

February 2019



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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BACKYARD BOOK SWAP & FOOD TRUCK LUNCH

Saturday, February 9, 2019
12–3 p.m.

Join us at chapter president Glen Erik Hamilton's Burbank home for one of our most popular events! Clear out your old books and fill that space with new ones. Bring a book bag (or two)!

This is a members only event—plus ones & kids are welcome.

Admission, drinks, and dessert are free.
Meal tickets for a prominent LA food truck are only \$5.

[RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW](#)

Tam Luncheon

February 24
Los Angeles

Book Publicist Panel

[More info](#)

Save the Date!

Los Angeles Times Festival of Books

April 13–14
USC Campus

[More Info](#)



The President's Rap Sheet

Glen Erik Hamilton

I'm starting this Rap Sheet on the plane returning from Seattle, where I was a guest of the American Library Association's Midwinter conference. Or more accurately: My publisher was an ALA sponsor, so I finagled a trip north to foist advance copies of my next book onto librarians and other heavenly people involved in putting literature and readers together.

The dedication of my second novel reads "*To Mom and Dad, who took me to the library and let me run.*" That's both metaphorical—my folks never put restrictions on what I should read—and literal. At ALA, I met some librarians from my home branches who might have told a young Glen to slow down, once upon a time.

Authors and librarians have a mutual admiration society that borders on the ridiculous. Librarians love us for our irrational dedication to making fiction out of thin air, and we love them for tackling the insane levels of education and effort it takes to manage information in this age. And somehow, we both still adore words, and books, and people who adore words and books. Any chance you get to hang with librarians, take it. Authors get more attention, but librarians have the best stories.

We're edging into the busy season for our chapter: Our Book Swap on February 9, the first Tam O'Shanter luncheon of the year on February 24, and the Tucson Festival of Books March 2 and 3. Make sure to RSVP for the February events on the chapter website and watch your email for more information about Tucson very soon!

And finally, huge congratulations to our Edgar and Agatha Award nominees from SoCal! **Ellen Byron** (Agatha, Best Contemporary Novel, MARDI GRAS MURDER), **Naomi Hirahara** (Edgar, Best Paperback Original, HIROSHIMA BOY), and **Leslie S. Klinger** (Edgar, Best Critical/Biographical, CLASSIC AMERICAN CRIME FICTION OF THE 1920s). We'll be cheering you on!

All Best,
Glen

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Jennifer Younger

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Like us on Facebook
<https://facebook.com/groups/72570009680>

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

It's been awhile since I sat down to write on a novel. I've got a five-year-old WIP that hasn't seen the light of day since before Christmas, plus two or three other books started that may or may not ever get developed into anything more than what they are currently. I specify 'novel' because I've written plenty of short stories. I've kind of used them to keep me afloat in the years since my novels were published.

But as far as novels are concerned, I've fallen into that all-too-common writer's trap of not finishing what I start, and it's taken a toll.

I made a decision in early December to give myself the gift of *not* writing. At the time, I'd lost every bit of enthusiasm, inspiration, desire, my muses—whatever you want to call it—for storytelling, and creating in general. The holidays seemed like a good time to give in to the ennui and pretend I never had aspirations to write in the first place.

Two weeks into January, I began to worry. In spite of the break I'd taken, the numbness was still there. I had obligations to meet, and though there's nothing like a deadline to motivate, I couldn't help looking beyond those projects and into the future. Had this ten-year writing obsession just been a phase? And if it was just a phase, what was next for me?

I put those worries aside and tackled my immediate deadlines. I edited an anthology of short stories last year which will come out in March, so much of my recent energy has been focused on its launch. And while I'm not back to writing fiction yet, I'm beginning to see a glimmer of passion that's been absent these last six months.

All of this has clarified some things for me. 2019 will be a year of exploration and possibly re-invention, a year of saying yes when my inclination is to say no. And I'll work on projects I'm excited about rather than forcing myself to adhere to self-manufactured ideas of what I *should* be doing rather than what I *want* to do. I'm fortunate to have some freedom, I might as well exercise it.

Here's what I know for sure: You haven't seen the last of me yet.

Holly

The March of Crime is the newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America.

Editor: [Holly West](#)

Opinions expressed herein are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Mystery Writers of America Southern California Chapter.

Contact us at:
themarchofcrime@gmail.com

**Join our SoCalMWA
Yahoo! Group**

Email SoCalMWA-subscribe@yahoo.com to join
(members only)

FRESHBLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new and returning members

Sandy Braccey



Jennifer J. Chow

Jennifer Chow's #ownvoices pet mystery series will be published by Berkley/Penguin Random House in 2020. She also writes the Winston Wong Cozy Mysteries under J.J. Chow. Her short fiction has been published in *Over My Dead Body!* magazine. Along with MWA, she's active in Sisters in Crime and Crime Writers of Color. Learn more about Jennifer and her work at www.jenniferjchow.com.



Barbara Schreibke

Barbara Schreibke makes her living in community mental health, working equally as a grant writer and in supportive housing for people who have experienced serious mental illnesses, addiction, and homelessness. She has a bachelor's degree in English, a master's degree in Clinical Psychology, and trained as a therapist. She has also worked as a special education educator, nursing assistant, and technical and promotional writer, among other jobs. She spends her free time with animals and in nature, and supporting public libraries. She recently returned to fiction writing and has had some success with short stories.

TUCSON FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

The Tucson Festival of Books is coming March 2-3 and once again SoCalMWA is sponsoring a booth for members to sell and sign. The event, held on the University of Arizona campus, is notable for its great weather and big crowds (over 125,000 last year). It's an opportunity to promote your books and meet readers and other authors. Contact Fred Andersen at fxandersen@msn.com to sign up—free—or get more info.

Authors looking for another place to sell and sign (not the SoCalMWA booth) at the *L.A. Times* Festival of Books April 13–14 may also contact Fred.

OVER the TRANSOM

All of **Patrick Ian O'Donnell's** novels are now available on Amazon in both paperback and e-book formats.

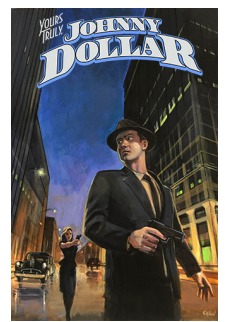
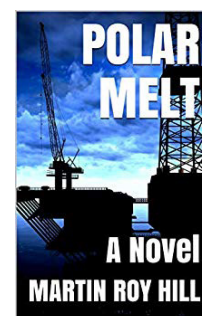
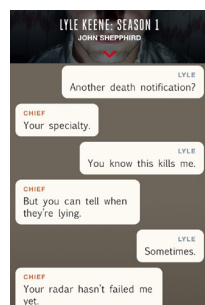
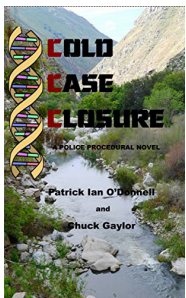
Charlotte Cohen has released a collection of short stories. The collection deals with the human condition: race relations, gender inequality, gender identity, rape, and murder.

Season One of **John Shepphird's** LYLE KEENE premieres on the flash-fiction app *Hooked* (stories told through text messages). Los Angeles Sheriff Department Homicide Detective Lyle Keene visits the crime scene of a bungled robbery/homicide. His hyper-empathetic abilities tell him nothing is as it appears. Season One follows three seasons of John's PI series, iPrivateEye.

THE MASK OF MIDNIGHT by **Laurie Stevens** has just been released. It's the Winner of the Clue Award and the third book in her Gabriel McRay series.

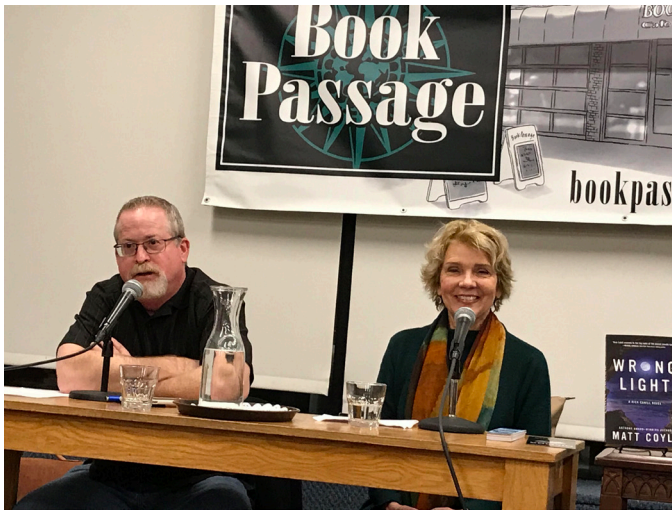
Martin Roy Hill's latest thriller, POLAR MELT, was released in January by 32-32 North. A special U.S. Coast Guard team links the disappearance of an Arctic research ship's crew to a Russian oil platform and the mysterious energy source that lies below. The audiobook of Martin's first Peter Brandt mystery, EMPTY PLACES, was also released in January. The book is narrated by Tim Danko.

For the first time ever, brand new short stories of the "Man with the action-packed expense account." One of classic radio's most beloved detectives makes his way to prose in Moonstone Books's YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR. This thrilling collection of the freelance insurance investigator features a story by **Gary Phillips** and several others, plus a bonus reprinting the long out of print 48pg. Johnny Dollar comic. In tradepaper and limited hardcover.



Member APPEARANCES

Christina Hoag will be appearing at the GenreLA Writing Conference at Los Angeles Valley College, Van Nuys, Friday, February 22 in a panel on memoir writing (3:15 p.m.) and giving a talk on research (4:30 p.m.).



Matt Coyle and **Patricia Smiley** appeared at Book Passage in Corte Madera in January.

Authors Gray Basnight, Eric Beetner, Samuel Gailey, **Lawrence Maddox**, **Nadine Nettmann**, Tom Pitts, and **Wendall Thomas** will read from their works at the Los Angeles Noir at the Bar on Feb 3, 7 p.m. Mandrake 2692 South La Cienega, 90034.

Kathy Krevat, author of the Gourmet Cat Mystery series and Chocolate Covered Mystery series, is presenting a workshop, “Let’s Write A Murder Mystery,” at the 8th Annual CCA Writers’ Conference in San Diego, on Saturday, February 23. This is the only free writing conference for high school students in the US, and even includes a free lunch. Last year, 230 students from 40 schools attended this day filled with workshops by *NY Times* bestselling and award-winning authors, screenwriters, playwrights, poets, and more. The CCA Creative Writing Club welcomes sponsors and program advertisers. Check out the amazing line-up [here](#). For anyone who wishes this conference existed when they were in high school, there are Sponsor-a-Student opportunities for \$25 under the Sponsorship Opportunities tab.

Jeri Westerson is virtually launching her 12th Crispin Guest Medieval Noir *TRAITOR’S CODEX* on Facebook (as it’s releasing February in the UK, in May in the US). Join her on Saturday, February 2, 11 a.m. Pacific/7 p.m. Greenwich—It’s only on Facebook, with a presentation, laughs, and giveaways. <https://www.facebook.com/events/570704960009669/>. On Saturday, February 16, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., join her and mystery authors **Jill Amadio** and **Linda O. Johnston** on a panel at the AAUW Mystery Authors Luncheon. Luncheon and books for sale. Newport Coast Community Center 6401 San Joaquin Hills Road, Newport Beach, CA 92657. For tickets and other info, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mystery-authors-luncheon-tickets-55099975510>.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

In celebration of Left Coast Crime 2020, [Partners in Crime: The San Diego Chapter of Sisters in Crime](#) welcomes you to submit a short story to their first anthology titled CROSSING BORDERS! Submissions are free.

Stories will be chosen and edited by **Lisa Brackmann**, *NYT* best-selling author of BLACK SWAN RISING and more, and **Matt Coyle**, best-selling author of the Rick Cahill crime novels, in a blind read process.

CROSSING BORDERS will be an official Sisters in Crime Anthology. Partners in Crime will market the anthology with press releases and social media. Left Coast Crime 2020 will be in San Diego, and Partners in Crime will host an anthology signing party at the conference.

All proceeds from the sale will support the ongoing efforts of Partners in Crime to bring workshops of interest to crime writers and readers.

Why CROSSING BORDERS? San Diego is a beach town, a military town, a business town, and a border town. But CROSSING BORDERS is not just about physical borders between states and countries—we'd also love to see stories about borders between people, between life and death, between normal and paranormal, between moving forward and standing still, between conflicting goals and emotions, and more. The theme of borders can be interpreted many ways. Good stories that are mysteries of all genres, suspense, thrillers and true crime, are encouraged that explore borders in some way.

Keep in mind:

1. Stories must be Word docs up to 5,000 words using Times New Roman 12 or another commonly used business font.
2. Stories must contain a crime.
3. Stories must be anonymous, including file identification.
4. Stories must be emailed to PICAnthology@gmail.com by midnight PST, **February 15, 2019**. Please use "Crossing Borders Anthology Submission" in the subject line.
5. More than one story can be submitted by an author but only one story will be printed.
6. Authors must be current members of either Partners in Crime, Sisters in Crime Los Angeles, or Sisters in Crime Orange County, and members of national Sisters in Crime as well.

Feel free to email PICAnthology@gmail.com with any questions. Good luck!

Sincerely,
Board of Directors
Partners in Crime

Lisa Brackmann is the *NYT* best-selling author of the Ellie McEnroe trilogy (ROCK PAPER TIGER), and suspense novels GETAWAY, GO-BETWEEN, and BLACK SWAN RISING. Her work has also appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Salon*, *Travel+Leisure*, *LARB*, and CNET. She lives in San Diego with a cat, far too many books and a bass ukulele. Find her at lisabrackmann.com.

Matt Coyle is the author of the Rick Cahill crime series. His books have won the Anthony, Ben Franklin Silver, and San Diego Book Awards, and have accrued nominations for the Macavity, Anthony, Shamus, Lefty, Foreword Reviews Book of the Year and RONE awards. WRONG LIGHT, his fifth novel, comes out in December 2018. Matt lives in San Diego with his yellow Lab, Angus, where he is writing the sixth Rick Cahill novel. Find him at mattcoylebooks.com.

YOUR SHRINKS MIGHT NEED TO BE SHRUNK

by **Dennis Palumbo**

This article originally appeared on the Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine blog.

As a former Hollywood screenwriter, now a licensed psychotherapist and mystery author, I have more than a passing interest in how therapy is portrayed on screen and on the page. That said, I've noticed that in recent years, whether in some best selling crime thriller or on your average procedural TV drama, the therapists depicted are usually pretty quick-on-the-draw when it comes to diagnosing characters in the story.

For example: To explain a suspect's behavior to the investigating detectives, shrinks in these novels and TV series toss out easily-digestible diagnoses like "psychopathic," "schizophrenic," or "borderline personality disorder." As if these terms explained everything the cops (and readers or viewers) needed to know about the person being discussed. In my view, not only is this lazy storytelling (psychological symptoms taking the place of character development) but it's clinically debatable.

The problem starts with the DSM (the DIAGNOSTIC AND STATISTICAL MANUAL OF MENTAL DISORDERS). Used as the premiere diagnostic bible by mental health professionals worldwide, the DSM has been predominately responsible for the labeling of an individual's behavior, in terms of whether or not it falls within the range of agreed upon norms. As such, it's been both praised and reviled over the years. Praised because of its concise descriptions and categorizations of behavioral symptoms; reviled because of its reinforcement of stigmatizing attitudes towards those whose behavior is deemed "abnormal."

In fact, there's an old joke about how clinicians use diagnostic labels to interpret their patients' behavior. If the patient arrives early for his therapy appointment, he's anxious. If he's late, he's resistant. And if he's on time, he's compulsive.

Nowadays, however, it's becoming clear that the joke may be on us. Diagnostic labels are thrown around quite casually by people who ought to know better (therapists on TV news programs) as well as by people who usually don't (writers of mystery novels and procedural crime shows).

For the latter, it's perfectly understandable. With rare exceptions, most writers depend on research—and such tools as the DSM—to provide their psychologist and psychiatrist characters with the right lingo. This not only makes these characters sound like the mental health professionals they're supposed to be, but it also allows the writer to describe the bad guy's psychological problem in a way that the reader understands. Plus it makes the shrink character seem wicked smart.

However, as I said, it can also lead to lazy storytelling. In too many mysteries and thrillers nowadays, the shrink character need only say that someone's a psychopath and—in an instant—a whole series of inexplicable or horrendous behaviors are explained away. To the question of why the bad guy did what he did, the answer is simple: he's crazy.

In other words, so much for developing a vivid, relatable backstory for this character. Or creating a motive that makes sense. Or for acknowledging, as the author should, that most people are too complicated to be reduced to a set of easily determined symptoms.

Which is why I feel that crime writers—especially those who make use of therapists in their stories, either as protagonists or "experts" brought in to help the hero or heroine—need to take care not to use a one-size-fits-all model of diagnosis when it comes to describing a character in the story.

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YOUR SHRINKS MIGHT NEED TO BE SHRUNK

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(There's another problem with this, one which I think writers need to be aware of. Diagnostic labels, like practically everything else nowadays, follow the dictates of trends. Remember how, not too long ago, every other child was diagnosed with ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder]? Or Asperger's? Well, forget about those. Now the "hot" new label, regardless of age, is bipolar disorder [what used to be called manic-depression]. Lately, whether you're a movie star, teen heartthrob, politician, or athlete, you're not cool if you're not bipolar.)

Not that there's anything wrong, per se, with labels. Nor with the idea of a common vocabulary so that all us clinical geniuses can communicate with each other. It's just that, if we're speaking honestly, diagnostic labels exist primarily for the convenience of the labelers. Which is fine, as far as it goes. But how far is too far? Especially for crime writers?

In my opinion, "too far" is when authors give their therapist characters an almost clairvoyant ability to declare (with God-like conviction) what's going on in the mind of some suspected bad guy. Because, as any working mental health professional will tell you, facile, off-the-cuff interpretations of a patient's psychological state rarely end up being accurate. And can even do great harm.

Once, when asked how he worked, Albert Einstein replied, "I grope." Frankly, that's what most good therapists do, too. They grope. That is, if they truly respect the therapeutic process—and their patients.

As a therapist in private practice for over 28 years, I've grown to appreciate the vast differences in temperament, relationship choices, communication styles and beliefs of my patients—and how these translate into behaviors, both healthy and harmful. Which means I've been forced many times to challenge the orthodoxy of my own profession, and to pay attention to the potential danger of reducing people to a simple diagnostic category.

I think all of us who write mysteries owe our various suspects and bad guys the same consideration. As well as try to keep our shrink characters' smug, self-congratulatory opinions in check.

After all, despite being fictional, they're still only human.



Dennis Palumbo, M.A., MFT is a writer and licensed psychotherapist in private practice, specializing in creative issues. His acclaimed series of mystery thrillers, the latest of which is *HEAD WOUNDS*, features psychologist and trauma expert Daniel Rinaldi.

**PRIVATE EYE WRITERS OF AMERICA
SUBMISSIONS FOR 2019 SHAMUS AWARDS
For Works First Published in the U.S. in 2018**

Following are the categories for the Private Eye Writers of America 2019 Shamus Awards for private eye novels and short stories *first published in the United States in 2018*. The awards will be presented in the fall of 2019.

DEADLINE: Submissions must be postmarked by **March 31, 2019**. No extensions can be given. Shamus Committees will forward their final lists to the Shamus Awards Chair by May 31, 2019.

ELIGIBILITY: Eligible works must feature as a main character a person PAID for investigative work but NOT employed for that work by a unit of government. These include traditionally licensed private investigators; lawyers and reporters who do their own investigations; and others who function as hired private agents. These do NOT include law enforcement officers, other government employees or amateur, uncompensated sleuths. Independently published books (Indies) may be submitted to the Best Original Paperback P.I. Novel category.

SUBMISSIONS; Please send one copy of each eligible work to ALL members of the appropriate committee. Do NOT submit a book to more than one committee. There is no application fee and no submission form, as a simple cover letter will suffice. If you have any questions, please e-mail **Gay Toltl Kinman** at gaykinman@gaykinman.com BEFORE submitting.

BEST HARDCOVER P.I. NOVEL: A book-length work of fiction published in hardcover in 2018 that is NOT the author's first published P.I. novel.

BEST FIRST P.I. NOVEL: A book-length work of fiction, in hardcover or paperback, first published in 2018 that is the author's first published novel featuring a private investigator as a main character.

BEST ORIGINAL PAPERBACK P.I. NOVEL: A book-length work of fiction first published as a paperback original in 2018 that is NOT the author's first P.I. novel. Paperback reprints of previously published novels are NOT eligible.

BEST P.I. SHORT STORY: A work of fiction of 20,000 words or fewer. Stories first published in an earlier year and reprinted in a magazine, anthology or collection in 2018, are NOT eligible.

2019 SHAMUS Awards Committees

BEST P.I. SHORT STORY COMMITTEE

Terence Faherty, Chair, 8640 Vintner Way, Indianapolis, IN 46256

John Hoda, 24 Squire Ct., Milford CT 06460

Ken Wishnia, 21 Bridle Path Ln., Port Jefferson NY 11777

BEST FIRST P.I. NOVEL COMMITTEE

Colleen Collins, Chair, 2255 Sheridan Blvd., Unit C #293, Edgewater CA 80214

Dennis Palumbo, 15300 Ventura Blvd., Ste. 402, Sherman Oaks CA 91403

Cheryl Head, 913 12th St. SE, Washington DC 20003

[continued on next page](#)

Shamus Award Submissions, continued**BEST P.I. NOVEL COMMITTEE**

Thomas Donahue, Chair, 72 Gannett Road, Scituate MA 02066

Tracy Clark, 7422 S. Constance Ave., Chicago IL 60649

John Shepphird, 1036 4th St., Hermosa Beach CA 90254

BEST PAPERBACK ORIGINAL P.I. NOVEL

Brad Parks, Chair, 49 Seahorse Lane, Christchurch VA 23031

Michael Wiley, 1905 Largo Rd., Jacksonville FL 32207

Beth Terrell, 2919 Dunmore Dr., Nashville TN 37214

2019 California Crime Writers Conference

Saturday, June 8–Sunday, June 9, 2019

Doubletree Hilton in Culver City

The 2019 California Crime Writers Conference, co-sponsored by SoCalMWA and Sisters in Crime/Los Angeles, is gearing up to be an exciting weekend.

In addition to keynote speeches by our two guests of honor, Tess Gerritsen and Catriona McPherson, they'll each teach a session on creative writing. Plus, we're taking advantage of our proximity to Hollywood to bring in producers and screenwriters to discuss book options, adaptations, and what to do when Hollywood calls. All of this in addition to craft panels, forensic workshops, and the fun and fellowship you've come to expect from CCWC.

Registration and hotel blocks are NOW OPEN!

[Click here for registration info](#)

Crime CALENDAR



FEBRUARY TAM LUNCHEON—BOOK PROMOTION Sunday, February 24 | 12 p.m.

Do you need a publicist? How do they support their clients in an oversaturated market? Our panel of professional book publicists explain the ins and outs of book promotion and what every author should know. Join us for a hugely informative discussion moderated by SoCalMWA board member Jessica Kaye.

Don't miss this information-packed event!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO & TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT](#)

February 9 – [SoCalMWA Book Swap, Los Angeles CA](#)
 February 24 – [Tam Luncheon, Los Angeles CA](#)
 March 2–3 – [Tucson Festival of Books, Tucson, AZ](#)
 March 23 – [Murder and Mayhem in Chicago, Chicago IL](#)
 March 28–31 – [Left Coast Crime, Vancouver, Canada](#)
 April 13–14 – [LA Times Festival of Books, Los Angeles, CA](#)
 May 3–5 – [Malice Domestic, Bethesda MD](#)
 June 8–9 – [California Crime Writers Conference, Los Angeles CA](#)
 July 9–13 – [ThrillerFest XIV, New York NY](#)
 October 31–Nov 3 – [Bouchercon, Dallas TX](#)

The LAST WORD

“An exhumation! You saw Raymond Chandler’s dead body dug up and didn’t invite me along? That’s inexcusable!”

—Jill Amadio, DIGGING UP THE DEAD