the owner's vehicle. In some less tech savvy locations, many police departments don't even know how to go about retrieving the data, or securing the box (manufacturers locate it in different areas of the car — under the driver's seat, near the fuse box by your legs, behind the dash).

Most manufacturers have integrated the black box technology into the airbag control module — this was no accident. It needs to tell the airbag when to deploy, and it also makes mucking around with the black box a Federal offence. With all the talk of dismantling EDRs by the public, some legal eagles say that future cases of tampering would probably disqualify the insured from collecting payouts, or even being covered from liability against someone they've hit. It's a slippery slope we've found ourselves on.

But, have no fear, these black boxes can also be tweaked by a hack, a cold solder connection that looks like it was done in the factory, a good fuse replaced by a burned out one, or a jammer thrown in the glove box to keep the data from being transmitted live-time. The end game being that the loss of an air bag to deploy could kill someone, and jammers are actually illegal and carry fines in excess of \$120,000 and Federal prison time. You can kill someone and get penalized less. So, your privacy is going to cost you. Of course, even handling the black boxes is like holding a hand grenade — one might go off at any time to send a narc signal to bring the FCC kicking down your door to slap handcuffs on you. But don't worry, it's like owning an illegal cable box, there will always be people out there willing to do this kind of work for you.

The FCC — who you will have to deal with if you tamper with your black box — is one of the country's most powerful arms. They need no warrant and they can come in and take what

they want and haul you off in handcuffs. I've had some experience with them as a teen when their tracking truck showed up outside of my parent's Silicon Valley home as I was doing some experiments with amplitude modulation modification and taking over the airwaves.... Exciting stuff!

Legal issues and laws will come into question as we see legal decisions surrounding EDR technologies being made and challenged, and laws may even take a turn as you're writing the last sentence of your latest book. Don't worry, these laws are going to go to and fro like a ping pong ball. Nothing will be settled for a very long time, but you will need to integrate these fragile standards into your author technology bible so this techno-savvy generation won't trash your books. There's no room for error, these kids — people under 35 — are smart and know what's going on — you don't want one of their cutting, *Didn't you know that...* letters in your email.

This certainly isn't the flying car future the Jetsons promised me — this is Big Brother sitting with you in your car future George Orwell promised us — and the ever watching government PKD brought even closer to home in *Blade Runner*. As you can surmise, the world of mystery writing just became a whole lot more complicated.

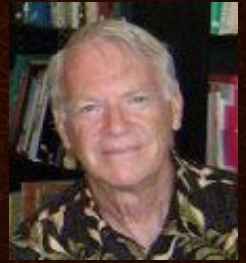


Sally Richards is a technologist, hacker and author of *FutureNet* (Wiley 2002) that outlined what is happening today. She wrote the first book about the tech bubble — before the crash and is a consultant to startups and investment groups on technology viability. Her writing has appeared in *Newsweek* and other media outlets worldwide. She authored *Inside Business Incubators and Corporate Ventures* (Wiley), is a fellow at The World Internet Center in Silicon Valley and was a featured speaker at the infamous DEFCON (2003), the world's largest underground hacking conference. Sally is a paranormal researcher, investigator and author, her book *Ghosthunting Southern California* (Clerisy Press) came out on 2012.

Art as a Job



By Dan Pollock



Several years ago I posted a blog titled *Quantity before Quality* in writing. The focus was thriller-mystery by master John D. MacDonald. Coming home after World War II, he taught himself to write — starting with pulp fiction by working twelve to fourteen hour days, seven days a week.

That self-imposed apprenticeship, as I pointed out, was very much in keeping with Malcolm Gladwell's now celebrated formula (in *Outliers*) of 10,000 hours to achieve mastery in a chosen field. Gladwell cites a surprising spectrum of exemplars, from Mozart to the Beatles, Bill Gates and the top Canadian hockey players.

In his first four months of writing, MacDonald completed 800,000 words of typed manuscript and kept, "At least thirty stories in the mail to the magazines at all times." He papered his small workroom with form rejection slips and lost twenty pounds. In short-story format, he estimated he wrote the equivalent of ten full-length books in those four months — "A classic example of learning by doing. Had I done a novel a year, it would have taken me ten years to acquire the precision and facility I acquired in four months," MacDonald once said.

Even so, after that grueling start, MacDonald was barely eking out a living. By the second year he said extreme financial pressures were eased, and he continued to labor forward on a decades-long path to best-sellerdom.

For years, battling my own laziness, I marveled at this four-month chrysalis of effort in which JDM metamorphosed himself into a great storyteller. From what source did he summon the *true grit* to work himself that hard day after day — and where might I find a similar motivation? It was only the other day that I came across an additional paragraph in *John D. MacDonald*

by Davod Geherin that helps explain what made Johnny write:

It turns out he simply didn't know any better. Having encountered no other writers (he had just returned home from the war, remember), MacDonald had no clear idea how a writer ought to go about his work. He recalls, "I thought you got up in the morning and went to work and worked till lunch and then went back to work until the day was over — with good business habits, as in any other job. It wasn't until my habit patterns were firmly embedded that I discovered that writers tended to work a couple of hours and then to brood about it the rest of the day."

MacDonald, in other words, treated the creative process as a job of work. Other literary prodigies obviously shared MacDonald's work ethic. At his peak, Georges Simenon produced six novels a year and churned out his best-selling mysteries featuring Inspector Maigret a chapter a day for eleven or twelve days running. During this time, the Belgian master remained reclusive, I found this reference in *Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews* "I don't see anybody, I don't speak to anybody, I don't take phone calls — I live just like a monk. All the day I am one of my characters. I feel what he feels." By the time Simenon typed *Fin*, he was utterly exhausted. This is writing as performance (which reminds one of two great writer/actors — Shakespeare and Dickens).

John Creasey, an English crime writer, seems to have outstripped both Simenon and MacDonald in output. In 1937 alone, twenty-nine of Creasey's books were published. According to the *John Creasey Online Resource*, He was so prolific that a comprehensive catalogue of his work has never been completed. Even the man himself lost count of the number of titles that he wrote.

But here's something I found that further shows what hard work can create. He published 562 books following 743 rejection slips, with worldwide sales [as of November 1971] of more than 80 million copies in at least 5000 different editions in 28 different languages.

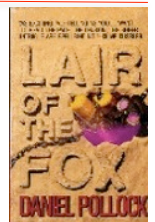
Like MacDonald, Dickens and many another novelists, Creasey worked assorted jobs, including clerical, factory, and sales, while trying to establish himself as a writer. For more colorful employment histories, check out the CVs of Jack London and Louis L'Amour.

Of course, sheer antlike industry is no guarantee of success. I offer a cautionary tale from the Guinness Book of World Records (between 1976 until 1982) of one William Gold, labeled the world's Least Successful Author who earned only 50 cents after 18 years of unceasing labor.

Maybe that's some support for Simenon's advice, "I think that everyone who does not need to be a writer, who thinks he can do something else, ought to do something else."



Dan Pollock is the author of four thriller novels: *Lair of the Fox*, *Duel of Assassins*, *Orinoco* (published by Pocket Books as *Pursuit Into Darkness*), and a specially commissioned "logistics" thriller, *Precipice*. He and his wife, Connie, a writer-editor, live in Southern California with their two children.



Did You Know?

According to the FBI's 2011 findings (most recent), there are approximately 1.4 million active street, prison, and OMG (outlaw motorcycle gang) gang members comprising more than 33,000 gangs in the United States. Gang membership increased most significantly in the Northeast and Southeast regions, although the West and Great Lakes regions boast the highest number of gang members. Neighborhood-based gangs, hybrid gang members and national-level gangs such as the Sureños are rapidly expanding in many jurisdictions. Many communities are also experiencing an increase in ethnic-based gangs such as African, Asian, Caribbean and Eurasian gangs. Gangs are responsible for an average of 48 percent of violent crime in most jurisdictions and up to 90 percent in several others, according to NGIC analysis.

the short-lived superhero series of some years back, in which Mia Sara played an evil female psychiatrist named Dr. Harley Quinn. Grandiose, homicidal, the works. Then again, what else would you expect of the Joker's girlfriend?

Don't get me wrong — there have been the occasional positive portrayals of male therapists on film and TV: Judd Hirsch in the Oscar-winning *Ordinary People*. Robin Williams in *Good Will Hunting*. And, to cite *Law and Order* again, J.K. Simmons' wonderful, testy police consultant, Dr. Emil Skoda. Not to mention Gabriel Byrne in HBO's *In Treatment*, playing a therapist who, though certainly flawed, ultimately has his heart in the right place.

But these are clearly exceptions. The question is, why? What happened? How did the on-screen image of male therapist go from father figure to the most likely suspect?

Maybe this change simply reflects one that's occurred in the culture at large. After all, the past fifty years has seen a challenge to the whole idea of male authority. In terms of image, professors, doctors and scientists of the male persuasion have suddenly gone from being saints to sinners. Same with male therapists. No wonder today's TV and film writers find them irresistible as villains. All that education, respectability and power, turned to the Dark Side.

But it wasn't just society's growing distrust of male authority that turned Lee J. Cobb's gray suit and pipe into Anthony Hopkins' face muzzle and

leather restraints. There was also a trend, starting in the '50s, of popular films that threw extremely cold water on the notion of psychological treatment as a positive tool to alleviate suffering. Films like *The Manchurian Candidate* (and its recent remake), *The Snake Pit*, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* all suggested the nefarious ways that psychology could be exploited or used for evil, often conflating its concepts with those of brainwashing and drug-induced manipulation.

Even such recent films as *A Beautiful Mind* depicted the horrendous misuse of electro-convulsive therapy — at the hands, of course, of a coolly assured, unfeeling male psychiatrist. (As opposed to its somewhat benign use in the first season finale of Showtime's *Homeland*, in which Claire Danes' sister, a kindly psychiatrist, looks on with concern.)

Let's face it, the world's a pretty treacherous, confusing place nowadays. Our most sturdy institutions — our government, religion, education — traditionally headed by men, seem to be letting us down. It's no different with psychotherapy. Fairly or not, I believe the way in which male therapists are portrayed on screen reflects a similar disenchantment with both the profession in general, and its male practitioners in particular.

Which is why, when I started writing a series of mystery novels (*Mirror Image*, *Fever Dream*, the upcoming *Night Terrors*), I wanted my amateur sleuth to be a therapist. Flawed, yes. Psychologist Daniel Rinaldi is certainly that — troubled, stubborn and with a temper. He's also someone trying desperately to make a

difference. He wants to help others on their path to healing, even if only as a way to come to some kind of peace within himself.

My point is, if Daniel Rinaldi's mission as a therapist is to treat those crippled by trauma, I guess one of my goals as a writer is to help resuscitate the image of the mental health professional. Particularly male. Particularly in today's harsh, cynical world.

Because nowadays, much like Catholic priests, the male therapist suffers from the failed expectations of a disillusioned public.

He's been transformed, regrettably, into just another stock character — our distrust and suspicion buffed to a stereotypical finish by the narrative demands of TV and film.

So now, to the hallowed celluloid images of *tough* private eye, *brilliant* physician and *ruthless* attorney, we can add the unethical, manipulative and frequently homicidal male therapist. Coming to a theater — or TV screen — near you!



Formerly a Hollywood screenwriter (*My Favorite Year*; *Welcome Back, Kotter*, etc.), Dennis Palumbo, www.dennispalumbo.com, is now a licensed psychotherapist and author of *Writing From the Inside Out* (John Wiley). 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 crime novel, *Mirror Image* (Poisoned Pen Press), is the first in a series featuring psychologist Daniel Rinaldi. The sequel, *Fever Dream*, is on sale now. The latest, *Night Terrors*, comes out in May.

Over the Transom



Julia Spencer-Fleming



Nancy Pickard

Literary Guild of Orange County

Festival of Women Authors

Two Stellar Mystery Authors to Star in Orange County

Among the authors featured during the 20th Annual Festival of Women Authors presented by the Literary Guild of Orange County will be Julia Spencer-Fleming — winner of so many awards including the Agatha, Anthony, Macavity, Barry and Gumshoe, and Nancy Pickard — Winner of all of the above awards also — and Founder of Sisters in Crime. Other headliners for this May 11th event at the Irvine Marriott Hotel include Fannie Flagg — author of *Fried Green Tomatoes* among other novels and Amy Dickinson — successor to Dear Abby, syndicated columnist *Ask Amy*. Visit our Website to register — <http://www.LGOC.org> and to read about our other presenters. See you in Orange County on May 11th. Thank you.

— Joan Hansen, Founder, Men of Mystery and Literary Guild of Orange County

Calendar

2013

April 11

Jeri Westerson will be speaking and signing books San Diego Mystery Club Dinner at the Best Western Seven Seas Hotel 411 Hotel Cir S, San Diego, CA 92108 Call for reservations 619-206-0287

April 13

SoCal MWA Luncheon
Honing Your Process Panel
Bestselling authors discuss how they kickstart their manuscripts from concept to completion. Thomas Perry, Kate Carlisle, Darrell James, Rochelle Staab & Daryl Wood Gerber.
11:30-2:00p Maria's Kitchen, Encino
www.socialmwa.com

April 18

Jeri Westerson will be speaking and signing books 11 am to 2 pm - California Federation of Women's Club Author's Luncheon at the Windjammer at the Holiday Inn Express 1080 Navigator Dr., Ventura, CA 93001, Reservations required, call 805-469-7812

April 20 & 21

SoCalMWA is hosting a booth again at the fabulous Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on the campus of USC this April 20 and 21. Our booth is nestled in the "mystery section" with the Sisters in Crime LA booth and Mystery Ink

bookstore. Our booth is number #377 and you can find out more details at <http://events.latimes.com/festivalofbooks/>. There are still a few spots left to volunteer at our booth on Sunday. If you are interested, email us at contact@socialmwa.com

April 20 & 21

Jeri Westerson will be speaking and signing books at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books on the University of Southern California campus in Los Angeles (USC). She'll be manning booths for Sisters in Crime and Mystery Writers of America and signing at Mystery Ink.

May 11

The 20th Annual Festival of Women Authors presented by the Literary Guild of Orange County at the Irvine Marriott Hotel. Authors Fannie Flagg, Amy Dickinson, Nancy Pickard, Julia Spencer Fleming, Elizabeth Letts, Sere Prince Halverson, Tatjana Soli and Sonya Sones. See www.lgoc.org

May 11

Gay Toltl Kinman has a story The Cat in the new anthology Death and the Detective published by Elm Books, and will be signing with the other authors at the Pasadena Litfest 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

May 11

LitFest Pasadena 2.0 will feature more than 75 authors, storytellers, performers, and exhibitors for a day that will explore an eclectic mix of subjects such as Southern California surf culture, local history, children's and young adult literature, and more.

May 19

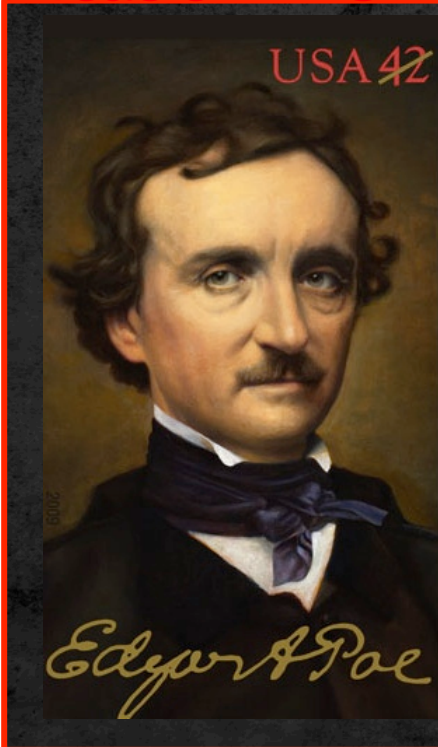
Gay Toltl Kinman has a story The Cat in the new anthology Death and the Detective published by Elm Books, and will be signing with the other authors at the Book Release Party at Book 'Em Mystery Bookstore on Sunday May 19 at 2 p.m.

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 Sue Grafton & Elizabeth George. A weekend of outstanding workshops geared to the needs of both emerging and established mystery writers
See www.cccwconference.org



Last Word



“Deep into that darkness peering,
long I stood there, wondering,
fearing, doubting, dreaming dreams
no mortal ever dared to dream
before.”

— Edgar Allen Poe

