



SISTERS in CRIME  
**CROAK & DAGGER**  
ALBUQUERQUE CHAPTER



# THE NOOSELETTER

Volume X, Number 5 — September/October 2016

## †The President's Corner†

I like to think of myself as being on top of things. You know, keeping track of obligations, remembering dates (like what day is this??) making sure you show up on time and in the right place. But here lately, I fear I'm slipping on some of these things. I thank my lucky stars we have a wonderfully capable Nooseletter editor like Linda Triegel to remind me when it's time for my column.

But I don't think this is entirely my fault.

You see, I've noticed lately that I'm living in a time warp. It's a very cruel and capricious force of the universe that I never dreamed existed. When I was a little kid, time moved so glacially slow! It took FOREVER for my birthday to roll around each June, and Christmas was always so far in the future I couldn't even imagine it.

When I reached legal age (don't ask for what) I realized time was not quite as slow as I had seen it in my childhood. But it was still something stretching to a far distant future I couldn't even imagine. I remember the first time I received a statement from the Social Security Administration. I think I was somewhere in my late 30s or early 40s at the time. I couldn't imagine why I was receiving such a thing. I was, after all, still a mere youth. This notice explained to me that in the year 2004 I would become eligible to receive benefits from all those deductions taken from my salary each payday. 2004??? OMG! That's more distant in the future than the movie, *2001*! It was only the 80s. Why were they bothering me with something so far away I couldn't believe I'd ever get there? Guess what? It got here much sooner than I expected.

Even today, I still think we are at the beginning of this century. It just turned to the year 2000, didn't it? I've been re-watching *Downton Abbey* and realizing that is set 100 years ago. I was born in the same century of *Downton Abbey*. I'm ancient!

But here's the thing. With all this time behind me, I live each day as it comes. I look forward to the activities I enjoy and relish the friends I meet. That's one reason I love the writing community. There are so many interesting people to enjoy—both writers and readers of books. Croak & Dagger Chapter hopes all of its members have the opportunity to fully engage with each other, attend meetings, and support all those member writers who entertain us with their work.

We hope to see all of you (or as many of you as we can get) at our September 27 meeting. And mark your calendars for another event. On Saturday, October 1, 2016, many of our C&D writers will spend the day at the Albuquerque Museum to participate in the first Authors Festival. They will be greeting fans, signing and selling their books, and introducing a throng of people to New Mexico's writing talent. Will we see you there?

— Pat Wood, President

### Don't Miss It! Tuesday, September 27, at 7 p.m.

**Rob Kresge**, founding member and past president of Croak & Dagger, will speak at the September meeting about using coincidence in your novels—and how to make it seem natural.

Rob grew up on the East Coast, but traveled to the West as a boy. His love for reading and desire to become a writer led to a journalism degree. During his career with the CIA, he founded a writers group to follow his dream in spare moments. Since retiring to New Mexico, Rob has achieved his dream to be a published author, writing the *Warbonnet* historical Western mystery series.

## Coming Up...

October's speaker will be **Michelle Adam**, who will tell us about the unusual subject of her novel, *Child of Duende: A Journey of the Spirit*.

The poet Federico Garcia Lorca described "duende" as the "spirit of the earth" that "one must awaken in the remotest mansions of the blood." The word also means "ghost, goblin, or nature spirit." Michelle will speak about her personal journey with duende, and the possibilities of embodying this spirit/energy/essence in our own creative journeys.

Raised in Switzerland, Spain, and the United States, Michelle Adam is a writer, teacher, and healer. She has been a magazine writer for more than 20 years, has taught Spanish, and has been leading healing and teaching circles of song and sound in New Mexico.

#

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**

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](http://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

REMEMBER: All the above provide opportunities for free publicity for members. Contact our website maven, Sue Zates (address below) for more information or with an idea for a blog article. Get your name out there wherever you can!

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](http://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

President – Pat Wood –  
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Treasurer & Hospitality – Joan Taitte –  
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*jsabe@berserker.com*  
*Nooseletter* Editor – Linda Triegel  
*newsette@earthlink.net*

## Noose News

### Field Trip to the Forensic Science Center, September 22

Learn what forensic science and crime scene investigation is really like—and what it is not. A presentation will be followed by a tour of the building, featuring such areas as DNA chemistry and firearms.

The tour leaves the Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center (in the Four Hills area) at 8:15 a.m. and returns at 2 p.m. Transportation is \$2. To sign up, visit the center at 501 Elizabeth Street SE, or call for more information at 505-275-8731.

### Old Town Author Fest October 1

The first Albuquerque Museum Author Festival will be held October 1 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Albuquerque Museum in Old Town. (See page 4)

Twenty-one New Mexico authors will exhibit and sign/sell their books. There will also be presentations by several of the authors in attendance. Book sales will benefit the Albuquerque Museum Foundation. Organizers hope this will become an annual event.

Come and meet your favorite authors, including Anne Hillerman, David Morrell, Steve Brewer, Joseph Badal, Don Bullis, Melody Groves, and Steve Havill. Croak & Dagger members scheduled to be present are Rob Kresge, Gloria Casale, Bob Kidera, Albert and Jennifer Noyer, Margaret Tessler, and our intrepid president, Pat Wood.

There is no charge for admission to this event. If you have out-of-town guests here for the Balloon Fiesta, this Author Festival would be a wonderful way for them to fill their time between morning and evening balloon events.

*Don't just plan to write – write. It is only by writing, not dreaming about it, that we develop our own style.*

—P.D. James

### Albuquerque Book Crawl, October 22

You've heard of the Albuquerque ArtsCrawl? Well, some readers and writers decided that books

are an art form too and have organized the first-ever Albuquerque Book Crawl, which will be happening on October 22 from noon to 5 p.m.

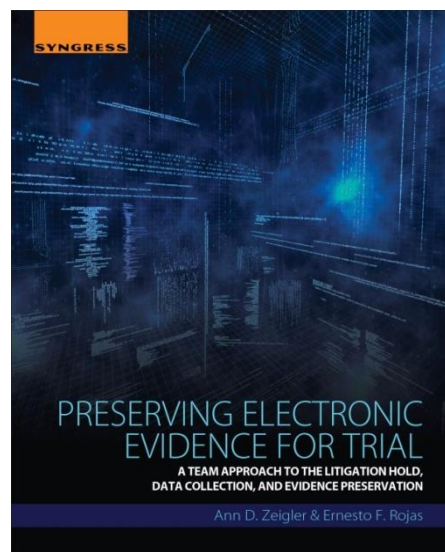
The idea is to visit the book stores sponsoring the event and (they hope) buy a book to support local authors. The event is free to both authors and readers. Sales will be handled by the authors themselves, thus maximizing their profits.

Participating stores are (so far), Page One Books, Title Wave Books, Blue Eagle Metaphysical Emporium, and Figments Tea Shoppe and Gallery. For more information, call one of the bookstores.

### Hands-on Guide to Digital Forensics from Ann Zeigler

C&D vice president Ann Zeigler's book, *Preserving Electronic Evidence for Trial*, is now available from Amazon. Corporate management and outside counsel need reliable processes for identifying, locating, and preserving electronic evidence. This handbook provides the road map, showing you how to organize the digital evidence team before the crisis, not in the middle of litigation.

"The ability to preserve electronic evidence is critical to presenting a solid case for civil litigation, as well as in criminal and regulatory investigations. *Preserving Electronic Evidence for Trial* provides everyone connected with digital forensics investigation and litigation with a clear and practical hands-on guide."





# Author Festival

Meet and greet the finest of the  
New Mexico writers' scene

**Saturday, October 1, 2016**  
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Albuquerque Museum  
2000 Mountain Rd NW  
*Located in Old Town*

Twenty-one authors from a variety of genres will share their experiences and books. Each author will have books available for purchase and signing.

<b>Joseph Badal</b> Mystery / Thriller	<b>Steve Havill</b> Southwestern Mystery	<b>Jane Lindskold</b> Science Fiction / Fantasy	<b>Paula Paul</b> Mystery / Literary Fiction
<b>Steve Brewer</b> Mystery / Thriller	<b>Anne Hillerman</b> Mystery / Non-Fiction	<b>Rory McClannahan</b> Science Fiction / Fantasy	<b>Margaret Tessler</b> Mystery / Thriller
<b>Don Bullis</b> Non-Fiction / Western History	<b>Betsy James</b> Science Fiction / Fantasy	<b>David Morrell</b> Mystery / Thriller	<b>Neecy Twinem</b> Children's Books
<b>Gloria Casale</b> Thriller	<b>Robert Kidera</b> Mystery / Thriller	<b>Albert Noyer</b> Historical / Contemporary Mystery	<b>Robert E. Vardeman</b> SciFi / Fantasy / Mystery / Western
<b>Pamela Christie</b> Historical Mystery	<b>Rob Kresge</b> Historical Mystery / Spy Thriller	<b>Jennifer Noyer</b> Historical Fiction	<b>Patricia Smith Wood</b> Mystery
<b>Melody Groves</b> Western			

**aM** 505.243.7255  
www.albuquerquemuseum.org  
info@albuquerquemuseum.org

The 2016 Authors Festival is a collaboration to benefit participating artists and the educational programs at Albuquerque Museum.

Six authors will speak and take questions in the Albuquerque Museum auditorium.

11 a.m. Anne Hillerman -- Why Stories Matter  
 Noon Joseph Badal -- Where Do Your Stories Come From?  
 1 p.m. David Morrell -- Rambo: the Story Behind the Story  
 2 p.m. Steve Brewer -- Humor Writing  
 3 p.m. Robert E. Vardeman -- Westerns, Weird and Otherwise  
 4 p.m. Jane Lindskold -- Writing Science Fiction / Fantasy

"It's exciting for us to draw attention to the talents we have here in New Mexico," says Museum Director Cathy Wright. "We look for a variety of ways for people to enjoy the Museum. A literary event integrates a different way for the community to experience and to talk about art and history."

## ***Not the only game in town...***

In case you don't get enough information, networking opportunities, and terrific speakers at Croak & Dagger's monthly meetings, here are some other opportunities to mingle with fellow writers and readers:

### ***Organizations for Writers***

#### **The New Mexico Book Co-op**

(<http://nmbookcoop.com> or call 505-344-9382) is the largest not-for-profit organization in the Southwest supporting authors, publishers, bookstores, and libraries. Albuquerque monthly meetings are at the Golden Corral at 5207 San Mateo Blvd NE.

There is a different topic of discussion at each meeting. The topic of the September 23 is Design, with UNM Press staff attending. Future topics will include taxes, book reviews, book fairs, and printers. The lunch meetings begin at 11 a.m. with networking, and the meeting starts at noon. Attendees are responsible for their own buffet lunch, tax and tip. All are welcome

Finalists in the 2016 NM-AZ Book Awards will also be announced at the September 23 meeting. The New Mexico & Arizona Book Awards celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2016. The Book Awards now has over 50 categories for histories, children's books, novels, covers, and many more genres. The award program each year also honors individuals and organizations that impact the book community in New Mexico. Past recipients include: Rudolfo Anaya, David Morrell, Nasario Garcia, Don Bullis, Pat Hodapp, and Anne Hillerman. The Award winners are announced each year at an awards banquet (held this year on November 18.)

**SouthWest Writers** ([www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)) is a nonprofit organization devoted to helping both published and unpublished writers improve their craft and further their careers. SWW serves writers of all skill levels in every fiction and nonfiction genre.

SWW had its beginnings in the early 1980s as New Mexico Romance Writers (NMRW) with five members. By 1985, the organization had grown to

about 150 members, and NMRW voted to change its name and open the group to writers of all genres.

Regular Meetings are on the first Saturday of the month from 10:00 a.m. to noon and the third Tuesday from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. We also offer 2-hour workshops on select Saturdays after our morning meetings. Go to our [Workshops](#) page for details. We hope to see you soon.

### ***Mystery Reading Groups***

The **Mystery Mavens Book Club** meets at the North Domingo Baca Center on the second Wednesday of the month from 7-8 p.m. This is a small group who read an assigned book each month.

The **Mystery Book Club** meets at the Palo Duro Senior Center on the second Tuesday of the month from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. to discuss an assigned mystery novel.

A **Mystery Book Group** meets at the Cherry Hills library on the first Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30 p.m. to discuss an assigned mystery novel. Call the library for more information.

### ***Other resources***

**Write by Night** at [www.writebynight.net/new-mexico](http://www.writebynight.net/new-mexico). Here you'll find a collection of resources for writers in New Mexico, from conferences to local critique groups to literary magazines. If you live in New Mexico, these are some organizations you might want to check out.

#### **A Room of Her Own**

([www.aroomofherownfoundation.org](http://www.aroomofherownfoundation.org)) is an arts program for women writers and artists and sponsors many events as well as regular contests.

**Shaw Guides** ([www.writing.shawguides.com](http://www.writing.shawguides.com)) lists regional conferences and workshops.

#### **C&D Members!**

If you know of, or belong to, other mystery writing and reading groups, send the information to the *Nooseletter* at the address on page 2.

—the editor

# ***Show and Tell at the 2016 Writers' Police Academy***

***by Jay Kinney***

I just returned from the recently completed Writers' Police Academy, The WPA was held August 11-14, 2016, in Green Bay, Wisconsin. It was not a conference to pitch or sell books or to find an editor. Instead, the WPA was created to allow attendees to see, hear, smell, and feel what it is like for public service professionals (police, fire, EMS, and forensics) to do their jobs on a daily basis.

All of the instructors are current and/or former members of these services, with several attorneys, a forensic psychologist, a pathologist, a judge, and a private investigator thrown in to complete the list of presenters.

This year's WPA was a four-day event, with registration and orientation, a maximum-security prison tour (cut short this year due to an unplanned lockdown), and a special ops (read SWAT, K-9 units, etc.) show-and-tell in the hotel parking lot Thursday afternoon and evening. The first session, on drones, was held Thursday evening after orientation.

Friday and Saturday were the "be prepared to fry your brain" days. Breakfast began at 6:00 a.m., and buses departed the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center at approximately 7:35 a.m. for a ten-minute ride to the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) campus, where all WPA presentations (except for the session on drones) were held.

Morning announcements began at 8:00 a.m., but weren't announcements in the true sense of the word. The Friday morning announcement was an extremely realistic dramatization of a head-on collision caused by a drunk driver. The Saturday morning announcement had conference attendees facing a knife-wielding assailant in a crowded building. In both situations, we saw firsthand how public safety agencies (police, fire, and EMS) respond to these emergencies. During each announcement, WPA instructors explained what was happening as each new phase unfolded.

After each morning's announcement, everyone headed to classrooms and lecture halls for that day's presentations. The same presentations were scheduled at different times on both Friday and Saturday, so it was possible to adjust your schedule if a conflict occurred, in order to accommodate those sessions you were most interested in attending.

Some sessions required prior registration (usually when you signed up to attend the WPA). These sessions, which included the prison tour, ballistics, handguns (live fire), pursuit immobilization techniques (high speed pursuit), shoot/don't shoot scenario training, death scene investigation, emergency driving, and long guns (live fire), were limited to a certain number of students. One of the reasons for the limited class sizes was because you actually got to do what was being taught. A word of caution: these sessions aren't for the faint of heart, and you must sign a waiver to attend.

I focused on presentations that were most relevant to the book that I am writing now. As a result, I attended the following sessions (but there are many more available):

- 1) Mashed Potatoes of Death: Are You Going to Eat That?
- 2) Death Scene Investigation

- 3) How to Think Like a Bad Guy
- 4) 10 Common Mistakes Writers Make About the Law  
(taught by Leslie Budewitz, current president of Sisters in Crime)
- 5) Drug Identification
- 6) Why They Were Bad (about serial killers)
- 7) Ballistics

The guest of honor for the Saturday evening banquet was international bestselling writer Tami Hoag, who spoke briefly to the attendees. A book-signing session followed the banquet.

A debriefing session was held Sunday morning. For the WPA attendees, it was one final opportunity to present questions to the public service experts and to Tami Hoag. It also turned out to be a very important session for me. I was able to talk to the EMS staff who had worked through the weekend. I presented the scenario and basic timeline for my book, and was very pleased to hear both of them say “yes, that is perfectly plausible.” Not only did they provide a pat on the back, they also gave me some tips on how to improve my story. Hallelujah!

Please take a look at WPA’s website (<http://www.writerspoliceacademy.com/>) and consider attending in 2017 if you haven’t done so before. The 2017 WPA will also be held in Green Bay.



*(Jay Kinney is a new author, working on his first mystery novel, to be finished “soon.” As a new member of SinC and the C&D chapter, who had never attended the WPA, he would like to thank SinC for providing financial help with the conference tuition. [Ed note: for 2016 the SinC discount was \$150 off the \$395 tuition.] Jay has been a member of Mystery Writers of America for several years. He lives in Las Cruces.)*

# ***The Downside of Selling the Movie Rights***

***OR: Take the option money and hope they never make the movie***

*Excerpted from an essay, "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," by Lance Morrow in the November 18, 1985, issue of Time magazine (Ye Editor was weeding out her clippings file).*

The novelist John le Carre says that he will never write again about George Smiley. He cannot think of Smiley anymore without seeing Alec Guinness. The actor stole the author's creation, hijacked it into flesh. Mention George Smiley to anyone who knows Le Carre's spy novels and his memory will instantly throw onto its screen the image of Alec Guinness. Smiley will not be fat and smudgy looking, as the novelist imagined him. He will be simply, immutably, Guinness, impersonating Smiley.

Incarnation of this kind is an interesting negotiation between words and pictures. It is a form of translation.

A one-way form of translation: the filmed flesh, the visible image, seems to have the advantage. Great movie characters do not often beat on the gates of prose, begging to be turned back into words. (Movies get "novelized" sometimes, of course, but novelization is merely a spin-off, like a doll or a T-shirt.) Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* sold a million copies in its first seven months. After the movie appeared, Rhett Butler was irreversibly Clark Gable. Scarlett O'Hara was Vivien Leigh. Mitchell's prose withered to the irrelevance of an architect's blueprint after the house is built.

Dashiell Hammett created Sam Spade. Humphrey Bogart became Sam Spade. The idea of a character becomes imprisoned in the body of the incarnator, and even the creator cannot liberate the prisoner. The character has acquired features and hair and costume. But something valuable, the subjective suggestiveness that hangs around the edges of words and comes alive only in the reader's imagination, may have died of specificity. Abruptly, the embodied character takes on the limitations of individual flesh.

Some artistic incarnations can be dangerous to the incarnator. Eugene O'Neill's father James was a talented actor who played the Count of Monte Cristo so many times, and so lucratively, that he ruined himself for anything else. He became the part. The illusion that was his success (the count) became his failure. (And so, in the artistic hall of mirrors, his playwright son reincarnated him in *A Long Day's Journey into Night* in order to destroy him once again.)

In a refinement of the idea, some characters have destroyed themselves precisely by incarnating themselves. Toward the end of his life, Charles Dickens, pressed for money, set off on grueling reading tours in which he became "Dickens," a lecture-hall version of himself. The labor exhausted him and hastened his death. Ernest Hemingway was a splendid man—generous, intelligent, full of curiosity and energy and talent—until sometime in middle age, when he became "Ernest Hemingway," a besotted parody of himself.

Writers who turn themselves into celebrities run such risks. Balzac is said to have formed a theory about the dangers of being photographed, which may have something to do with the hazards of celebrity in general. Everybody is composed of a series of ghostly images superimposed in layers to infinity, the theory said. Since man is not able to create something out of nothing, each photograph must lay hold of, detach and use up one of the layers of the body on which it was focused. The self is peeled away like an onion.

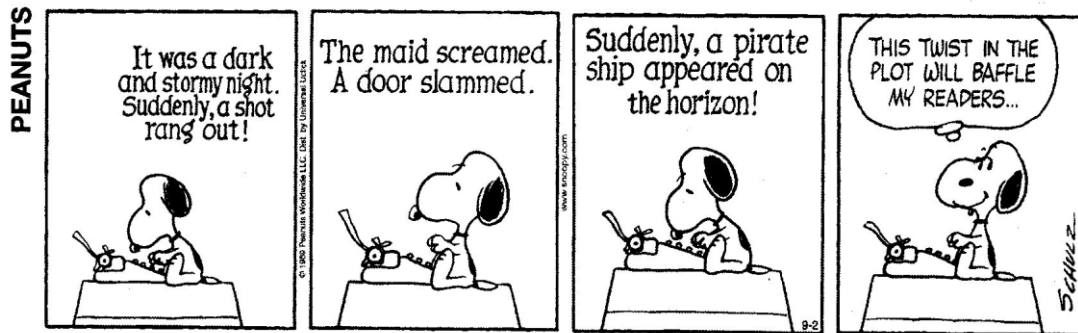
Sometimes the process of incarnation veers off in metaphysically unexpected directions, translating selves into roadside institutions. Consider this exchange:

*Child:* What was the first movie you ever saw, Daddy?

*Father:* I don't remember the title, but it starred Roy Rogers.

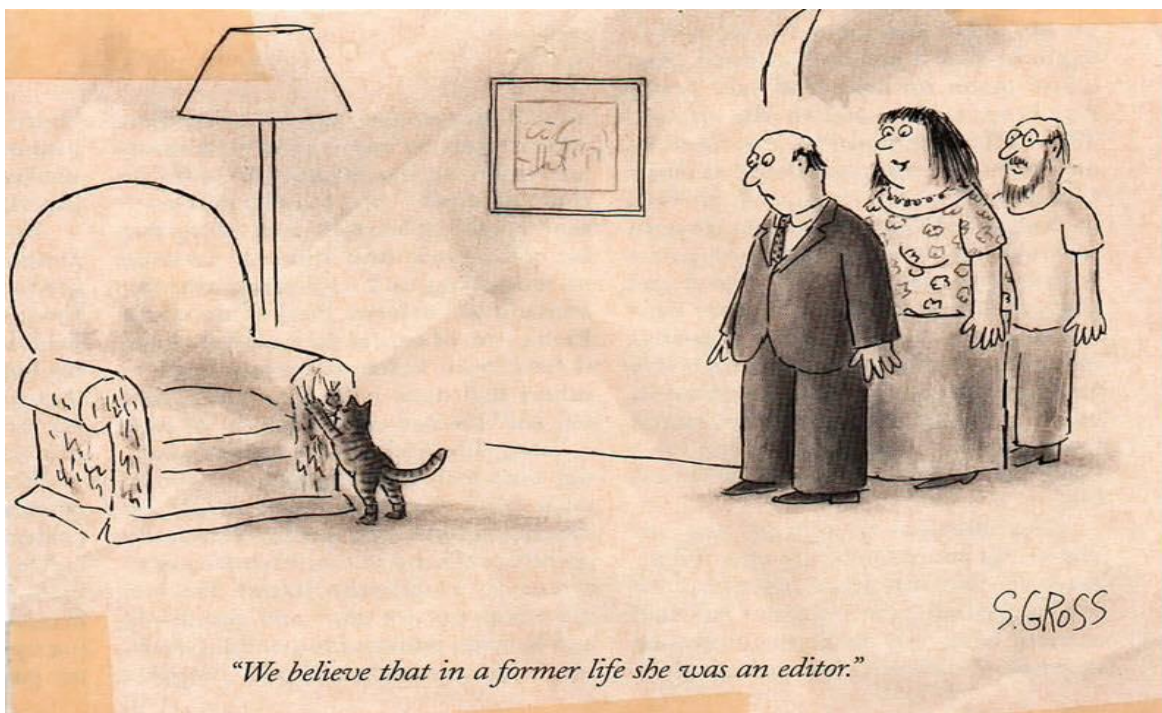
*Child:* Why would you want to see a movie about a restaurant?

## Croak & Dagger Short Story Challenge



All Croak & Dagger members are invited to finish a short story inspired by Charles Shultz's cartoon strip (above) republished in the *Albuquerque Journal* on September 2, 2016. The Rules:

- The story must begin with Snoopy's opening lines.
- The story should be no more than 1,000 words (the shorter the better!)
- E-mail your story to [croakanddagger@yahoo.com](mailto:croakanddagger@yahoo.com).
- All entries will be published on our blog.
- Challenge runs until October 31, 2016.
- Have fun!



# Reviews

## Rob's Random Shots

### September Case File Number One

*Stealing Trinity* by Ward Larsen. Oceanview Publishing, 2010, 336 pp (PB)

This novel had an intriguing premise. What if a Nazi officer became aware of the existence of the Trinity Project to develop the world's first atomic bomb and was able to be inserted into the United States in order to find it and either sabotage the project or steal the plutonium used for the first bomb?

But the news comes too late. Germany falls while he is en route to the US via U-boat. He has a plausible connection to America (exchange student in the 1930s) and is able to connect with a female student and her family that he remembers. British Intelligence becomes aware that some Nazi is pursuing Trinity, but their agent in pursuit initially doesn't know what the Trinity project means.

I found the premise interesting, but the pell-mell chase across America from Rhode Island mansions, by mail plane across the US, to New Mexico, where the spy learns of the big blast at White Sands, to the British spy and the Nazi's former girlfriend chasing him by train and finally onto the USS Indiana, which is transporting the first two bombs to Tinian Island in the Pacific, to be outlandishly stretching, even begging the willing suspension of disbelief. An interesting premise that cannot be credibly sustained. ♦

### September Case File Number Two

*A Lesson in Secrets* by Jacqueline Winspear. Harper Perennial, 2012, 352 pp (PB)

This is another in the Maisie Dobbs series set in England between the wars. I've met Ms. Winspear at conferences and enjoyed her previous outings with Maisie, now employed as a formal private investigator.

This story takes place in the 1930s, after Hitler has risen to power. Friends in the police ask Maisie to assume a job at a university where an important author of an anti-war book during the First World War has been killed.

Competing student factions aligned with fascism clash with more traditional students.

Maisie has to travel back and forth to London, working on another case involving a missing person. I found the rationale of her main premise to be a little forced and had trouble keeping straight all the supporting players in both the university town and in London. Needless to say, Maisie solves both cases, the London one at considerable peril. The university case culminates with speeches by competing student faction leaders. That made it hard for me to sustain my continued interest. Not the best Maisie Dobbs outing I've read. ♦

### September Case File Number Three

*This Doesn't Happen in the Movies* by Renee Pawlish, a Reed Ferguson novel, 2011, 226 pp (PB)

This series has been compared to *The Maltese Falcon* and other noir tales of the 1930s, but it's set in the 21st century and is light-hearted and wacky and set in Denver, a refreshing change of pace and locale.

It's an offbeat tale of missing husband in which fledgling private eye wannabe Reed Ferguson has a small circle of friends willing to do leg work for him as he tries to sort out the husband's trail and the circle of supportive women around the wife. He runs into considerable danger, although not of the life-threatening variety, as a group of thugs intervene in the investigation.

It's all sorted out in a 1930s-style confrontation with all the parties together that lets Reed explain all the competing interests and the whereabouts of the missing man. Tongue in cheek throughout and enjoyable enough that I would seek out other Reed Ferguson novels by Ms. Pawlish. ♦

## September Case File Number Four

***The Inspector and Mrs. Jeffries*** by Emily Brightwell. Constable Crime (PB)

Readers familiar with my reviews of books in this series will note that the series takes its name from the title of this book, the first of 34 (!) in sequence by this prolific author. The unique premise of these books, set in England at an unspecified era that looks like early 20th century, before World War I, is that Scotland Yard Inspector Witherspoon, newly promoted from the Records Division, is a bumbler out of his element investigating murders and other crimes.

Fortunately for him, he has a large household staff and home (inherited from a rich aunt) and Mrs. Jeffries, his housekeeper, organizes the rest of the servants to conduct footwork, surveillance, and other chores to help the inspector identify murderers and other felons in a manner in which he never suspects he's being guided along by his loyal household.

This case is unusually convoluted, centering on the easy-to-recognize poisoning of a doctor in his own home and involving the discovery of a poisonous mushroom at the bottom of the victim's soup bowl (he was dining alone). Suspicion falls on the cook, then on others as the mushroom in the soup bowl turns out to be a red herring (so to speak, mixing my meal courses).

Mrs. Jeffries and the rest of the staff surveil, follow, talk to pub crawlers and the doctor's neighbors, and it turns out not to be a case of enhancing the inheritance from the wealthy doctor, but that the victim was really a blackmailer and his list of enemies grows longer. (This novel features appearances by American Luty Belle Crookshank, an unsinkable Molly Brown type who also appears in subsequent books.)

If you haven't already followed up on my earlier recommendations for this cozy and humorous series, this volume would be a good place to start. It's sort of Upstairs/Downstairs meets Agatha Christie. ♦

—Rob Kresge ([rkresge777@comcast.net](mailto:rkresge777@comcast.net))

### Key:

PB = Mass Market Paperback  
TP = Trade paperback  
HC = Hardcover

NOTE from Rob:

It's too early to say whether these reviews will be my last for this publication, but Julie and I have bought a house in Fort Collins, CO, where our daughter is expecting twins in February. I will be very busy trying to sell our home



(8801 Doris Steider St. NE, near the corner of Wyoming and Alameda) and may not be able to keep up with my reading or my reviewing. I've been published in virtually every issue of the *Nooseletter* since the founding of our Sisters in Crime chapter.

Thanks for stopping by. I hope to remain in touch at a distance, since the Colorado SinC chapter only meets quarterly and the Colorado chapter of MWA meets for a monthly dinner and speaker at a Denver restaurant an hour away. Hope I can keep my subscription.

### Series mysteries:

**All reviews by Susan Zates**

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

***Murder on the Mind***, by L.L. Martlett.  
CreateSpace, 2011, 282 pp (PB).

(The first book in the Jeff Resnick series set in Buffalo, NY.)

Jeff is a former insurance investigator in Manhattan, out of work for months, almost out of money. On the eve of starting a new job, he is brutally mugged on his way home. Recovering from a serious brain injury, he must go back to his hometown and live with his half-brother, Richard Alpert, until he is medically able to resume normal activities.

Jeff has a history of conflict with his brother, as well as resentment of his brother's wealth vs. his own poverty. Luckily for Jeff, Richard can and will pay all expenses while Jeff recuperates. Richard and his partner Brenda are having difficulties in their relationship, but they both assure Jeff he is very welcome in their home, and his presence may even help them resolve issues.

In addition to physical pain from his injuries, Jeff is plagued day and night by visions of a brutal crime. When he reads in the news that the crime really occurred, he insists upon investigating. Of course Richard and Brenda want Jeff to rest and stay safe.

Jeff uses his former investigator credentials to interview the victim's family and co-workers, which gets him in trouble with the police detective in charge of the case. Jeff resists telling the detective exactly how he knows about the murder, for fear of ridicule as well as complete dismissal of his information. When his visions lead him to critical evidence, as well as a second murder victim, he sends anonymous tips. As Jeff closes in on the killer, he and his brother are suddenly in mortal danger. ♦

***An Uncommon Enemy***, by Michelle Black. Winter Sun Press, 2010, 330 pp (TP).

(The first book in the Mystery of the Victorian West series set in 1868-69 Kansas.)

Eden Murdoch (Cheyenne name Seota) has lived with her Cheyenne husband Hanging Road and her Cheyenne "sisters" (his other two wives) for four years since her capture during an Indian raid on a stagecoach. Hanging Road has been more than kind; he has respected her and encouraged her to help him with healing rites.

She is devastated to be captured once again, this time by General Custer's army. They think they are rescuing her, but they treat her as "permanently soiled goods," as do the townspeople of Reliance.

General Custer has been widely criticized in the national press for unprovoked slaughter of peaceable Indians. His own officers doubt his orders. Custer eagerly seizes upon Eden's rescue as an opportunity to justify all his behavior in the national press, and he assigns Captain Brad Randall to "protect" her. What Custer really wants is for Brad to befriend and trick Eden into revealing horrific details of her former capture that Custer can use to glorify himself as a hero for rescuing her. Of course, Custer also hopes to gain information about the Cheyenne that he can use against them in future battles.

Randall is engaged to the daughter of a wealthy man high up in political and military circles back East. He is serving "Out West" not by choice but as a favor to his future father-in-law, and to meet his fiancée's expectations. As Randall befriends Eden, he is emotionally torn. As the army prepares to depart, Randall helps Eden make a brave and daring move that dramatically changes her life once again.

Eden and Randall's story is told within the context of the actual history of specific battles. Chapters begin with snippets of news coverage or communications between military commanders. It's also a story of a deep and abiding love. ♦

***Murder, Plain and Simple***, by Isabella Alan. NAL, 2013, 368 pp (PB).

(The first book in a cozy mystery series set in Amish Country in contemporary Ohio.)

Angie Braddock fled a broken engagement in Texas to run a quilt shop inherited from her Aunt Eleanor. Angie is not completely new to quilting; she visited her aunt many summers while growing up. But the move is a major lifestyle change:

Angie left a high-pressure marketing career for a very slow pace in the quiet countryside. She and her French bulldog Oliver enjoy the lush greenery of the country and the quiet nights. Unfortunately she encounters difficulty from the start: her shop's next-door neighbor, owner of a wood-working business, claims he owns the quilt shop. Angie must locate the deed to prove her ownership.

Before her second day of business, she discovers the unpleasant neighbor's dead body—murdered in her shop. Angie is certain the sheriff believes she is guilty, and she is frantic to find the real killer. She also has to get her shop open for business again, before the money runs out. Angie constantly pesters her new Amish friends in Rolling Brook to find suspects for the sheriff to investigate. She also develops a crush on the sheriff.

The story contrasts the daily lives of the "English" and the Amish, providing; interesting insights to a completely different way of life. ♦

### BOOKMARKS

Have you seen them? Deep purple, with blood-red accents? Do you have one? Do you have a handful?

The 2016 Croak & Dagger bookmarks are a great way to spread the word about our Sisters in Crime chapter. Hand out plenty, but keep one for yourself: they list all our meeting dates and times for 2016.

***Skinner's Mission***, by Quintin Jardine. Headline Book Publishing, 2010 (PB).

(The sixth book in the Bob Skinner police procedural series set in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Scotland.)

Skinner is proud to be Scotland's "Toughest Cop." He is obsessed by the new knowledge, obtained under hypnosis, that his first wife's death in a car crash was murder. Against all advice from old friends within the police force, he proceeds to investigate the old case, even as it threatens to destroy his current happiness with his second wife and infant son.

In parallel with his mission to solve Myra's murder, he investigates the current murder of a car dealer's wife. No ordinary businessman, this car dealer is known to Skinner as well as the entire police force as the key figure behind most violent crime in Edinburgh. Skinner has been trying for decades to gather sufficient evidence to put the slimeball away for life, but witnesses always disappeared or died suddenly before they could testify (a trend that continues).

Skinner makes soul-shattering discoveries as he unravels Myra's case; likewise his daughter, as she reads her mother's most intimate thoughts in the diary, which her father gave her. Life profoundly changes for both Skinner and his daughter, due to his "mission."

Gripping and startling. I love this series. ♦

***Royal Flush***, by Rhys Bowen. Berkley, 2010, 320 pp (PB).

(The third book in the Her Royal Spyness series, set in 1930s Scotland.)

Lady Georgiana, 34th in line for the throne but quite penniless, returns to Castle Rannoch with a secret mission: to find out who in her own social set is trying to kill off the royals. Georgie dreads a visit with her sister-in-law Fig, but this time she is most welcome, to help her sister-in-law roust many unwelcome guests.

Georgie's heartthrob, Darcy, pops up now and then, at very convenient times. Georgie brings her grandfather to the estate, where she enjoys his company and complicity in sleuthing. It takes a near-fatal confrontation for Georgie to solve the mystery, but she does, in this light & frothy entertainment. A quick read, inspired by an historical royal conspiracy theory. ♦

***The Book of Evidence***, by John Banville. Vintage, 2001, 215 pp (PB).

(Book One of the Freddie Montgomery trilogy set in contemporary Europe and Ireland.)

This is a tale told by a criminal awaiting trial: Freddie proudly recounts the events and motives leading up to his crimes. Pressured by gangsters, he steals a painting. Caught in the act, he kills the witness. Freddie is a sociopath. No conscience, no compassion.

At first, I delighted in the introspective and richly descriptive detail of mood and emotion, the shifts back and forth between past and present. The writing itself is a joy, the sentences exquisite. But by a quarter of the way through the book, I needed a break from the nonstop, intense melancholy. Although it was harder to follow the plot with breaks, I alternated reading chapters from the book with much lighter and more cheerful reading material.

An unusual and fascinating peek into the twisted mind of a loner, but beware, it's relentlessly negative. I can't imagine how this book will be followed in the trilogy. I prefer and recommend the Irish crime novels. ♦

### ***Wanted:*** **BOOK BOX MONITOR**

Since the Croak and Dagger chapter was founded, we have encouraged members and visitors to bring to meetings any book they'd like to share and exchange it for a book from our book boxes. If you haven't brought a book, you're encouraged to take one home anyway.

Over time, one box has grown to three or more, which we periodically cull to reduce the weight and number of books. Now we are looking for a volunteer to store those boxes and bring one (or more if you're so inclined) to future meetings.

As a testimonial to the power of process, a former board member says, "The book exchange boxes saved my marriage. I get grumpy when I'm out of good mysteries to read. When I complained, my wife said, 'Go to the garage and get a book out of the boxes.'"

If you'd like to pick up this fun and easy monthly task, and maybe borrow a book or two between meetings, contact Rob Kresge at [rkresge777@comcast.net](mailto:rkresge777@comcast.net) or Ann Zeigler at [annzl@centurylink.net](mailto:annzl@centurylink.net).

## 2016 MEETING DATES

Tuesday, September 27, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, October 25, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 22, 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 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](http://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](mailto:newsette@earthlink.net), with "Nooseletter" in the subject line. The *Nooseletter* is distributed to all members electronically. ♦

—Linda Triage

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## 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 our membership chair at [contact@croak-and-dagger.com](mailto:contact@croak-and-dagger.com).