



The
MARCH

of CRIME

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Portraying Mental Illness Accurately

by **Barbara Schreibke**

Schizophrenia, bipolar, PTSD—these words are popping up in conversations nowadays. They describe specific mental illnesses that are complex and potentially very disabling. Writing about them makes for interesting subject matter—the allure of delving into the human mind is understandable, and mental illnesses can be dramatic. On top of which, the publishing industry is trying to better represent our diverse society by including marginalized voices. The challenge for writers is to portray characters with mental illnesses accurately, and for this, good research is important.



According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one out of five people will experience a mental illness in any given year, but less than half of those will seek

treatment. Ironically, treatment is moving out of the Dark Ages. It can be extremely effective, making a meaningful life attainable for most people. Unfortunately, two detrimental forces block access to care: stigma and ignorance. Mystery writers can challenge these forces by writing realistically about their characters who are experiencing mental illnesses. If a character with a mental illness is portrayed realistically, it might motivate a reader who suspects a similar condition to seek treatment. If the character is portrayed as less moral or strange by choice (i.e., stigmatized), or the character is portrayed as hopelessly broken through ignorance of current treatment opportunities, then the reader who might be experiencing a similar condition is less likely to admit it or consider treatment.

Two organizations exist nationwide with many local chapters that can provide a wealth of information about mental health disorders from personal and family perspectives. These organizations are the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Mental Health America. Psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, and social workers practicing in the area of serious mental illnesses are also good sources of information, as are people willing to tell their own stories of living with a specific illness.

With research, mystery writers can write fascinating stories that involve people with mental health challenges being part of the action. Writers can also make a difference for the better. The time to deflate stigma and ignorance starts here.



Barbara Schreibke has a master's degree in Clinical Psychology and has spent the last ten-plus years working with people who have serious mental illnesses. She's also an aspiring mystery writer.



The President's Rap Sheet

Glen Erik Hamilton

The Catch-22 of book deals: We all dream of having a publisher buy our manuscript, and then, if we're fortunate enough to sign on that dotted line, we may suddenly and desperately miss the freedom of unlimited writing time. What seemed like a surplus of months to finish the work rapidly shrinks to weeks. *What's* my required daily word count? Shouldn't there be a decimal in there somewhere?

I'm in the crush of a deadline right now. But despite the pressure, I feel lucky for two reasons. The first and most obvious is that I get to see two more Van Shaw books on the shelves. The second reason for feeling blessed is that I've been here before. Nothing was as tough to write as my second novel, until my third book with its even shorter timeline came along. Now, with book five, I feel like I recognize the blind curves and potholes of this particular road.

So with the wisdom—or overconfidence—of experience and armed with a rough outline, I'm trying a little experiment this time around. The book is due to the publishers after Labor Day. I've been front-loading my stress, treating May and June as though they were the final weeks before delivery and aiming to get more than half of the novel written by working every reasonable hour. Combined with the stack of opening chapters originally submitted to the publisher, that should allow two months to rewrite what I've drafted, add a satisfying conclusion, and make one more pass of reading and revision.

And now that I've described all that, it sounds like an absurd undertaking. But possible, I hope. Hope is important. Maybe just as much as discipline.

After the similar crush of CCWC, our chapter is enjoying a relatively quiet start to summer before the next events: A joint meeting with Sisters in Crime Orange County in August and our Gumbo Party to herald autumn in late September. Watch your email and this newsletter for details. And congratulations to SoCalMWA's Shamus Award nominees **Matt Coyle**, **Howard Michael Gould**, and **Barry Lancet**! [See page 7](#) for a full run-down of this year's nominations.

I hope you have a wonderful season. See you on the other side.

All Best,
Glen

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The EDITOR'S CORNER

Holly West

In his Prez Rap this month, Glen talks about missing the freedom of seemingly unlimited writing time. As so often happens with his Raps, this struck a chord in me because I am currently a writer who has that freedom. I'm also a serial abuser of that freedom.

After CCWC, I decided that the next few months would be the "Summer of Holly." We have no travel scheduled, no visitors coming, no real demands on my time. With days and weeks to do whatever I want stretching out in front of me, I had to make a choice: Would the Summer of Holly be one of productivity and accomplishment or would it be another season of excuse-making and wallowing?

I chose the former. Having managed to get myself back on track in the last six months with the release of a short story anthology, a finished novella, and an Anthony Award nomination, I've gained much-needed momentum and, more importantly, confidence. With my choice made, I set a goal and an action plan for attaining it. I'm happy to say that I'm sticking to the plan and loving the renewed creativity and focus I thought I'd lost for good.

It's not too late to make this the Summer of *You*, however you define that for yourself. Go ahead. You deserve it.

Holly

FRESHBLOOD

SoCalMWA welcomes its new members

Carol Caverly

Marguerite Diffin

Carol Oliver

Phil Swann



Phil Swann's career in the entertainment industry has spanned more than thirty-five years as an award-winning performer, songwriter, producer, and author. His songs have been heard in television and film, and recorded by hundreds of recording artists. For the stage, Swann is the composer of nine musicals, including *In a Booth at Chasen's*, *Play It Cool*, *The People V's Friar Laurence*, *DeLearious*, and Neil Simon's *Musical Fools*. Books by Swann include COLD WAR COPA, MEKONG DELTA BLUES, TINSEL TOWN TANGO, SONG OF ELEUSIS, and THE MOZART CONSPIRACY (published in Italy as *IL CODICE AMADEUS*). Swann lives in Los Angeles, where he writes, and is an adjunct professor at the Los Angeles College of Music.

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:
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Yahoo! Group**

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

OVER the TRANSOM

Gay Toltl Kinman's short story, "Greenway"—the property once owned by Agatha Christie—is the subject of a (fictional) documentary in which the narrator is almost murdered, but brings a murderer to justice. Of course! Published by Elm Books and available on Smashwords for free.

Les Klinger's NEW ANNOTATED H.P. LOVECRAFT: BEYOND ARKHAM, including another twenty-five stories from the horror-master, will be published by Liveright/W. W. Norton in August and is available for pre-order from the usual vendors.

Howard Michael Gould's first novel, LAST LOOKS, is available in paperback July 16. The film version, starring Charlie Hunnam and Mel Gibson, is currently in production. Dutton will publish his second, BELOW THE LINE, again featuring eco-maniacal private eye Charlie Waldo, in August.

Beginning July 1, **Jeri Westerson's** Crispin Guest Medieval Noir, TROUBLED BONES, has been selected for a Kindle Monthly Deal for 99 cents. Get yours!

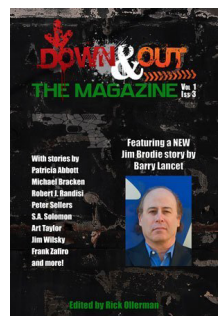
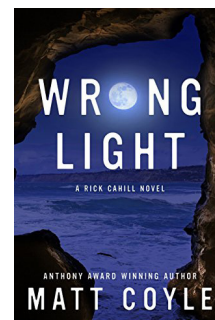
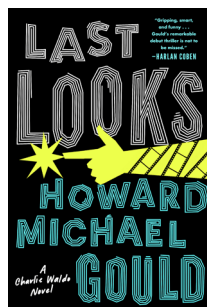
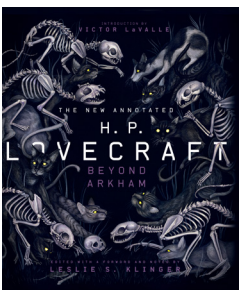
Paul D. Marks's story "Past is Prologue" appears in the July/August issue of *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. Available now at all the usual places.

Barbara DeMarco-Barrett just signed a contract with Akashic Books as editor of PALM SPRINGS NOIR, an addition to Akashic's domestic noir anthologies.

The impossible crime mystery "Callindon Mountain" by **Peter DiChellis** appears in the new anthology THE BEST LAID PLANS (Superior Shores Press, June 2018). Additionally, Peter's humorous crime romp "Rolling Lucky" appears in the June 28 edition of *The Norwegian American* newspaper.

WRONG LIGHT, the fifth book in **Matt Coyle's** Anthony Award-winning Rick Cahill crime series has been nominated for a Shamus Award for Best Private Eye Novel.

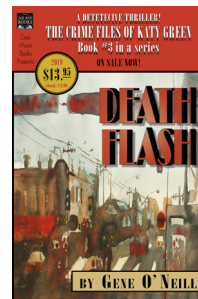
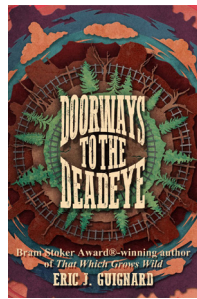
"Three-Star Sushi," the first short story featuring art dealer/Japan expert Jim Brodie, the reluctant detective in **Barry Lancet's** award-winning series of mystery-thrillers, has been nominated for a Shamus Award for Best Short Story. It ran as the cover piece in *Down & Out: The Magazine*, volume 3. "Three-Star Sushi" is also a Derringer Award finalist.



OVER the TRANSOM

Bram Stoker Award-winning author **Eric J. Guignard's** debut novel *DOORWAYS TO THE DEADEYE* is scheduled for release July 26 through publisher JournalStone. Praised by peers (“Rich, strange, and wonderful.”—*NY Times* bestselling author, Michael Marshall Smith and “A ride worth hopping that will take you somewhere you haven’t been.”—International Horror Guild Award-winning author, Glen Hirshberg), *DOORWAYS TO THE DEADEYE* is a thrilling and profound look into man’s search for continuance after death, framed in the permanence of legend-building and the fantastic travels of a 1930s-era train-hopping hobo.

Gene O’Neill’s novel *DEATHFLASH* is available July 1 through publisher Dark Moon Books (owned and operated by **Eric J. Guignard**), and is the third volume in the series *THE CRIME FILES OF KATY GREEN*. In this volume, Billy Williams can see the soul as it departs the body, and is “commanded to do the Lord’s work,” which he does fanatically, slaying drug addicts in San Francisco; Katy and Johnny investigate the case as junkies die all around, for Billy has his own addiction: the rush of viewing the *DEATHFLASH*.



Member APPEARANCES

Christina Hoag will be reading her essay “Where Are You From?” at the Voz sin Tinta literary reading series on July 11 at 7 p.m., Alley Cat Books, 3036 24th St., San Francisco.

Jeri Westerson will be at DuPar’s Restaurant in Pasadena with the Historical Novel Society doing a reading from her latest Crispin Guest book, *TRAITOR’S CODEX*, Sunday, July 21, at noon. Come join HNS for an interesting meeting. Have lunch! Dupar’s 214 S Lake Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101. Free parking in the back on Sundays. Books for sale.

From Mystery Ink’s **Debbie Mitsch**: Save the date! The Orange County Sisters in Crime chapter will be having their 6th annual Ladies of Intrigue event on Sunday, November 10 at the Mesa Verde Country Club in Orange County. Registration is now open. For additional information and registration: www.ocsistersincrime.org.

Saturday, August 31, 2 p.m.: **T. Jefferson Parker** will appear for a talk and discussion at **Mystery Ink Bookstore** (8907 Warner Ave. #135, Huntington Beach). He’ll be signing his latest release, *THE LAST GOOD GUY*.

Private Eye Writers of America 2019 Shamus Award Nominees

*Winners will be announced at the
PWA Banquet at Bouchercon in Dallas, TX*

Best Private Eye Paperback Original

SHE TALKS TO ANGELS by James D. F. Hannah (Hannah)
NO QUARTER by John Jantunen (ECW Press)
SHARK BAIT by Paul Kemprecos (Suspense Publishing)
SECOND STORY MAN by Charles Salzberg (Down & Out Books)
THE QUESTIONABLE BEHAVIOR OF DAHLIA MOSS by Max Wirestone (Redhook Books)

Best First Private Eye Novel

THE BEST BAD THINGS by Katrina Carrasco (MCD Farrar, Straus, Giroux)
BROKEN PLACES by Tracy Clark (Kensington)
LAST LOOKS by **Howard Michael Gould** (Dutton)
WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU by Aimee Hix (Midnight Ink)
ONLY TO SLEEP by Lawrence Osborne (Hogarth)

Best Private Eye Short Story

“Fear of the Secular,” by Mitch Alderman, AHMM
“Three-Star Sushi,” by **Barry Lancet**, *Down & Out Magazine*
“The Big Creep,” by Elizabeth McKenzie, SANTA CRUZ NOIR
“Game,” by Twist Phelan, *EQMM*
“Chin Yong-Yun Helps a Fool,” by S.J. Rozan, *EQMM*

Best Private Eye Novel

WRONG LIGHT by **Matt Coyle** (Oceanview Publishing)
WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE by Kristen Lepionka (Minotaur Books)
THE WIDOWS OF MALABAR HILL by Sujata Massey (Soho Crime)
BABY'S FIRST FELONY by John Straley (Soho Crime)
CUT YOU DOWN by Sam Wiebe (Quercus)

Submitted by Gay Toltl Kinman, Chair, Private Eye Writers of America Shamus Awards

TMOC Needs You!

TMOC is looking for articles (500–700 words) on subjects of interest to SoCalMWA members.
This includes craft, marketing, and all aspects of publishing.

Content shouldn't be overtly promotional, but rather instructional or informational.

Include a brief bio (100 words or less) and a headshot or cover image.

Send your questions and/or pitches to themarchofcrime@gmail.com.

A banner with a central olive-green box containing the text "Crime CALENDAR". The word "Crime" is in a cursive font, and "CALENDAR" is in a bold, sans-serif font. The banner has ribbon-like ends on the left and right.

Crime
CALENDAR

July 9–13 – [ThrillerFest XIV, New York, NY](#)
July 18–21 – [Theakston Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival, Harrogate, UK](#)
August 1–4 – [The Writers Police Academy, Raleigh, NC](#)
August 22–25 – [Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference, Corte Madera, CA](#)
October 30 – [SinC Into Great Writing! Workshop 2019, Dallas, TX](#)
October 31–Nov 3 – [Bouchercon, Dallas, TX](#)
September 21 – [Men of Mystery, Long Beach, CA](#)
November 10 – [Ladies of Intrigue, Costa Mesa, CA](#)
November 8–10 – [New England Crime Bake, Boston, MA](#)

A banner with a central olive-green box containing the text "The LAST WORD". The word "The" is in a cursive font, and "LAST WORD" is in a bold, sans-serif font. The banner has ribbon-like ends on the left and right.

The
LAST WORD

“Marty scrambled off the cab as if decapitation was infectious, backing away without taking his eyes off the wreckage, just waiting for some new horror to pop up.”

—Lee Goldberg, THE WALK