



SISTERS in CRIME
CROAK & DAGGER
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



THE NOOSELETTER

Volume X, Number 3 — May/June 2016

†Expert Testimony†

At last! Today (April 20) finally feels like spring, and I'm so excited to see it return (we had a couple of false starts this month.) Have you ever noticed that in addition to the plants and trees blooming, we human beings seem to bloom when the weather turns springy? When the sun is shining on our beautiful New Mexico landscape, the temperatures are in the balmy 70s, the wind is tame, and the days are longer, it seems people perk up from the long winter doldrums.

It seems odd that we've only had two meetings of Croak & Dagger so far this year. As you know, we had to skip our February meeting because the Multigenerational Center was closed for cleaning and repairs. I hope that won't happen again for the next few years, but it made me realize how when you get in the habit of doing something on a regular basis, you get completely thrown off when something changes.

That's why I hope you all made it to the April meeting, and I'm really hoping you don't forget about the meeting coming up on May 24. It's one of those crazy months when the fourth Tuesday is NOT the last Tuesday, as it often is in other months.

We had a really good turnout in January, and I'd hoped that would carry through to the March meeting. Alas, it did not. Not only did many of our usual attendees not make it that night, neither did our guest speaker, Jann Arrington-Wolcott. She contracted a nasty flu bug over the weekend before she was to speak to us. Rita Herther stepped in with a really wonderful last-minute substitute, Janet Greger,

an active member of C&D and an accomplished writer. But we did miss those of you who could not make it.

By the time you read this article, we will have already had our April meeting featuring our guest speaker, Joseph Badal. I'll send out the usual notice, so I hope you don't miss that one because Joe always has wonderful information for us.

My plea for the month is to encourage all of you who haven't attended much this past winter, to put on your spring/summer duds and join us for meetings this year. It's always good to see you, and find out what you've been up to. In that same vein, I know Linda Triegel always appreciates contributions to the *Nooseletter*. We want to know if you've been writing, having book signings, or reading any new, great mysteries. If so, share it with your fellow mystery lovers at Croak & Dagger.

So welcome to spring! We hope to see a lot more of all of you!

— Pat Wood, President

Don't Miss It! Tuesday, May 24, at 7 p.m.

Chris Eboch, our May speaker, has written more than 30 books for young people, including *The Eyes of Pharaoh*, a mystery in ancient Egypt. Under the name Kris Bock, she also writes romantic suspense novels for adults, involving outdoor adventures and Southwestern landscapes. *Counterfeits* starts a new series about art theft. *Whispers in the Dark* involves intrigue among ancient Southwest ruins. Read excerpts at www.krisbock.com or visit her [Amazon page](#).

Coming Up...

June's speaker (rescheduled from March) will be **Jann Arrington-Wolcott**, a Founding Member of Women Writing the West and a Founding Faculty Member of the Tony Hillerman Writing Conference.

A third-generation New Mexican, Jann spent much of her childhood on her grandparents' cattle ranch near the Mexican border. Her colorful family tree includes a frontier sheriff grandfather, a Harvey Girl grandmother, a native American great-grandmother, a Methodist minister great-grandfather and an assortment of horse thieves and train robbers.

On her fortieth birthday, she decided that if she was going to pursue her dream of writing, she'd better get going. She began writing for magazines and newspapers, and (in the middle of the night and on weekends) researched and wrote her first novel, a metaphysical thriller *Brujo*, which sold internationally and was filmed as a TV movie titled *Seduced by Evil* in 1998. Her new thriller, *Deathmark*, was published to rave reviews in July 2014.

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The Albuquerque Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime welcomes mystery fans, readers, and writers who want to enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship and sensational speakers. C&D meetings are held in the North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center at 7521 Carmel Avenue NE, north of Paseo del Norte and west of Wyoming. Unless otherwise noted in the Nooseletter or our website, programs are free and open to the public.



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986. *The mission of Sisters in Crime shall be "to promote the professional development and advancement of women crime writers to achieve equality in the industry."*

Our vision is: "Raising professionalism and achieving equity among crime writers."

And our motto is: "SinC into a good mystery!"

Check Out the Croak & Dagger Website
(www.croak-and-dagger.com) for all your
Croak & Dagger information needs:

- Upcoming Programs
- 2011 Meeting Schedule
- Membership Form
- Speakers Bureau
- Links to Mystery Websites & Websites for Your Favorite Croak & Dagger Authors
- *The Nooseletter* Archive

AND: All members are invited to join the Croak & Dagger Yahoo group, an online gathering place for mystery writers. Join in! Log on to C&D's web page (www.croak-and-dagger.com) and click on the link to moderator Nancy Varian for instructions. Exchange news and information about mystery books, movies, etc., as well as online courses.

The Line Up

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C&D Members!

Send news of your latest releases, good news of any kind, and any news you hear about your favorite authors to the *Nooseletter* at the address on page 2. I can't make this stuff up!

—the editor

Noose News

Craig Johnson will be speaking and signing copies of his latest Longmire novel, *The Highwayman*, at the ABQ Main Library Auditorium on 5th Street on May 17th at 6 p.m. Get there early!

Another reason to Join SinC

In Chinese astrology, 2016 is the year of the Red Fire Monkey. What connection might that have to SinC? Our logo is red, we're on fire for mystery and crime writing, and we like to monkey with the status quo.

And so, this is also the year we begin our campaign to support the short story, **We Love Short Stories**. Many SinC members, including me (Leslie Budewitz, President), got our first publishing credits with short mysteries. They remain a tremendous avenue for new writers to break in; for published authors, they provide an opportunity to tell stories that would not support a novel or to hold reader interest between books. Other authors simply prefer the form. They're fun to write, and fun to read.

At the same time, story markets have shrunk. Print magazines have lost subscribers and single-copy distribution, in chicken-and-egg fashion. Online magazines typically offer limited payment. Anthologies fill some of the gap, but many offer writers only exposure—a boon, to be sure, but not one that pays the bills.

What's a writer or reader to do?

You know the SinC response: Reach out. Ask questions. Create a new path. Thanks to Debra H. Goldstein, Deborah Lacy, and Art Taylor, that's what SinC is doing.

In the next year, you'll see articles in *InSinC* on writing short stories, finding markets, and promotion. You'll read interviews with short story publishers and editors. You'll learn more about single and multiple author anthologies, and how to publish them, traditionally and independently.

Nearly 90% of SinC members are writers. We all know that to write well in a form, we must read it. Read it, study it, make it part of our creative life.

To help you with that assignment, SinC has arranged subscription discounts for members for *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*, *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, *the Strand*, and *Mystery Scene Magazine*. Discount codes are available in the members-only section of the website, or from Beth Wasson, Executive Director.

SinC is committed to the story. Make that commitment with us. Subscribe. Give a subscription to a friend, the high school writing club, or your local library. Try your hand. Join or start a short story critique group in your chapter. Submit. As is often said, read, write, repeat.

And support, in whatever way you can. Because that's what Sisters do.



Edgar Winners Announced

Mystery Writers of America is proud to announce the winners of the 2016 Edgar Allan Poe Awards, honoring the best in mystery fiction, non-fiction and television published or produced in 2015. The Edgar® Awards were presented to the winners at our 70th Gala Banquet on April 28. (See the March *Nooseletter* for other awards and all the nominees).

BEST NOVEL: *Let Me Die in His Footsteps* by Lori Roy.

BEST FIRST NOVEL BY AN AMERICAN AUTHOR: *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen.

BEST PAPERBACK ORIGINAL: *The Long and Faraway Gone* by Lou Berney.

BEST FACT CRIME: *Whipping Boy: The Forty-Year Search for My Twelve-Year-Old Bully* by Allen Kurzweil.

BEST CRITICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL: *The Golden Age of Murder* by Martin Edwards.

BEST SHORT STORY: "Obits" – *Bazaar of Bad Dreams* by Stephen King.

THE SIMON & SCHUSTER - MARY HIGGINS CLARK AWARD: *Little Pretty Things* by Lori Rader-Day.

BEST JUVENILE: *Footer Davis Probably is Crazy* by Susan Vaught.

BEST YOUNG ADULT: *A Madness So Discreet* by Mindy McGinnis.

2016 International Thriller Writers (ITW) Award Nominees

BEST HARDCOVER NOVEL

Ian Caldwell – *The Fifth Gospel* (Simon & Schuster)
Tess Gerritsen – *Playing with Fire* (Ballantine)
Paula Hawkins – *The Girl on the Train* (Riverhead Books)
David Morrell – *Inspector of the Dead* (Mulholland Books)
Karin Slaughter – *Pretty Girls* (William Morrow)

BEST FIRST NOVEL

Sandra Block – *Little Black Lies* (Grand Central)
LS Hawker – *The Drowning Game* (Witness Impulse)
Gilly Macmillan – *What She Knew* (William Morrow)
Brian Panowich – *Bull Mountain* (G.P. Putnam's Sons)
Hester Young – *The Gates of Evangeline* (G.P. Putnam's Sons)

BEST PAPERBACK ORIGINAL NOVEL

Marc Cameron – *Day Zero* (Pinnacle)
John Gilstrap – *Against All Enemies* (Pinnacle)
Andrew Mayne – *Name of the Devil* (Bourbon Street Books)
D.J. McIntosh – *The Angel of Eden* (Penguin Canada)
Jean Rabe – *Pockets of Darkness* (WordFire Press)

BEST SHORT STORY

Reed Farrel Coleman – “Feeding the Crocodile” JEWISH NOIR (PM Press)
Jeffrey Deaver – “Repressed” (Diversion Books)
Sharon Hunt – “The Water Was Rising” (Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine)
Terrence McCauley – “El Cambalache” (Thuglit)
Joyce Carol Oates – “Gun Accident: An Investigation” (Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine)

BEST YOUNG ADULT NOVEL

Alan Gratz – *Code of Honor* (Scholastic Press)
Nicole Maggi – *The Forgetting* (Sourcebooks Fire)
Michelle Painchaud – *Pretending to be Erika* (Viking Books for Young Readers)
Emily Ross – *Half in Love with Death* (Merit Press)
Allan Stratton – *The Dogs* (Sourcebooks Fire)

BEST E-BOOK ORIGINAL NOVEL

Diane Capri – *Jack and Joe* (AugustBooks)
Chris Kuzneski – *The Prisoner's Gold* (Chris Kuzneski)
Robert McClure – *Deadly Lullaby* (Alibi)
Caitlin O'Connell – *Ivory Ghosts* (Alibi)
Eric Rickstad – *Lie in Wait* (Witness Impulse)



The 2016 ITW Thriller Award Winners will be announced at ThrillerFest XI, July 9, 2016, at the Grand Hyatt (New York City.)

2016 Conferences – Still Time to Sign Up!

Below are some mystery writing conferences coming up between now and the end of 2016. For more information, click on the links to check them out online.

June 10-12

Third annual *Mystery Writers Key West Fest*, held at the Doubletree by Hilton Grand Key Resort. “A meet-and-greet where authors can catch up with old friends and readers can chat with their favorite mystery writers.” Panels on mystery fiction and nonfiction. Keynote speaker is Robert K. Tanenbaum. For more, write to: info@mysterywriterskeywestfest.com.

July 5-9

Thrillerfest annual conference, Grant Hyatt Hotel, New York. ThrillerMaster, Heather Graham; Silver Bullet Recipient, John Lescroart; Spotlight Guests, C.J. Box; Gillian Flynn, Walter Mosley. Click on: [Thrillerfest](#) for more.

July 28-31

23rd annual *Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference*, Corte Madera, California. “This conference has a strong tradition of great authors and teachers.” Classes on setting, dialogue, suspense and point of view; expert panels on detective work, forensics, etc. For more: <http://bookpassage.com/mystery-writers-conference>

July 29-31

Pacific Northwest Writers Association (PNWA) annual conference. Numerous panels, workshops, and special “master classes” in the art and business of writing all types of fiction and nonfiction. Keynote Speaker: Robert Dugoni; Featured Speakers: Catherine Coulter, Gerri Russell, Sheila Roberts, and C.C. Humphries. For details: <http://www.pnwa.org/>

August 13

Suffolk Mystery Authors Festival, at the Center for Cultural Arts, Suffolk, Virginia. One-day festival includes book signings, fan meet & greets and author readings as well as a New Author Expo, multiple workshops, and moderated panel discussions. For more, go to <http://www.suffolkmysteryauthorsfestival.com>.

August 18-21

Killer Nashville, Embassy Suites, Nashville, TN. Special Guests: Janet Evanovich, Kevin O'Brien, William Kent Krueger, Robert Randisi, Anne Perry, Clay Stafford. Click on: [Killer Nashville](#)

September 15-18

Bouchercon, Marriott Hotel, New Orleans. Chairs Heather Graham & Connie Perry; American Guest of Honor: Harlan Coben; International Rising Star Guest of Honor: Craig Robertson; Local Legend: Julie Smith; Lifetime Achievement: David Morrell; Toastmasters: Harley Jane Kozak & Alexandra Sokoloff. For more: <http://www.bouchercon2016.com>.

October 26-30

NoirCon, Philadelphia. Special Guests and award recipients: Woody Haut (keynote speaker), Charles Benoit, Charles Ardai, Garry Gifford, Aurélien Masson. Check out <http://www.noircon.com/news/>

October 28-30

Magna cum Murder, Ball State University, Indianapolis, IN. Guest of Honor, Maureen Jennings, best known as the author of the Detective Murdoch series, which has been turned into a television series, *Murdoch Mysteries*. International Guest of Honor, English crime fiction writer Natasha Cooper. <http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CentersandInstitutes/EBBall/MagnaCumMurder.aspx>.

Top 10: the best dialogue in crime fiction

By Andrew Martin (excerpted from The Guardian, November 25, 2015)

Dialogue lends an immediacy that suits the genre. Also, crime fiction is essentially demotic (even if it's about the rich), and bad, unmusical dialogue always makes me think the author is too self-obsessed to have paid attention to how other people speak. From Agatha Christie to Raymond Chandler and even Martin Amis, here are some of the best practitioners.

1. *The Maltese Falcon* by Dashiell Hammett

Hammett and Chandler were the kings of the wisecracking, hardboiled style, but Hammett's dialogue is slightly more naturalistic than Chandler's. At the start of this novel, the detective Sam Spade's secretary, Effie Perine, says, "There's a girl wants to see you. Her name's Wonderly."

'A customer?'

'I guess so. You'll want to see her anyway; she's a knockout.'

'Shoo her in darling,' said Spade. 'Shoo her in.'

2. *Farewell My Lovely* by Raymond Chandler

Mr Lindsay Marriott asks the detective Marlowe to accompany him on a rendezvous but won't say why. Marlowe suggests, 'You just want me to go along and hold your hat?' which annoys Marriott:

'I'm afraid I don't like your manner,' he said, using the edge of his voice.

'I've had complaints about it,' I said. 'But nothing seems to do any good.'

3. *Evil Under the Sun* by Agatha Christie

Christie's dialogue is underrated. The fastidious tone gives away the first speaker in this conversation about sailing as Poirot. The personalities of the vicar and the major are also immediately evident from just a few words:

'There is no such thing as a really calm sea. Always, always, there is motion.'

'If you ask me,' said Major Barry, 'seasickness is nine-tenths nerves.'

'There,' said the clergyman smiling a little, 'speaks the good sailor – eh, Major?'

'Only been ill once – and that was crossing the Channel!'

4. *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier

A stretch, perhaps, to label this a crime novel, but the tormenting of the unnamed narrator – new mistress of the house called Manderley – by the baleful housekeeper, Mrs Danvers, is as relishably nasty as anything in the genre.

'I don't have a maid,' I said awkwardly; 'I'm sure Alice, if she is the housemaid, will look after me all right.'

She [Mrs Danvers] wore the same expression that she had done on our first meeting, when I dropped my gloves so gauchely on the floor.

'I'm afraid that would not do for very long,' she said; 'it's usual, you know, for ladies in your position to have a personal maid.'

5. *Strangers on a Train* by Patricia Highsmith

Here, the relentlessly pushy (and psychopathic) Charles Anthony Bruno is beginning the entrapment of Guy Haines into his plan for the perfect double murder:

'Shall I tell you one of my ideas for murdering my father?'

'No,' Guy said. He put his hand over the glass Bruno was about to refill.

'Which do you want, the busted light socket in the bathroom or the carbon monoxide garage?'

'Do it and stop talking about it!'

The insinuating tone of Bruno is the chief delight of a brilliant novel.

6. *Billion Dollar Brain* by Len Deighton

The working-class spy hero of this novel was called Harry Palmer in the film. In the book, he is unnamed. Here the KGB man, Colonel Stok, has just chided him for fraternising with “evil” enemies of Russia. Our hero responds:

‘... but in my experience there aren’t many evil people around. Just ill-informed, misguided and ignorant ones.’

Colonel Stok said: ‘In Russia our people are not misinformed.’

‘There are many people who think that water has no taste,’ I said, ‘because we were born with it in our mouths and it’s been there ever since.’

What I like about Deighton’s books are these moment of elliptical weirdness that contrast so effectively with the terseness of the prose and the sharpness of the plotting.

7. *Night Train* by Martin Amis

Amis has deprecated the importance of dialogue, saying it’s too easy to write, “like riding a bike downhill.” But he’s very good at it, as demonstrated in this “postmodern” but still hardboiled crime novel, set in what is probably LA. The female detective, Hoolihan, is quizzing the partner of Jennifer Rockwell, an astrophysicist who committed suicide. The ellipses are Amis’s:

‘You guys were building for the future?’

‘Such was my understanding.’

‘Get married. Kids.’

‘Such was my understanding.’

‘You two talked about it ... I asked if you talked about it ... Okay. Kids. You wanted kids? You yourself?’

‘... Sure. I’m thirty-five. You begin to want to see a fresh face.’

8. *Be Cool* by Elmore Leonard

This is the second book concerning the misadventures in showbiz of Chili Palmer, who is encountered here getting off on the wrong foot with the dangerous Raji:

‘You wear your shades at night,’ Chili said, ‘so I’ll think you’re cool, but I can’t tell if you’re looking at me.’

Raji put his glasses down on his nose, down and up. ‘See? I’m looking the fuck right at you, man. You have something to say to me fuckin say it so we be done here.’

It’s the sudden lurch towards confrontation that Leonard’s so good at.

9. *No Country for Old Men* by Cormac McCarthy

Here, Sheriff Ed Tom Bell and his deputy, Wendell, view the aftermath of drug-related gunfight in the Texan desert. McCarthy doesn’t use speech marks or apostrophes in his dialogue (which is slightly irritating), but Wendell speaks first:

Could have been checkin the quality. Getting ready to trade.

They didnt trade. They shot each other.

Bell nodded.

There might not of even been no money.

That’s possible.

But you dont believe it.

Bell thought about it. No, he said. Probably I dont.

What I like about the line, “There might not of even been no money” is that it’s both highly ornate and completely natural.

10. *Snowdrops* by AD Miller

A creepy tale of a young lawyer, Nick, who is seduced in Moscow by a scheming Russian woman, Masha.

I said, ‘How is your mother, Masha?’

‘Not bad,’ she said, ‘but very tired. Coming old now.’

‘I would like to meet her.’

‘One day, maybe.’

‘How is your job?’

‘I pretend work, they pretend pay me.’

Reviews

Rob's Random Shots

May Case File Number 1

The Pot Thief Who Studied Georgia O'Keeffe by J. Michael Orenduff, Open Road Press, 2016, 285 pp (TP)

Hubie fans, rejoice! Mike Orenduff has produced his latest annual *Pot Thief* mystery, this one set partially in White Sands, New Mexico (Orenduff's back yard; he used to be president of New Mexico State University in Las Cruces), so this takes place both in Albuquerque, and also practically in the author's stomping grounds.

For those needing an introduction, Hubert Schuze is a pot thief who sells many of the treasures he uncovers at Spirits in Clay, his shop in Albuquerque's Old Town Plaza. What his books have in common are Hubie's nefarious pot-hunting expeditions (it is illegal to excavate old native pots and sell them), some time spent at his store, and experiencing Happy Hour over margaritas with long-time drinking buddy Susannah Inchaustagui (yes, we have Basques in New Mexico, too), a purely platonic relationship.

Another common thread in these books is that the life and works of some famous New Mexican (D.H. Lawrence to Billy the Kid) or someone else famous (Einstein to Escoffier) is Hubie's current obsession and play some part in unraveling the mystery in each volume. This book is no exception. The paintings and career of O'Keeffe provide perspective at several points and much of the book is set in a new area for Hubie to dig for a pot—the remote and highly secure White Sands Missile Range in southern New Mexico.

If that remote location isn't enough fresh territory for readers, Hubie's new, more-serious-than-ever romance with his recent girlfriend, Sharice, a striking Quebecoise from Montreal, takes the most serious turn imaginable. This is definitely a high-water mark in Hubie's relations with women and readers will rejoice.

Meanwhile, back to the plot: Hubie has a chance to investigate an off-limits ruin in search of a very rare pot, but do so, he has to penetrate security at White Sands, closely guarded ever since the test

of the world's first atomic bomb there in 1945. He and Susannah settle on an ingenious way to penetrate the base and, true to acknowledging other worthy real Mexico citizens in this book, Jim and John Hoffsis of Treasure House Books on Old Town Plaza are consulted about the annual Bataan Memorial Death March re-enactment.

No spoilers here, folks. Almost needless to say, Hubie's plans go awry. He finds but loses the pot. A murder occurs, for which Hubie becomes the main suspect. Susannah and Sharice work to get him out from under a cloud of suspicion and everything ends satisfactorily, perhaps even a shade triumphantly. There are scads of clever wordplay and misunderstandings (can there ever be just one scad? Or are they like suds; there can't be one single, solitary sud) and the bonus of newfound fulfilling romance.

I can't wait for the next Hubie mystery/adventure. Somehow, I don't think Sharice will be able to divert him from his appointed rounds for very long.

(BTW, if you read in bed as much as I do and want to leave a book temporarily at the end of a chapter, you will have 63 opportunities to do so here; Mike Orenduff is a master of short chapters, leaving readers hanging every time and anxious to return to his narrative.) ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

May Case File Number Two

The Man Who Fell From the Sky by Margaret Coel, Berkley Prime Crime, 2016, 291 pp (HC)

This is the latest and greatest of the Wind River Reservation mystery series featuring divorced female Arapaho attorney Vicky Holden and Jesuit priest Father John O'Malley as sleuths. This book continues a trend that the author began three or four novels before this one, in which a crime or a disappearance decades or a century ago impacts a crime in the present. Readers should also enjoy *The Silent Spirit* (silent films), *Buffalo Bill's Dead Now* (the Wild West show in Europe), and *Killing Custer* (Western re-enactors).

I admire Coel's ability to seamlessly leave the authentic present she's created for us on the Arapaho reservation of today and step back to the past and use convincingly other point-of-view characters besides Father John and Vicky. This volume begins

with a present day murder of an Arapaho man who may have been using an authentic treasure map to search the Rez for gold coins and currency supposedly stashed by famous outlaw Butch Cassidy, who frequented the area in the 19th and 20th centuries.

We learn of family connections between Butch and a young Arapaho woman who may have given birth to a daughter by him. Besides his trips to the Rez to hide out from posses, this Butch is portrayed as a Robin Hood character, sharing some of his loot with Indian families. Since they never know when to expect Butch (who goes by other aliases than just the well-known Robert Leroy Parker), these drop-ins are referred to several times. The outlaw was even reported to have visited as late as the 1920s and 30s, decades after he and the Sundance Kid were reported to have been killed by militia in Bolivia.

Treasure maps have appeared, even been published, over the years in the late 20th century. But the latest map may have been genuine and may have led to the death of an old treasure hunter close by a lake. However, the title doesn't refer to the victim, but to the sudden unannounced visits by Butch. We see differing opinions of Butch's innocence, the likelihood of undiscovered treasure, and the validity of various maps that pop up.

Although Father John interacts with a movie company coincidentally making a documentary about Butch, lawyer Vicky carries the brunt of the murder investigation (apart from the local FBI office, the chief agent of which is much sought after in this book, but hard to find.) This means that most of the danger from treasure-seekers and from the probable murderer descends on Vicky and lends this book a palpable rising sense of danger.

The author's casting of Father John as the male half of the investigators ensures that actual romance never develops, but one or both protagonists are usually at risk in every book in this series. Readers will turn pages quickly in the Wind River novels to assure themselves that the two will survive to "detect another day."

Fans of the series will not be disappointed in the characters or the thrilling outcome. First-timers can pick up any novel in the series in any order. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

May Case File Number Three

Dark Waters: A Raisa Jordan Thriller by Christine Goff, Crooked Lane Books, 2015, 352 pp (HC) (I read the Kindle version)

This is a scintillating debut thriller in a series by mystery author (and MWA member) Chris Goff, whom many of you met at the joint MWA-SinC mystery conference here in ABQ last summer. While the thriller genre represents a departure from Chris's mystery series, this is nonetheless a breathtakingly paced juggernaut of a thriller that will have you checking to see if your seatbelt is fastened. Her unique series protagonist is an agent of the US Diplomatic Security Service (DSS), many of whose real-life members I briefed during my second tour in the Counterterrorist Center in the 1990s.

A brief primer for those unfamiliar with US embassy staffing: Besides the State Department folks you would expect, there are CIA personnel, military personnel, even FBI agents attached to most larger embassies, and sometimes single reps in smaller ones. DSS agents are charged with protecting the embassy beyond what Marine guards do, safeguarding the ambassador, ensuring the safety of embassy families, and in this case, augmenting security for visiting US diplomats. DSS agents also protect senior State Department officials anywhere in the world, including the secretary of state, just as the Secret Service is responsible for the safety of the President, other senior officials, and their families.

The book opens with a bang, the murder of Raisa's predecessor in a public park in Israel that may also have targeted a visiting Federal judge and his ill daughter. This doesn't bode well for the imminent visit of the Secretary of State. Rae puts together a team of embassy personnel, Israeli police, and local security service folks and endeavors to keep the judge, his daughter and a suspicious thumb drive out of the hands of whatever group the attackers belonged to.

In a few short days, the action escalates and the stakes are raised as the opposing sides play cat-and-mouse games against the backdrop of the impending visit and efforts to abduct the judge's daughter and/or determine the importance of the thumb drive.

Chris knows how to put her foot on the accelerator and never let up. I thought I knew a thing or two about DSS and embassy security from working with one of their agents for three years. But I learned a lot from this book and you will, too. From understanding the differences among Jewish sects, to finding that Palestinians aren't the only Muslims in Israel, who have their own proliferation of sects, to appreciating the real size of Israel and learning about urban borders that split towns and cities, and the stresses that competing security and intelligence agencies face in a crisis.

This is the first in a high octane series of thrillers. We can expect more from Chris Goff and I look forward to more Raisa Jordan. Her occupation gives Chris a great opportunity to move her heroine around the world. You should buy a ticket for those flights as well. ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Key:

PB = Paperback
TP = Trade paperback
HC = Hardcover

May Case File Number Four

The Tiger in the Smoke by Margery Allingham, Felony and Mayhem Press (reprint), 2010, 336 pp (I read the Kindle version)

I was originally disappointed in this book before I even finished it, but now that I've done some research through Amazon reviews, I don't want to be too hasty in declining to recommend it.

Background: My son and I watched the Campion series on PBS *Mystery* back in the early 1990s and liked it immensely. I bought him the DVDs a couple of years ago and he's had fun reliving the shows, which were all set in the 1920s, with all the background, costumes, and cars that that would entail.

So I was shocked to download this novel and decide to condemn it and perhaps not even finish it. Where did the 1920s go? Why does this book involve WWII veterans, why is Campion a minor character in a series that bears his name, why does he get so few pages in solving this crime?

It turns out that the author aged this character as she herself aged (1900-1966). This novel was designed to let us see the killer/kidnapper from the point of view of his minions, the women he terrorizes, and the Anglican canon who eventually thwarts him. Thus I can say that as a novel, it works, as a series mystery it doesn't—unless you have read more Campion books before you tackle this one. At least we were given glimpses of Campion's indestructible manservant, Magersfontain Lugg, generally just called Lugg. *Extra points for whoever reads this or any other Campion novel and can explain the significance of Lugg's first name.* ♦

—Rob Kresge (rkresge777@comcast.net)

Clawback by J.A. Jance, Touchstone, 2016, 336 pp (HC)

I'm surprised no one has made use of this phrase before for a thriller—it's so deliciously menacing. Specifically, of course, "clawback" refers to attempts to get back the money made by the first investors in a Ponzi scheme,—who can make out like bandits (think Bernie Madoff)—in order to pay back the later, losing investors.

I'm partial to Jance's Ali Reynolds novels (following on her equally successful Sheriff Joanna Brady stories, set in Arizona, and the J.P. Beaumont mysteries set in Seattle. Okay, I'm less enamored of Beaumont, but occasionally Jance brings two of her characters together for a thrill, and I read those books avidly too.

In *Clawback*, Ali helps solve the murder of a man whose Ponzi scheme bankrupted hundreds of people, including Ali's parents, and left them seeking justice...or revenge. Her dad, not one to take a setback lying down, goes to demand an explanation from Dan Frazier, his one-time friend and financial advisor, only to stumble into a bloody double-homicide scene—and promptly becomes the prime suspect.

Ali and her husband, B (don't ask—that's what he goes by, for amusing reasons you'll have to discover for yourself), with the help of his tech company's bright young employees, work to clear Bob's name, while also helping to get justice for the other suddenly impoverished victims of the scheme.

And that's not even the whole story, which is layered with subplots and shady characters. Nonetheless, I had no trouble unraveling the many plot strands in this face-paced, easy-to-read, and highly entertaining novel. ♦

—Linda Triegel (ljt23@earthlink.net)

You can never read your own book with the innocent anticipation that comes with that first delicious page of a new book, because you wrote the thing. You've been backstage. You've seen how the rabbits were smuggled into the hat. Therefore ask a reading friend or two to look at it before you give it to anyone in the publishing business. This should not be someone with whom you have a romantic relationship, unless you want to break up.

—advice from Margaret Atwood

Series mysteries:

All reviews by Susan Zates

NOTE: Print publisher noted; most also available (and/or read by the reviewer) in e-format.

The Pyramid: and Four Other Kurt Wallander Mysteries, by Henning Mankel. Vintage Crime/Black Lizard, 2009, 416 pp (HC).

The Pyramid is the ninth book of the Kurt Wallander police procedural mystery series set in late-20th-century Sweden. The novellas are set in the years leading up to the 1990 start of the series, filling in the back story how Wallander became a divorced and often depressed loner.

“Wallander’s First Case” introduces him as a 21-year-old patrol officer new to the force. While serving his beat, he spends his free time solving the murder of his next-door neighbor. A senior detective recognizes that Wallander has the talents of a good detective, becomes his mentor, and promotes him to detective status. Wallander ends a relationship with a demanding girlfriend, and meets Mona.

In “The Man with the Mask: Christmas Eve 1975,” Wallander stops at a store on his way home to follow-up on a stalker report...with tragic consequences.

In “The Man on the Beach: April 1987,” a man dies during a taxi-cab ride alone. There’s no sign of violence or injury, no clues as to his enemies. Tracing the man’s activities, Wallander learns he regularly traveled to a beachside community, where he walked along the beach. Why? Wallander returns several times to that beach, questioning the residents. He gets a hunch, and his research supports his theory. Once again he puts himself in grave danger as he solves the case, alone.

The photographer of the title in “The Death of the Photographer: April 1988,” is killed in his studio, presumably by someone he let in, since there was no sign of a struggle. Wallander has to investigate the photographer’s family, his past and acquaintances for clues.

“The Pyramid: December 1989” presents parallel plots: Wallander’s difficult relationship with his father, and a case that starts with an airplane crash. Wallander is astonished to learn from his daughter Linda that his father is moving to a new home—his father didn’t tell him he was moving. Then Wallander is concerned when his father decides to take a trip to Egypt alone to see the pyramids. The worst shock is when Wallander suddenly must fly to Egypt to rescue his

cantankerous father. Wallander’s brief visit to Egypt shapes his thinking about the airplane crash case...and the sight of the pyramids provides the breakthrough clue. ♦

The Serpent Pool, by Martin Edwards. Poisoned Pen Press, 2011, 284 pp (HC)

(Fourth in the Lake District mystery series set in contemporary England.)

The entire book is about relationships! I thought at first the heavy emphasis on relationships was just a slow start, to set the background for a murder investigation, but it turned out the relationships were the key to solving all the murder cases.

Detective Chief Inspector Hannah Scarlett is in charge of cold cases. It’s a position of responsibility, but she knows it’s a sideline to her career, a casualty of office politics. Nevertheless, she cares deeply about victims, and wants to bring closure to their survivors. She lives with antique bookseller Marc Amos. She’s attracted to historian Daniel Kind, the son of Ben Kind, a detective Hannah used to work with and from whom she learned a great deal. Marc becomes attracted to his new employee Cassie.

As Hannah researches a six-year-old murder that police would prefer to consider a suicide, she finds the victim had relationships with many people Hannah knows, who also are key acquaintances with two current murder victims. A wealthy celebrity with an abrasive personality holds a New Year’s Eve party, at which the recent widow of another antique book collector creates a scene. Hannah finds many links between them all. They seem to all have had affairs with one another, in a confusing tangle of relationships. While she is trying to sort out which relationships led to murder, another murder occurs, which makes the tangle of clues even worse. In a final suspenseful and creepy scene, one last secret relationship is revealed, which resolves all the murder cases.

We’re left wondering what happens next in Hannah’s personal life. ♦

Written a Novel?

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Death at Epsom Downs, by Robin Paige. Berkley, 2002, 308 pp (PB).

(7th in the historical mystery series set in Victorian England.)

Charles Sheridan (Lord Somerset) and his wife Kathryn “Kate” are an engaging team of amateur sleuths. Both are ahead of their time, eagerly embracing new technologies. Charles is interested in the latest advances in photography and forensics. In previous books he used fingerprints to solve a case, a technique not widely accepted yet. Charles and Kate’s latest adventure is all about horseracing and the outbreak of horse doping, plus of course a murder.

Charles has set up a camera at Epsom Downs racetrack, to record the winner at the finish line. When horse doping leads to a tragic accident, HRH asks Charles to investigate discreetly. With her sympathetic and understanding personality, Kate is able to gain information from people she meets far more easily than law enforcement can. Plus, her friendly relationship with her maid yields below-stairs gossip that would never be divulged to “outsiders” investigating the case. Between Charles, his high-society friend Bradford, a retired Scotland Yard detective, and Kate, they manage to resolve the horse doping as well as bring a serial killer to justice.

A happy side effect of their investigation is being reunited with Patrick, a youth who helped them solve a smuggling case along the Cornish coast. ♦

Dead Famous, by Carol O’Connell. G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2004, 316 pp (HC).

(7th in the Kathleen Mallory police procedural series set in late-20th-century New York City.)

This plot is quite intricate; difficult to understand the “why” A man was tried for murdering his wife, and acquitted; he is now a verbally abusive “shock jock” with a radio show. On the air, he encourages listeners to locate jurors from the trial. Those jurors are trying to lead their lives in peace, with new identities and in new locations due to the witness protection program.

After jurors’ locations are revealed on the radio show, they are murdered. Riker and Mallory are hunting the serial killer. Riker forms a close attachment to one of the jurors, which puts him at odds with his partner.

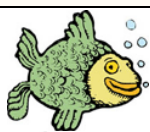
Plenty of surprises keep the reader guessing all the way. An emotional scene will hit pet lovers hard. A scene in Grand Central Terminal showcases O’Connell’s awesome writing and Mallory’s clever trickery. ♦

Forty Words for Sorrow, by Giles Blunt. Berkley, 2002, 372 pp (PB)

(The first book of the John Cardinal police procedural mystery series set in Algonquin Bay, Ontario, Canada.)

John Cardinal is a homicide detective at odds with his boss and his new partner Delorme as he investigates a series of kidnap murders. One-word summary: GRIM. February in Algonquin Bay is unbearably cold; the torture killings are gruesome. All characters have major issues: the “bad guys” are sick and twisted killers or corrupt businessmen/gangsters/law enforcement, while the “good guys” are hiding guilty secrets.

Chapters alternate points of view between John’s efforts to track a serial killer, his partner’s covert assignment to investigate John, and the kidnapping/torture/murders. The final 50 pages detail a suspenseful race to save a life. ♦



Sisters in Crime **Guppies**

SinC guppies come from across the United States and Canada. They have different occupations and avocations, but they share a passion for writing mysteries and a common goal of getting published.

“Few professions offer as many opportunities for rejection as writing does. Only the strong survive the path to publication. The encouragement and support of other writers can be the difference between giving up too soon and getting in print.” (SinC Guppies)

Guppies is an online writer’s support group. Subgroups represent cozies, noir, psychological and romantic suspense, and thrillers. The Mystery Analysis Group is a book discussion group aimed at discussing the craft, and the AgentQuest group can help with writing queries and synopses.

Interested in joining this online writer’s support group? Check them out at www.sinc-guppies.org/.

2016 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, May 24, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 28, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, July 26, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, August 23, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 27, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, October 25, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, November 22, 7:00 p.m.

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 North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center at 7521 Carmel Avenue NE, north of Paseo del Norte and west of Wyoming. Check our Web site, www.croak-and-dagger.com, for schedule changes and upcoming programs.

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. ♦

†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, but short items and ideas for sources are also welcome.

Deadlines: Publication is every other month, starting in January. Submission deadlines are the last day of the month *prior* to publication: Feb 29, April 30, June 30, Aug 31, Oct 31, and Dec 31.

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 e-mail to newsette@earthlink.net, with "Nooseletter" in the subject line.

The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ♦ —Linda Triegel

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