



NEW MEXICO CHAPTER — SISTERS IN CRIME

# THE NOOSELETTER

Volume XII, Number 1 — January/February 2018

## †The President's Corner†

Happy, happy New Year to all my Croak & Dagger friends! Where did 2017 go? I must have slept through it.

So here I am again, serving as president of the Croak & Dagger Chapter, and what an honor it is. You guys are the best, and I'm looking forward to this year together. We have some wonderful things in store for you, and I hope you'll be able to participate in all of them.

First, our Great Library Adventure was a huge hit with the local librarians in 2017—so much so, that we've been asked to make some return visits in 2018. The other wonderful news here is that Ann Zeigler has agreed to focus her attention on that which she does so well—get our books and names in front of every librarian in sight. She will be giving the board of directors her reports on a regular basis, and we will share them with you here, in The Nooseletter.

Our next exciting event will be hosting crime writer Jan Burke sometime in May. We applied to Sisters in Crime for a free guest speaker from their Speakers Bureau, and were delighted to learn it would be Jan Burke. First chance you get, rush out to the library or the bookstore and grab a couple of her books to read. That way, when she gets to Albuquerque, you'll know what a great writer she is, and how dedicated she is to getting all the details accurate—especially when it comes to forensics.

Our intrepid Social Chair, Janet Greger, is already hard at work putting together other

events for us to enjoy. Often participation will require signing up early, but remember, these events are only for paid-up members of both Sisters in Crime and Croak & Dagger.

Which segues into my last point this month. If you haven't already done so, it's time to pay your dues! First, go online to Sisters in Crime and pay them. Print out your membership card from SinC (they have instructions on how to do that), then either mail me a check for \$20 for Croak & Dagger, or attend our next meeting on Tuesday evening, January 23, 2018, and give it to me in person!

Either way, do not tarry! You'll definitely want to be in good standing when that first event becomes available. See you at the meeting!

*Pat Wood  
President & Membership Chair*

**Don't Miss It!**  
**Tuesday, January 23, at 7 p.m.**

**Judge R. John Duran**, our popular speaker from last January, is back! A graduate of the University of New Mexico and former Metropolitan Court Judge, he has taught law at UNM and took part in the Felony Domestic Violence and Gang Crimes Division of Metro Court. He now works with the District Attorney's office. He will speak to us about his work in the criminal justice system.

**Coming up:**  
**Tuesday, February 27, at 7 p.m.**

Our February Speaker will be writer and folk artist **Marie Romero Cash**. Her early writing focused on research-based books about the culture and churches of Northern New Mexico, along with a memoir about growing up in Santa Fe in the 1950s. She then began a mystery series, including *Treasure among the Shadows* and *Shadows among the Ruins*, set in Santa Fe and featuring Jemimah Hodge, a forensic psychologist.



Sisters in Crime was founded in 1986.

*The mission of Sisters in Crime shall be "to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition, and professional development of women crime writers."*

*And our motto is: "SinC up with great crime writing!"*



## Sisters in Crime **Guppies**

SinC Guppies is an online writer's support group. 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.

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. For more information, check them out at [www.sinc-guppies.org](http://www.sinc-guppies.org).

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
- 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, Susan 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**

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## Noose News

You are invited to participate in the **12th annual Authors for Literacy Event** sponsored by the Moriarty Community Library and the Read "Write" Adult Literacy Program, taking place Saturday, April 28, from 9 to 4, at the Moriarty Civic Center, 202 S. Broadway, Moriarty, NM 87035.

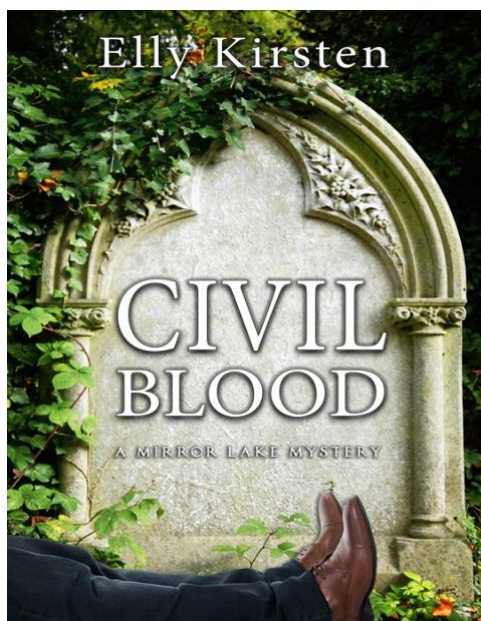
Booth space for participating authors to sign and sell their books is \$10, with proceeds to benefit the Read "Write" Adult Literacy Program. Continental breakfast is provided; lunch is available on site at your own expense.

As in the past, the objectives of the event include raising awareness of adult literacy-related issues in New Mexico, recruiting volunteer tutors for the Read "Write" Adult Literacy Program, and providing an opportunity for the community to meet some of New Mexico's authors.

To sign up, or for additional information, please call 505-832-2513 or e-mail [moriartyauthorsevent@gmail.com](mailto:moriartyauthorsevent@gmail.com).

### New Cozy Mystery by Linda Triegel

Linda Triegel's first cozy mystery novel, *Civil Blood*, written under her penname, Elly Kirsten, is available now in print and e-book editions on Amazon.



*Civil Blood* is her first mystery novel, but she has been a devotee of regional theater forever, so it seemed natural to set a story in a small town with a theater festival. Middleford is an imaginary New England town, but the author draws on several places she knew growing up to create an ideal atmosphere for the genre.

Linda also had a new Regency romance novel (w/a Elisabeth Kidd), *The Prodigal Peer*, from [www.regencyreads.com](http://www.regencyreads.com) or Amazon.

## Sisters Mystery History

### January

**1896:** Elizabeth MacKintosh, later famous as mystery novelist **Josephine Tey**, born on 25 July.

**1896:** Frances Lockridge born. She and husband Richard wrote together as creators of the *Mr. and Mrs. North* mysteries from 1940 to 1963. Their crime stories went from novels to radio to TV series. Their pet cat "Martini" was included in their novels, and by the 1950s, felines "Gin" and "Sherry" joined the plots.



**1904:** Margery Allingham, creator of Detective Albert Campion, born in London.

**1907:** Novelist Daphne DuMaurier (Rebecca) was born in London. She will describe writing a book as "a purge; at the end of it one is empty...like a dry shell on the beach, waiting for the tide to come in again."

**1921:** Patricia Highsmith born in Texas. Her first novel *Strangers on a Train* (1950) became Alfred Hitchcock's screen hit.

**1961:** Dora Amy Elles Dillon Turnbull (w/a Patricia Wentworth) dies. She's best known for creating the genteel private detective character "Miss Maud Silver."

**1976:** Grande Dame of Mystery Agatha Christie dies.

## Sue Grafton

### 1940-2017

*Obituary by Neil Genzlinger in The New York Times, December 29*

Sue Grafton, a prolific author of detective novels known for an alphabetically titled series that began in 1982 with *A Is for Alibi*, has died in Santa Barbara, Calif. She was 77.

Her daughter Jamie Clark, announcing the death on the [author's website](#) and [Facebook page](#), said Ms. Grafton had cancer.

With the publication of her latest book in August, Ms. Grafton's alphabetical series had reached *Y Is for Yesterday*.

"She was adamant that her books would never be turned into movies or TV shows," her daughter wrote, "and in that same vein, she would never allow a ghost writer to write in her name. Because of all of those things, and out of the deep abiding love and respect for our dear sweet Sue, as far as we in the family are concerned, the alphabet now ends at Y."

Ms. Grafton's husband, Steven F. Humphrey, said her illness had prevented her from making any progress on the planned final book in the series, although she did have the title. "She always said that last book would be 'Z Is for Zero,'" he said. "She'd been saying that for 30 years."

Sue Taylor Grafton was born on April 24, 1940, in Louisville, Ky. Her father, C. W. Grafton, was a lawyer who also wrote mystery novels, and her mother, the former Vivian Harnsberger, was a teacher.

Ms. Grafton graduated from the University of Louisville in 1961 and tried but quickly abandoned a graduate program, instead moving to California. Her first novel, *Keziah Dane*, was published in 1967. She helped adapt her second, *The Lolly-Madonna War* (1969), into a screenplay, and later intermittently wrote for television. A series she created, "Nurse," ran for two seasons on CBS in the early 1980s.

But she did not care for the dynamics of writing for TV and film.

"Ask me if I'd ever sell the film or TV rights to these books," she said in a [2013 interview](#) with The Minneapolis Star Tribune promoting *W Is for Wasted*. "No, I would not. I would never let those clowns get their hands on my work. They'd ruin it for everyone, me more than most."

*A Is for Alibi* was her eighth book and, she said, "my ticket out of Hollywood."

The notion of the alphabetical series, she said, was inspired by *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, Edward Gorey's macabre 1963 rhyming book in which 26 children meet bizarre ends.

"I was smitten with all those little Victorian children being dispatched in various ways," she told The New York Times in 2015. "'A is for Amy who fell down the stairs; B is for Basil assaulted by bears; C is for Clara who wasted away; D is for Desmond thrown out of a sleigh.' Edward Gorey was deliciously bent."

Her book series features Kinsey Millhone, a private investigator, whom *A Is for Alibi* introduced this way:

"My name is Kinsey Millhone. I'm a private investigator, licensed by the state of California. I'm thirty-two years old, twice divorced, no kids. The day before yesterday I killed someone and the fact weighs heavily on my mind."

*"I want to be the king of American mysteries," Ms. Grafton told the Chicago Tribune in 1992. "Not the queen, please. I want to be the king."*

Ms. Grafton read the Nancy Drew books and Agatha Christie growing up, but, she said, the first book that really rocked her was Mickey Spillane's *I, the Jury*.

"After Nancy Drew and Agatha Christie, what a revelation!" she said, "and it may have been the moment when the spirit of Kinsey Millhone first sparked to life."

Kinsey's debut, though, did not impress at least one critic.

"Will the series take hold?" [Newgate Callendar said](#) in reviewing *A Is for Alibi* for The Times. "This first book is competent enough, but not particularly original."

The reading public apparently thought otherwise. The Millhone books routinely made best-seller lists. They also established a star female presence — both character and author — in a genre that leaned heavily male.

"Ms. Grafton and P. I. Millhone floated in on the same zephyr of welcome fresh air that during the past decade has brought us a number of other women writing about women operatives in the traditionally male-dominated genre of American private eye fiction," the writer Ed Weiner said in reviewing *F Is for Fugitive* in 1989.

"None of them — and Ms. Grafton may be the best of the bunch — have gone so far as to redefine the genre," he continued. "They play it fairly conservative and conventional. But in their work there is thankfully little of the macho posturing and luggish rogue beefcake found so often in the male versions, no Hemingwayesque mine-is-bigger-than-yours competitive literary swaggering."

Ms. Grafton said one difference between her books and the ones with male protagonists was her willingness to deal with the "human and emotional ramifications" of violent crime.

"Most of the hard-boiled male detectives go through murder and mayhem, and it has absolutely no impact on their personalities," she said [in an interview](#) with The Times in 1985. "I find it more interesting to see what the constant exposure to violence and death really does to a human being, how a person incorporates that into their psyche."

In addition to Mr. Humphrey, her third husband, a philosophy professor whom she married in 1978, and Ms. Clark, her daughter from a previous marriage, Ms. Grafton is survived by another daughter, Leslie Twine, and a son, Jay Schmidt, also from previous marriages; four granddaughters; one great-grandson; and a sister, Ann Cox. She had homes in Santa Barbara County and Louisville.

Ms. Grafton was forever being asked how much of her was in Kinsey Millhone, and she acknowledged that there was a sort of alter-ego connection between author and character. But, she noted to The Seattle Times in [an interview](#) in August, there was one big difference: She realized early in the series that if she was going to write the entire alphabet, Kinsey could not age in real time and still be limber enough for a fast-moving detective yarn.

"When I started, she was 32 and I was 42," Ms. Grafton said. "And now she's 39 and I'm 77, which I just do not think is fair."

*"I've come to believe," critic Patrick Anderson wrote in The Washington Post in 2005, "that she is not only the most talented woman writing crime fiction today but also that, regardless of gender, her Millhone books are among the five or six best series any American has ever written."*

### ***A Medical Mystery: The Lady with the Lamp***



*In Post Mortem: Solving History's Great Medical Mysteries, Dr. Philip A. Mackowiak, professor and vice chairman of the Department of Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, examines a little-known mystery about a very well-known woman in history.*

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) was in her mid-30s when she oversaw the medical needs of soldiers during the Crimean War. With just 38 nurses, she tended to the 4,000-bed hospital complex at Scutari for 21 months. Before the first shots were fired, 1000 British troops had perished from disease. Her first winter there, another 2,000 inmates died because of a clogged sewer that ran under the hospital. She herself contracted a case of Crimean Fever that was so virulent that she nearly succumbed, and she returned to England with intense physical symptoms that would keep her bedridden for three decades.

By nature Florence was deeply religious and claims that God told her to become a nurse. She was vigorously educated at home at a time when most women weren't. Descriptions in her letters and diary portrayed her as suffering from depression, insomnia, heart palpitations, tachycardia, nervous tremors, spinal pain, nausea, indigestion, anorexia, low self-esteem and feeling suicidal.

The doctors of the day could find no definitive cause for her symptoms, so she endured a life of pain and seclusion. Then, when in her mid-sixties, she went into spontaneous remission.

Both the disease and its sudden cure have intrigued the medical profession ever since. Diagnoses over the last century have included:

Faking - she pretended to be ill to keep people away, particularly her mother.

Victorian Melodrama - vapors, if you will.

Self-pity.

Repressed self-loathing.

Neurasthenia - chronic fatigue syndrome or today's fibromyalgia.

Syphilis.

Chronic Brucellosis - a bacterial infection, most probable cause of Crimean fever.

In light of the research that has come out of the Vietnam War, Dr. Mackowiak dismisses most those assumptions in favor of PTSD, post-traumatic stress disorder. The most common symptoms include: anxiety, dreams/flashbacks, depression and thoughts of suicide, hermit fantasies, social hypersensitivity, aggressive behavior, interpersonal problems, sleep disturbances, feelings of helplessness or worthlessness, survival guilt and problems with authority. Curiously, the half-life of the condition in Vietnam veterans is thirty years, the exact length of time she suffered. Soldiers deemed to be most at risk for PTSD are those who:

Are older - she was 36.

Are not adequately trained - she wasn't; she was an administrator, not a nurse.

Have no prior combat experience - she was a noblewoman from a wealthy background.

Are rapidly deployed and returned - true on both counts.

Undergo physical illness - she contracted Crimean Fever while at the front.

Work with casualties - early on most of the men died in her arms.

While the chronic brucellosis contributed to her illness, Dr. Mackowiak believes that she suffered from the same trauma that afflicts soldiers returning from war today.

*NOTE: In his book Dr. Mackowiak also examines the controversial lives and deaths of eleven other famous men and woman, including Alexander the Great, Herod, Joan of Arc, Mozart, Beethoven, and Edgar Allen Poe. In each chapter he describes the characteristics of illnesses and brings to life the medical social and family histories of the victim as he sifts through the medical evidence to come up with a diagnosis most consistent with the illness as described in the historical record.*

## 2018 Writers Conferences – Plan Ahead!

Below are some mystery writing conferences coming up in the first half of 2018. For more information, click on the links to check them out online.

### March 1-4

***Sleuthfest 2018***, Boca Raton, Florida. Keynote speaker **Andrew Gross, Forensic Guest of Honor Katherine Ramsland, Ph.D., Guest Authors Hallie Ephron, PJ Parrish, Hank Phillippi Ryan, and James R. Benn.** Workshops and moderated panel discussions. For more, go to: <http://sleuthfest.com>.

### March 17

***Murder and Mayhem in Chicago***, at Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL. A one-day event featuring some of Chicago's top mystery/crime writers and a few of their friends. Perfect for crime readers and librarians hoping to find new books to read and aspiring crime writers hoping to learn about the mystery community and writing and publishing careers. For the full schedule, go to: <http://murdermayhemchicago.com/>

### March 22-25

***Left Coast Crime***, Nugget Casino Resort, Reno, NV. Guests of Honor: Naomi Hirahara, William Kent Krueger; Toastmaster: Todd Borg; Ghost of Honor: Mark Twain. Noir, cozy, thriller, historical, and more ... Get the latest on: <http://www.leftcoastcrime.org/2018>.

### April 27-29

***Malice Domestic 30***, Bethesda (MD) North Marriott Hotel & Conference Center. Guest of Honor: Louise Penny; Toastmaster: Catronia McPherson; Lifetime

Achievement Award: Nancy Pickard; Amelia Award: David Suchet; Malice Remembers: Robin Hathaway. "Plus lots of other mystery authors and fans." For more info, go to: [www.malicedomestic.org](http://www.malicedomestic.org).



### May 4-5

**Idaho Writers Conference**, Boise. Opportunities for writers to pitch their work, attend workshops and panel discussions, meet one-on-one with literary agents, and have lunch with presenters in a variety of fields and genres. For updates: <https://idahowritersrendevous.blogspot.com>.

### May 4-5

**Oklahoma Writers' Federation Conference**, Oklahoma City. Thursday pre-conference workshop; Friday "who-dunnit" lunch; Keynote speaker Jay Asher. For more: <https://www.owfi.org/conference2018>.

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

# Reviews

## Rob's Random Shots

### January Case File Number 1

***Brother Cadfael's Penance*** by Ellis Peters. Sphere, 1995, 288 pp (PB).

This is the latest I have found in the always enjoyable and scrupulously researched series about a Benedictine monk/sleuth in 11<sup>th</sup>-century England. Readers of the series (or viewers of *Cadfael*, the excellent 13-episode TV series from about 20 years starring Sir Derek Jacobi) will recall that in an earlier novel (and episode), Cadfael found out that his dalliance with a woman from Jerusalem during his time in the Crusades had resulted in a son. Since the mother was now dead when he met and figured out a visiting knight's pedigree, he never told the young man of his relationship to him and the son went off to continue his travels in England as a knight errant.

In this volume, word comes to Cadfael that the son has gone missing after combat between the warring parties for the English throne—the Empress Maud and her brother, King Stephen. Cadfael obtains leave from his abbot to journey across lines between the two armies and search for his son. He arrives at the battle lines in time to witness (safely) combat between the opposing forces and finds his son in retreat with his contingent. But when the two of them go to a nearby castle in defiance of Maud's will, his son is imprisoned and Cadfael has to figure out how to free him, as an army led by Stephen besieges the castle.

Readers will thrill to his solution to this locked castle story. Suffice it to say that father and son exfiltrate the castle ingeniously and are reunited some miles away. This time, Cadfael is not reluctant to tell his son the truth of his parentage. They ride off amicably to separate duties. Even though there is a murder in the castle for Cadfael to solve, that investigation is less important than the relationship revelation. ♦

### January Case File Number 2

***Two Kinds of Truth*** by Michael Connelly. Little Brown, 2017, 416 pp (HC).

No one living today writes mysteries to equal Connelly's, and this one is no exception—but his works continue to be exceptional (pun intended). Bosch has been retired from the LAPD for some years now, but keeps his hand in as part of a seven-member force in a small suburb of Los Angeles. He lands a case of murder of a father and son at their pharmacy and suspects drugs may lie at the heart of this crime.

Readers will get details of the illegal prescriptions trade as Bosch figures out suspects in the crime and goes undercover to find an air delivery link between the smuggled drugs, a move that nearly costs him his life. Returning to LA, he helps rescue victims of this drug trade, but is charged with evidence tampering in a previously settled drug case.

Bosch is helped by his half-brother, Mickey Haller (the Lincoln Lawyer—see the movie with Michael McConaughy) and goes undercover one more time to break the prosecution's case, brought about by conniving drug smugglers and former police colleagues who had run-ins with Bosch years ago.

Whether you use the hardback bestseller or an electronic version like I did—run, don't walk, to get a copy of this. There are more than 20 novels in this series and Connelly has not lost a step as he brings Bosch and new investigative tools into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What more can I say? Another masterpiece. ♦

#### Key:

PB = Mass Market Paperback

TP = Trade paperback

HC = Hardcover

Note: Editions likely to be available at the library or your local used-book emporium are given. Most titles also available as e-books.



### January Case File Number 3

***Watchers of Time*** by Charles Todd, #5 in the Inspector Ian Rutledge series. Bantam, 2002, 448 pp (PB).

This is an exceedingly long book that I found ultimately unfulfilling. I have heard praise for Todd's works and his character for many years, but this was the first time I ventured into his long but universally praised works. The time frame is early 1900s, after the end of the First World War and the disruption to traditional English life brought on by the loss or maiming of so many young soldiers.

Rutledge himself deals with the effects of his own wounds and experience as he is posted from London to a small town with virtually no police force to investigate the murder of a priest who was clubbed by a crucifix in his own rectory. We get an accurate portrayal of changing English mores, but this book is way too long (400-plus pages), and red herrings take a long time to resolve. The solution, when it comes, is a major surprise, concerning the victim, the motive, and denouement, such as it is. I hope to read other works by Todd that may be more interesting. ♦

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

#### Series mysteries:

All reviews by Susan Zates

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

***Death is in the Air*** by Kate Kingsbury. Berkley, 2001, 200 pp (PB)

(Book 2 of the Manor House cozy mystery series set in the English countryside during WWII.

Lady Elizabeth Hartleigh Compton (Lizzie) is Lady of the Manor in the village of Sitting Marsh, since her parents were killed in a London bombing raid. She takes her authority and responsibility seriously, but she's hampered by lack of funds, an old house sorely needing repairs, and two aging, eccentric servants. American soldiers are billeted in her spare rooms. She is attracted to their commander,

Major Monroe, but trying to suppress the feeling.

Lizzie and the villagers watch as a German bomber crashes; its pilot parachutes into a nearby field, and he escapes into the woods. Next day, a young woman who worked as a farm hand is found dead. Of course all the villagers assume the German killed her. Visiting the farm where the victim worked, Lizzie suspects another possibility (and eventually proves it).

Besides the manhunt for the suspected killer, Lizzie has another cause for concern: hard feelings are increasing between the American soldiers and the village. The young women of the village are no longer interested in local lads, instead are frantic for the goodies they can get by chasing after Americans (wine, whiskey, chocolate, nylons, steak). Fights break out between the American and English soldiers. So Lizzie decides to smooth over relations by holding a dance. She recruits all the village residents to make the dance a success, instead of running down the Americans in gossip. It almost works.

It's hard to imagine a woman feeling responsible for the welfare of an entire village in the 20th century, but the writing is superb, and the period details ring true. An entertaining read. ♦

***A Vow of Compassion*** by Veronica Black, Robert Hale, 2014. 224 p (HC)

(10th book of the Sister Joan mystery series set in late 20th-century Cornwall)

Sister Joan is frequently admonished by her fellow nuns to find something useful to do. They send her on errands to the hospital, for instance, where she becomes suspicious of a recent death. Little details don't seem quite right. Subsequent unexpected deaths make her doubly curious.

Then an abused little girl disappears, as well as one of her acquaintances from the gypsy camp. Seemingly unrelated events, yet Sister Joan believes they must be linked, if only she can find the pattern. Red herrings abound, and it takes a few more murders before she nails the culprit. ♦

***Winter of Discontent*** by Jeanne M. Dams. Macmillan, 2004, 204 p (HC)  
(9th book of the Dorothy Martin mystery series set in late 20th -century England)

Transplanted American Dorothy happily resides with her British retired police chief husband in their tiny quiet town of Sherebury. It's December, time to shop for and wrap gifts, sign and mail cards, bake cookies, and decorate for the holidays. But before she can get started, she learns from her best friend Jane that historian Bill Fanshawe has gone missing.

Bill and Jane were once a romantic couple, but WWII intervened. After years as a prisoner of war, Bill returned crippled. Their romance did not resume; each lived separate single lives, but nevertheless cared for each other in their own way. Jane is absolutely distraught, and of course Dorothy will do all she can to help.

The police cannot search officially since Bill's only been missing a day, so Jane and Dorothy diligently search all over town. Next day, Dorothy thinks of a place no one looked—and finds his body. Now the question is, why was he in hiding? Who wanted to do him harm? The police take the matter seriously because Bill's assistant was attacked, but only Dorothy thinks the old letter in Bill's hand and the markings he made on an atlas are keys to a WWII secret. Dorothy begs reluctant Jane to learn about Bill's wartime past, so together they question surviving acquaintances from the RAF base. ♦

***Consequences of Sin*** by Clare Langley-Hawthorne. Penguin, 2008, 272 p (PB)  
(First book of the Ursula Marlowe mystery series set in Edwardian London)

Ursula lives in luxury with her father, who earned his way from poverty to wealth through hard work in several businesses. She participates in suffragette meetings and rallies, but her father wants her to follow tradition and marry Tom, a suitable husband, his right-hand man in business.

Fellow suffragette Winifred calls for help in the middle of the night. Ursula is willing and eager to rush to her side, believing her innocent of her lover's murder, even though she doesn't

really know the woman. She turns to her father's lawyer, who agrees to handle Winifred's case.

The police are certain Winifred killed her lover. Ursula is desperate to find another suspect, so she snoops in the lawyer's records. She finds puzzling documents about a tragic expedition in the distant past. The victim's father, Ursula's father, and his business associates were all involved.

Ursula wants to learn more, but all those around her begin to act secretive and shut her out. It isn't clear to Ursula that they are trying to protect her, until an attempt on her life claims her father's. Clearly events on the past expedition present a current mortal danger.

At this point the sluggish pace evaporates and the story gets more interesting. Ursula suddenly becomes independent, learns how to disguise herself as a man, and takes off for South America. It makes no sense, but she abandons her disguise before going into the jungle.

Earlier heavy-handed foreshadowing of romance leads to the obvious. The book races to its conclusion, one improbable event following another, the villain quite clear long before Ursula realizes. Interesting plot elements to craft a mystery, but marred by awkward writing, flat characters, and uneven pace. ♦

***The Silent Girl*** by Tess Gerritsen. Ballantine, 2011, 482 p (HC)  
(Book 9 of the Rizzoli & Isles mystery series set in contemporary Boston)

Investigating a murder in Chinatown, Boston PD homicide detective Jane Rizzoli learns of a multiple murder decades ago at the same crime scene. Iris Fang, the intriguing owner of a martial arts studio whose husband was killed in the past crime, may be key to solving both cases, but she guards her secrets.

A new detective of Chinese heritage, eager to join Jane's team, proves his worth as they investigate the past and present crimes. A paranormal being (apparently) saves Jane's life, and commits crimes "on the side of justice." The deeper into the case the homicide team gets, the more related crimes are discovered. When

Jane enlists the help of a retired detective who handled the original murder case, he is murdered too, leaving only one small clue.

Jane persists, placing herself in grave danger, until she knows the truth (or at least most of it). Maura Isles makes a very small appearance in the story, mostly as a way to compare and contrast Jane's and Maura's perceptions of justice. To Maura, right and wrong is black and white, no gray areas. Jane perceives many ambiguities in the nature of justice, especially in this case.

Fast paced with plenty of suspense, leaving just a few odd loose ends. Very enjoyable. ♦

***The Cracked Spine*** by Paige Shelton. Minotaur, 2016, 305 pp (HC)

(First book of the Scottish Bookshop mystery series set in contemporary Edinburgh)

Delaney Nichols has lived a quiet life in Kansas. When she is laid off from her museum curator position, she impulsively answers an ad for a job in Edinburgh. Based on an hour-and-a-half telephone conversation with her future boss, owner of an antique book and manuscript shop, she moves to Edinburgh.

Delaney immediately becomes fast friends with the cab driver who picks her up at the airport. She's delighted by and thrilled with her new home, her job at The Cracked Spine, her boss Edwin, her co-workers Rosie and Hamlet. She feels her move was meant to be when she sees Delaney's pub across the street. She's attracted to pub owner Tom, a genuine hunk in kilt or jeans.

Before she can quite get settled into her duties at the shop, all their lives are disrupted by Edwin's sister Jenny's murder. Delaney hears conflicting stories about Jenny, known to have been a druggie, maybe sober and responsible now, maybe not. Delaney attends an auction with Edwin, and meets members of a secret club that pursues rare antiques with questionable pedigree. She learns Edwin had trusted a previously undiscovered First Folio to Jenny for safekeeping, as a token of his faith in her. Tremendously valuable; a compelling motive for murder.

Delaney does her own sleuthing to better understand her boss and his sister and his fellow club members, assisted by the cab driver (my favorite character), who frequently warns against going into Jenny's neighborhood. She tries to share her findings with the police, who suspect Hamlet, but is largely dismissed.

Justice prevails in the end, and romance blossoms. Light and pleasant entertainment. The writing could be improved by cutting back on excessive explanations of Delaney's thoughts and feelings. The descriptions of sights in Edinburgh and Scottish speech and mannerisms are the reason I selected the book; too bad I didn't read it in audio-book format. I still haven't figured out "fleysome."\*

\*(According to the Scots Word Book by William Graham—ye editor actually has a copy on her bookshelf—it means "appalling" or "frightful.")

**Innovative Product Use  
(or Mother Knew Best)**  
by Elena Santangelo

Dear Tide:

I am writing to say what an excellent product you have! I've used it all of my married life, as my Mom always told me it was the best. Now I find it even better! In fact, about a month ago, I spilled some red wine on my new white blouse.

My inconsiderate and uncaring husband started to belittle me about how clumsy I was, and generally started becoming a pain in the neck. One thing led to another and somehow I ended up with his blood on my new white blouse! I grabbed my bottle of Tide with bleach alternative, and to my surprise and satisfaction, all of the stains came out!

In fact, the stains came out so well the detectives who came by yesterday told me that the DNA tests on my blouse were negative and then my attorney called and said that I was no longer considered a suspect in the disappearance of my husband.

What a relief! Going through menopause is bad enough without being a murder suspect! I thank you, once again, for having a great product.

Well, gotta go, have to write to the Hefty bag folks.

## 2018 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 24, 7:00 p.m.  
Tuesday, May 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](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 (New Mexico) chapter 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 28, 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. ♦

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## *Still not a member of Sisters in Crime?*

\$20/year brings mystery to your life! The New Mexico *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. Come hear our next program speaker and meet the gang. We promise to bring mayhem and murder into your life!

*Croak & Dagger* members must also be members of the national organization of Sisters in Crime. For information on joining SinC, go to <http://www.sistersincrime.org>. For information about your local chapter, contact our membership chair at [pwood73@comcast.net](mailto:pwood73@comcast.net)