



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
 ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSE LETTER

Volume III, Number 1—January 2007

†Expert Testimony†

From the Prez

Happy New Year everyone! I love the idea of having a “new year” every once in a while. It allows us to start a new project or look at an old one with new eyes. Reinventing ourselves, even in a small way, is critical to staying fresh, and that’s especially important for readers and writers alike.

What better place than in Albuquerque’s Croak and Dagger chapter to set new writing goals, aspire to new reading heights, or just learn a few new criminal tactics to make your life new again. Here are some highlights coming up in 2007 that might help you get to where you’re going:

- Rob Kresge will finally reveal top secrets from his years with the CIA.
- Pati Nagle, a published writer, will share some of her insights on what makes a good mystery.
- Ruth Brown Jimenez will talk about self-publishing.

Other expert apparitions we hope to see this year include self-defense experts, detectives, and ghost hunters.

Also, “Inside the Criminal Mind,” a four-week interactive online class, begins in March for members. If you know of anyone who would like to take this class, encourage them to join Croak and Dagger.

As always there will be food, drink, and companionship with people who share your passion for the devious and designing.

This is your organization, so if you have any ideas for a program speaker or about how Croak and Dagger would be more of a benefit to you, please let me know.

Again, Happy New Year, and thanks to all of you for giving me the opportunity and privilege to serve on your board as president. ✓

—Lucinda Schroeder

Croak & Dagger Lineup

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Don't Miss It!

Tuesday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.

Croak and Dagger’s own **Margaret Tessler** (visit her at thegreat-escape.com/ABQ-TaleSpinner/) is the author of a mystery series featuring San Antonio attorney Sharon Salazar. Her latest novel, *Black Widow, White Lies*, is set in Chama, New Mexico, and is sure to leave Ms. Tessler's fans eager for her next mystery.





Book Review

Promise Me (A Myron Bolitar novel)

Harlan Coben

New York, Dutton, 2006

The instructor for one of my writing classes announced one day that if we wanted to read an example of a well-written mystery novel, read Harlan Coben. I hadn't taken her advice when I chanced upon *Promise Me* on the "New Books" shelf at my local branch library.

Feeling half-guilty that I hadn't taken the counsel of a real published author, I started into *Promise Me* that evening. For those of you who may be familiar with the Myron Bolitar series, my resulting perplexity will probably generate a knowing smile. You see, *Promise Me* is Coben's eighth book in the Myron Bolitar series. I hadn't read any of the earlier ones. I should have known better.

Coben has been cited as a master of the "hook and switch." He's also a master of quirky and weird characters. His lineup is a combination of Janet Evanovich seasoned with Elmore Leonard, with dashes of Lawrence Sanders's McNally, Dickens, and Thackeray. Protagonist Myron Bolitar became a publicity agent after injury terminated his budding career as the first Jewish professional basketball player from Livingston (New Jersey) High School via Duke. (New Jersey = Evanovich, albeit Livingston is more fancy shmancy than Trenton.) His parents, now retired, live in Florida and bemoan the fact that their forty-something son is still single. (Florida = Leonard, substituting senior condos for trendy Miami Beach.) His "crew" includes Big Cyndi and Esperanza, two female ex-tag team wrestlers (one of whom weighs in at over 300 pounds and favors white spandex = Evanovich again). His buddy and sometime roomie, Windsor Horne Lockwood III (known to his friends as "Win"), is scion to a multibillion fortune and appears to devote his time, energy, and spare cash to fulfilling the role of a latter-day Lone Ranger who always shows up on time to rescue the good-hearted, well-meaning Bolitar from his feckless foibles. Well, not always; sometimes Win sends one of *his* crew for backup, for example, the ex-Mossad cross-dressing wet-work expert Zorro. (Ranger in drag?) You get the picture.

Myron's favorite aphorism is the old Yiddish adage: *Man tracht und Gott lacht*; i.e., "Man plans and God laughs." It is the philosophical point of

view for all the characters in the book. It's applicable when Myron overhears two teenage daughters of friends discussing how a girlfriend of theirs had gotten into a car with a drunken driver. Myron gives them each his card and makes them *Promise Me* that they will call him if ever they are in need of help, 24/7. And they agree as long as he *Promises Them* that he will never tell if they do. You get the picture; God's chuckling about now. When one of the girls—Aimee—calls about two in the morning to beg deliverance from a street corner in midtown Manhattan, Myron picks her up and drops her off at what she tells him is a girlfriend's house. She promptly disappears. By then he's in full-scale belly laugh.

As the last person to have seen Aimee (alive or maybe not), Myron becomes the prime suspect in her disappearance. Not to mention that another girl, a high school classmate of Aimee's, had disappeared under suspicious circumstances a few weeks prior after having withdrawn cash from an identical ATM machine in midtown Manhattan. Fortunately for the reader, the remainder of Coben's characters and their plotting are drawn much more closely to reality: the good cop-bad cop pair, the bad cop-bad cop pair, the drug-wholesaling high school teacher, the Teacher-of-the-Year sex offender blackmail victim, the rich-and-boorish father who would do anything to assure that his star-quarterback-drug-retailing son gets into Dartmouth, the genius son of the poor-but-honest Asian dry cleaner who is screwed over by . . . You get the picture.

Yet despite the complexities, Coben keeps the story line moving and the logic justifiable. The dozen or so character-centered points of view are consistent. The reader even finds empathy with Myron, despite his choices resembling those of an average middle schooler. When Myron seems to wrap up the conflicts in chapter 56 despite unresolved tensions, we are left feeling that it was about the best he could have done, fulfilling his promise, not altogether satisfactorily, leaving untidy conclusions and unresolved animosities.

And then comes chapter 57. Its more McMuffin than McGuffin, but then Coben's not been called the master of hook and switch for nothing.

That noise in the background? He's still laughing.✓

—Reviewed by Ira Rimson

—TRUE CRIMES—

Selected biographies of your Croak & Dagger board members.

Shirley Coe (*Nooseletter* editor) is adjusting to the phenomenon of seasons, having moved to Albuquerque two years ago from temperate, coastal, single-seasonal Santa Cruz, California (though originally from the humid equally sea-level realm of Maryland). An editor in real life, Shirley worked for Papier-Mache Press (of *When I Am an Old Woman I Shall Wear Purple* fame) until they closed their doors, another small press that couldn't compete in the world of chain bookstores. (Support your independent bookstores!) Though she doesn't profess to it at program meetings, along with reading mysteries, Shirley is an avid science fiction and speculative fiction fan and enjoys contemporary novels too. She currently works as a freelance editor for several trade book publishers, which supplies her with an occasion for reading nonfiction. ✓

IN THE LOOP

If you haven't joined already, all members are invited to join the *Croak & Dagger* community group, an online gathering place. Exchange information about mystery books, movies, and TV shows; share news about local and national mystery events; and participate in occasional online classes. Join in!

Email croakdagger@yahoo.com for further instructions.



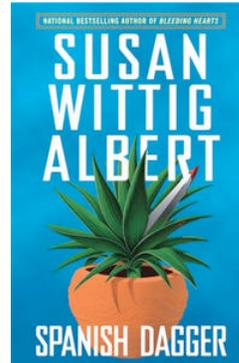
Croak and Dagger Members: An Online Workshop

"**Inside the Criminal Mind**" is a four-week interactive online class for Croak and Dagger members. Beginning in March, Lucinda Schroeder, former federal agent, mystery writing consultant, and author of *A Hunt for Justice: The True Story of a Woman Undercover Wildlife Agent*, will present this fascinating program. To participate, get in the loop and sign up with our online group. Email croakdagger@yahoo.com to join the group.

Croak and Dagger Coming Events . . .

On **Tuesday, February 27, 2007**, **Rob Kresge** will speak to us about his thirty years with the CIA. A founding member of the Counterterrorist Center, he also worked on the CIA's Native American Council before moving to Albuquerque. He's written four books and has published a profile and interview with thriller author Gayle Lynds in *Mystery Scene* and *Crime Spree* magazines.

On **Tuesday, March 27, 2007**, **Pati Nagle** is our featured speaker. A New Mexico native, she has written many books, ranging from fantasy to historical novels. (Visit her at pagnagle.com or patinagle.com.) Please join us to hear some of her stories.



*On **Tuesday, April 17, 2007**, **Susan Wittig Albert** is our special guest. Author of the China Bayles mystery series, she is also the author of the Cottage Tales of Beatrix Potter and coauthor with her husband, Bill Albert, of a Victorian mystery series (under the name of Robin Paige). She lives in the Texas hill country and is a gardener, herbalist, and fabric artist as well as a prolific author. (Visit her at susanalbert.typepad.com/lifescape or mysterypartners.com.) (Or visit China Bayles at susanalbert.typepad.com/pecanspringsjournal/.) Her newest book, *Spanish Dagger*, a China Bayles mystery will be available in hardcover in April.

***Please note:** *The April program is on the third Tuesday of the month, not the fourth Tuesday.*



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986. **The purpose of Sisters in Crime shall be** "to combat discrimination against women in they mystery field, educate publishers and the general public as to the inequities in the treatment of female authors, raise the level of awareness of their contribution to the field, and promote the professional advancement of women who write mysteries."

DON'T FORGET:

Tuesday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 p.m.

ROB'S RANDOM SHOTS

January Case File Number One

The Intelligencer by Leslie Silbert, Washington Square Press, 2004, 330 pp.

Well, it's time for New Year's resolutions. And I've been reading a few books from my accumulated stash. Here's one I should have reviewed for you sooner, a good first thriller by a young woman I met in Las Vegas at the October 2003 Bouchercon, the largest and arguably most prestigious of the more than a dozen annual mystery/thriller conventions held around the country.

Reviews cited in the first few pages compare this book to *The Da Vinci Code*, but that's only because it has a *lot* of history in it, more even than Dan Brown's bestseller. It really owes nearly nothing to *Da Vinci Code* and stands well on its own. "Intelligencer," in the book's title, is a reference to an early term for a spy or secret agent.

This novel has a great format concept: alternating chapters tell the last few weeks in the life of renowned Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe—who was also a spy for two competing masters—and a modern story of spy Kate Morgan, who works for a deep-cover CIA unit that poses as a New York City security/detective agency.

Silbert, who studied Renaissance literature at Oxford and now works for a private investigation firm headed by a former CIA operations chief, makes this concept work really well. Every chapter ends with a cliff-hanger or moment of rising tension. Then we are drawn into reading a chapter from the other era before finding out how that situation is resolved. A successful ploy that had me reading this book well into the night and finishing it in only two sittings.

Without giving anything away, I can say that I thought the Elizabethan chapters—the Marlowe story—worked better than the modern story. That's not to say that there's anything wrong with the heroine, whom Silbert admits is drawn on herself, her background, and her current employer. It's just that I know so little about Marlowe and the competing spymasters who were vying for Queen

Elizabeth's favor to take over from the legendary Sir Francis Walsingham. Elizabethan London is very well drawn, and you can imagine many of the stars of *Shakespeare in Love* filling some of these roles.

But the modern story relies too heavily on outrageous coincidence. Granted, the methods of investigation, latest technology, identity changing, international travel, and taking down of a targeted villa are all realistically portrayed. But you'll have no trouble figuring out who (rather than what) the McGuffin of this half of the book is or the actual identity of the main villain. Like *Da Vinci Code*, the modern half of *The Intelligencer* suffers from too small a cast of suspects and too short a timeframe.

As some reviews of this book say, if you liked the bestseller, you'll be pleasantly swept along by this novel. I hope we get more from Leslie Silbert. She writes well.

January Case File Number Two

Under Orders by Dick Francis, Putnam, 2006, 308 pp.

It feels really good to be reviewing this novel. On one level, that's because this book marks the return of Sir Richard to mystery writing after a more than five-year hiatus following the death of his wife. On another level, it's because this is another Sid Halley novel, the fourth in a short series featuring Francis's beloved crippled ex-jockey with an artificial left hand. And on a personal level, well, see the reviewer's note at the end.

Dick Francis is the winner of three Edgar awards, an MWA Grand Master, and a recipient of the UK Crime Writers' Cartier Diamond Dagger, the latter two for lifetime achievement. And what a life he's had—Queen Mary's personal steeplechase jockey, author of two volumes of memoirs, and author of 40 mysteries and thrillers, more than 30 of them *New York Times* bestsellers, as is *Under Orders*. It takes two columns at the front of this book just to list all those titles.

Although he's best known for his mysteries, many of Francis's works are "domestic thrillers." What? Dick Francis writes cozies or backbiting around kitchen tables? No. The phrase incorporates those novels of suspense that are not "international spy thrillers" with world-altering plots at their cores. Domestic thrillers feature a small scope and small cast of characters that readers come to care for and who are placed in grave jeopardy. Mary Higgins Clark is the best-known author of such works.

(cont'd. on next page)

(Rob's Random Shots, cont'd.)

But this volume is an out-and-out mystery. Halley was first introduced to readers in *Odds Against*, in which he lost a race, his horse, the use of his left hand, and his wife (to divorce). He becomes an amateur PI and, through a particularly grisly torture sequence, physically loses that hand to a sadistic villain. He returned—to the gratitude of Francis fans—in the mystery novels *Whip Hand* and *Come to Grief*, the latter more than 10 years ago. The torture sequence brings to mind a Francis trademark—meticulous and exhaustive research. He once had himself tasered so he could describe the experience as it happens to one protagonist.

As Francis fans know, all of his books have some relation to the sport of horse racing, but among his protagonists have been bankers, photographers, painters, pilots, journalists, and even glass sculptors (2000's *Shattered*—see below). In this case, Sid Halley, well-known PI in racing circles, is hired by Lord Enstone to find out why his favored horses keep losing. Suspects include the trainer and his best jockey. When horses in such positions are made to lose, the phrase is “under orders,” hence the title.

In short order after accepting the assignment, a famous horse dies at the track and the suspect trainer's best jockey is murdered in the racetrack parking lot. Suspects include the trainer, his assistant, an online bookmaker, the lord himself, a slimy journalist, and others. This book not only has a satisfying investigation, but a welcome collection of other characters—Halley's former father-in-law and long his best friend, his ex-wife, and his new girlfriend, about whom he becomes increasingly serious as thugs target her, knowing Halley himself cannot be bribed or scared off.

I was originally disappointed as I read the climax, but when I persevered to the last line, I was both surprised and gratified at how just were the villain's desserts.

Reviewers' Note: I often review books by authors I've met, sometimes authors who've become good friends. Over the last five years of my writing life, Dick Francis has earned a category all by himself.

In the fall of 2000, I attended a Dick Francis signing at the Borders near my house in northern Virginia. Francis entered alone that evening as his publisher's representative parked the car. The bookstore's community relations person wasn't around, but since I recognized Francis from his book jackets, I went over to him and took him to the

community relations person. Having at one time or other broken every bone in his body, he walked very stiffly and looked every bit of his 70-plus years (which no longer seems so old to me). He even held his right pinky out straight because of a badly healed break; his handshakes and how he held his pen feature that outstretched little finger.

He was a great speaker. Although he made these signing tours with his wife of 40 years, Mary, she didn't accompany him to this particular bookstore. When it was my turn (number 72 in line; how many authors would love to have a signing that large) to have my book signed, he remembered me (and my tie with horses on it). I thanked him for many years of reading pleasure and inspiration. I told him as he signed that I planned to go home that night and get to the halfway point of the first draft of my own first mystery manuscript.

“Oh,” he said, looking up. “What's the name?”

“Um, *Murder for Greenhorns*.”

“No, no. I meant, what's your name? I want to look for your book.”

“Well, it's really hard to remember or to pronounce.”

Unfazed, Francis pushed a stack of Post-it notes across to me.

“Write it down for me, will you?”

In a daze, I did as he asked, shook his hand, took my treasured copy of *Shattered*, and left. My feet never touched the carpet; I was walking on air. When I got to work the next day, I sent an internal e-mail to the 180 members of the CIA writers group I had founded in June, entitled “Guess Who Asked for MY Autograph Last Night.” I've met a lot of NYT bestselling authors (and Patrick “Captain Picard” Stewart) since then, but I've never had quite the same thrill since the night I met Dick Francis. ✓

—Rob Kresge

Classified Information

Would You Like to Be in a Book Reading Club?

On a regular basis that doesn't conflict with monthly Sisters in Crime program meetings? Just announce it at the next program meeting or advertise for like-minded readers in the *Nooseletter* by e-mailing your suggestion to shirleycoe@comcast.net.

Mystery-less in Downeast



Maine

We just got our membership renewal notice for Croak and Dagger, and, though we now live nearly 3,000 miles away

from Duke City, we pulled out the checkbook. Who knows? We might come back for a visit and be able to attend a meeting or two, pick up some free paperbacks from the book exchange, and visit with old friends. We do miss the wonderful meetings, the speakers, and the book swaps. Still doing Book Notes? They were fun as well. What lovely camaraderie!

We do love it here in Maine, a half mile from the sea . . . well . . . from Penobscot Bay, just about the most beautiful stretch of the Atlantic coast. We found an old cape (1830) and have given it lots of paint and new storm windows. Good thing since we had five inches of snow yesterday. We've been busy being farmers, builders, wood gatherers, canners, and keepers of chickens. We've even planted the requisite number of bulbs to ensure a colorful spring. It's a fine life in the tradition of May Sarton and Edna St. Vincent Millay, but didn't they have servants? Oh well!

What we really miss is chatting about mysteries and mystery writers and comparing notes. Sisters in Crime, C&D, has it all! We live in a town of 1,200, and at least a thousand can read! Actually the IQ is quite high around here. We have one store that mainly sells beer and chips, a tiny library supported by monetary redemption of empty beer cans, one gas station, and the ubiquitous, nonspecific Protestant church.

Actually the church was the scene of a bit of crime a few weeks back. An elderly parishioner was trying to park her car to go to the Sunday service when she lost control and drove right up the granite steps, injuring three believers, two of them seriously. We've never been that eager to get to church.

The owner and operator of the ambulance service lives next door to us here on Main Street, which may prove handy, but we hope not. You should see her heading off for an accident scene. She's the epitome of dedication. Just last month, she turned 84.

There is crime—mostly involving weed, and domestic abuse, and drinking. Some crime is the result of hunting and jacking. So far we've survived

deer hunting and moose seasons for this year, but now it's ruffed grouse and pheasant. This would seem to be less dangerous, but just last week an 18-year-old girl was shot and killed while crossing her own field. Culprit? A pheasant hunter. No charges filed.

So there is crime, but who besides us is writing or reading it? A myriad of slightly corny comedy writers such as Sandy Phippen and Tim Sample have made fun of this area, but have not caught on nationally. The mighty King, Stephen that is, has utilized the local terrain for his good, bad, scary, and sometimes wonderful yarns.

The medical mysteries are led by the indomitable Tess Gerritsen who lives not far down the coast from us, but she doesn't set her stories here in Downeast. Colby College in Waterville has produced writers such as Richard Russo whose *Empire Falls*, a well-cast HBO film, is set 40 miles from here in Skowhegan. Katherine Hall Page has written over a dozen cozies set in downeast Maine, Deer Isle, but she writes from a Wellesley College perspective and spends most of her life in Massachusetts. There's Cathie Pelletier, but she focuses on the Allagash, a northerly wilderness area, and her books are more like mainstream novels than mysteries. One of them, *Candles on Bay Street*, has been made into a Hallmark Hall of *Plain* movie. Of course, it was filmed in Nova Scotia. That's nothing. Back in the '90s, Carolyn Chute's *The Beans of Egypt, Maine* was filmed in Oregon. As long as the studio was going to do that, I wonder why not film it in Albuquerque?

I guess if there were enough mystery aficionados and writers in Maine, there would be a Sisters in Crime chapter closer than Massachusetts. At least we have a wonderful bookstore in nearby Searsport with two shelves of mysteries, including Donna Leon, Henning Mankell, Archer Mayor, and our own Albert Noyer, but we haven't cornered any of the mystery customers yet.

We were told about a mystery bookstore in old Camden town, where the most prosperous citizens of the East hang out at their favorite watering holes during high season. (You remember them. They used to wear white shoes and belts from Memorial Day to Labor Day.) Last week, delighted and excited, we packed up two bags with well-read mysteries and headed for this magical place. When we got there, a haughty nearby shopkeeper informed us that it's a seasonal business and that maybe they'd return in early May. Darn!

(cont'd. on next page)

(Mystery-less in Downeast Maine, cont'd.)

There is one used bookstore right here in Stockton Springs not two thousand yards from us, but it is so totally inundated with cigarette smoke from the proprietor that one might want to enter with a Hazmat team. The ashtrays haven't been emptied since Nixon resigned. The "store" is in an old, dark barn cluttered with books, and you definitely need a flashlight and a ladder. The male half of Page Erwin says, "Next time we're bringing a caged canary." The aged, smoky owner says that it was his mom's store. Some of the locals claim she may still be living in the back. Yeah, kinda stiff, propped up in an old rocker. Anyway, she must've loved those old Patricia Wentworth, Ngaio Marsh, and Agatha Christie mysteries, because they're stacked up to the hay rack. The paperbacks aren't just dog-eared, they're moose-eared, and the pages seem tobacco stained. I don't know about you, but I like my mysteries *sans* food stains and yellowed pages.

We could move to a large city like Portland where there are bound to be thousands of mystery fans. Trouble is, we love it here in this quiet New England village. Or we could renew our membership in the Albuquerque chapter of Sisters in Crime and correspond via e-mail with some of you mystery connoisseurs. Let's face it! You've got an extraordinary organization with a lot of enthusiasm and heart, and you're as close as our keyboard. So, of course, we re-upped, and you should too. You're so lucky to have such a great bunch of lively, witty, creative folk. Build on what you've got. Enjoy mysteries. But more than that—be grateful for one another's company. ✓

—Page Erwin, Stockton Springs, Maine

Classified Information

Are You Looking for a Critique Group?

Why not advertise for like-minded writers in the *Nooseletter*? Just email your announcement to shirleycoe@comast.net. Or if you prefer, bring up your suggestion at the next program meeting.



A Good Murder Mystery

Do you like to read a good murder mystery? Not even *Law and Order* would attempt to capture this mess. This is an unbelievable twist of fate!

At the 1994 annual awards dinner given for Forensic Science, AAFS President Dr. Don Harper Mills astounded his audience with the legal complications of a bizarre death. Here is the story:

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On March 23, 1994, the medical examiner viewed the body of Ronald Opus, and concluded that he had died from a shotgun wound to the head. Mr. Opus had jumped from the top of a ten-story building intending to commit suicide.

He left a note to the effect, indicating his despondency. As he fell past the ninth floor, his life was interrupted by a shotgun blast passing through a window, which killed him instantly. Neither the shooter nor the deceased was aware that a safety net had been installed just below the eighth-floor level to protect some building workers and that Ronald Opus would not have been able to complete his suicide the way he had planned.

"Ordinarily," Dr Mills continued, "Someone who sets out to commit suicide and ultimately succeeds, even though the mechanism might not be what he intended, is still defined as committing suicide." That Mr. Opus was shot on the way to certain death, but probably would not have been successful because of the safety net, caused the medical examiner to feel that he had a homicide on his hands.

The room on the ninth floor, where the shotgun blast emanated, was occupied by an elderly man and his wife. They were arguing vigorously, and he was threatening her with a shotgun! The man was so upset that when he pulled the trigger, he completely missed his wife, and the pellets went through the window, striking Mr. Opus. When one intends to kill subject "A" but kills subject "B" in the attempt, one is guilty of the murder of subject "B."

When confronted with the murder charge, the old man and his wife were both adamant, and both said that they thought the shotgun was not loaded. The old man said it was a long-standing habit to threaten his wife with the unloaded shotgun. He had no intention of murdering her. Therefore the killing of Mr. Opus appeared to be an accident, that is, assuming the gun had been accidentally loaded.

(cont'd. on next page)

(A Good Murder Mystery, cont'd.)

The continuing investigation turned up a witness who saw the old couple's son loading the shotgun about six weeks prior to the fatal accident.

It transpired that the old lady had cut off her son's financial support, and the son, knowing the propensity of his father to use the shotgun threateningly, had loaded the gun with the expectation that his father would shoot his mother.

Since the loader of the gun was aware of this, he was guilty of the murder even though he didn't actually pull the trigger. The case now becomes one of murder on the part of the son for the death of Ronald Opus.

Now comes the exquisite twist. Further investigation revealed that the son was, in fact, Ronald Opus. He had become increasingly despondent over the failure of his attempt to engineer his mother's murder. This led him to jump off the ten-story building on March 23, only to be killed by a shotgun blast passing through the ninth-story window.

The son, Ronald Opus, had actually murdered himself. So the medical examiner closed the case as a suicide! ✓



NoveList Revealed

The public library pays big bucks for premium databases. One of those databases is NoveList, an invaluable source of information on mystery and suspense titles.

To use NoveList through the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System, go to www.cabq.gov/library/ and click on [Digital Library \(databases\)](#). Then click on [A-Z listing](#) and scroll until you find [NoveList](#). All of the databases on this list require your name and library card number.

Search Our Database allows the user to:

- Find a Favorite Author (Use a favorite author to find new titles.)
- Find a Favorite Title (Use a favorite title to find similar books.)
- Find a Series Name (Use a series name to get a list of titles in the series.)
- Describe a Plot (Enter words describing a book you'd like to read.)

- Boolean Search (Guided and freehand Boolean searching of the NoveList database.)
- Article and List Search (Enter words to search our ready-made lists and articles.)

Describe a Plot, for example, allows the user to search for a book by:

- WHO the story is about
- WHAT happens in the story
- WHEN the story takes place
- WHERE the story takes place

You can also limit your search by age range and/or publication date.

You can also **Browse Lists**. The categories listed under **Best Books** for [Adults](#) are:

- Christian fiction
- Fantasy
- Horror
- Literary
- Mysteries and Thrillers
- Romance
- Science Fiction
- Westerns

If you then click on **Mysteries and Thrillers** you get this list:

- Agatha Award
- Anthony Award
- Arthur Ellis Award
- Dagger Awards
- Dilys Award
- Edgar Allan Poe Award
- Lambda Literary Award
- Library Journal Best Mystery Books
- Library Journal Best Thrillers
- Los Angeles Times Book Prize
- Macavity Award
- New York Times Notable Books
- Quill Book Awards
- Romantic Times Reviewers Choice Award
- Shamus Award

From here you can select the award you like and find winning books.

The categories listed under **Explore Fiction** are:

- Adventure
- Fantasy
- Horror
- Mysteries and Thrillers
- Romance
- Science Fiction
- Westerns

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(NoveList Revealed, cont'd.)

If you click on **Mysteries and Thrillers** here, you get the following subgenres:

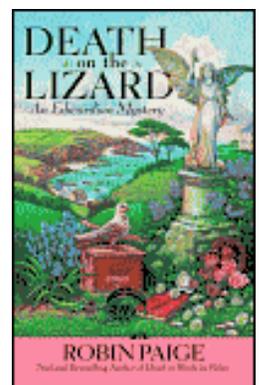
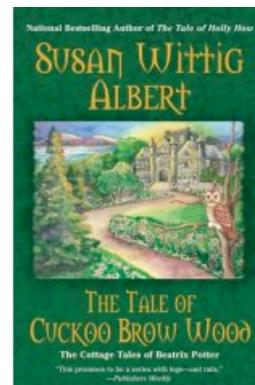
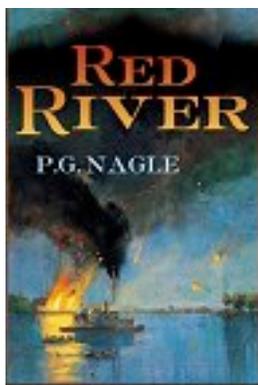
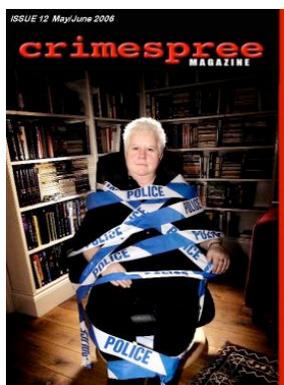
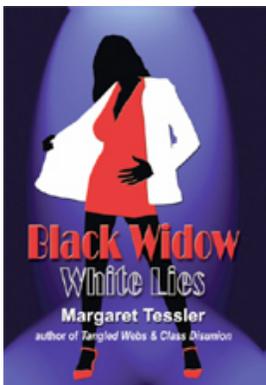
- Accidental Sleuths
- African-American Detectives
- Art Thefts
- Biblio Mysteries
- Burglars
- Campus Crime
- Comic Caper
- Contract Killers
- Cozy Mysteries
- Crime Classics
- Crime in the Great Outdoors
- Detecting Lawyers
- Doctor
- Ecumenical Sleuths
- Elderly Rogues
- Forensic Detectives
- Gay and Lesbian
- Human and Animal Teams
- Husband and Wife Teams
- Immortal Detectives
- Investigative Reporters
- Latino Detectives
- Legal Thrillers
- Native American Detectives
- Police Procedurals
- Private Detectives
- Rogue or Thief
- Senior Sleuths
- Serial Murderers
- Settings and Subjects (another list that includes such topics as Cookery, Historical Mysteries, Locked Room, Hospital Setting, Strip Joints, and more)
- Smuggling
- The Underworld
- Women
- Women Detectives

Whew!

The **For Readers** section includes **Author Read-alikes**. If you have read every book by your favorite author, NoveList helps you find other, similar books, and the database provides an annotated list to help you decide whether the recommended author is a fit for you.

For Readers also features **Annotated Book Lists**. My treasure for today was a discussion of noir and a list of classic noir titles. Here is the list: check out NoveList for the annotations:

- Anderson, Edward. *Thieves Like Us*. Frederick A. Stokes, 1937.
- Cain, James M. *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Knopf, 1934.
- Fearing, Kenneth. *The Big Clock*. Harcourt, Brace, 1946.
- Goodis, David. *Down There*. Fawcett Gold Medal, 1956 (later republished as *Shoot the Piano Player*).
- Gresham, William Lindsay. *Nightmare Alley*. Rinehart and Company, 1946.
- Hammett, Dashiell. *The Glass Key*. Knopf, 1931.
- Hammett, Dashiell. *The Maltese Falcon*. Knopf, 1930.
- Levin, Ira. *A Kiss Before Dying*. Simon and Schuster, 1953.
- McCoy, Horace. *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* Simon and Schuster, 1935.
- Thompson, Jim. *The Killer Inside Me*. Lion, 1952.
- Willeford, Charles. *Pick-Up*. Beacon, 1955.
- Woolrich, Cornell. *I Married a Dead Man*. Story Press Book, 1948.
- Woolrich, Cornell. *Manhattan Love Song*. William Godwin, 1932.



2007 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, March 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 17, 7:00 p.m. (*third Tuesday*)
Tuesday, May 22, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 26, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 27, 7:00 p.m.
December TBA

Meetings are free to the public.

Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held every fourth Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., at the James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Police Substation, 12700 Montgomery Blvd. NE, one block east of Tramway.

Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes.

†*Nooseletter* Submissions†

Croak & Dagger friends are encouraged to contribute articles, reviews, and essays on aspects of mystery writing *and* reading for publication consideration. Information on relevant conferences or events is also welcome. Especially let us know if you have published a new book or story, or have an upcoming local author event. (Unbridled enthusiasm for your own mystery book is encouraged here.)

Length: Articles should average 500 words.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to publication: February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, and December 15.

The Living and the Dead: As a general policy, articles and information should focus on living authors rather than dead ones, but that's not set in concrete shoes. Articles about specific historical development of the crime-mystery writing genre, for example, would be welcome.

Submissions: Please submit via email to shirleycoe@comcast.net, with "*Nooseletter*" in the subject line.

The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ✓

—*Shirley Coe*

Summary of Findings

The *Nooseletter* is the internal organ of the Croak & Dagger chapter, Albuquerque, of Sisters in Crime (SinC). Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and editors.



Still not a member of Sisters in Crime?

\$20/year brings mystery to your life! The Albuquerque *Croak & Dagger* chapter welcomes mystery fans who want to enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship, and sensational speakers.

Benefits of membership in the *Croak & Dagger* chapter include a subscription to our *Nooseletter*, close contact with local mystery writers, and fun events with other mystery fans.

You do *not* have to be a member of the national organization to join us. Come hear our next program speaker and meet the gang. We promise to bring mayhem and murder into your life.

Contact Sarah Schwartz, membership chair, at croakdagger@yahoo.com.