

“A clever and candid look under the hood of  
today’s publishing vehicle.”

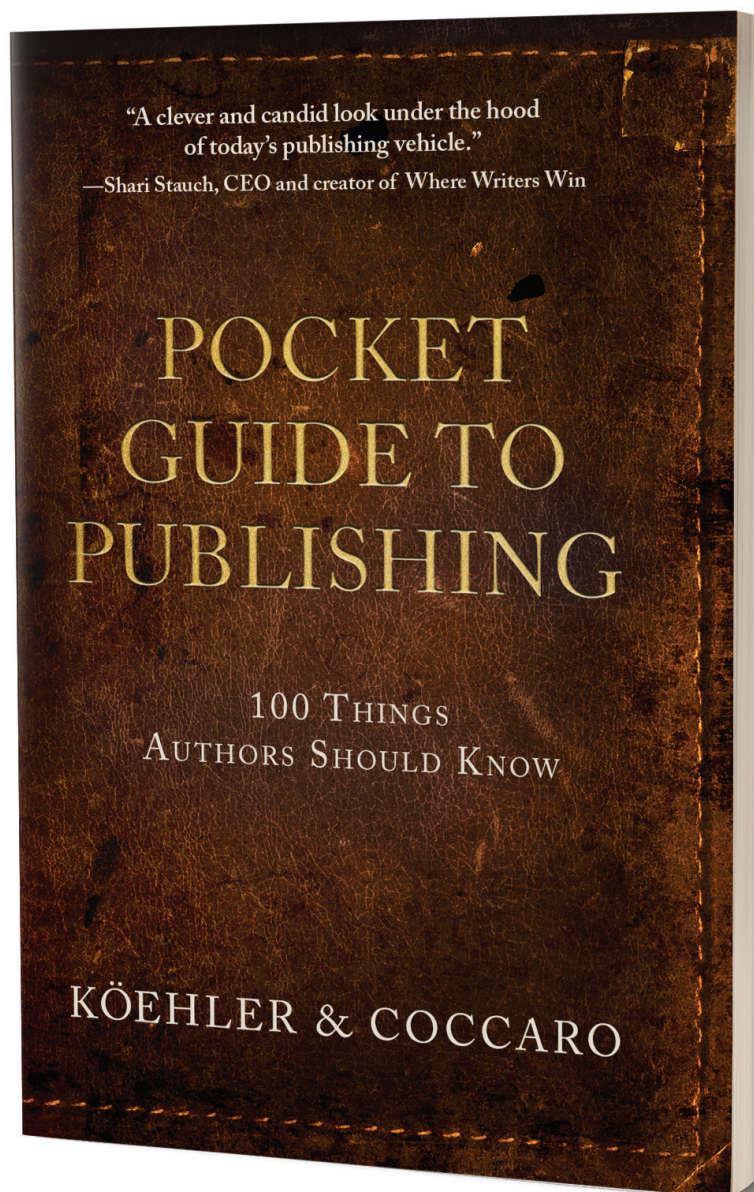
—Shari Stauch, CEO and creator of Where Writers Win

“I wish *Pocket Guide* had been available when I started out.”

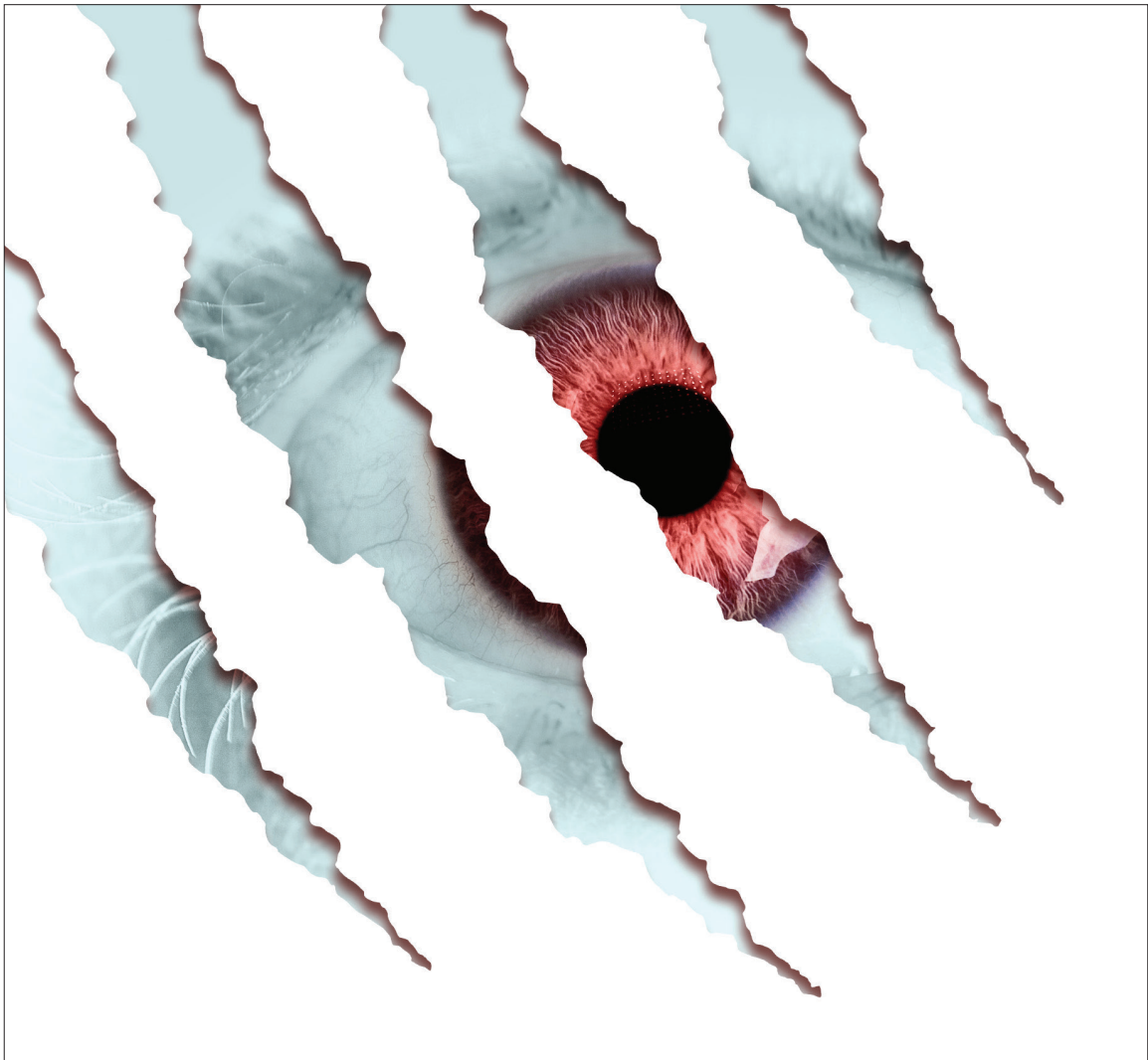
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cuts to the chase about publishing.”

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# CHICKENHAWK

ARNALDO **LOPEZ** JR



# *Chickenhawk*

**Arnaldo Lopez, Jr.**

## **DESCRIPTION**

EDDIE RAMOS is a cop. He and his partner, Tommy Cucitti, are detectives in the elite squad known as Manhattan North Homicide. Eddie's an old-fashioned kind of cop; heck, Eddie's an old cop period, and he's put to the test when young men and boys start winding up dead all over his town, young men and boys who share a common source of livelihood...they're all prostitutes. Eddie Ramos doesn't like cell phones or computers; he trusts paperwork, procedure, and his instincts. He's been married to his childhood sweetheart for 30 years, he's a family man, a church-going Catholic, and he still carries the same 5-shot revolver they gave him when he graduated from the academy.

Tommy Cucitti is younger, brasher, more of a hot-head and usually in trouble. He knows computers and always carries his cell phone. He's single and lives with his street-wise, hotheaded Armenian girlfriend; Daphne. Tommy and Eddie are two different kinds of men who are the same kind of cop; dedicated, hardworking and resourceful. They're after a serial killer who manages to stay below their radar while the body count keeps climbing in a city that's turning into a powder keg.

## **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- The author, Arnaldo Lopez Jr., worked for the NYPD as a dispatcher. So the words and actions of the characters are authentic.
- The novel takes place in New York City with neighborhoods and other locations accurately described.
- The novel is of a marketable size being only slightly over 80,000 words.

## **AUDIENCE**

- Males, 17-55 years old, and women, 30-55 years old.
- Individuals who watch Law & Order: SVU, and other hard-hitting police shows.
- *Chickenhawk* will also appeal to fans of Police Procedurals, murder mystery readers, members of law enforcement, and other fiction readers.

## **AUTHOR BIO**



Arnaldo Lopez has been employed by the MTA for twenty-six years and was formerly employed as a dispatcher with the NYPD. Mr. Lopez is also a speaker and trainer, speaking on subjects as diverse as terrorism and customer service. He created the civilian counter-terrorism training program currently in use by New York City Transit and many other major public transportation agencies around the country.

As well as writing, Mr. Lopez is an artist and photographer, having sold several of his works over the years. As a writer he's sold articles to *Railway Age* magazine, *The Daily News* magazine, *Homeland Defense Journal*, and *Reptile & Amphibian* magazine; scripts to *Little Archie* and *Personality Comics*; and short stories to *Neo-Opsis* magazine, *Lost Souls e-zine*, *Nth Online* magazine, *Blood Moon* magazine, and various other Sci-Fi and/or horror newsletters and fanzines. He was also editor of *Offworld*, a small science fiction magazine that was once chosen as a "Best Bet" by Sci-Fi television. *Chickenhawk* is his first novel.

**Publisher: Café con Leche,  
an imprint of Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram  
6"x 9", 316 pages**

**SOFTCOVER: 978-1-63393-008-7**

**EBOOK: 978-1-63393-009-4**

**Pub Date: August 1, 2015**

**FICTION / Thrillers & Crime**



**INGRAM**

# CHAPTER 1

ABE LOOKED AROUND the premises nervously. He didn't like spending so much time with a customer. Earlier on, he had nearly bolted out of there when a patrol car, siren hooting and warbling, slowly moved up the street. He watched quietly as the strobed reflection of the car's flashing lights alternately colored the facades of the surrounding buildings a vivid shade of red. Then white. Then red again. The colors bounced off the windows of the nearby skyscrapers in blinding explosions of refracted light, spilling like spent fluid along the naked girders around him, disappearing then reappearing further away as they receded.

Abe nodded in the direction of the lights. "Don't worry man," he said. "That's the last time they're gonna come around tonight."

The customer nodded in understanding. The police considered Abe and his fellow hustlers little more than pesky annoyances, lowlife perpetrators of victimless crimes who rarely even had the nerve to pick an occasional pocket. The well-heeled residents of this part of Midtown Manhattan, however, were not quite so forgiving. They convinced the local merchants to join them in demanding an increase in police surveillance in the area. Not long after that, cops from the nearby precinct were assigned to make at least three nightly trips up Lexington Avenue from Fifty-First to Sixty-Eighth Streets, rousting and occasionally even arresting the young male prostitutes who worked the strip and catered to the desires of the mostly suburban, married businessmen who comprised the bulk of their clientele; some of whom hailed from as far away as Connecticut.

Abe worked his hand feverishly, focusing on his customer's now flaccid penis with disdain. *Man, this is ridiculous*, he thought as he gave the penis a shake, scattering droplets of semen and saliva into the night. *If this guy's dick doesn't get hard again in another few seconds, I'm just gonna tell 'im to forget it. I mean, damn—I already sucked him off once!* Abe again studied the expensive looking material that framed the limp penis in his hand before returning it to his mouth, *This guy is gonna have to pay me something extra just for wasting my time*, he thought. *What made him think he could go twice anyway?*

He let the still soft penis slip out of his mouth. A viscous strand of saliva, glistening like spider's silk covered in morning dew, still connected Abe to his customer's stubborn member. Abe plucked the string of saliva and it collapsed into a fine mist. He sighed

agitatedly and made as if to get up. His customer stopped him by placing a strong but gentle hand on his shoulder.

“No, don’t get up,” he said.

Abe’s new denim pants creaked as he settled back down on his knees. The voice didn’t sound threatening or even particularly demanding. His customer had a deep, rich baritone voice, the kind that made you think of overstuffed leather chairs, mahogany bookcases, and giant oak desks. Clearly it was the voice of a wealthy and powerful man. Abe wished he had been blessed with a voice like that. If he had been, Abe could have easily been an actor or a singer. Instead, he was just another homeboy giving blow jobs to rich guys from “The Island” at thirty bucks a pop. That was his reality.

“Keep doing what you’re doing,” that voice said. “It feels really good.”

Abe dismissed the thoughts he was having moments before and shrugged. “I don’t care how good it feels to you man,” he said. He winced at how high and whiney his own voice sounded. “It’s taking you too fuckin’ long. I’m either gonna catch a cramp or the fuckin’ cops are gonna bust us.”

Abe flinched in surprise when his customer raised an immaculately manicured left hand. The gold ring on the third finger flashed cold fire as his hand settled on Abe’s head. Long, thick fingers lost themselves in the thick mat of tousled black curls, then gently extricated themselves. The man stroked Abe’s hair. It drove Abe crazy. He hated when they did that.

Finally, Abe felt the penis in his hand stiffen. “About fuckin’ time,” he muttered to himself.

“Ah yeah,” the customer groaned with a contented sigh. “I knew you could get it up for me again, you little cocksucker, and I do mean that literally.”

Abe didn’t like anyone calling him names.

“You little spic bitch,” the man with the rich voice continued softly. “You love sucking white cock, don’t you?”

That was the last straw for Abe. He sprung to his feet. “Man, fuck this shit,” he whispered harshly, his anger tempered by the prospect of being detected by the police. He’d had enough and couldn’t stomach this asshole any longer.

The man with the great voice just stood there, a bemused expression on his face, and watched Abe’s reaction and growing anger. His now fully erect penis pointed at Abe’s chin like an obscene divining rod. He crossed his arms and thrust his hips forward in an exaggerated motion. His penis bounced up and down, and swung in circles as if held up by an invisible wire.

“Come on *Pancho*,” he said, making that great voice ugly now. “Or do you think I should save some for your *mamasita*, huh? I bet she’s the one who taught you how to suck cock! Or maybe it was your *papasita*? Is that it *Pancho*?”

Abe charged at the man with a roar burning in his throat. His rage could no longer be contained, police or no police.

Then a sudden move that Abe did not see coming. It was a blur and before he had a chance to react, it was too late. Abe saw his customer pull a gun from under his jacket. So many thoughts ran through his mind at once. *It’s huge. Black. A revolver. The barrel is impossibly long, it can’t be real...*



AL  
MARGEN  
DEL  
DESTINO



JORGE LEINER

# *On The Edge Of Destiny*

## Jorge Leiner

### DESCRIPTION

Santiago Kant refuses to believe in destiny. For him, his repeated failures in the constant search for success, love, and the true meaning of his existence all boils down to a matter of bad luck and missed opportunities. However, this all changes the day that an Italian mathematician named Lazzaro Prati appears in his life and shows him that the guiding force known as destiny, which supposedly shapes the movement and history of every human being on this planet does in fact exist and in the same way that a continent can be crossed by a geological fault line, there lies a defect in destiny's own plan that can change its entire structure. It's a matter of an imperfection that exists in a physical presence, in a person who is on the edge of destiny . . . Santiago Kant himself.

Santiago is not the first person to fall through the cracks of destiny's global plan. Throughout the centuries, there have been others like him and their characteristics have been exploited in the same manner by men of science like Lazzaro Prati with a desire to help all of mankind make its existence more tolerable, less violent, and with a clear direction in accordance with its own will. However, Lazzaro Prati's intentions are not totally innocent and the resistance that Santiago will put up—causing him to cross borders and time zones—will culminate into a race in which the victor shall determine if humankind will in fact get the opportunity to redeem itself or if it is destined to face a catastrophe of gigantic proportions someplace in the near future.

Santiago Kant's decisions will make all the difference. While all this turmoil is taking place, he will find himself in the place he has been all along . . . on the edge of destiny.

### KEY SELLING POINTS

- It is sure to appeal to the educated reader.
- The subject is completely original, which is difficult in a business filled with repetitive concepts and imitators.
- Regardless of the addressed Latino market, the themes are not those of a "common" Latino novel (immigration, family, struggles of the life in the U.S., romance), it is a thriller with touches of existentialism, moral, history, fantasy, scientific and esoteric concepts, all complemented with a subplot regarding the corporate world.
- The novel is "designed" to be the second of a two act story. It works perfectly as a stand-alone novel, but it has enough elements, plot points, and references to be explained in a possible first book that can act as a prequel. So, if the novel is successful, it guarantees the sale of another one.
- It has enough elements to spark the interest of those interested in the world of the metaphysical, but the plot twists lead to a whole complementary set that can be of interest to a more scientific-oriented reader. Structurally, it manages to draw attention of both groups.
- The novel spans a 400 years plus story and it occurs in more than one country. It has a feeling of a historical novel at times.

### AUTHOR BIO



Jorge Leiner wrote his first story at the age of 17. At a young age he exhibited a strong affinity toward the sheer beauty of the written word and a special interest for the truth that exists in the scientific method. It was precisely this interest that propelled him to acquire an engineering degree years later, but without ever losing sight of his passion for books and the written word.

This combination of unique and hidden traits is what planted the seed that would in time manifest itself into his first novel *Al Margen del Destino/On the Edge of Destiny*. His nearly chronic curiosity and pressing desire to want to visit faraway places and experience different cultures has driven him to travel constantly, but at the same time keeping his deep love for Mexico City, the place he calls home, deeply rooted in his heart.

**Publisher:** Café con Leche  
an Imprint of Köehler Books

**Distributor:** Ingram  
6" x 9", 404 pages

**Softcover:** \$21.95,  
978-1-63393-008-7

**Ebook:** \$7.99, 978-1-63393-009-4

**Pub Date:** August 1, 2015

**FICTION:** Fantasy/Contemporary

### AUDIENCE

- Based on the origins of the author and the language, it obviously is targeted to the Latino reader, but it can reach anyone who finds enjoyment in reading in Spanish.
- It can draw the attention of people who enjoy history, since the novel has plot elements spanning from Japan in the XVII century, China in the XVIII century, Russia in the XIX century, and contemporary Latin America and some European countries.
- Thriller and fantasy readers.
- Those who are interested in existentialism, philosophy, and metaphysical concepts.
- It has a scientific – science fiction approach. Readers of those subjects can be attracted to it.



**INGRAM**

## PRÓLOGO

DESPUÉS DE PASAR algunas horas en la autopista, el padre, la madre y el pequeño hijo hicieron un alto en el camino. El padre se detuvo frente a una vieja gasolinera, salió del auto, tomó la bomba y comenzó a llenar el tanque. La madre parecía inquieta. Las carreteras la impacientaban. No era una de esas personas que aprecian el recorrido tanto como el destino del viaje, así que el calor, la interferencia constante en la mayoría de las estaciones de la radio y la frustración de sentirse prisionera durante varias horas, la obligaban a salir a caminar el mayor número de veces posible. Aprovechaba cada estación de servicio, cada pequeña tienda, cada caseta interestatal para salir del auto.

Volteó a ver al niño antes de bajar. Parecía estar sumamente concentrado observando algo en la ventana trasera, así que no se molestó en obligarlo a que saliera también a caminar un poco. Cerró la puerta tras de sí, estiró los brazos y trató de encontrar alguna referencia conocida en lo que parecía ser el lugar más apartado del mundo.

—¿Cuánto falta para llegar? —le preguntó a su marido con frustración evidente.

—Probablemente una hora. Puede ser un poco más. No depende realmente de mí. El tráfico para entrar a la ciudad puede hacer que nos demoremos mucho más, así que —añadió con impaciencia—, recomiendo que te tranquilices y disfrutes el resto del viaje. Juega con el niño. Encuentren forma a las nubes. Hagan algo.

—¿Nubes dices? —preguntó la mujer. ¿Es una broma verdad? Una nube es lo último que quiero ver durante el resto de tu estúpido viaje. Apresúrate y haz lo necesario para que llegemos pronto —el volumen de su voz aumentaba con cada palabra—. Necesito deshacerme de este maldito polvo. Quiero meterme a la tina, abrir una botella de vino y cerrar la puerta por una hora. ¡No quiero ver nubes!

La discusión había empezado. Y como ocurría frecuentemente, continuaría durante un buen tiempo, probablemente más de la hora que faltaba para que llegaran a su destino. El niño estaba acostumbrado. Había aprendido a mantenerse al margen y a voltear hacia otro lado mientras sus padres peleaban.

En esta ocasión, sin embargo, su atención se dirigió hacia otra parte. Mientras sus padres discutían, el niño observaba detenidamente lo que parecía ser otro enfrentamiento que ocurría del otro lado de la autopista. Dos hombres discutían acaloradamente. Ambos estaban furiosos y habían alcanzado el punto en el que sus rostros casi se tocaban. Parecía



que entre los gritos, en cualquier momento uno de los dos podría lanzar una mordida. Súbitamente, uno de los hombres escupió en la cara del otro, al tiempo que lo pateaba violentamente en la rodilla derecha. El golpe provocó que el segundo hombre gritara por el dolor y cayera al suelo. Eso lo colocó inmediatamente en desventaja, lo que permitió que el primer sujeto lo pateara repetidamente en el estómago y en la cara.

El niño entró en pánico. Desde el interior del auto trató de abrir la puerta, pero el seguro no lo permitió. Golpeó la ventana para llamar la atención de sus padres pero ninguno de los dos hizo caso; se encontraban demasiado ocupados con sus propios gritos y con sus amenazas particulares como para poder atenderlo.

Las manos del pequeño sudaban. Comenzó a respirar con dificultad ante la escena que se presentaba, como si se tratara de un espectáculo de horror y él se tratara del único espectador. Cerró los ojos, respiró profundamente y agachó la cabeza, sujetando con fuerza la parte trasera de su asiento; unos segundos después los abrió y volteó de nuevo. El hombre en el suelo no se movía. El hombre de pie observaba hipnotizado el cuerpo inerte. Un auto pasó y el ruido pareció regresarlo a la realidad. Volteó entonces hacia todos lados para comprobar que nadie había presenciado lo ocurrido y se encontró con la mirada asustada del niño, provocando en ambos el sentimiento de vacío que acompaña al vértigo, ahí, justo en la boca del estómago. El hombre sonrió con dificultad y atravesó sus labios con el dedo índice. Silencio, dijo, sin necesidad de palabras.

El hombre levantó entonces el cuerpo y se acercó aún más a la autopista. Esperó un par de segundos y ante la inminente aparición de varios autos, lo lanzó al camino.

El niño gritó horrorizado y fue solo entonces cuando sus padres voltearon hacia él. Todo lo que ocurrió entonces fue irreal.

El cuerpo aterrizó en el carril de alta velocidad. El conductor del auto que inmediatamente se encontraría con él, giró el volante hacia la derecha en un afán de esquivar a eso que había salido de la nada. El giro, combinado con su velocidad, provocó que el auto cambiara su trayectoria en una forma imposible. Dio una vuelta sobre su propio eje y quedó de frente a dos autos más que circulaban en los otros dos carriles. El choque provocó una gran carambola. Los tres perdieron totalmente el control y en la inevitabilidad de la situación uno de ellos aceleró en dirección a la familia que observaba todo lo que ocurría, con manifestaciones puras de horror y asombro en sus rostros.

Los padres no pudieron hacer nada. La balanza se inclinó hacia un lado: en un extremo la responsabilidad que les implicaba su paternidad, en el otro, la increíble velocidad del auto. En esta ocasión, no hubo forma de que la primera ganara. Lograron correr hacia la pequeña tienda a unos metros de la gasolinera. Desde ese lugar observaron como el auto se estrelló con la parte frontal del suyo, y como continuó avanzando hasta detenerse un par de metros más adelante con una de las bombas de gasolina. Transcurrieron un par de segundos hasta que la bomba explotó. Una gran bola de fuego se elevó a una altura insospechada, logrando que pedazos de vidrio y metal volaran hacia todos lados, lastimándolos a ellos y a algunas otras personas.

Después de esto, un instante de calma invadió el lugar. La explosión dejó una gran nube de humo negro a través de la cual los padres tuvieron que abrirse paso para dirigirse hacia su automóvil, con la inútil esperanza de encontrar a su hijo entre los pedazos retorcidos de metal.

"Every educator and business leader in America knows that STEM is vital, and that this is where we need to go. *Awakening Your STEM School* offers us a guide for business leaders and educators on how to get there together."

—Josh Cramer, Senior Educational Programs Officer, SME Education Foundation

# AWAKENING YOUR **STEM SCHOOL**

## ASSURING A JOB-READY WORKFORCE

44 IDEAS AND ACTIONS FOR EDUCATORS  
MORE THAN 300 TIPS FOR SUCCESS



**DR. AARON L. SMITH**  
**WITH BUD RAMEY**



# Awakening Your STEM School

Aaron L. Smith with Bud Ramey

**“Every educator and business leader in America knows that STEM is vital, and that this is where we need to go. Awakening Your STEM School offers us a guide for business leaders and educators on how to get there together.”**

—Josh Cramer, Senior Educational Programs Officer, SME Education Foundation

**“Teachers and administrators can use this book as a guide to develop and implement other innovative approaches to enhance STEM learning in their school, community, and state.”**

—Dr. Roger A. Hathaway, Special STEM Programs Manager, NASA

## DESCRIPTION

### EDUCATORS AND BUSINESS LEADERS BRINGING THE STEM CLASSROOM ALIVE

Every school in America embraces the need to dramatically improve STEM education. And every business in America needs STEM graduates.

### STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education)

*Business leaders and educators know the skills and knowledge in each of these disciplines are deeply intertwined into the real world of jobs.*

Dr. Aaron Smith's thoughtful narrative offers ideas, tools and actions that both community leaders and educators can deploy to inspire students and assure that a job-ready workforce flows from the local schools.

Here resides a guide for community and business leaders on how to become involved at a meaningful level to make sure employers can recruit capable and prepared students.

Here school leaders can become inspired to embed the skillsets needed in the 21st century workplace.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- Created at a pioneering STEM school surrounded by breathtaking high technology enterprises, *Awakening Your STEM School* will inspire the faculty, the business community and community leaders to embrace the amazing transformation that awaits with STEM.
- Creates new pathways and opportunities to deeply involve local businesses and industrial leaders in your school.
- Shows proven ways to move your STEM school ahead with no additional school funding.

## AUDIENCE

- STEM and CTE public and private school teachers, and leadership of schools, nationwide
- Student teachers and faculty at colleges and universities
- Business leaders and policymakers
- Teacher and Educational Administrator Associations

## AUTHOR BIO



Dr. Aaron L. Smith has been in education for 18 years, serving middle, high and college students as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, program director and adjunct professor. His experiences as a math teacher launched his journey into leading edge STEM education. He has received the Crystal Star Award from the National Dropout Prevention Center. Denbigh High School – Aviation Academy has been honored several times by the prestigious Society of Manufactured Engineers. The school has received awards from the Virginia Department of Education. The Aviation Academy is listed in the Virginia Living Magazine as a Top 100 Schools in the state. Dr. Smith received the 2014 ING Unsung Hero award. He also had two graduates earn the prestigious Gates Millennial Scholar during his tenure.

**Publisher: Koehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram Publisher Services**

**PUB DATE: 8/1/2015**

**SOFTCOVER, \$17.95, 978-1-63393-061-2**

**EBOOK, \$4.99, 978-1-63393-062-9**

**Trim : 6x9, Pages : 228**

**EDUCATION: Professional**

**Development**

**EDUCATION: Teaching Methods & Materials/general**

## MARKETING

- Awakening Your STEM School will be promoted via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, Youtube, etc) as well as through hiring a Koehler partner publicist who will assist Dr. Smith in setting up media releases and interviews
- We will begin locally, keep a keen eye for opportunity and aggressively seek speaking engagements across the country
- Book signings will be made available at conferences and also bookstores.
- Advanced copies will be sent to national educational associations, websites, blogs and radio and television producers.

## ONLINE

[www.stemschooldr.com](http://www.stemschooldr.com)

 **koehlerbooks™**

**INGRAM**



## CHAPTER ONE

### HANDING ME THE THROTTLE

SO MY CAREER has led me here.

I unpack the boxes from my previous school leadership position to take over as Program Director of the Aviation Academy, a magnet program in the Newport News, Virginia Public Schools.

I look out the large picture window at the tarmac of the airport. Housed in the old terminal building at this beautiful airport, the enlightened leadership of the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport made this space available to the magnet program 20 years ago—a perfect location to bring young people interested in aviation as a career.

So, I am an educator now with an office at this old airport.

An odd flow of emotions arrives as I step into the terminal. Should I feel inspired or scratch my head? Could this represent a phenomenal new opportunity or the end of the line for a career in education? What about the retro décor (late 1940's airline terminal grey)? Could this forebode something, offering a sign, a symbol, a metaphor for being bypassed by history? I give this about sixty seconds of serious thought.

As I return to my office and begin to carefully place the pictures of my wife and kids on the credenza and unload my files, I know the answer to that question.

This is an amazing challenge and opportunity simultaneously. The momentum for STEM education has just reached critical mass and only recently has the focus of state and national education leaders shifted to STEM education.

As if the answer to my question needed an external answer, the muted whining of a powerful jet engine catches my attention. An amazing Mirage jet fighter taxis past the school, just coming in from exercises with the fighters at Langley Air Force Base nearby.

For me, STEM came naturally. I loved the sciences and math, probably because I was blessed with inspirational instructors. I found significant success there and achieved my PhD.

I always wanted to teach, and I always hoped to pass on the inspiration I received as a student both to fellow teachers and to our students.

I find nothing more rewarding than seeing that spark ignite in a young people, a spark that can take them on a pathway to a successful career.

That's what STEM does, as long as the students can see it in action, apply the learning to problem solving—and see themselves in the picture. This school could epitomize that energy.

The sound of several commercial airliners rises and falls as they arrive and depart the new terminal next door. The private aviation terminal and hangars nearby welcome back the corporate Learjets. Air Traffic Controllers come in for the afternoon shift. Baggage handlers and aircraft maintenance crew go about their duties. Security officers and TSA observe it all inside and outside the terminal as hundreds of passengers arrive and depart.

What a brilliant place to house STEM aviation classrooms.

I have inherited a piece of gold and hope to shape it into something even more beautiful. If ever I could find a living metaphor for STEM education, I have just unpacked my bags there.

And perhaps just as unconventional as the location of this school, the shape of my thinking must change as well to navigate the demanding new STEM movement with, as usual, minimal resources and high expectations.

Should I feel scared or energized? Well, honestly, a little of both. I have the summer to plan how to take this beautiful little program to the next level.

I bring in a few strengths. During my last assignment as an assistant principal, I helped students and colleagues in the division by creating the Save All Freshmen Everywhere (SAFE) experience, an initiative honored by the National Dropout Prevention Center.

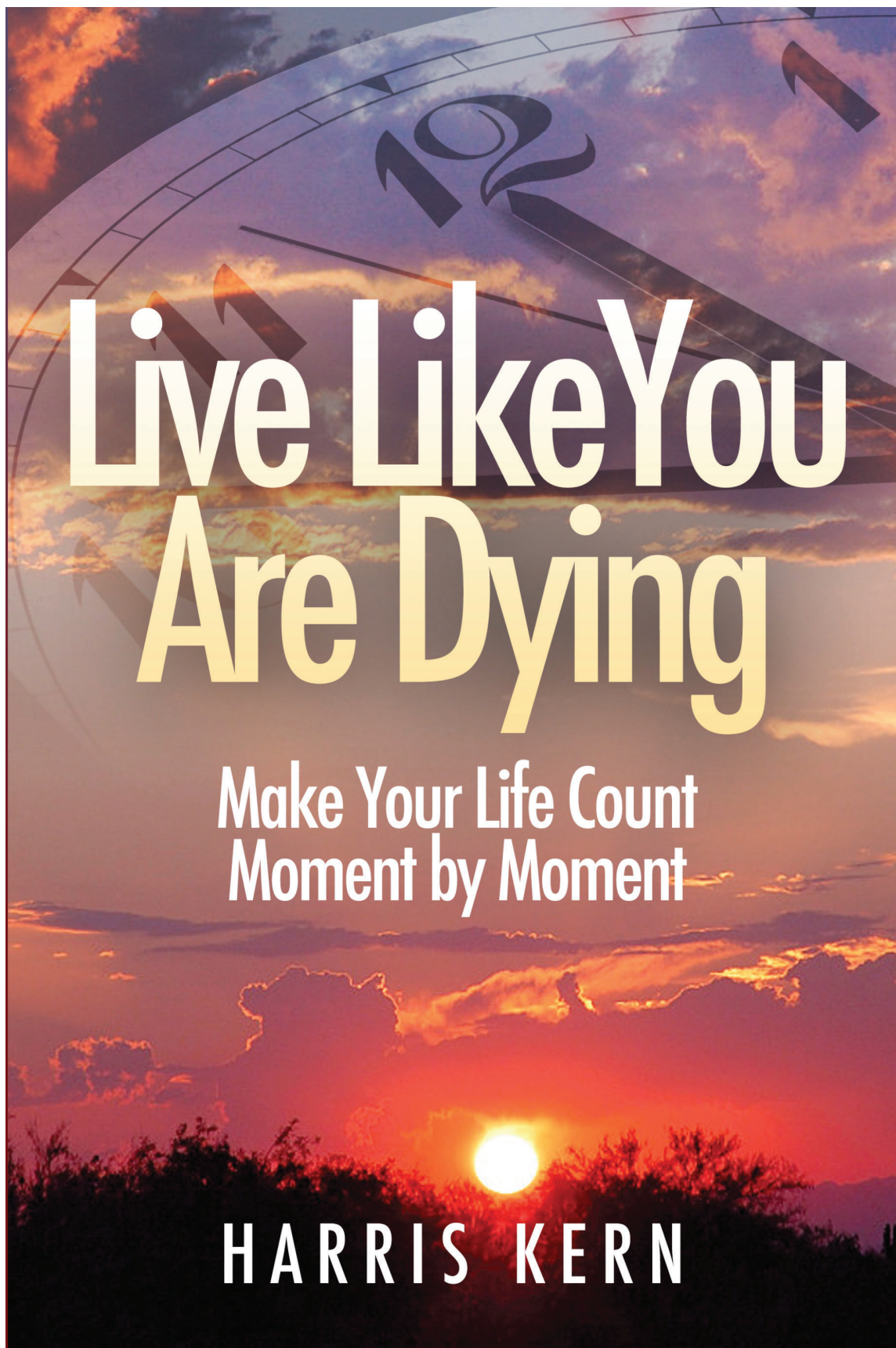
Paired with a great mentor who showed me instructional and culturally related strategies, I prepare to use these skills to shape the perception and performance of the Academy. Great wisdom exists in the spirit of those educators and administrators who have gone down a path before us.

We are not only in an immersive high tech STEM environment; we are in the shadow of great historical scientific events. About a hundred miles to the south of this airport, not all that long ago, the Wright brothers risked life and limb to invent control surfaces on gliders and enable the use of an engine on an airplane.

And less than ten miles away, Neil Armstrong rehearsed landing on the moon at NASA Langley Lunar Landing Facility, which still stands as a monument to that historic achievement.

Both of these events changed the world. Both illustrate the power of science, technology, engineering and math when brought to bear on solving a problem.

I don't know which is more difficult or worthy of celebration —the creation of a school such as this, or the rising of the institution to a new and unpredicted height. I did not create the Aviation Academy experience. But this handoff, giving me the throttle at just the right time, is not only an honor; it provides stepping-stones that will assist us in mapping key elements that any program could emulate.



# Live Like You Are Dying

Make Your Life Count  
Moment by Moment

HARRIS KERN



# ***Live Like You Are Dying***

**Harris Kern**

## **DESCRIPTION**

In this era, people are under overwhelming pressure to accomplish more in life at a record setting pace with minimal resources at their disposal than ever before. Make no mistake: We are living in extremely challenging times and the only thing that can help us now is changing our mentality and taking the appropriate measures so that we can keep our heads above water. *Live Like You Are Dying: Make Your Life Count Moment by Moment* will teach readers from all walks of life how to train their mind so they can adapt to and keep up with the daily rigors of life in the Twenty-First Century.

Written by a highly successful life coach/organization mentor and publishing professional, *Live Like You Are Dying: Make Your Life Count Moment by Moment* identifies what has been up to now the missing link every person needs to be more productive by living life with a sense of urgency during these stressful and accelerated times we're presently living in.

Drawing from his own powerful life lessons, sweet successes and monumental failures, Harris provides real world examples of how to train the mind for more productive living. He offers readers a unique perspective so they too can learn how to live their lives as if tomorrow is never going to come.

## **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- Prescriptive self-help book that reads like compelling fiction.
- Timely and relevant issues representative of the times we live in.
- Contains practical advice on how to maintain balance while working longer.
- Provides real world examples of how to train your mind so that you can face today's challenges head-on.
- Offers inspirational stories and motivational tips.
- Includes indispensable section on parenting in the Twenty-First Century.

## **AUDIENCE**

- Full-time high school, college, and graduate students
- Blue Collar and White Collar workers of all ages and cultures.
- Single and married parents
- Any professional who wants to excel in their field
- Top level CEO and Entrepreneurs
- Individuals close to retirement age

## **AUTHOR BIO**



Harris Kern is one of the world's leading life and organization mentors. Harris has been mentoring people for over thirty years to attain the highest level of efficiency. He helps individuals develop key skills i.e., self-discipline, leadership and EQ. Harris is an acclaimed author and publisher of over 40 books, some of the titles include *Going From Undisciplined to Self-Mastery* and *On Being a Workaholic*.

Harris is a frequent speaker at business, leadership and management conferences. Mr. Kern is also the founder and driving force behind the Harris Kern Enterprise Computing Institute and the best-selling series of IT books published by Prentice Hall. The series includes titles such as: *IT Services* and *CIO Wisdom*, among others.

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**Pub Date : 08/01/2015**

**Softcover: \$17.95, 978-1-94019-279-6**

**Ebook: \$7.99, 978-1-63393-046-9**

**Trim : 6x9**

**Format : Trade Paper**

**Pages : 164**

**BISAC Code Category:**

**SELF-HELP/Personal Growth/  
Happiness**

## **MARKETING**

- Author will utilize his multiple brands and websites at harriskern.com, disciplinmentor.com and disciplinetheorganization.com
- Utilize extensive social media platform including Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and more developed from author's previous 40+ books
- Author will use books as showpiece and sell them during talks/seminars

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**INGRAM**

# INTRODUCTION

## Author's Note

At a very young age, I was told by my neighbor to “Act as if you’re going to die at forty years old and live life accordingly.” This philosophy resonated with me and set me on a path of living with urgency and chasing success in every facet of life. Almost accidentally, I stumbled upon the importance of *discipline* in leading a successful life. This “Pig-Headed Discipline (PHD)” coupled with the dark thought of dying at forty compelled me to create that extraordinary life.

At the tail end of authoring my latest book on the topic of self-mastery, I had an epiphany: How come so many of us in life don’t treat time with more respect? Simply because we think we have an infinite supply of it. The harsh reality is that age forty will come and go before we know it, and the chances of true success after this milestone diminish greatly for the vast majority of people.

My epiphany caused me to re-evaluate my message; discipline is great, but people need to better understand why they truly need it. Simply put, we all die. Sure, many of us live well into our eighties and beyond, but you never know. If the vast majority of us adopted the philosophy that our expiration date is forty, how much more focused would we be with our early lives? We’d better understand why we need discipline in order to achieve everything we want before we kick the bucket.

Granted, my message may sound morbid to many, but those who feel that way are kidding themselves and shying away from the fact that my message is the kind of *reality* that *really* hits you in the gut. Based on my past experience as a life coach, people don’t want to hear *reality*. What they truly want is to hear positive thoughts and to be provided with quick, easy solutions to their weaknesses. I had the dubious pleasure of setting the record straight. There are no quick fixes, and instilling structure into a chaotic lifestyle isn’t easy.

Throughout my twenties and thirties no one knew that I had a war brewing internally. I was always positive and jovial on the outside. Inside, I was in a constant battle to outperform my previous best every day. I needed to accomplish more and faster. I knew my time was limited and all I could do was think but one word: *legacy*. I wanted to leave my family more than just pictures. Well, I’m in my early sixties now, and there’s still a sense of urgency.

This book is a bit of an autobiography celebrating the trials, tribulations, and achievements I had during my first forty years of life and how my sense of urgency pushed me forward through adversity and to achieve the things in my life that most people only dream of. I have also been collaborating with a host of celebrity successes that were guided into their success by the same philosophy... pretend as if you're dying at forty years old! How many of us would like to:

- Buy a home before the age of twenty
- Appear on the cover of a magazine because of a hobby or passion of ours
- Climb the corporate ladder without a formal education
- Live a life of healthfulness and prime physique
- Visit exotic people and countries around the world
- Mentor hundreds of people and dozens of organizations to become more efficient
- Start a successful business while working as an executive at a large corporation
- Own an expensive luxury sports car in our thirties
- Manage sleep optimally
- Have financial security in our thirties
- Publish dozens of books with the largest publishing company in the world while working twelve-hour days as an executive
- Purchase (in cash) a brand new car at the age of sixteen

The foundation for all of these achievements must be laid early in life. The mistake most people make, at least from what I have seen, is that they waste time. They're deluded into thinking that success will come, somehow miraculously appearing one day. The truth is very different.

When you're in the prime of your life, which is the late teen years, twenties and early thirties for most (not based on scientific data—however a majority would agree), there seems to be plenty of time to have a great career, buy a home, start a family, and invest for your retirement. Even if you're only thirty you still have approximately fifty years to make your dreams come true, right? Think again!

Most people these days don't sweat it if they're not able to complete that project today—tomorrow's another day after all. *What's the rush? Life is too short, sometimes you just have to stop and smell the roses.* It is this kind of prevailing mentality on a universal level that makes *procrastination* by far the number one deterrent to success.

Well, here's a spoiler alert for all you teens, twenty and thirty-somethings—your biological clock is ticking away as you read this. The first forty years of your existence sets the tone for the rest of your life, so if you haven't accomplished most of your dreams by this age then the chances of you doing so greatly diminish as you exit your prime years, when your power and vigor are greatest. Contrary to popular belief, you actually only have until the age of forty to make something special happen in your life.

There are numerous opinions written on when the prime of your life actually occurs; for me it was my late teens through my twenties and early to mid thirties.





SYDNEY SCROGHAM

CHASE



# *Chase*

## Sydney Scrogam

*Two worlds will collide under one reigning Promise.  
He's chosen to die.  
She's destined for Snix skin.*

Financial strain from her mom's lost job means Lauren has to sell her horse. In a desperate attempt to keep her beloved animal, Lauren pursues an escaped genetic experiment worth a ten thousand dollar reward—a bright-red horse.

With the red horse in sight, Lauren disappears into Agalrae and comes face-to-face with Chase, a man raised by Alicorns. Lauren wants to return home, but the Snix, Chase's enemy since birth, has other plans. The Snix confronts Lauren with an ultimatum: Kill Chase for ten times the red horse's reward money, or sacrifice the lives of her mother and horse.

Forced to stay in Agalrae until she decides, Lauren wrestles with possible outcomes. But she can't hide the truth from Chase forever.

### KEY SELLING POINTS

- The hero thinks like a horse and has never met another human before.
- Agalrae, the fantasy world, was inspired by Afton Mountain and Skyline Drive (Shenandoah Valley in Virginia).
- The Snix is a never-before-seen half human half snake villain.
- Before writing, the author felt like she needed to write a story showing that God wants romance with His people—not religion.

### AUDIENCE

- Fans of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy*, *Twilight*, and *The Scorpio Races*.
- Readers who want a fast-paced, enthralling fantasy with a splash of romance. Horse lovers.
- Anyone who grew up playing (still playing) Mario video games and watching (still watching) Disney movies.

### AUTHOR BIO



Sydney Scrogam has been a horse owner writing novels on the side for the past ten years. She actively writes for Flash! Friday and Porsche Club of America e-Break News. When she isn't writing, Sydney can be found at the barn with her horse Snowdy. Apart from Snowdy, Sydney's inspiration for writing includes spending time with God, watching ABC's *Castle* or *Marvel* movies, Breyer model horses, Bionicle Legos, and taking long walks in the middle of nowhere. Sydney's driving passion is to see people revive and chase after their dreams. To learn more, check out her blog at <http://www.sswriter.com>

**Publisher: Köehler Books**  
**Distributor: Ingram**  
**6" x 9", 168 pages**  
**Softcover: \$14.95, 978-1-63393-115-2**  
**Ebook: \$7.99, 978-1-63393-116-9**  
**Pub Date: August 1, 2015**  
**BISAC CATEGORY**  
**JUVENILE FICTION: Fantasy**

### ONLINE

<http://www.sswriter.com>

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**INGRAM**

LAUREN

Real life has run out of good stories for me, so I live my own. When I'm on top of a horse, our bodies connect and become one. My horse, Emblem, gives me his strength, and I give him my confidence. I am a wild rider, racing by cliff edges with the ocean below. The wind tears through my hair, stings my eyes, steals my breath, and I am free. But, actually, I'm just riding circles under the falling brown leaves in my backyard; pretending I'm brave and beautiful with lots of horses; pretending my house isn't too small and my yard isn't brown from Emblem's constant munching; pretending it's not just me and Mom.

"Lauren, dinner." Mom's figure is tiny by the front door.

*But Mom, I'm not done slaying dragons,* I say to myself.

The dead grass crunches under my feet as I swing off of Emblem. His dark brown shoulder is warm, and his coat smooth from our workout. With his eyes, he takes me in, and then shoves his face into my chest. *Oof!* I stagger back and swat at his face, but I miss, so I just tug Emblem back to the little wooden shed with a slanted, rusted roof that is his home.

I exchange Emblem's bridle for a halter. The lead rope is coarse between my fingers, and I loop it through a metal ring on a wall inside the shed. Emblem stands without me tying him completely. But just in case, I say, "Don't move." I yank the saddle from his back and brush his damp hair. He'll have to roll in the dirt to fully get the wetness out. There's not a speck of white on him, so I'll only know he's dirty when I pat his neck and a dust cloud flies up. My dad used to say it's easier having just a brown horse. They hide the poop stains.

"Hey!"

Emblem sulks away a little faster, nose to the dirt, sniffing. I chase his tail and he trots away.

"Get back here, Mister. You're going to make me late for dinner."

I lunge for the lead rope, now brownish-red with dirt from being dragged, but it slips through my fingers. Emblem's being a turd, and right now I don't have patience

for that. There's a big bin taking up the other half of the shed, and I reach in, pull out a metal coffee cup with sweet feed in it, and shake it. *Rattle, rattle*. Emblem freezes, throws his head up to look at me, and his sides flinch with a snort.

"Really," I mutter. "Really. You're scared of your own food."

Emblem's thin black tail curls high in the air like he's a fancy Arabian breeding stallion instead of a backyard American Quarter Horse. He likes to pretend, too, but his fantasy doesn't last as long as mine, and he licks his lips, drops his head, and saunters to me. The forgotten lead rope dangles and Emblem steps on it, yanks his head down, and falls into me. I roll my eyes and his ears pop back up after I take the halter off.

"You're such a goof, but I'd die if I ever lost you." I dump the sweet feed onto the ground inside the shed, throw the coffee cup back into the bin, and lock it tight. The fence creaks under my body as I climb over, and with the weight of the saddle pressed into my hip, I march to the house.

I stomp my feet on the concrete porch and leave two little muddy imprints. I'm only a shoe size six, and I hear Dad's voice in my head telling me I have pea feet. Mom said they're elegant and well wrought. But I think they're like swan necks—too long and thin to give me much balance. I push open the blue front door, lean my saddle against the wall, and strip off my boots. Something smells good enough to make my toes curl. As I straighten, I see the paper balled up on the table by the door. I peel off my gloves and shake the cold from my fingers before grabbing the informational wad.

"Peach, come wash your hands," Mom calls. Little metallic clinks come one after the other—she must be setting silverware and getting it just right. She hasn't called me *Peach* in a long time, and hearing it sends me back ten years when I ran into the house squealing for *Mario*, which Dad had just given me. That was when I started pretending, the day I became Princess Peach.

The newspaper catches a ride in my hand as I walk into the kitchen, the only place of warmth in this house right now. I'm cramped between the table, three chairs, and giant vase in the corner sprouting silvery reeds. That's Mom's creature, not mine. I plop down in my chair and scooch up to the table without washing my hands. *Oops*.

With a big bowl of steaming green beans in hand, Mom sits down next to me at the circular table. The yellow tablecloth scrunches where Mom slides the bowl of beans onto the table. This yellow is too neon for fall, but Mom loves yellow, so I guess I'm okay with it.

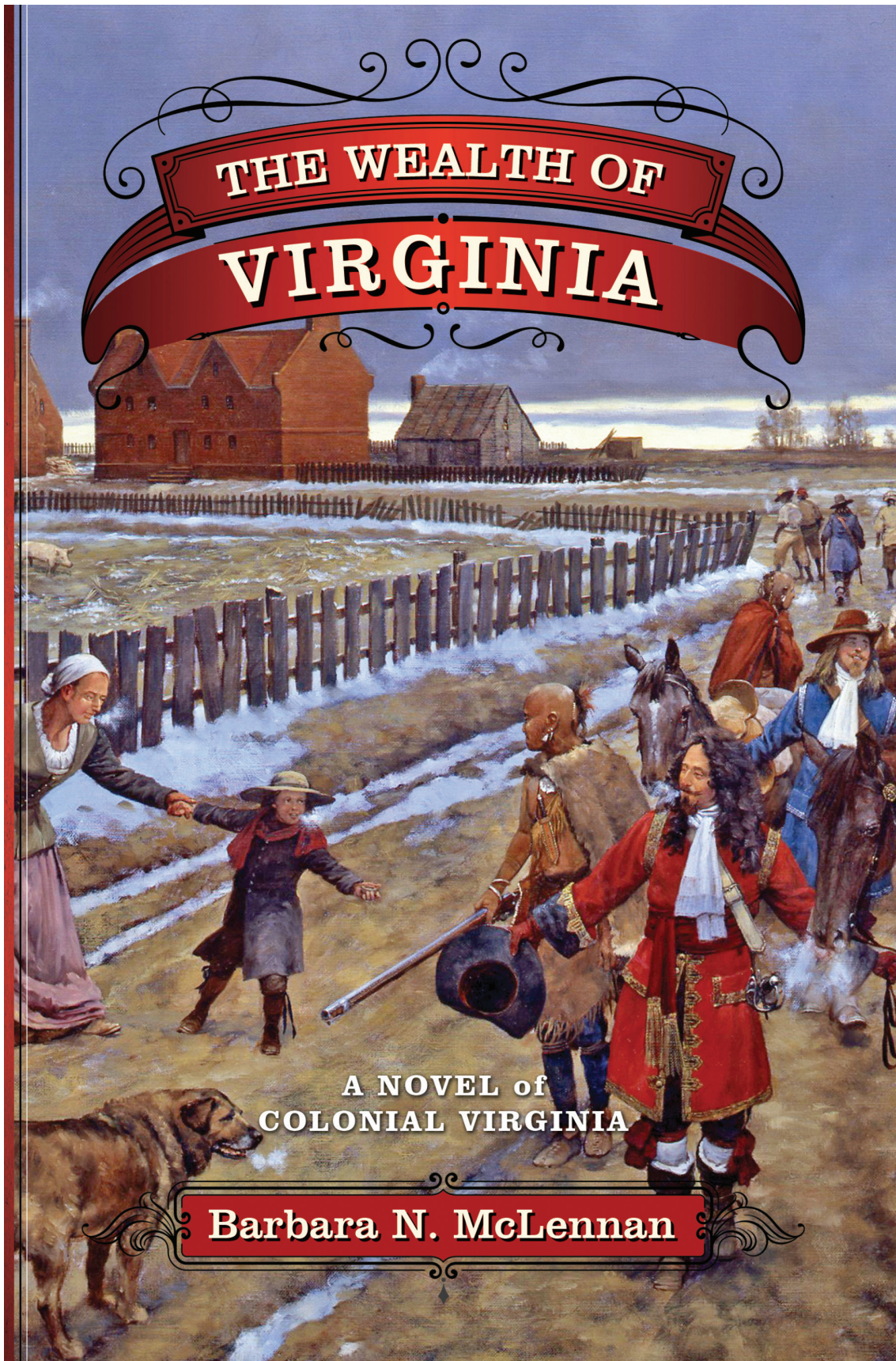
Mom clears her throat and drops her hands into her lap. Even though I can't see her hands, I know she's smoothing her skirt because her shoulders wag back and forth. Then she picks at an invisible hair hanging onto the end of her fork and she finally looks at me with her brown eyes. I wonder how my eyes got so bright and green while hers are so brown and tired.

"Will you say grace?" Mom asks.

I duck my head and squint so I can just barely see that neon yellow tablecloth brushing my knees. For a split second, my body flashes icy cold, then hot with panic. I never know what to say to God about food.

"Th—thanks for food. Good food that tastes good and is filling and yummy and good and—"





**THE WEALTH OF  
VIRGINIA**

A NOVEL of  
COLONIAL VIRGINIA

**Barbara N. McLennan**



## CHAPTER 1

Three women sat in the front drawing room with a young child. Windows were opened and spring light flooded the room along with the aromas of jasmine and honeysuckle. Well furnished, the room had bright purple floral paper covering the walls, Turkish carpets covering the side tables, and a great gilded mirror on the wall.

“Nobody asks me what I think. It’s my life,” huffed Lucy Burwell. “I’m not a dog or a horse.”

Lucy’s sister Elizabeth Harrison flashed a grin at sister-in-law Sarah Harrison Blair. Both women giggled at impetuous Lucy, still so sweetly naïve at age sixteen. The year was 1699 and Elizabeth’s husband, Attorney General Benjamin Harrison III, was away in Jamestown assisting Governor Nicholson who’d moved the capital city of Virginia from Jamestown to Williamsburg, a small town previously known as Middle Plantation.

Sarah had just finished playing a game with Benjamin Harrison IV and was impressed at how quickly he had learned his letters. The boy was five and had a great head for numbers she thought.

Elizabeth sent for a servant to take her son out of the room. As soon as they were gone Elizabeth asked Lucy in the soft tones of Virginia speech, “Sugar, what exactly did Father say?”

Lucy looked embarrassed. She had lovely dark hair and a bright, infectious smile. She stood from her chair and moved to the window. She was a born dancer and every move she made was as graceful as a bird’s. “He said the governor had asked for my hand in marriage and that he was thinking it over. He also said that every family in Virginia would like to count a governor as a member.”

Sarah knitted her eyebrows and quietly asked in her deep, melodious voice, “Darling, did he leave it for you to think about it, or did he tell you this was going to happen?”

Elizabeth thought for a moment and knew her younger sister was looking for support more than advice. She said to Lucy, “Darling, you know that Father dotes on you. He’ll never do anything that would make you unhappy. Why are you so frightened?”

Lucy seemed to dance in short pirouettes around the bright room, warm with the color of the early spring sun. She finally turned to her sister and Sarah and said, “It frightens me. Governor Nicholson is so much older—he must be over forty. Everyone says he has a dreadful temper. I don’t know how Father could even entertain the possibility of a match, but I suppose he has to be polite. Father is a member of the Governor’s Council. Mother says nothing at all. If I refuse and Father backs me up, we could have soldiers in the house to carry me away.”

This was too much for Elizabeth and Sarah. They both smiled to each other knowingly and laughed out loud.

Lucy continued, “Nicholson is beside himself. He sends me gifts and writes ridiculous poetry. He’s serious. This last letter I received, here it is.” Lucy pulled out a handwritten letter and read out loud:

*Virtuous, pretty, charming Innocent Dove  
The only center of my Constant Love.*

“Isn’t this idiotic? The more I hear from him, the more I can’t stand him.”

Elizabeth and Sarah couldn’t contain themselves. After their laughter died down, Sarah was first to speak.

“You know it used to be normal for brides not even to be consulted on marriage choices. When times were difficult, marriages were strictly business arrangements—meant to transfer lands or rights in business dealings. Even though I was already engaged to another, my father had me married to Commissary Blair as part of a business deal with tobacco factors. I was only seventeen. Times really aren’t as bad now. If you’re unhappy about the arrangement you should let your mother know. She can talk to your father.”

Elizabeth rose and went to her younger sister. She was tall, also dark, but not nearly as pretty as Lucy. Elizabeth was in her late twenties and one of the leading hostesses of Virginia. She embraced Lucy.

“You know we’re on your side. I’ll talk to Father this weekend. We’re having a party for some of the new burgesses. Father and Benjamin would like to get to know the new members better. Virginia is growing so quickly, and we’re building a new capital city. People everywhere are flush with excitement.”

“I know,” Lucy whimpered, almost on the verge of tears, and hugged her older sister.

Elizabeth held her shoulders and whispered, “Don’t worry, sugar. The Burwells and the Harrisons take care of our own. After all, who’s a governor anyway?”

Lucy looked up in surprise. Sarah said, “The Board of Trade sends over royal governors every so often. Since Governor Berkeley, who was governor for a long time and well before you were born, none have stayed very long. A few were outright thieves and were driven away by the burgesses. The House simply asked that they be recalled. Nicholson isn’t a royal personage. He’s just a London bureaucrat.”

Lucy mumbled, “I don’t care how he got here. He’s here and he frightens me.”

“There’s nothing to worry about,” said Elizabeth. “Father will hear from all of us this weekend.”

Sarah tried to turn the conversation to brighter subjects. “Benjamin IV is very bright isn’t he, Lucy?”

Lucy giggled. “Yes, just like you. He always wants to make a deal when he plays, and he drives a hard bargain!”

Elizabeth laughed at that too. “Maybe we should arrange a wife for him? He’d let us know what he thinks soon enough.”

Sarah laughed. “Yes, in Europe royalty is married off on the day they are born. Thank goodness we’re far away from that!”

Lucy felt a little better and decided she was hungry. “May I go to the kitchen to see if there’s something to eat?”

Elizabeth smiled and said, “Yes. And have the servants prepare some tea for us as well.”

Lucy bounced out of the room, leaving Sarah and Elizabeth to themselves. Sarah said wistfully, “It brings back bad memories, doesn’t it?”

Elizabeth looked at her sister-in-law sympathetically and crossed the room to sit down beside her. “But we’ve managed. Benjamin is a lovely boy and you can raise him almost as your own. He enjoys when William comes. He loves his rough and tumble father.”

They were talking about William Roscoe, Sarah’s lover and business partner, and the biological father of Benjamin IV.

Sarah had the child during one of her husband’s extended trips to London. Sarah’s brother and his wife, Elizabeth, had been childless and happily agreed to raise the baby as their own. In doing so, they protected Sarah from being sullied and provided legitimacy to the boy.

Sarah often visited the child, spending months at a time with him at her brother’s home. The boy’s father often visited as well. While both Sarah and William were married to others, they also managed to spend much time together at the piers where their two ships were docked.

Sarah was suddenly irritated. She stood and paced the room. “Oh, what a performance all of this is! Perhaps we could get the commissary to go to London again, and I’ll have another baby. He despises Nicholson as he does all governors. Maybe someone could convince him to visit the Board of Trade?”

“Benjamin won’t want to go again, but we might talk him into suggesting it to the commissary. Does the reverend suspect anything about you and William?” Elizabeth was curious about the opinions of the Reverend James Blair, Sarah’s lawful husband. Reverend Blair served as commissary of the Church of England in Virginia, with a seat on the Governor’s Council. He was also president of the new College of William and Mary.

“James lives in another world. He’s always very polite to William, addressing him as sheriff, as if he were some sort of functionary. William’s no bureaucrat. He’s been elected to the House of Burgesses by the people he knows, and he’s sheriff because his people asked the governor to keep him in that position.” Sarah continued, “James is married to his church and the titles he accumulates so long as his appointments come from London with small salaries attached. He lives well so long as I keep our plantation and ships in business. He really doesn’t know where the money comes from.

"A DELICIOUS READ!"

—Adam Sachs, Editor in Chief of *Saveur* magazine.

# Looking for Lydia Looking for God

From 2014  
to The Civil War,  
The Journey of  
Thirteen Women

Dean Robertson



# ***Looking for Lydia: Looking for God***

## **by Dean Robertson**

**“A DELICIOUS READ.”**

—Adam Sachs, Editor in Chief of *Saveur* magazine.

**“Storytelling at its finest.”**

Susan Reigler, author, *Kentucky Bourbon Country* and  
*The Complete Guide to Kentucky State Parks*

**“Readers will find that, whether they seek a lost relative or answers to Life’s biggest questions, *Looking for Lydia* may lead them to find that exploring the questions can be as satisfying as finding the answers.”**

Molly Roper Jenkins, Great-granddaughter of Lydia Bowen Roper

### **DESCRIPTION**

*Looking for Lydia: Looking for God* is a memoir. It is a spiritual memoir. It is a confession. It is a family saga and a cameo of life in Norfolk, a southern city after the Civil War. It is the mystery of a nineteenth-century woman, come from Philadelphia to Norfolk, Virginia, the year the War ended, and the story of the mysteries that don’t get solved and the questions that don’t get answered. It is the study of the Bible that began in the Lydia H. Roper Home, in Norfolk, Virginia, and it has grown outward from there in the most unexpected ways. It is rooted on every page in the concrete details of the Roper Home and in the lives of the family that built and chartered it. It is, finally, a story about growing older for everyone, everywhere.

*Looking for Lydia* is packed with detail. It sifts through layers of the Bible; the post-Civil War South; the lives of the women at the Lydia Roper Home; the lives of the women in the Roper family; the founding of a southern lumber empire by a carpetbagger from Pennsylvania; and, finally, the search for the elusive Lydia Roper.

As you read, you will fall in love with a small group of women, in their ninth and tenth decades, as they discover the Bible, each other, and themselves.

### **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- This book is ideal for book clubs and includes a full set of discussion questions.
- It is uplifting and encouraging for older women to continue to live life and to rediscover their voices.
- It is an essential book for use in Bible studies.

### **AUDIENCE**

- Children, grandchildren, and caretakers of the aging.
- Bible study and church groups
- Women in general and those over in 50 in particular.

### **AUTHOR BIO**



Prior to taking up writing with various essays and her debut book, Dean Robertson was a school teacher, retiring in 2006. After suffering a bad fall in 2013, Dean ended up convalescing at the Lydia Roper Home. There she met the amazing women who inspired her to teach them about the Bible. Soon it became clear that she was the student, and so the journey of the book began.

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**6”x 9”, 186 pages**

**Softcover: \$14.95, 978-1-63393-100-8**

**Hardcover: \$26.95, 978-1-63393-170-1**

**Ebook: \$7.99, 978-1-63393-101-5**

**Pub Date: July 24, 2015**

**BISAC CATEGORY**

**RELIGION: Biography/Inspiration**

**BIOGRAPHY: Religious**

**ONLINE:**

**pdrobertson.com**

 köehlerbooks™

**INGRAM**

# Chapter One

## GATHERING: WHERE WE ARE

IN JUNE OF 1921, CAPTAIN John Roper, former Union soldier and, since the end of the nineteenth century, a legendary Norfolk lumber baron, died at the age of eighty-six. A month before he died, the Lydia Roper Home was chartered, named for his wife, Lydia Hand Bowen Roper, and, according to some sources, intended as a safe haven especially for “widows of Confederate soldiers and others who had no sons to provide for them.” A woman who was an administrator of the Lydia Roper Home for twenty years tells me that she heard the Home was Lydia’s idea. Mrs. John Roper wanted a place for women she knew whose husbands had died and left them without enough money. She wanted her husband to help. He did.

The rambling brick building, with its shingle roof and sunny front porch, sits half a short block from a busy Norfolk street, hemmed in now by a louder world. Crepe myrtles line the sidewalk; the porch is furnished with wicker chairs and sofas and pots full of flowering plants. Visitors must ring the bell to be admitted. The large entry is carpeted in soft green; a six foot tall gold-leaf mirror hangs on one wall; the stairs rise by landings to the second and third floors. It is quiet inside.



Much later, as I realize I have embarked on a search for an unaccountably elusive Lydia Roper, I will discover that on June 7, 1865, the year he returned south after the war, Captain John Lonsdale Roper married Lydia Hand Bowen at the Columbia Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia and brought her from the city of her birth to the corner of Virginia that he had already mapped and claimed as his own. The 1865 membership roster for the Columbia Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church includes neither Bowens nor Ropers.

Whatever their church affiliation in Philadelphia, John and Lydia were soon established as active members of the Granby Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk—later Epworth United Methodist, relocated to Freemason Street. Ultimately, the Roper family would prove a strong force for Methodism in the Virginia United Methodist Church. Captain Roper’s grandson Albert, three-term mayor of Norfolk, founded the

Wesley men, a men's prayer and Bible study group, which celebrated its one hundredth birthday in 2014. It still meets every Sunday morning at nine-thirty. In 1965, the Mayor published a book titled *Did Jesus Rise From the Dead: A Lawyer Looks at the Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965). Today there are no Ropers in the congregation at Epworth United Methodist Church.

As I consider that I might want to know more about Lydia, it doesn't occur to me that there could be problems finding what seems such obvious information. I have not really moved beyond a strong imperative to write about the Bible Study and the women who come every week. I have not yet become a researcher.

However, I am curious. I begin, tentatively, with little real investment of time or attention, to look for Lydia.

I know so far that Lydia Roper bore the Captain six children and that she died in 1930 at the age of ninety. Her interment card at Elmwood Cemetery reads, simply, "cardiac failure." Lydia's heart stopped beating.

In 1963, the Roper family donated the Lydia Roper Home to the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Church; with that gift came an endowment for the maintenance of the building. A plaque in the foyer tells visitors that sometime between the Captain's death in 1921 and her own in 1930, Lydia Roper endowed the Home again.

One condition was attached to the original gift—that it retain the name of Lydia Roper.



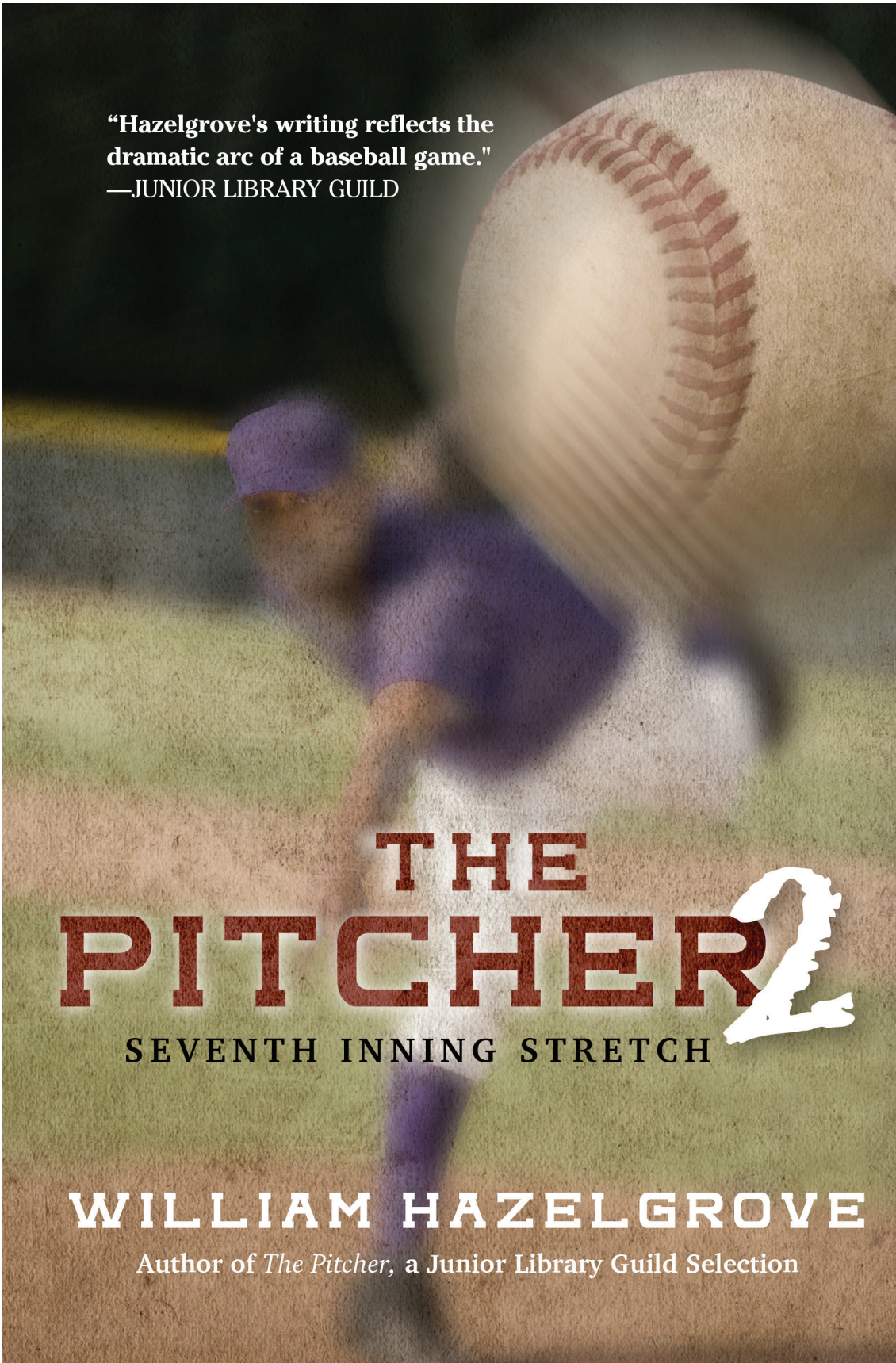
Kate arrives a little late from her weekly hair appointment. Her hair, as always, is shiny clean and in one of those careful styles that looks like no style at all. She is classic and dressed in the way I have come to expect: slim black slacks, a long-sleeved pullover in off-white, a simple red silk scarf tied loosely at the neck. She wears small gold earrings, and I ask about her bracelet, red enamel with intricate gold insets. It was a gift from her grandchildren, who live now in Italy. When she reaches for something on the table, her sleeve is pulled back slightly. There is an intimate glimpse of pale skin, marked with the spots and prominent veins of old age. The wrist, feminine and beautiful, catches the eye. Kate's birthday is next month; she will be ninety-seven.

Today we confront what we learn is called a Portable Public Address System, acquired when I realized that too many of the women were just not able to hear me unless I shouted. Sometimes we take a break from our studies—to swap stories, to sit on the porch, to talk about the relief of not having to wear girdles or shave our legs. Today it's the P.A. system.

We play musical chairs. Kate and Evelyn and Catherine move around the room, trying out the best positions near the speaker. They are our test cases, since they are in most need of the amplified sound. I move furniture and check out the speaker in different locations. I turn the volume up, turn the volume down, adjust levels of this and that, and I think we're a success. Evelyn actually asks me to lower my voice!

When I lived here, Evelyn and I shared a table in the dining room; we still do on those Wednesdays I'm able to stay for lunch. She is a shy woman, self-effacing and kind. If someone asks for an extra dessert, Evelyn is likely to pass hers over.





**"Hazelgrove's writing reflects the dramatic arc of a baseball game."  
—JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD**

**THE  
PITCHER<sup>2</sup>**  
SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

**WILLIAM HAZELGROVE**

*Author of *The Pitcher*, a Junior Library Guild Selection*



# *The Pitcher 2*

## William Hazelgrove

**"Hazelgrove's writing reflects the dramatic arc of a baseball game."  
—JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD**

**"You can taste the ballpark dust, feel the smack of the ball in your glove, and feel assured that, somehow, these three strongly drawn characters will push on to victory." —Booklist**

**"William Hazelgrove has fashioned a near classic baseball story."  
—San Francisco Review of Books**

### DESCRIPTION

Ricky Hernandez is now a senior and all seems to be going well until a new pitcher moves into town from Texas who can pitch almost a hundred miles an hour. MLB Scouts have been snooping around but now Ricky's future is in jeopardy with the fireball pitcher Bailey Hutchinson on the team. When he beats Ricky out of his starting spot and his violent father Fernando returns it seems his dream to become a Major League Pitcher is gone. Ricky returns to the field with *The Pitcher* to relearn the art of pitching one more time.

### KEY SELLING POINTS

- Junior Library Guild selection for 2013
- The author is known internationally as the Writer in Ernest Hemingway's attic. Stories in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *The International Herald*, NPR, *All Things Considered*, *People Magazine*, *Chicago Tribune*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Sun Times*, NBC, ABC, PBS, CSPAN have all covered his books and writing in the attic.
- Strong crossover into the YA and Latino market with excellent price point
- Releases just in time for the MLB playoffs

### AUDIENCE

- People who loved *The Natural*, *Eight Men Out*, *Field of Dreams*, *Bull Durham*, *The Rookie*.
- Baseball fans, coaches and players
- Women who have sons in organized sports.
- Latinos and Hispanics

### AUTHOR BIO



William Hazelgrove is the national best-selling author of ten Novels: *Ripples*, *Tobacco Sticks*, *Mica Highways*, *Rocket Man*, *The Pitcher*, *Real Santa*, *Jack Pine*, and the forthcoming, *My Best Year*, and *The Pitcher 2*, and *The Pitcher 3*. His books have received starred reviews in *Publishers Weekly*, *Booklist*, *Book of the Month* Selections, *ALA Editors Choice Awards*, and *Junior*

*Library Guild Selections*. *Tobacco Sticks*, *The Pitcher*, and *Real Santa* have been optioned for movies. He was the Ernest Hemingway Writer in Residence where he wrote in the attic of Ernest Hemingway's birthplace. He has written articles and reviews for *USA Today* and other publications and has been featured on NPR's *All Things Considered*. *The New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *USA Today* have all covered his books with features. He runs a cultural blog, *The View from Hemingway's Attic* and lives in Chicago. Visit his website at [www.williamhazelgrove.com](http://www.williamhazelgrove.com).

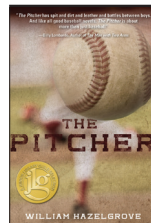
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**Publisher:** Koehler Books  
**Distributor:** Ingram Publisher Services  
**PUB DATE:** 9/1/2015  
**6" X 9"**, 174 pages  
**SOFTCOVER**, \$12.95, 978-1-63393-002-5  
**HARDCOVER**, \$24.95, 978-1-63393-089-6  
**EBOOK**, \$7.99, 978-1-63393-003-2  
**Trim :** 6x9, **Format :** Trade Paper  
**Pages :** 176  
**JUVENILE FICTION / Sports & Recreation / Baseball**  
**JUVENILE FICTION / Latino**

### MARKETING

- Follow on the heels of *The Pitcher*. Junior Library Guild Selection. Libraries. Schools. Book Trailer. Promotions. Trade Reviews. Twitter. Blogging. Cross Promotion
- Author will go after national media he has had success with in the past
- Author will cultivate online relationships with bloggers, book clubs and other sites for reviews and endorsements
- Mass email campaigns will be sent to author's contact list
- He is planning on visiting schools and engaging English teachers as he did with the first book



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**INGRAM**

# 1

TY COBB WAS THROWN OUT of baseball for beating up a fan who heckled him. The man had no hands, and Ty Cobb stomped on him with his spikes until the cops pulled him off. When Van Johnson banished him from baseball, his team went on strike in support of him. Cobb went back to playing, and no one remembered who the man was he beat up. Ty Cobb was fined fifty dollars. I would have rather faced Ty Cobb than the wrath of telling someone I wasn't taking her to prom.

Esmeralda's mouth is inhaling French fries and telling me all about her prom dress. And her lips are like blood red and her mouth is white fire with her teeth chomping up and down. I'm nodding and thinking she really is very pretty. She has long dark curly hair, and her earrings jump around like Mom's, and her eyes are deep brown, almost black. We've been dating for like two years. I have known her like all my life because she lives right down the street, and she is already talking about my Major League career and having kids and all sorts of stuff. But right now, the biggest thing she talks about now is prom.

But I have to drop the big one.

"Listen, Es," I begin.

She's doing the head wobble with her mouth moving. The tat of the rose on her shoulder looks blood red, and I have barely made a dent in my quarter pounder because this is not going to be good. She is now slugging on her big Diet Coke that is almost like a bucket of soda, getting her even more wired. There is no good time, so I just lay it out there. Because eventually you just got to pitch, and I figure a curve ball will work here.

But she's babbling on and on, not giving me a chance to deliver.

"And so I told her no way am I getting in a limousine without a bar because if I am going to pay good money...."

Alright, maybe not yet, maybe I should hold off. The truth is I wouldn't even be in this situation if it wasn't for Christine Sanders coming up to me after a Facebook post that MLB scouts were talking to me. Christine is like one of those girls who never talks to Mexican dudes. So, it really freaks me out when she asks if I'm going to prom. I mean, we are talking blond cheerleader, and she is like one of the richest girls in school, with

the blue eyes and a cheerleader body. She asks if I will give her a ride home, and we never like even make it to her house.

I mean bam. Right there. I fall in love. And I'm like, Es who? But you know everybody wants to be my friend now, and I ask Christine right then if she wants to go—even though I am going out with Es. And by the time I get home and some of the shock of it all had worn off, I realized that I am going to the prom with *two* girls. And so then I made it my mission to tell Es. But I keep chickening out. So, I decide I got to do it, I got to man-up, right here at McDonald's. She is now draining down more Diet Coke, and I breathe heavy and say again.

"Listen, Es."

"Yeah, you said that," she says.

"Yeah..."

I squirm and my burger is ice cold. I'm getting chicken again, thinking about her temper. She has thrown a few things my way over the years because she gets jealous real easy, and so I know this is not going to over good. But Christine has already gotten her dress, and I'm supposed to go over to her house for dinner, and I figure it is now or never, man, *now or never*.

"Listen, Es."

Her eyes do the mom dance. You know, like angry marbles or something.

"What you think, I'm deaf or something?"

"No," I mutter.

Her eyes really are moms. I mean they shimmy back and forth and light up like pin balls and do the back and forth thing when she is pissed. And right now they are waiting on the dude who is strangling on his words.

"Yeah, listen, Es."

"Rick, you are starting to worry me. Are you getting stoned or something? You already said that three times. "

"Listen, Es."

"Ricky...*what!*"

Alright. So I throw my curve.

I blink and talk down to my burger

"Look, about prom."

"Uh-huh. What about prom?"

"Yeah..."

I kick back and stare out the window and wish I was anywhere else but now. She already bought the dress, bro. *Bought the dress*. But I am going with Christine, who is like some exotic leopard that has slinked into my world, and man, I can't even think when she is around. And like I see this as my future, you know. Exotic women just rolling in when I'm a MLB pitcher.

I throw my pitch.

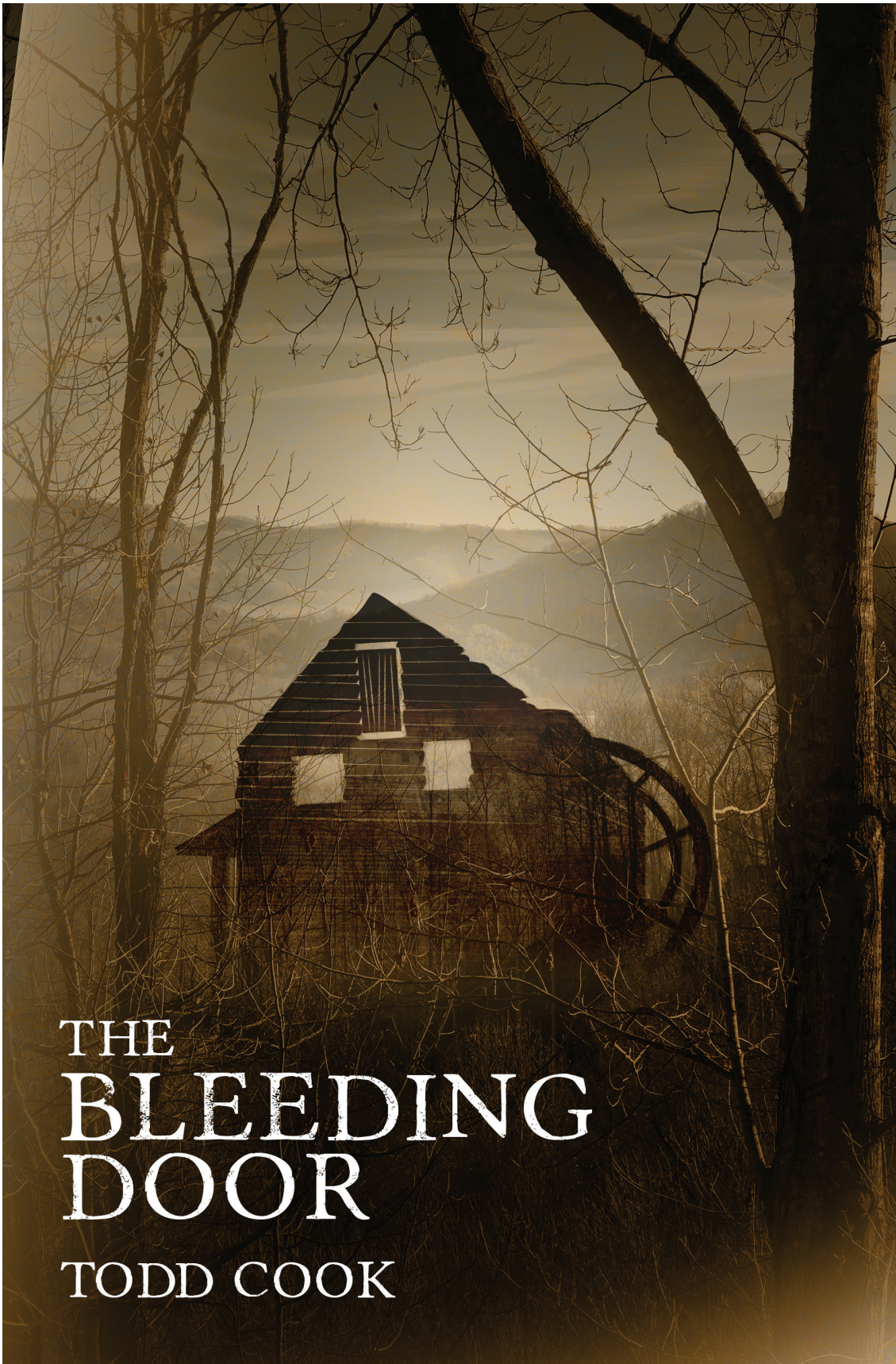
"Yeah...listen...I...don't think I'm doing the prom thing."

Es is like looking up from her bucket of pop, and her eyes narrow in.

"What did you say?"

I swallow and nod and shake and mumble and grumble and murmur.





THE  
BLEEDING  
DOOR  
TODD COOK

## INTRODUCTION

I FIRST MET Seth Waller back in the fall of 1936, one year before he died. I was introduced to him by my new Sunday school teacher, a sixteen-year-old girl by the name of Julia Crowell. I was in awe. Never in my young life had I met anyone as old as Preacher Seth Waller. At the time, he was ninety-three, and he looked every year of it. I will always remember the long, flowing white beard that streamed down from beneath his beak-like nose. Wise, but playfully mischievous eyes twinkled at me from beneath thick grey eyebrows. To me, he resembled one of those Old Testament patriarchs, the kind you see in illustrated Bibles.

Ms. Crowell introduced us. “Uncle Seth, this young man is Dan Keysor. He’s just moved here with his family.”

The old preacher slowly extended a weathered hand with long bony fingers. He grasped my right hand gently. “Do you love Jesus?” he asked me in a high-pitched voice and the thickest southern drawl I’d ever heard.

I quickly nodded my head. “Yes. I do.” I remember wanting the old preacher to be assured of this. I wanted very much for him to approve of me, even though I had just met him.

Then, he clasped my hands in his. He spoke slowly and deliberately. “Trust and obey the Lord always, and He shall direct thy paths.”

Those were the last words he said to me before other adults approached him to talk. The old man’s words to me were brief. Simple. But coming from his mouth as his eyes looked hard into mine, they couldn’t have sounded more profound. My heart swelled with pride that this old man had spoken to me, had smiled at me. It seemed to me that I had just met the kindest and wisest man on the earth.

Later that day, as my family sat around the dinner table with neighbors, Preacher Seth Waller was one of the topics of conversation. It seemed that everyone knew and loved “Uncle” Seth Waller. He was indeed revered as the leading patriarch of McDanhan County. Old Seth Waller had lived quite a life. Not only had he been preaching in the hills for some seventy years, but he was also the co-founder of the well-known Cryder School Settlement, a boarding school for mountain children. And in his younger days, Preacher Seth Waller had been a feudist.



Now, none of the old mountaineers actually referred to *feudists* or *feuds*. They were more apt to talk about the *wars* or the *troubles* where someone in so-and-so's family got wounded or killed. Without question, the worst *war* in the Crooked Sam Valley, the mountain region encompassing McDanhan and Adams Counties, involved the Waller and Steppe clans in the late 1860s. Of course, as a child my picture of mountain feuds was much like the popular cartoon version: I envisioned two cabins situated on opposite sides of a river or creek. The long-bearded feudists, holed up inside their respective cabins, would fire their guns out open windows and doorways, sending a fusillade of bullets in the direction of the cabin across the way.

It was hard to imagine kindly old Preacher Seth Waller ever having been a gun-toting feudist. Even so, the fact that he was made him all the more fascinating to me. That and the fact that saintly Preacher Seth Waller must have come in contact with the Crooked Sam Valley's darkest figure from that period of the Waller-Martin wars: Enoch Slone.

I knew of Enoch Slone even before our family moved to McDanhan County. In fact, it was because of the Enoch Slone stories that I feared coming to McDanhan County. This, despite the fact Enoch Slone had been dead since 1869.

Enoch Slone was (and to many, still is) the most frightening figure in the entire region of southern Appalachia. His grisly legend has grown steadily since he terrorized the hills in the 1860s. But it was thanks in large part to country singer Emery Clay's immensely popular 1935 ballad, "Enoch's Holler," that the rest of the country came to know the eerie specter who never stopped haunting the dark forests of McDanhan County. I can still hear the bone-chilling lyrics to this day.

*O' nights when all is dark and still  
Don't ride by the Kinsey Mill  
Don't go a-knock one, two, three, four  
Enoch's there behind the door*

I lived in McDanhan County for eleven years, until I left to attend Asbury College in central Kentucky. I have also included the history of that school in this work as, during the course of my research, I was stunned to discover how intricately linked were the frontier beginnings of my alma mater (as well as the alma mater of my Sunday School teacher, Julia Crowell) with the now-legendary events that took place in the Crooked Sam Valley back in the 1860s.

In those eleven years that I lived in McDanhan County, I walked the paths that Seth Waller, Enoch Slone, and other feudists walked or rode upon in olden times. I visited the battle sites, the creeks and rivers where shootouts took place; I found the places where fortress-like homes once stood; I explored the ruins of old churches that stood as bastions of peace amidst the turmoil of lawlessness and clan violence. And many times, I walked past the ruins of the Kinsey Millhouse.

The *Bleeding Door* is gone now, as is the millhouse. But the millhouse and the door were there when I was young. If you were wise, you never walked or rode past there at night. I did. Once.



To this day, I swear I saw the blood on the door. And to this day, I swear to you I heard someone whispering to me from behind the door. No racehorse could have kept up with me that night as I tore home. I had a healthy heart as a fifteen year-old boy, but that night my heart came very close to stopping altogether.

I have returned to the Crooked Sam Valley many times in the last sixty years. Most recently, the historian in me returned with pens, notebooks and tape recorders. I visited with the old-timers, asked them to tell me their stories as they remembered them. I patched together a history of that period, focusing largely on the two figures who loomed large in my childhood memories: Seth Waller and Enoch Slone. This is their story, and it is my hope that I have kept true to the people as they were and the events as they happened.

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The peculiar history of Bethel Academy, Methodist school for pioneer boys in Kentucky, began with a letter received by Bishop Francis Asbury in eastern Tennessee. Bishop Francis Asbury duly recorded his response to that letter in his journal entry dating to April of 1790: “Now it is that we must prepare for danger, in going through the wilderness. I received a faithful letter from brother Poythress in Kentucky, encouraging me to come.”

Danger was hardly new to Bishop Asbury, co-Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Asbury’s mission was to spread the Word of God across the land in every place and in every way he could. In the years following the Revolutionary War, Asbury would ride an average of six thousand miles a year. He would preach anywhere a crowd could be found: public squares, courthouses, tobacco houses, public houses, and even open fields. He traveled north and south through the states of the Atlantic seaboard. Then, he traveled across the heavily wooded Alleghenies, carrying the gospel message to the largely unreached frontier settlements. All the while, Asbury battled treacherous swollen rivers, vicious thunderstorms, apathetic to hostile frontier crowds, physical affliction and injury, not to mention the ever-present threat of Indian attack. Hardly the kind of life one would project for the man who would be Archbishop of Canterbury in England!

Francis Asbury, Archbishop of Canterbury. The leading cleric and spiritual head of all Great Britain. At least that was the destiny Asbury’s mother envisioned for him. Francis Asbury began his life in Handsworth Parish in Staffordshire, England—a universe away from the American wilderness. Even before his birth, Asbury’s devout mother knew she would have a son, and that he was destined to be a great Christian leader. Indeed, God had promised her that her son would be the Christian leader of a certain—though unspecified—people. The woman could only assume they would be the people of England.

This faithful woman of vision, Elizabeth Asbury, lost no time in nurturing young Francis in the faith. Every day for an hour, Elizabeth would read Scriptures to the little boy. As Francis would later recall, these were not the happy, light-hearted, child-oriented stories from the Bible—they tended towards the harsh, gloomy, often bloody stories of the Old Testament, coupled with readings from the New Testament about Christ’s sufferings on the cross.

“State of Mind is a must-read for individuals interested in the mental health field, students and experienced clinicians.”

—Mark J. Zerwic, Ph.D.,  
Chief, Psychology Section, Jesse Brown VA Medical Center,



STATE of MIND

Life and Work  
in a Mental Hospital

ROBERT J. CRAIG, PH.D.

# I. INTRODUCTION

**DAYTONA BEACH, FLORIDA, MARCH 5, 2014:**

ONLOOKERS WERE HORRIFIED when they saw a van driving along the beach veer into the ocean. At first, said one witness, “I thought it was a runaway car, you know, the kind where maybe the gas pedal gets stuck,” but then he heard children inside the vehicle screaming “Help, my mother is trying to kill us!”

A tourist jumped into the water and began wading to the car, which had its tailgate fully extended. It was now floating somewhat, being tossed around like a bottle cork, which made rescuing the children more difficult. He reached the vehicle and extracted two of the children, who later would say they had been afraid to jump out of the car because they couldn’t swim. Meanwhile, another person reached the van and was able to pry open the front door and pull out the female driver. A third person got to the rear of the van and unlocked the baby in the child restraint seat, carrying her to safety. The car eventually sank.

Police later told reporters that they had spent two hours with the driver, and said she was coherent, rational, and answered questions appropriately. They did not report why they were questioning the driver, who told them she was planning to go to an abuse shelter so they left the premises.

She would be sent to a local hospital where *she would be given psychiatric tests.*

**WATERLOO, IOWA, MAY 22:**

When a salesman, Mr. David Wallace, approached the door of a house in the 2700 block of the Greenwood neighborhood, he smelled a strange odor. Wallace rang the bell, but there was no answer. There appeared to be several animals visible through the front window. They appeared emaciated to Wallace, who called the police. When they arrived, they smelled the same odor and saw the same animals, so they obtained a search warrant and entered the home. There they found human and animal feces scattered throughout the home. Animals (dogs, cats, three rabbits, and a gerbil), who looked as if they’d been unfed for days, roamed throughout the home. A foul odor permeated the premise. A disheveled woman appeared disoriented, was non-communicative, dressed



shabbily and talked nonsense. The woman, identified as Elaine Eastman, was taken into custody to be *sent for psychiatric tests*.

**PORTLAND, OREGON, MARCH 15:**

His neighbors described Porter as quiet and unassuming. He was the kind of person, they said, who stayed by himself. He appeared to have few if any friends and neighbors reported they never saw any visitors come to his house. The neighbors on both side of his house could say little about him. They didn't know where he worked or what kind of work he did. He left early and would come home late. Strange, they thought, that they would never see him in local stores—not in the grocery store; not at Charlie's, the local bar; not at church.

Then the whole city knew about Porter Casey, who was found outside, nude, screaming obscenities, talking nonsense, threatening those who tried to subdue him with the machete he wielded in the air. Police were called to the scene and they finally were able to take him into custody. Later it was announced that Mr. Casey was *referred for psychiatric tests*.

**LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, CHRISTMAS EVE:**

A man was apprehended trying to break into the Clinton library. He said there were secret documents there that would prove that aliens had landed in Area 51, that mummified extraterrestrials were entombed in the basement of the library to keep them away from the public, and that President Clinton knew all about this and had been part of the cover-up. He demanded the police get a search warrant and find these artifacts that, he said, will prove his theory that President Clinton himself was actually an alien. Instead, the man was taken to the local hospital *for psychiatric testing*.

**ATLANTA, GEORGIA, AUGUST 1:**

Police were called to the home of Georgia Peach—Yes, that was her actual name—following a disturbance at her home. When they arrived, they found Ms. Peach dressed in a devil costume, yelling “Trick or Treat,” and soliciting sex with the police, saying that this will keep them out of hell. She had been screaming about Satan, reading satanic verses using a bullhorn, and generally disturbing the neighbors. Police took her into custody and a spokesperson from the department said she was sent to *the psychiatric hospital for tests*.

**OMAHA, NEBRASKA, JULY 16:**

A man in his 40s was arrested by the police and taken into custody after he refused to leave a restaurant that advertised an “all you can eat” menu. He was later identified as Richard Clark, an unemployed stockbroker with a history of mental illness. Mr. Clark said the food was poisoned and he would not leave the restaurant because he wanted to report this to the police and expose the owner who, he said, had been having an affair with his wife, who had left him two months ago. Mr. Clark then walked over to

a desert table, upsetting it and pouring its contents over the floor. That is when police were able to subdue him. He will be taken to Good Shepard Hospital for *psychiatric tests*.

### CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, JULY 22

Passersby were astounded and shocked when they observed a young woman jump into the lake in an apparent suicide attempt. One young male jumped into the lake to try to rescue her. Meanwhile the police were called and the fire rescue team arrived in time to help the young hero pull the woman out of the water. She was conscious and breathing when the ambulance took her to Cook County Hospital for *psychiatric tests*.

Do these incidents sound familiar? Do they ring a bell? How many times have you heard reports of mentally ill patients causing a disturbance, threatening the public, acting weird, doing bizarre things, and upsetting a quiet community? Have you ever wondered what happened to these people after they have been apprehended? When you hear reports that they are being sent for psychiatric tests, what tests are they given?

Actually there are no tests in psychiatry that would establish a psychiatric diagnosis. There is no blood test, brain wave pattern, MRI or CAT scan that suggests psychosis. No biological marker indicates a mental disorder. Almost all psychiatric diagnoses are manifested through behavior. One of the few exceptions to this sweeping generalization is substance abuse diagnoses, now contained in official psychiatric nomenclature. Here, we know that the particular psychoactive substance or combination of substances have induced the disorder, and these are determined most commonly by toxicological screens taken via urine tests. Medicine continues to look for such markers but they have remained elusive so far.

*There are psychological tests that can suggest psychiatric diagnoses. It would be fairer to say that, when people are referred to psychiatric hospitals for evaluations, these evaluations may include these kinds of tests. What is absolutely assured is that when these patients are evaluated, they are done so by observation and recording their behavior symptoms. These symptoms then suggest a psychiatric diagnosis.*

*The bizarre behaviors listed above are the ones that gain media attention, but for the most part, patients are admitted to psychiatric hospitals without much fanfare and certainly not in ways that make the newspapers or appear on television.*

This book will detail some of the incidents I experienced while working as a staff psychologist in a state mental hospital. It will report vignettes that significantly contributed to my professional development. It reports embarrassing moments when I didn't appear as competent as I was later in my career. And it details occasions in dealing with these patients where our behavior exemplified the best possible patient care under the circumstances. Some are laughable, some are frightening, and some may bring you to tears. But all were commonplace events at state psychiatric hospitals throughout the country in the late 1960s and 1970s.

In the early 1960s, President Kennedy signed into law the Community Mental Health Treatment Act, which brought psychiatric care closer to where the patients lived.

**"This tender novel explores with depth and sensitivity that unique relationship and the special challenges when your sibling with Down syndrome is your twin!"**

—EMILY PERL KINGSLEY, author and parent of a son with Down syndrome



# indivisible

RANDI T. SACHS



## chapter one: aaron

THE CHIRPY VOICE of a nursery school teacher singing, “Wake up, wake up, get out of bed, wake up, wake up, you sleepy head,” jarred us out of our slumber.

“Aaron, you are not bringing that clock to our new place,” Becca said.

We lay curled up together under the covers on my slightly lumpy double bed. In my off-campus apartment—no roommates—we had the privacy and space we craved. Technically, Becca still had a dorm room on campus, but she rarely slept there. We were planning to announce our engagement at tonight’s post-graduation dinner with our families.

“Okay.” I stretched out my arms and yawning like a bear brought them back in and around Becca, squeezing tightly. “Ahh, I love waking up next to you. That was a great party we held last night. I barely remember getting into bed.”

“That’s probably because you needed help getting there. Cal practically had to carry you. Do me a favor and don’t get drunk before we announce our engagement tonight, okay?”

“Tonight, my fair Rebecca, I shall drink nothing stronger than tea, I promise.”

I didn’t tell Becca that I already bought the single-carat emerald-cut diamond engagement ring with the baguettes the saleslady said were absolute necessities. It was secreted in my treasure box painted with Donatello, my all-time favorite Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle, but if all went well, I’d be giving it to her tonight at dinner with the parents.

After wriggling out of my embrace, she wiped the sleep from her eyes, then leaned over, and did the same for me. “Are you ready to take on the honor of becoming a member of Franklin & Marshall’s Class of 2004?” she asked.

I looked at those bright blue eyes gazing at me as if I were perfection and in my best booming voice spoke Lou Gehrig’s famous words, “Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of this earth. I still can’t believe my luck at winning you over, my beautiful blonde California girl.” I had blonde hair, too, but it was as stubbornly curly as hers was sleek and smooth. She said our kids would be model-gorgeous.

Becca grinned. “Shush, don’t jinx my fairy tale come true. And you didn’t ‘win’ me. We simply found each other, silly-face.” She offered her lips to me for more kisses.

Just yesterday, I had received offers from four of the eight companies I had interviewed with on campus for an entry-level management job, and we were flying high. Two were in Manhattan; one was in Lancaster—in fact, I was leaning toward that one because we could keep my apartment; the fourth was in Santa Cruz, California. Fortunately, each of the companies had given me some time before they needed an answer. I had explained at the interviews that I wasn't sure exactly where my fiancée and I wanted to live next and that I would like to plan on starting my new job in July. Turned out it was no problem, as they all had new-employee training programs I would need to take, and they didn't even begin until the first week of August. I had a few weeks before they required any answer.

"I'm still amazed I got more than one offer—and we actually have time for a vacation before I start! Chasing those A's really paid off. My Dad is going to bust a gut!"

"You know my first choice is Santa Cruz—you'd love living in California, too," Becca said. "I honestly think you should consider it very seriously—no pressure. I'll admit that freshman year I found the Pennsylvania winter snowstorms enchanting, but after four years of it, I'm more than ready to go back to year-round sunshine. Still, location is secondary. You need to pick the job you think you'll like the most. Money counts too, by the way. And I have no problem waiting to apply to schools for January admission."

I wasn't completely against living in California, but my moving across the country from my family would be hard on them, especially my twin brother, David. He has Down syndrome, and he had always looked to me to lead the way in life. My parents seemed to take it for granted I'd be living at home on Long Island and working in the city after school. They didn't even know I'd interviewed elsewhere. I wondered if there was any way I could convince them to move, too. *If only they were a little closer to retirement age*, I thought.

We made our way into the kitchen, collecting empty beer bottles along the way, and sat down to a late breakfast of muffins and tea when the doorbell rang.

A massive police officer filled the doorway. "Are you Aaron LeShay?" he asked.

I zeroed in on the steel gun in his holster and gulped. His expressionless face along with his imposing figure reminded me of a Tron robot.

"Yes. Can I help you?"

"My name is Police Chief Ken Carson. I have something to tell you."

"Yes?" I immediately thought about last night's party. *Will I be trading my blue cap and gown for an orange jumpsuit?*

"Your family has been in an accident on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. There were some serious injuries," he said. He may have been trying to appear compassionate, but in reality he remained stone-faced.

"What? Where are they now?"

"They're at Lehigh Valley Hospital in Allentown. It's about an hour-and-half drive from here. Would you like me to provide transportation?"

I could barely breathe, let alone answer him. I didn't want to go anywhere with this guy.

"Who's at the hospital? What? What happened?" Becca asked.

"My family was in a car accident," I said.

"I can drive you both there," the cop repeated.

“No, thank you, officer,” I said, clearing my throat and breathing deeply. “Would you please get word to my family that I’m on the way? Where is that hospital?”

“It’s right off Route 78. Please try to remain calm; they’re in an excellent trauma facility.”

As soon as he left, Becca and I got dressed in whatever we could find on the floor.

“Give me the car keys,” she said. “Here’s a map, you navigate and I’ll drive. You know I can’t stand maps.”

“Okay, but drive fast.”

As I raced to the door, I ran right into our caps and gowns hanging from the top of the hall closet door so they wouldn’t get wrinkled. I fought my way out of the dry cleaner plastic that stuck to my body.

“We might not make it back in time; maybe you should stay here.”

Becca just shook her head and ran to the car. “I’m going with you, no arguments.”

The weather was beautiful. It was a perfect sunny seventy-five degrees, just right for graduation. We made it to the hospital in just under an hour. Becca clutched the steering wheel until her knuckles turned white and she had to shake her hands to get the circulation going. I barked out driving commands, keeping my eyes on the map held rigid in my hands. We parked in the closest spot, not checking to see if it was legal, and went right to the emergency room. The family resemblance must have shown because the triage nurse immediately asked me if I was Aaron LeShay.

“Yes, I am. Where is my family?”

The nurse brought us inside her office and sat us down. It was too quiet in that room. I felt numb. Years passed before a doctor in surgical scrubs joined us about five minutes later. I had never felt terror like this before. Everyone was acting too nice.

“Mr. LeShay, I’m Dr. Greenberg. I just operated on your brother. Most of his trauma was orthopedic in nature. He has some minor internal injuries, a few badly bruised ribs, and a compound fracture of his left leg. He’s got contusions and abrasions on his face and arms, but he’s going to be fine. Fortunately, he had no hemorrhaging or injuries to any organs. You can see him in the ICU recovery in about half an hour.”

“What about my parents and my sister, where are they?”

“Aaron, what have you been told about the accident?” asked Dr. Greenberg.

“Nothing. I wasn’t told anything other than that they are here.” Now he had switched to my first name; that couldn’t be good.

He took a noticeably deep breath. “Their car was hit head-on by a truck going the wrong way on the turnpike. I’m very sorry. We worked on your family for a long time, but their injuries were too severe for us to save them. We gave them CPR for over an hour, we tried to stop the bleeding, but they had multiple internal injuries and the blood we transfused came out as fast as we could get it in. Your sister made it into surgery, but we were unable to complete it. Again, you have our sincere sympathies. Your brother is the only survivor.”

The next thing I remember is waking up in a hospital bed with Becca holding my hand. I opened my eyes, shading them with my arm against bright lights, looked up at her, and asked, “Is it true?”

“Oh Aaron, I’m so sorry. You fainted when the doctor told you.”



“A lively symphony...”  
~ *Kirkus*

A NOVEL  
*Enchanting  
The Swan*

John Schwartz

# *Enchanting the Swan*

John Schwartz

**“A lively symphony... The various moneyed people, their elaborately appointed living quarters, and their high-wheeling lifestyle add a dash of pizzazz.”**

— KIRKUS REVIEWS

## DESCRIPTION

Paul, a classical pianist, meets law student cellist Fiona at William & Mary and they begin playing beautiful music together. When they perform *The Swan* by Camille Saint-Saëns on William & Mary's Charter Day, their love is sealed forever. They agree to marry after graduation, but Fiona's reactionary godparents object to her marrying Paul and command her to come back home to Belgium.

When Paul visits her in Brussels, Fiona breaks their relationship, following the wishes of her deceased parents that she marry into her Belgian social circle. She does just so, unaware of her godfather's real intentions. Heartbroken, Paul leaves for Geneva to start his banking career, and gets entangled in a dramatic banking fraud. He is forced to return to the USA, where he finds Fiona physically and psychologically abused and on the verge of utter despair.

Paul endeavors to restore their love but faces harrowing obstacles. Will they ever play *The Swan* again?

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- Story ends with a happy solution to a dramatic outcome at Christmas. This in view of the September 1 publication date
- Author will actively promote the book on his website and through social media
- Author will seek speaking engagements to promote his book further

## AUDIENCE

- Romantic story readers
- Classical music lovers, musicians, concert goers
- Students at colleges like William & Mary

## AUTHOR BIO



John Schwartz followed a career in international trade in Geneva at the United Nations and in economic development at the World Bank in Washington D.C., and functioned for many years as a senior international consultant, traveling worldwide. He now resides as a writer in Virginia, is married with two children and two grandchildren, and blogs at his website [johnschwartzauthor.com](http://johnschwartzauthor.com)

## ONLINE

[www.johnschwartzauthor.com](http://www.johnschwartzauthor.com)

**Publisher:** Koehler Books  
**Distributor:** Ingram Publisher Services  
**PUB DATE:** 9/1/2015  
**6" X 9", 272 pages**  
**SOFTCOVER, \$16.95, 978-1-63393-108-4**  
**EBOOK, \$4.99, 978-1-63393-109-1**  
**FICTION: Romance/General**

## MARKETING

- Create a website for the published book: domain name [enchantingtheswan.com](http://enchantingtheswan.com) already reserved. The site will contain a link to the blog "Enchanté".
- Use Amazon Author Central page
- Maintain an online presence by creating a Fan page for *Enchanting the Swan* and utilizing a Facebook page, Twitter, and Good Reads to promote the book.
- The author plans to start with a book signing at the William & Mary bookstore in Williamsburg.
- The author plans to use the Northern Virginia Writers Group and Virginia Writers Conference associated groups for book promotion.
- The author plans on gaining the interest of various book clubs, getting interviewed on NPR, holding speaking engagements, and trying to link with possible readers in Belgium, Switzerland and The Netherlands.

 **koehlerbooks™**

**INGRAM**

*Chapter 1*  
A TORMENTING  
DISSONANT

I ran up the stairs and called out for Fiona.

There was no reply.

A small ceiling light was on in the hall. The air-conditioning was off, and the air hung heavy and stale, so different from this morning when our place was supercharged with energy, excitement, and anticipation. In the bedroom, the sheets lay folded on the mattress. The shower stall in the tiny bathroom was wet, and a damp towel lay in the sink. An array of brown boxes and furniture stood center stage in the living room. No shipping labels attached. Her cello was gone.

I'd expected Fiona to still be cleaning, her ebullient brown hair in disarray, a wrinkled T-shirt hanging half out of her jeans, sweeping up the last bit of trash strewn over the floor, looking at me, enthusiastic about our move, our future together.

Her wall phone still worked. I called the Williamsburg Hospitality House where her aunt and uncle, Lady and Henry Van Buren, were staying. I'd met them yesterday, on Sunday, at the graduation of William & Mary's great Class of 1999 and was almost certain Fiona was with them. But no one picked up.

I drove to the hotel and found them sitting in the lobby with my mother. No Fiona.

Their faces spelled doom.

"Where is she?" I asked.

They looked at each other. "She's left for Brussels," her uncle said, lifting his arms in frustration.

"Brussels?" I dropped down into a chair.

"While we were helping her pack in her bedroom, we asked if she'd called her godparents about her graduation," Henry said. "She'd told us her godmother had phoned several times leaving messages, but she hadn't returned the calls because she was afraid she and her godfather would continue interfering with her life. She finally phoned her

godfather who was still in his office, and suddenly we heard her raising her voice and then she called Irma.”

“I overheard her telling him she would start at the law firm Jones Day in New York after staying in D.C. with you for a few days,” her aunt said. “Her godfather got furious and didn’t want her to go to D.C. with you. She got very upset, was stomping around and yelled at him. I took the phone and said I had full confidence in her choice and that he shouldn’t worry, but he insisted she come home immediately.”

“When did she leave?” I asked, feeling drained.

“Around one,” Henry said.

My head started to spin. “Why did she have to get away so quickly?”

“Her godfather demanded she take the first flight out and had his secretary make the booking,” Henry said. “She got mad at us for having spurred her to call home and mad at herself for mentioning she’d be staying with you. She hated she couldn’t talk to you. Your phone was already disconnected.”

Her aunt’s voice reached me from afar. “She agreed on condition it would be an open return ticket, as she wanted to get back here as soon as possible to start her job and be with you again.”

Fiona had been so euphoric that Jones Day New York had hired her, while I was practically assured of a career there with Morgan Stanley. Everything seemed ready for us, find friends to form a quintet, and mix work with music.

“She wanted to confront her godfather in person,” Lady Van Buren continued. “She said talking with him over the phone was fruitless. The only things she took were a suitcase and her cello.”

My insides turned to concrete. The celebratory melodies of *The Swan* we performed yesterday at the graduation ceremony suddenly turned into Grieg’s *Ase’s Tot*.

“Why didn’t she wait? I could’ve gone with her.”

Lady Van Buren and Henry stayed silent, looking embarrassed.

“Something happened yesterday?” my mother asked, turning to me, her eyes showing suspicion. “Maybe she got cold feet?”

Had she? She’d never showed anything close, not in her demeanor or in her sometimes cynical remarks. My mother must have forgotten what it was like to be in love and share that deep emotion night after night. Still, her supposition unsettled me thoroughly. Was Fiona copping out?

“Not at all,” I said, annoyed. “She’d phoned her mother to talk about our plans.”

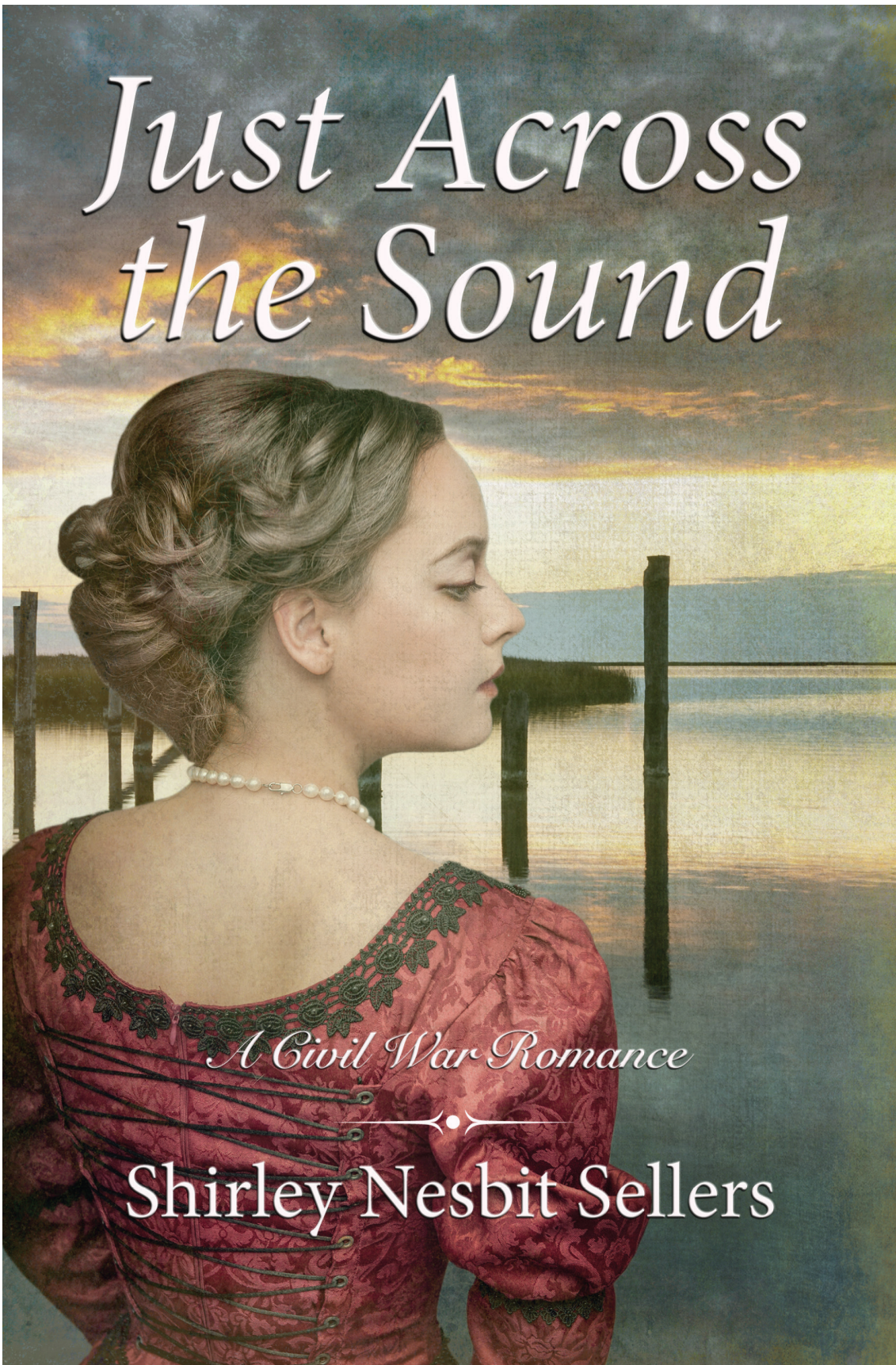
“Did her godfather ever say anything about that?” my mother went on with her inquisition.

“He’d apparently been making objections,” I admitted.

Fiona had once said that her godfather had a compelling influence over her because of her parents’ wishes about her future. What did her godfather tell her in that phone call? Had he threatened her with her parents’ testament that she be groomed to marry someone from their own circle in Belgium, no foreign intruders? But Fiona had rejected all that.

“Well, if she loves you and has any character, she’ll tell her godfather goodbye if he disagrees and come back,” my mother said in her usual stoical manner.





# *Just Across the Sound*

*A Civil War Romance*

—•—  
**Shirley Nesbit Sellers**

## PREFACE

*O*n a rainy, windy March day when I was twelve years old, I first heard the story of my great-grandmother, Sarah Eliza. Curled up in my favorite living room chair with a book, I could hear my grandmother and my great aunt “Lida” chatting in the kitchen. The sisters, who with their husbands shared a home while the two chief engineers were often at sea, were preparing the afternoon tea, a welcome pastime on such a day.

I felt cozy and contented in the high-ceilinged room, sheltered from the storm’s assault by the wide front porch and the bright lamp by my side. The low voices from the kitchen drifted reassuringly down the hall.

I was suddenly jolted from my sleepy, contented state by the buzz of the doorbell. Wondering who would brave such weather to make a visit, I called to Grandmother that I would answer the door. I opened it to a strange visitor.

The little black nurse, gray-haired and dressed in her white uniform, was no taller than I. Behind her, at the curb, was a shiny black limousine with a chauffeur, waiting to see her safely arrived at her destination.

She immediately asked, “Does Miss Hattie Mann live here?”

“Why, yes,” I replied. “But her name is Hattie Kirby now. Won’t you come in?”

She turned to wave away the driver and stepped eagerly into the hallway. I led her to the dining room where teapot and cups were being laid on the table. Grandmother and Aunt Lida looked at us with wonder in their eyes until the nurse quickly told them her name.

At that revelation I was witness to such hugging and laughing and gleeful chatter that I stood at a loss of understanding while my usually sedate relatives forgot that I was there. I learned that she was an old playmate who became a companion to a well-to-do lady vacationing in Virginia Beach who had sent her to find her old friends.

Then Grandmother caught my questioning eye and, holding arms about both of us, introduced me.

“Has your grandmother told you about your great-grandmother, child?”

I shook my head. “I know she was a schoolteacher from New York. That’s all.”

Her eyes were bright and her lips played with a small smile as, with the eager help of her two old friends, she began the story.



## CHAPTER 1

HEMPSTEAD, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, 1860

*P*lease wait a minute, Sarah Eliza!” The small gray-haired woman’s voice held a hint of admonishment. “Thou shouldn’t have to walk home alone because the meeting ended early. If there’s no need for thee to hurry, Jacob and I can be with thee in just a moment. He only needs to secure the doors, and that won’t take long.”

Sarah Eliza covered her exasperation with a patient smile as she turned from the door to face her would-be rescuer.

“Thank you, Mrs. Damon, but the boys will already be on the way to meet me, and it’s far from dark yet.” With an apologetic smile she added, “I rather cherish the walk. It gives me time to think and plan.”

“Yes, I know dear.” Mrs. Damon laid a sympathetic, albeit restraining, hand on Sarah Eliza’s arm. “But it really wouldn’t do for thy grandmother to know I had let thee out to pasture just because we finished early.” She gave a half-apologetic little chuckle at her own whimsical comparison.

She was familiar with her young friend’s independent inclinations. She also had a sympathetic understanding and admiration for the care the twenty-year-old had given in recent months for her three younger brothers, one barely three years old, while her mother was mourning the recent death of another son in Virginia. Though an independent young woman, she nevertheless was diligent in the care for her young brothers.

When Captain Willett Mott married Sarah Chapman, little had anyone in Hempstead expected that Susannah Mott, his mother, would be reporting to her friends in the Society the rapid births of Willett’s and Sarah’s six sons after the first child and only daughter, Sarah Eliza, was born. She sighed, as she often did, when she thought of how much their grandfather Joseph Mott would have loved those children had he lived.

Since the Ladies’ Society for the Abolition of Slavery had welcomed Sarah’s daughter to its meetings during the summer, it was the ardent hope of the Society’s outreach committee that Sarah Eliza would carry back to her friends in Norfolk an understanding of and commitment to the aims of their organization.

Though the Motts were originally from Long Island, that bustling southern port city was home now, in fact the birthplace of two of their youngest children. Her father, a one-time merchant sea captain, managed a thriving maritime insurance company near Norfolk’s waterfront.



Mrs. Damon could see that Sarah Eliza was impatient to be off. Young people in these unsettled times cared little about convention or appearances. She tried to smile understandingly when Sarah Eliza turned to face her. For her part, Sarah Eliza also attempted to smile, though she inwardly grimaced at the reference to a filly being let out to pasture.

“Since they’re already on the way, Mrs. Damon, you can imagine their chagrin if they met me on the way home with two other people in a three-person carriage! Having only girls in your family, you can’t know how difficult boys can be!” Then, relenting in compassion for the expression on the well-meaning lady’s face, Sarah Eliza reached down and took Mrs. Damon’s hand in her own two. She faced her in sincerity.

“The meetings of the Abolition Society have been inspiring for me, Mrs. Damon. Thank you for inviting me to share in them with such dedicated people. I’ll always remember the Friends’ meeting house and the men and women I’ve met here. They will be in my thoughts as I go back home to Norfolk. Their work in the anti-slavery movement has been a revelation to me.

“I know from what Papa has written to us that my church in Norfolk is divided in its sympathies, but I plan to do what I can to influence friends there. I’m sure there are many in our congregation who are appalled that abolition has not yet taken place. I’ll always remember my time with your group, Mrs. Damon.”

Sarah Eliza gave a squeeze to the hand she held, and a smile for the concerned face of her friend. Allowing no more time for conversation, she turned and made her departure down the wooden steps of the small building.

She was thankful that the evening was refreshingly cool after such an unusually warm day. It was the weather pattern that Long Island’s clear August days often followed. The late afternoon sky was diffused with a deceptively strange light—deceiving in that it was late in the day but with no sunset. The sun was pale beyond the trees and the sky around it was strangely mauve-gray. It seemed to Sarah Eliza to carry a message, but what was it?

She felt exhilarated, not only from the meeting of the Society or because Papa was on the way to Hempstead to carry his children back to Virginia and to their mother. It was probably having this little bit of time to call her own and, of course, the anticipation of her new teaching position. There was so much to do to prepare for it.

The conversation she had just had with Mrs. Damon had hit more than one nerve. Was she still to be treated as though she were a young girl who should be hovered over, advised, and planned for like one of her young brothers? You would think that being twenty years of age would allow for a little more freedom. She loved Hempstead and would always welcome the times when she would be visiting her grandmother, but it had been a long summer away from her bereaved mother, and the boys had taken so much of her time that she could not help but be glad to finally have a few days left before the beginning of school.

During the last week she was preoccupied with how to prepare for teaching in Mrs. Stevenson’s big Bute Street house near Sarah Eliza’s own home on Botetourt Street. She knew that her employer was still homesick for her family in New Jersey and for the school she had established there, which had to be abandoned when her husband, a lieutenant in the United States Navy, was transferred to Norfolk.

"Barry's backstory is as gonzo as it gets.  
From Studio 54 to Gordon Gekko to  
Hollywood royalty, he's on another level."

— Sean Fahey, Director, *Bailout*

# Without a Net

A true tale of prison,  
penthouses and playmates



Barry Hornig  
& Michael Claibourne



# Without A Net

Barry Hornig and Michael Claibourne

**"Barry's backstory is as gonzo as it gets.**

**From Studio 54 to Gordon Gekko to Hollywood royalty, he's on another level."**

— SEAN FAHEY, DIRECTOR, BAILOUT

**"Barry's life is juicier, sexier and more dangerous than fiction!**

**Without a Net is a fun read and makes my life seem tame!"**

— ANDREA PENNINGTON, MD, AUTHOR OF THE UPCOMING BOOK, *THE ORGASM PRESCRIPTION*, AND HOST OF AGELESS VITALITY-TV, WWW.ANDREAPENNINGTON.COM

## DESCRIPTION

Starving and certain that I would die in my dingy jail cell in Spain, I made a deal with God. I fell to my knees, promising to give up all drugs and criminal activities. I prayed out loud, witnessed only by the urine-soaked walls and huge rats that shared my cage. My desperation was raw and naked. I thought about the Countess. I thought about my parents at home on Long Island. But mostly I thought about myself. "Save me, God, and I will live virtuously and honor my family."

I was released early and found myself back home, penniless and living in my parents' basement. God had kept his promise. I soon broke mine...

*Without A Net* is an autobiographical road trip through a volatile period of American history. Barry Hornig was a seeker and an explorer. His adventures were splendid and sordid, and the sort of stuff that would teach anyone a lesson. This is the story of how he learned his lessons the hard way.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- A roller coaster of great highs and lows – a varied life story of travel, adventure and danger, glamour and hardship, relational dysfunctionality, replete with guns and drugs, prisons and penthouses, crime and punishment
- A likable, relatable protagonist who can be funny and self-deprecating
- A modern-day Odysseus in a tale of great and diverse intrigue
- Many locations, from Kabul to Los Angeles

## AUDIENCE

- Those who lived through the Studio 54 era and those who wished they had
- Baby boomers (jazz hipsters and old beatniks)
- Travel and adventure readers
- People who enjoy intrigue and like to live vicariously through others

## AUTHOR BIO



Barry Hornig attended Boston University and graduated from Emerson College with a BA in 1963. A native of New York City, he has traveled extensively through Afghanistan, pre-Taliban Pakistan, Spain, Morocco and South America. An international collector of textiles and an authority on weavings and carpets from Central Asia and Europe, Barry currently divides his time between Santa Monica, California and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. Barry is also obsessed with the paranormal—especially clairvoyance, mysticism, Sedona and UFOs.

He has talked with Space People, had visions in Masar-i-Sharif, been blessed by Muktananda and hugged by Ammachi.

Michael Claibourne is far less interesting: he graduated from Oberlin College with a BA in English Literature in 1990. After studying Japanese for several years in Tokyo, he worked in software development for a while in Los Angeles, first at Disney Interactive and then at DreamWorks Feature Animation. Finding writing far more rewarding than the world of software engineering, he has switched to writing full time.

**Publisher: Koehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram Publisher Services**

**PUB DATE: 9/1/2015**

**6" X 9", 230 pages**

**SOFTCOVER, \$16.95, 978-163393-076-6**

**EBOOK, \$4.99, 978-163393-077-3**

**Trim : 6x9, Pages : 230**

**BIOGRAPHY &**

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY/ Personal Memoir**

## MARKETING

- Author will create an informative website dedicated to this book and create several short Youtube videos that he will post on his Youtube Channel.
- Author will perform a PR blitz utilizing his contacts with places such as Cision, Media Hug, and Blogdash to not only get the word out about this book but hopefully get interviewed to promote it further.
- Author will cultivate online relationships with bloggers, book clubs and other sites for reviews and endorsements
- Mass email campaigns will be sent to author's contact list
- He is planning on pitching the book to local bookstores for signings.

## ONLINE

[www.withoutanetbook.com](http://www.withoutanetbook.com)

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**INGRAM**

# Chapter 1:

## The Red-Eyed Rat

We had really pulled a burglary, a jewel heist to fund a scheme to purchase drugs. Where did we get the guts to do it? Was it guts or bravado? And did we really expect to get away with it?

So here I was. Football star, athlete, Mr. Popular, and a jailbird. A disgrace, a drug dealer, a thief, a convicted felon in a foreign country. What would my family say? And my dear Grandma—how could I ever look her in the eyes again?

I had been riding shotgun with my friend, Weenie, disembarking from the ferry in Algeciras, when the policeman went through the rental car and discovered the hundred kilos of hashish in our duffel bags. Everybody came around and congratulated him like he'd won the lottery, cheering him like a soccer hero.

They handcuffed me and Weenie, drove us to a prison that must have been hundreds of years old, and threw us roughly into a filthy cell. The windows were approximately ten feet up, and the light stayed on high up in the cell. The building could have been there during the Inquisition. But now, Francisco Franco's men were the inquisitors. "Remember the Phalange!"

They let us have our sunglasses, our jeans, our sandals. They took all identification, of course, but not our dinero, or our belts. They didn't care if we hung ourselves. I sat with my back against the cell with my other cellmate; the shock made it impossible to speak.

Three days went by, with gruel, beans, and rice, wriggling with little living things: "Papillon sauce." I wasn't hungry enough, even on the third day, to try to eat it. They brought us a razor and told us to shave. I didn't really know what was happening. But I thought of burning stakes, Joan of Arc, the Inquisition, or a firing squad. We shaved with cold water and no soap, and since the blades had probably been used thirty times, we just got a little of the stubble off. My hair was already full of lice.

They marched us out single-file, handcuffed from the rear, to an ornate courtroom, where three plump men in their fifties sat, wearing dirty black robes. They assigned a public defender to help us, who spoke broken English, making it difficult to follow the proceedings. They started reading a criminal charges document to us. It sounded like the Declaration of Death. This went on for an unbearably long time.



They asked Weenie and me to explain what had happened. Of course we had a pre-arranged story ready, just in case. But when it was my turn, the words came out of my mouth, but I'm not sure what I said. My voice cracked, and tears welled up in my eyes. I tried to regain my composure.

Would they believe us? They had to. We were Americans on a holiday in Spain. We wouldn't rob each other. It had to be the gypsies. When they couldn't solve a crime, it was always the gypsies.

The three judges talked back and forth. The police officer got up on the stand. He seemed to have a new uniform and a shiny new watch, and the spectators cheered him, of course. There seemed to be a few more witnesses, but I had no idea what was going on. They told us to stand, and the middle one banged the gavel. "Convicto!" There was a pause, and then the translator spoke. "You will serve six years and a day as a guest of General Franco in his hotel." That was the dream from which I couldn't awaken.

When you have a nightmare, you wake up, and everything is okay. But when you have that nightmare and you try to wake up and you are awake, that's the end.

It seemed like a delusion, and it came so fast that it was almost as if I had dreamt it. I felt that it wasn't me there—it was somebody else, and I was looking down on the whole situation in disbelief. Like words in the pages of *White-Jacket*, about the voyages that transformed Melville from a boy into a man. But my own transformation would be a long time coming.

Weenie and I went back to our cells and started a hunger strike and an all-around commotion. It didn't work. A guard in a green jumpsuit came with a billy club, started banging the front of our cell, cursing at us, and decided that we needed to be separated.

Four or five days later, it was time for showers. We were getting ripe. We were lead into the shower room with other sordid prisoners—Arabs, Basques, Spaniards. We were the only Americans. The shower was ice-cold, the towel more like a handkerchief, and the soap stank. Weenie and I decided to protect each other's backs.

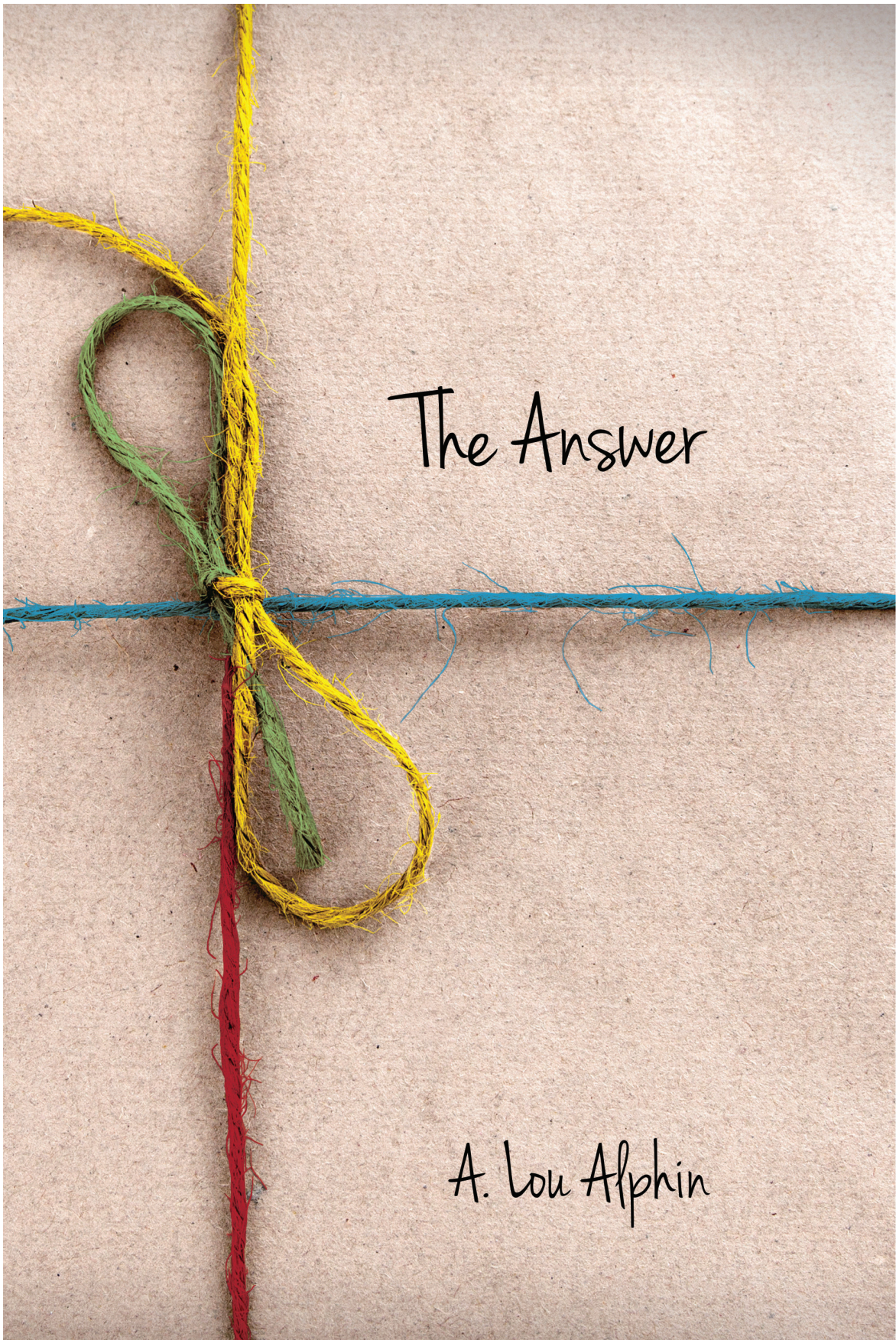
One large Moroccan guy was watching us very carefully. I pretended I didn't see him. He was obviously aroused, his member swollen. I was sitting on a stool drying myself when he made an aggressive move towards me. I don't know what happened, but the stool hit the middle of his head, and it split open. There was screaming, there was blood, there were whistles, and we were brought back to solitary. I could tell by the looks of the other inmates that I'd made my point. I had established our alpha position, and I wasn't about to be pursued or intimidated by the "pack."

I was so angry at them and at myself, I felt like smashing him again. I looked around for the next customer. There's always a next customer—when you're looking.

I had a piece of wood with a smelly mattress on it—if you can call it that, a quarter-inch thick, half a pillow, a tin dish for food, and a hole for a toilet.

Unfortunately, I had roommates. The four-footed variety. Weenie and I were in the same cell for the first few days, then we were separated. But Rudy the red-eyed rat and his friends found me. It was war. And I only had my thongs.





The Answer

A. Lou Alphin



# Chapter One

## Delight Yourself in the Lord

AS A YOUNG child, I was not aware I was already delighting in the Lord by thinking of Jesus in Biblical stories, caught in daydreams of what *heaven* would be like, hoping to hear from God personally, and believing Jesus is as real today as when he walked on the earth. I wasn't aware that I was delighting in the Lord by trusting he would guide me through each day of my life, walking every step with me, and wanting his thoughts and desires to be my thoughts and desires. I was not aware I was already delighting in the Lord by loving Jesus and believing he would deliver me from any evil or evil thoughts within my human sinful nature *if* and *when* I made a mistake, or what I refer to as *missing the mark*. I know I missed some targets dealing with situations and circumstances through life, so this phrase is important to me to know that we do miss the bull's-eyes, our aims, targets, or marks as humans. No matter what, get back up and try again and again. Do not give up because it is the trying that pleases God. All of these are ways to delight in the Lord. This is what Jesus desires from all of us.

When I delight in the Lord, I know who I am through Christ. I am a child of our living God. As a human, I am not perfect because I am flesh and bones, but Jesus's power is within me. His power is greater than anything else that might come before me. Knowing any transformation would come from and through Jesus, desiring to go through whatever evolving process is needed to be perfected by Jesus, delighting myself in learning how to truly worship Jesus, and coming before God in honest prayer was between just Jesus and me. Learning to talk to and to trust Jesus as my best friend, going before Jesus with *all my mess*, and being cleansed by Jesus is the process of loving him. Mostly, it is the knowing that Jesus loves me. *My missing the mark* within my internal thoughts and selfish efforts brought me to the point of asking to be cleansed of those misguided thoughts, performances, acts, and deeds. I was not even aware that by imagining laying my mental lists of human faults at the *cross*, releasing the control of my life as a human over to Jesus, and letting go of all old religious routines, religious rituals, and other religious doctrines were being taught by the *Master Teacher* through his Holy Spirit. Thanking Jesus for his love and his forgiveness and having gratitude

that all my *missing the marks* are wiped clean is praise. Knowing I am saved through the blood of Jesus lets me experience Jesus releasing his power to my spirit. By me partaking through surrendering is in the holy knowledge of the power of the Trinity, which is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in one. Going to Jesus ready to receive his *grace* and his *mercy*, being blessed by God's *favor*, and being one through Christ is another way to submit with praise. When you delight in the Lord, you will experience and know God's love with *his peace and his love beyond human understanding* because of the name of Jesus and who Jesus is beyond measure. Amen.

We just have not been taught much about God's power given to us as well. Yes, it is God's supernatural might given through the *Spirit of God*. I mean no disrespect concerning sermons I heard preached over many years. I could not relate to some of what I heard about the "hell, fire, and brimstone" preaching. Our congregations are just beginning to hear the renewed message of God's love, power, and Holy Spirit. Let us hear it often and repeatedly. The people of God need to hear about his power through each of us as his witnesses and about our own shared and personal relationship through God. We are always presented with choosing between total opposites in life; will you choose Jesus or not? Will you seek and talk out loud to Jesus and about Jesus or not? Will you witness and speak to other people about our Beloved who is the source of all our life? The entire Bible speaks of who Jesus is, who God is, and who the *Spirit of God* is in and through our life.

I love reading the Psalms, especially when I need to recall how David connected to God through his prayers. David humbled himself before God by seeking and believing in the power of God rather than sulk with too much pity. He sought God. Psalms is a good place to start in the Bible. In your normal tone of voice and with simple words, ask God to unlock the door and to renew your mind, your heart, your spirit, your soul, and your physical body as you read his words and his promises. Take a verse at a time. Renew your mind and your *conscience* of God's love for you. Close your eyes. What are God's words speaking to your inner spirit? Ponder and meditate upon what you read. His word is like a double-edged sword. You may read a verse again at another time and get a new or completely different message as you evolve and mature through Jesus. The Bible consists of history, parables, books inspired by the hand of God, love messages from God to us, moral standards and life lessons, his truth, his light, his promises, and so much more. Your evolving depends greatly upon your reading and understanding of the Bible. As a believer, I am evolving each day.

I still go to Genesis because I love to read about the creation of God's universe. I read the historical names, but I do not get discouraged about pronouncing them correctly or by recall. It is about the generations and history before us with God. Delight in reading about God and his ways. To be honest, there may be days that I may not be able to read the Bible. God is not mad at me if I do not read that particular day. It is my spirit that convicts me that I need to read daily about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Other days, I enjoy reading to the point that I do not want to stop reading my Bible.

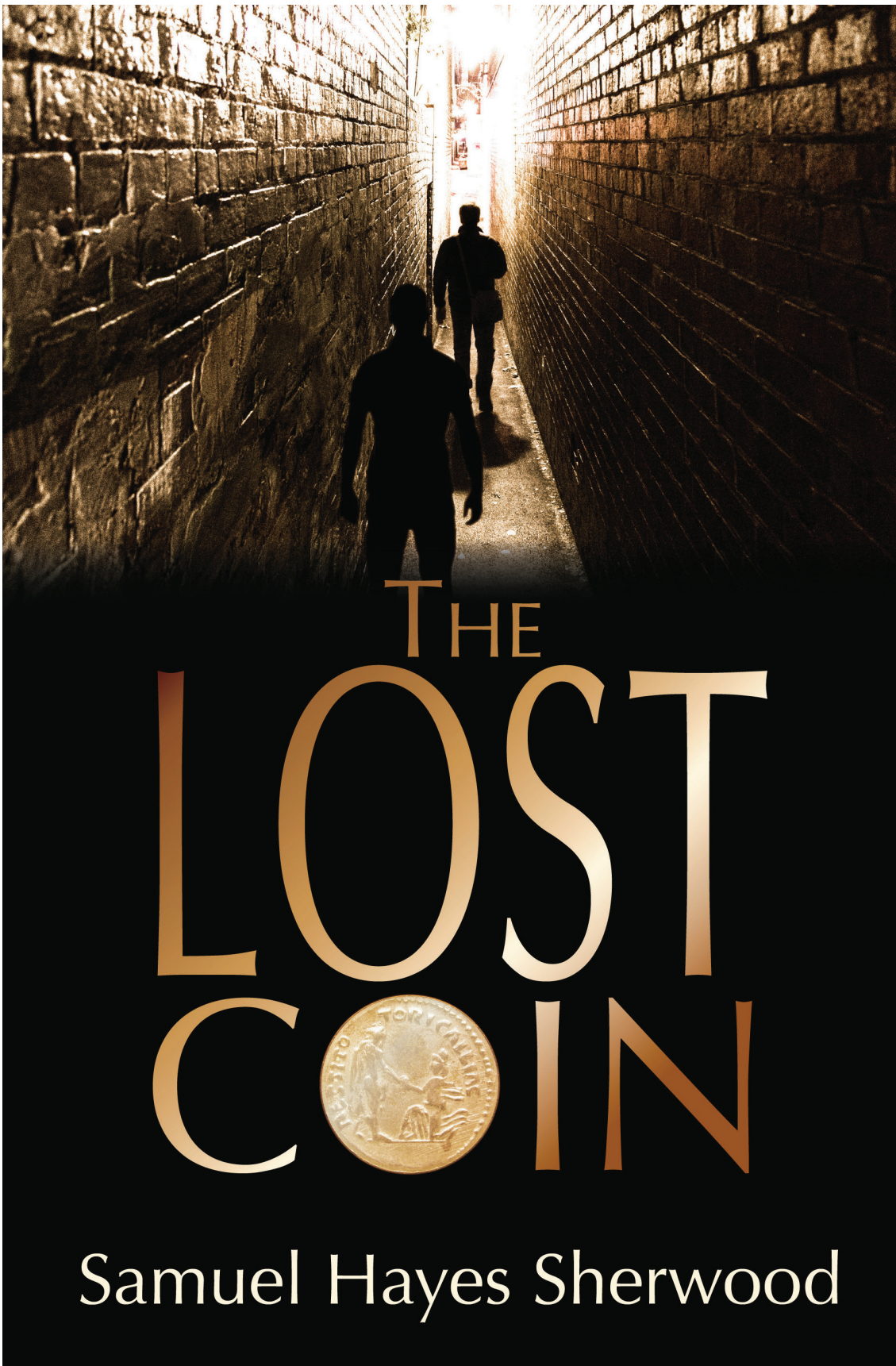
Remember, in the Old Testament people did not know what *sin* was. They did not know they were *sinning*. You will read that they could not come before God with any animal or other sacrifice with any blemishes as part of their obedience. People had to



bring a sacrifice before God each time for their atonement and to show their obedience. There were so many religious laws to live by back then. There were over six hundred laws, too many laws to remember, and too many to keep by any human. If one law was broken, it was as if all were broken. The Old Testament is hard for me to read at times because of the way people lived, especially with the brutality. God was so, so patient for a very long time with his people who forgot him. They were under the Old Covenant of the Law.

Thank God, we are under the New Covenant where *all sins* are all finished once and for all. It is done! Jesus paid that price in full on the *cross* through his blood. It is hard to comprehend for some people. I do accept and claim my salvation by holding Jesus in reverence before Almighty God. God loves me, and God loves you. God finished it at the *cross* through the blood of Jesus. I go to him feeling secure, safe, and confident, knowing I am not condemned. I am so *loved* through his unconditional love forever in God's eyes. I come to him as I am. God will clean me up, teach me his ways, and carry my loads of cares, fears, and worries. He clothes me with his protection, speaks through to my inner *spirit heart*, and digs deep within our *spirit heart* to reveal who he is. My mind will be renewed each day through his mind. My *spirit heart* will be renewed and whole through his heart. My soul will be renewed through his soul. Yes, my physical body will be renewed through his physical sacrifice on the *cross*. I am one with God. God is one with me. We are united as one; I knew that when I first believed in Jesus. We had already been forever connected through eternity; we just have not taught or believed that too often as his children.

I know when I am a human being of the flesh. It is a sense of feeling heavy, and I don't like being controlled or governed by the flesh, which are the thoughts and the *nature of sin* as a human. I know and sense peace and lightness when the *Spirit of God* overpowers the flesh because I am always immediately aware of God's power through me daily. God knows that I delight in him and ponder his greatness throughout each day. It may be quick prayers throughout the day, or it may be a long prayer another day. A prayer may be a silent whispered prayer or spoken out loud. Prayers, praising, thankfulness, and honestly honoring God by talking to God should be natural expressions of our daily love toward God. Honoring God may be being of service to another person whenever you see or hear of a need without being asked. It may be giving my time to help someone without boasting about what I did. It may be a song of praise that is sung on the spur of the moment. It may be looking into my three grandchildren's eyes with love and witnessing that love returned. I look for those moments to experience Christ's presence and to be Christlike. If I sense that I fail to respond as Jesus would have, I ask immediately for his prompting and correction to be more aware and able to respond with love more quickly the next time an opportunity comes my way. It is the *trying* and  *motive* that God sees and knows. Self-effort is by you and you alone, so any action, act, deed, or performance where God is not the main focus or center is the meaning of *falling from grace*, which God teaches us. With each new day, God does extend his grace every second of that day. Remember and believe each day that we do not ever lose God's *grace*. Think of it this way: I go from *grace* to *grace* because it is God who covers my back so to speak. When we do fail, God does lift us up to make us stronger for the next test and trial.



# ***The Lost Coin***

## **Sam Hayes Sherwood**

Sam Season, a young man disappointed by button-down Christianity that doesn't work, is unexpectedly handed a mystical coin that guides him to unraveling the truth about the mystery of Christ in us. Sam is unaware that his brother, obsessed with wealth and status, is against him. Regardless of the cost, he is determined that his grandfather's inheritance will not be split with the undeserving Sam.

*The Lost Coin* is the story of love and redemption, beginning with Sam as the parable's lost coin, and ending with the ultimate sacrifice of love for one last unlikely lost coin. The coin's amazing appearances confirm God's truths as Sam learns that only Christ in him, as him, can truly love and live the Christian life.

This book will appeal to many younger Christians experimenting with broadening their faith and also to older Christians, both church and unchurched, tired of traditional religion that doesn't deliver. It will also appeal to non-Christians interested in love, drama and suspense stories.

### **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- Christian truths are embedded in an intriguing story of suspense, mystery, and love
- Age-old questions will be answered about God and His intimate relationship with the two main characters
- Readers will experience an emotional roller coaster as the paths of the two brothers collide

### **AUDIENCE**

- Younger Christians, 18-35, male and female desiring to "know" God more deeply
- Older Christians tired of religious routine and looking for more from their faith
- Unchurched or fringe Christians who have given up on Christianity that doesn't work
- Readers who like mystery, suspense, and love stories

### **AUTHOR BIO**



Sam Sherwood has spent 39 years in various executive manufacturing and engineering roles with a degree in Mechanical Engineering and an MBA. He has spent many years prayerfully studying the mystery of Christ in us, what it truly means, and teaching those concepts in adult bible studies. *The Lost Coin* shares those truths by intricately weaving them into an intriguing story of suspense, mystery, and love. Sam has had articles published in *Downeast*, *American Whitewater*, and *Plant Services* magazines. This is his first book.

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**6" x 9", 274 pages**

**Softcover: \$17.95, 978-1-63393-140-4**

**Ebook: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-141-1**

**Pub Date: October 1, 2015**

**BISAC CATEGORY**

**FICTION: Christian/Suspense**

**Online:**

<http://www.yetnotibutchrist.com/>

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**INGRAM**



# 1

## THE OLD MAN AND THE COIN

Sam lay in a quagmire of mangled and confused dreams, twisting, turning, futilely fighting back as evil phantoms swirled around him, jabbing at his consciousness with flaming swords of accusation. He was no stranger to these importunate psychopathic minions. These faceless cowards always took flight in the drunken half-light of morning when their victims were most vulnerable, obfuscating good and evil without compunction, set into motion by the Accuser of the Brethren.

Sam moaned. “No!” he yelled, yet no sound came out of his mouth. “Not true! Leave me alone!”

They paid no heed to his pleas, but shoved the hot swords deeper into his soul. He tried to fend off their allegations, to deny and stop their threatened disclosures. But he had no defense. They mercilessly sifted him like wheat. The more he denied and resisted, the louder their accusations became. The noise became unbearable. He covered his ears; he couldn’t breathe; he was going under.

As he grasped for consciousness to break the spell, a still, small voice said, “Agree with your adversary quickly in the way.”

“What?” he cried.

“Agree with your adversary quickly in the way,” it repeated, “lest he deliver you to the judge and the judge cast you into prison. You won’t come out then until you have paid the last farthing.”

It was his grandfather’s voice.

*Okay, he conceded silently, you’ve got me. I’m guilty.*

Their power neutralized, the phantoms vaporized into the morning light. His clenched muscles exhaled all their built-up tension. Sleep started to drift back over his eyes, but it was short-lived.

The peace was shattered by an excruciating crescendo. Sam’s eyes opened in a tiny slit, enough to see the black box on the night table. He started to reach for the snooze button but his hands were bound in a self-made cocoon of sheets raveled around him. He finally wrangled one arm out of his straight jacket and pounded the black plastic box into silence.

“What the hell?” he cursed. “Damn!” His still-inebriated brain struggled to guess the day. It was Sunday. “What an idiot,” he muttered.

He lay there staring at the ceiling, exhausted, slowly getting his eyes used to the dim light. At least the phantoms were gone. *Cowards*, he thought. *Can't stand the light of day*. How he wished for more rest, but his pounding head disallowed that.

He ripped off the sheet. His body was wet with sweat. He realized he was naked.

*What's this?* he thought. *Too drunk to put on PJ's?*

He got up and headed to the kitchen. His foot knocked over an empty beer can. He shook his head as it kept rolling with a tinny rumble until a chair leg stopped it. John's door was halfway open. He was still passed out. *Wonderful*, Sam thought, *to be able to sleep through that alarm*. His girlfriend lay next to him. Half of her naked derriere and one long leg hung limply down the side of the bed. He reached in and closed the door for her modesty and his. He was pleased to find two Advil in the kitchen cabinet. He popped them in his mouth and chased them down with a handful of water. He walked quietly back to his room and splayed himself back on the bed to wait for some relief.

After the throbbing started to recede, he moved on to the next priority—coffee. *Yes, need some coffee*. He pulled on his jeans and grabbed a shirt off the floor and walked back to the kitchen.

He fumbled through the cabinets for the coffee. *Where did John put it this time?* he wondered. His anger started to kindle. He was afraid to open any cabinets that John had been in for fear of what might fall out. “What the hell,” he said. *Gotta do what I gotta do. If it wakes you up, it's your own fault, buddy*. Luckily, he found the foil bag on the first try. No avalanche.

Sam crashed into the old overstuffed chair and let it percolate. Hope revived as the aroma filled the room. Finally, it stopped percolating. He ventured into another cabinet for a cup. This time one stray cup fell out and bounced off the wooden floor with a thump. *At least it didn't break*, he thought. *Thank God for wooden floors*.

Sam sunk into the well-worn chair and slowly sipped the strong coffee—no such thing as too strong. It washed the latent taste of scotch from his tongue.

The morning light revealed the wreckage from the previous night. The reminder of a bad idea lay before him on the coffee table. A “dead soldier,” as his mother called it, lay on the coffee table beside a cadre of empty beer cans.

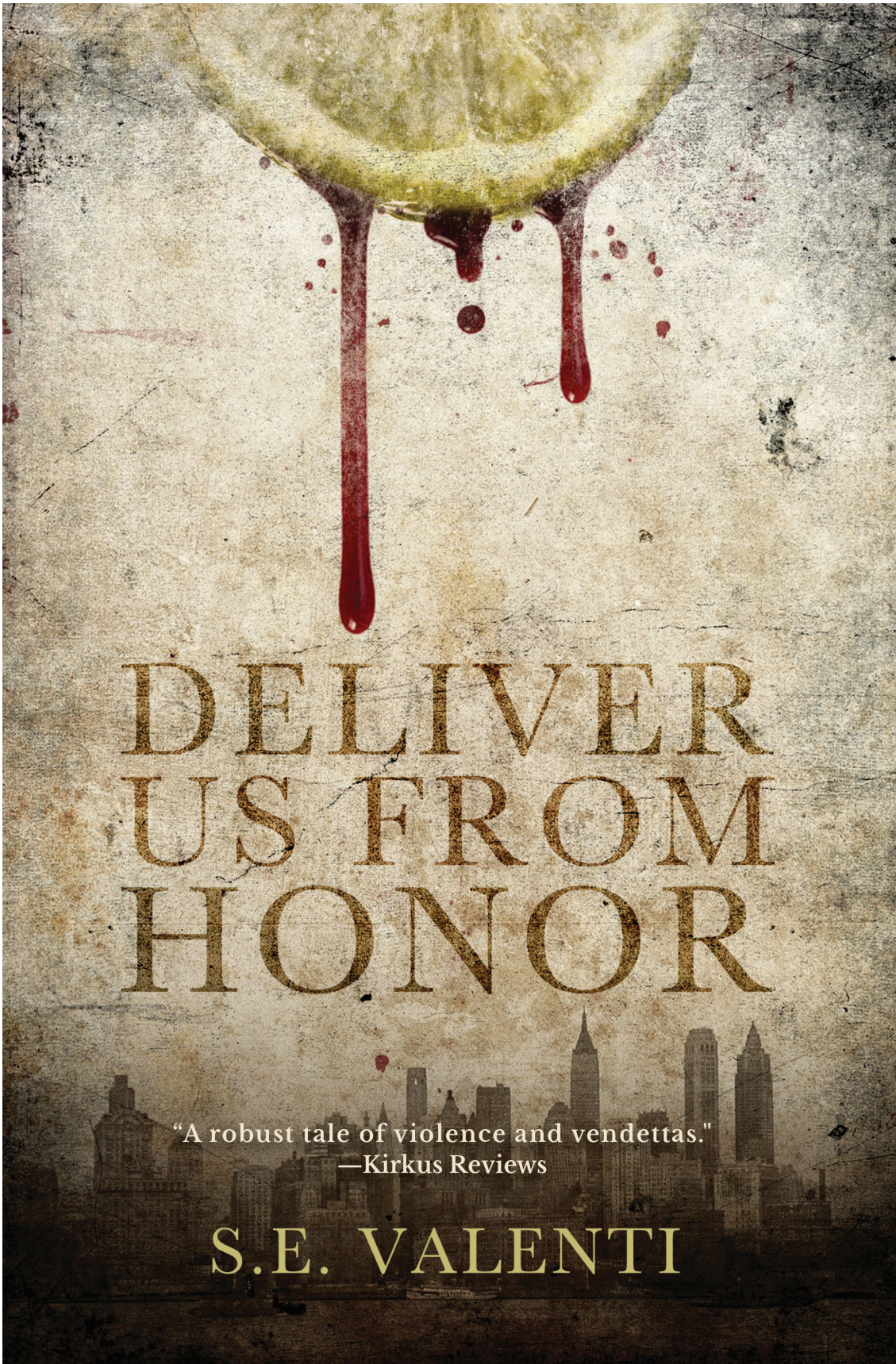
“Something has to give.” He sighed. “This ritual is killing me.” He stared at the empty Cutty Sark bottle, hoping it wasn't he alone that polished it off. Joe was there last night. No one loved free booze like he.

There was a time Sam hated the taste of scotch. Now his newly acquired taste drew near each night like a siren, beckoning, seducing, and eventually breaking his resistance.

He shook off what he couldn't remember. Other aromas attracted his attention to John's ashtray. It was never full, never emptied. The butts just fell to the floor. The aroma cocktail of spent tobacco, whiskey, and beer fueled his hangover.

John's yard-sale ashtray was a sore spot between the roommates—a huge ceramic, blue maple leaf about the size of a basketball cradled in a brass-metal stand.





DELIVER  
US FROM  
HONOR

"A robust tale of violence and vendettas."  
—Kirkus Reviews

S.E. VALENTI



# *Deliver Us From Honor*

S. E. Valenti

## DESCRIPTION

GIUSEPPE VAZANNO is one of the wealthiest and most beloved landowners in 1911, post-feudal Sicily. His lemon orchards provide work for the Sicilian peasants, a rich life for his brothers and their families, and a peaceful oasis for his wife Maria and their two daughters, sixteen-year-old Adriana and five-year-old Francesca.

But just before dawn one spring morning, Giuseppe's brothers Sevario and Santo awaken to the smell of smoke, and find Giuseppe's farmhouse burned to the ground. Adriana and Francesca are found safe, having taken refuge in a secret tunnel under the house, but are unable to talk about what they saw. The brothers find no trace of Giuseppe or his wife Maria and discover their middle brother, Gaspano, has been brutally tortured and murdered just a few miles from Giuseppe's burned farmhouse.

Adrianna has a terrible secret—one she prays was not the cause of the horrors she has witnessed. She must confront her worst fear: was the destruction of her home just a random act of violence, or a deadly *vendetta* against her family?

A powerful story of love, betrayal, revenge, and the irrevocable bond of family, *Deliver Us from Honor* richly chronicles the story of the Vazanno family, caught in the social and political upheaval of 1911 Sicily that eventually will lead to the rise of the Mafia in America and change their family forever.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- Will interest those who enjoy Mafia or Mob history
- The author has traveled to Sicily and has family in that area
- Has aspects of *The Godfather* in this story

## AUDIENCE

- Readers interested in Mafia or Mob history
- Readers of Sicilian and/or Italian heritage or descent
- Readers who love romance novels

## AUTHOR BIO



Sharon E. Valenti has a Master of Science degree from Oakland University and was married to her Sicilian husband for over thirty years. Although she has many published articles in professional medical journals and magazines, five years ago she decided to change the direction of her career to full-time novelist. *Deliver Us from Honor* is her first full-length novel.

## ONLINE

[www.deliverusfromhonor.com](http://www.deliverusfromhonor.com)

**Publisher:** Koehler Books

**Distributor:** Ingram Publisher Services

**PUB DATE:** 9/1/2015

**SOFTCOVER,** \$17.95, 978-1-63393-106-0

**EBOOK,** \$4.99, 978-1-63393-107-7

**Trim :** 6x9, Pages : 304

**FICTION:** Crime

**FICTION:** Romance/Historical

## MARKETING

- Author has created a website for this book and has already established a Facebook page. She will follow this up by creating a Twitter. She has also become a member of two Sicilian blogs.
- Author is looking into advertising on cable and will contact local radio and TV stations. She will also contact the local press and the PR people at St. John's Hospital to see if either of them would be interested on running a story about this book.
- The author plans on doing a book tour, where she'll participate in signings at several large groups such as the Abruzzi Club, HealthHIV, and ANAC of Southeast Michigan, as well as colleges where she is an alum
- The author is also hiring a publicist.

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# CHAPTER I

## REVENGE

5 MAY 1911

SEVARIO VAZANNO BROUGHT his arm back ready to strike. *Only a coward attacks a man in his sleep!* he thought, as his mind abruptly transitioned from sleep to sudden wakefulness.

“Sevario! Sevario!” urged the voice standing over him. “It’s me, Santo! Stop fighting me! Wake up!”

Sevario relaxed his fist, blinked, and then blinked again as he suddenly recognized the voice of the man standing over him. “Santo! What are you doing, you jackass? I nearly knocked you out!” he shouted. “What do you want? It’s the middle of the night, you fool!”

“Sevario, wake up!” his brother Santo Padua urged. “There’s trouble. Come on . . . get up!”

Groggy with sleep, Sevario looked around the room. Realizing he was still holding onto Santo’s arm, he let go of his grip and said nervously, “What’s wrong? Who’s here?”

“There’s no one here . . . but there’s smoke coming up from over the ridge. It looks like it’s coming from Giuseppe’s place.”

Immediately, the expression on Sevario’s face turned serious; throwing back the blanket, he swung his feet down onto the floor and stood up facing his brother. “Are you sure?”

“Yes! Can’t you smell the smoke? It woke me a few minutes ago; I ran outside thinking our barn was on fire. But then I looked up and all I could see was this black smoke coming up over the ridge.”

Sevario ran past Santo and out the open doorway. Dawn was still several hours away. A full moon illuminated the night sky but an unmistakable black cloud hovered over the ridge that separated Sevario’s farm from the farm of his older brother, Giuseppe Vazanno. Suddenly, Sevario was aware of an acrid smell drifting over the ridge along with the cloud of smoke.

“Get the horses. I’ll get the shotguns!” Sevario told Santo as he ran back inside to get dressed.

Santo had already finished saddling the horses when Sevario entered the barn carrying three shotguns and two sets of pistols in their holsters. He tossed a holster to Santo, who was standing next to his horse ready to mount.

Sevario got on his own horse; his mind was racing. He thought about what they might find at his brother's farm; turning back to face Santo, he asked, "Do you think we should bring the wagon?"

Santo knew instinctively what his brother was suggesting. He got down off his horse, strode to the wagon, and began tying his horse to the back of it. "Go on, Sevario. You go ahead; I'll be right behind you. I can handle this."

Sevario kicked his horse hard. The horse bolted and then took off at a full gallop toward the ridge. As soon as Sevario reached the top of the ridge, the smell of charred wood mixed with kerosene filled his nostrils. He covered his nose and mouth with his kerchief. The usual morning winds were picking up off the Castellamare coast and were carrying the ash directly towards him, causing him to cough and gag; his eyes teared at the sting of it. His horse whinnied and shook his head back and forth, rebelling against the ash filling its own nose. Sevario's mind was whirling; he prayed his brother and his family were able to get out of the farmhouse and that they all were safe. The more his mind raced, the harder he rode his horse towards the fire.

\* \* \*

By the time Sevario reached the top of the ridge the entire landscape before him was a black blur. The smoke had entirely filled the valley below him where his brother's farmhouse stood. Barely able to see ahead of him, he kept rubbing his eyes, trying to focus on the ground in front of him. He pulled back on his horse's reins, slowing the animal to a walk. He knew he was close to the road leading up to his brother's house, but with the smoke blurring his vision, recognizing even the familiar was nearly impossible.

Suddenly, the smoke started to clear; a stronger wind came up and started to blow the smoke higher into the air and away from the ground.

*There*, he said to himself as he finally spotted the road leading to his brother's farmhouse. He pulled his horse hard to the right and started down the road; suddenly the house came into his sight. The closer he got to the farmhouse, the more he realized the extent of the devastation.

"Whoa! Whoa!" he yelled, pulling his horse to a stop.

Sevario took in the sight before him and gasped. His throat tightened immediately; he felt as if his lungs could receive no air. He groaned and opened his mouth to scream but nothing would come out. There in front of him were the burned-out, charred remains of his brother's farmhouse. There was nothing left but the stone hearth, still engulfed in flames and ready to collapse.

The sight of the ruination sickened him; he jumped down off his horse and emptied what little he had in his stomach. He grabbed a kerchief from his back pocket and wiped his mouth; then he gagged and vomited again. *That smell . . . what is that smell?* he thought. *Wool? Hair? Something else?* He tied his kerchief around his nose and mouth to ward off the putrid smell.

As he looked into the charred rubble in front of him, without warning his legs gave out beneath him. He instinctively put his shotgun out in front of him to prevent himself from falling forward. After a few moments, Sevario regained his strength, took a step back, and stared at the sight before him.



**"...PACKED WITH POWERFUL IDEAS AND PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR  
ASPIRING INNOVATORS AND ESTABLISHED ENTREPRENEURS."**

—Franco Gandolfi, DBA

Dean, Faculty of Business and Economics  
The University of the South Pacific

# **NEXT**

## **REINVENTING YOUR FUTURE THROUGH INNOVATION**



**SETH MICHAEL STONE**

# INTRODUCTION

## WHY INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY MATTER

**“It’s unbelievable how much you don’t know about  
the game you’ve been playing all your life.”**

—Mickey Mantle

LIFE IS AN ongoing process of self-discovery and exploration of things around us in the world. Those moments when we feel like we’ve reached the top of the mountain, we gain a better view. If we’re honest with ourselves, we quickly realize that we know far less than we thought we did. There’s always going to be more to learn and discover. The things we learn and the ways we challenge ourselves to explore and grow shape us not only personally, but also in how we interact with others and in how we approach the organizations we work for and lead. The day we choose to stop learning and discovering, because we think we’ve “arrived” is the beginning of the end of our growth and ability to lead our organizations into the future. The world around us will not stop changing and growing just because we decide to. Taking ourselves out of the game is not an option for whatever amount of time we’re allotted to spend here. The heart of innovation is about learning, growing, sharing, discovering, and producing that which is new. This can’t be done without creativity. This is why innovation and creativity matter. This is why I’ve chosen to write this book.

If you’re a baseball fan, you might have heard the quote at the top of the page at somewhere along the line or you might remember it from the beginning of the movie *Moneyball*. If you’re not familiar, this movie is based on a true story that was also a bestselling book. It’s the story about the Oakland Athletics’ general manager, Billy Beane, and what he’s done to revolutionize the game of baseball. A game steeped in rich tradition, superstition, luck (or so many would say) and a scouting and recruitment system that was more than a century old. It had worked for a very long time and it wasn’t necessarily broken, so why fix it? Because it was fixable and it was changeable. It was ripe for innovation, because no one else had bothered to try something different, which is where Mr. Beane saw a tremendous opportunity.

The traditional methodology of player evaluation was to go by perceived talent, pedigree, build, and look, which made many players too expensive for small budget-

teams like the A's to sign. Therefore, Mr. Beane began using advanced statistics to evaluate players and find talent the broader market undervalued so he could still field a competitive team. This is innovation at its core. Why, you might ask? Because he did something different. But wait, he didn't invent a new type of baseball bat to hit the ball farther or a new type of uniform to help players run faster, so how could what he did be considered innovation? This is where we fail to see innovation for what it really is. We're going to spend much more time discussing this later, but innovation isn't about just fancy new gadgets. What Mr. Beane did with the Oakland A's was disruptive, changed the market in that industry, shifted the balance of power and brought a whole slew of opportunities still being explored and discovered today. That's the power of real innovation.

"Because everyone can and should innovate, virtually everything is and should be open for innovation! Although most people think of product innovation, it is equally important to innovate service offerings, process technologies, and enabling technologies."<sup>1</sup> Does that distort your view of innovation? Many people fall into the trap that they have to be the next Silicon Valley superstar to produce meaningful innovation. This is far from the truth and is nothing more than a self-imposed limitation that can keep you from discovering your true potential and capacity to innovate. Innovation is not exclusive to any one thing, person, or industry. You probably have hundreds of opportunities around you right now that are open to and waiting for innovation. Think just for a moment about the products, processes, and services you would like to see changed, enhanced, or completely redesigned. All of these things are at your disposal for innovation and we're going to address how to do that in great detail later on.

Why do you need to start considering all of the possibilities there are for innovation? Because whether your organization is an industry leader or a startup, other people, organizations and forces at work out there will take you down if you don't. "Somewhere out there is a bullet with your company's name on it. That bullet may be a company that's eager to exploit a disruptive technology, it may be an impending shift in customer preferences, a demographic change, a lifestyle trend or a regulatory upheaval that will render your strategy obsolete."<sup>2</sup> Have you ever considered this as a legitimate possibility? It's very real and should make you more than a little nervous if you're not currently doing anything about it, because this is the reality that we face today and moving forward.

You've probably noticed, but the world we live in has changed and it's not going back to the way it used to be. The way you choose to operate your organization can't be the same as it was twenty, ten, or even five years ago; it's just not going to work. There used to be seemingly insurmountable barriers to entry in just about every industry, because the established players held all of the key resources and information. Today it's different. Give a millennial a computer, an Internet connection, and some garage space to work out of and that individual could turn out to be the single greatest competitive threat to your organization's survival. The increases and advances we've seen in technology and human connectivity have transformed opportunities that were only available to the privileged few and multinational organizations and have opened them up to hundreds of millions of people in every corner of the world. If you think this is some kind of short-term fad that will soon pass, you need to think again. The world around you is advancing,



changing, and growing on a daily basis and it's only going to increase from here. Your organization's size, efficiency, and cash flow aren't your biggest competitive advantages anymore. The things that used to make organizations unbeatable are quickly becoming commoditized because of technological advances. This includes your organization. In the new economy we're in today, ideas, creativity, information sharing, knowledge creation, learning, and value capture are the greatest real means of competitive advantage. This means you need to be thinking about innovation as an organizational priority.

Innovation used to be a nice luxury; today you need it to survive. "From Bombay to Boston, around the world and back to Bombay, the skies are connected. Yet most of us are only concerned about what's happening in the sky over our own heads."<sup>3</sup> We may understand this cognitively, but it's still an epidemic spreading through many organizations today. So many still aren't doing anything to face this reality. We've never been more connected as a global society, so why are so many still unable or unwilling to look out past what's going on inside their own organizations and in their own little world they've created? Because it takes a shift in mindset and that's not always easy, but we're going to spend plenty of time talking about how to do that. We've come to a critical juncture where many organizations are going to be faced with a choice: they will either have to choose innovation to grow and remain competitive or keep doing things the way they always have and quickly become irrelevant. Which organization do you want to be? Of course, you don't want to fail and see your competition soar past you, which is why innovation and creativity matter to you right now and should be at the forefront of your strategy and mission moving forward. This book is designed to help you make the most of what you have to make innovation happen effectively for you.

The purpose of this book is to help you see innovation differently and what it can do for you and your organization, plain and simple. The objective is to show you the areas of your organization you need to probe to make an innovation program work for you. The book is broken up into three distinct sections. In Section 1, we'll discuss further what innovation is, focus on the tools you'll need, and start practicing exercises to move your ideas from just ideas to viable reality. We'll also address how to move away from the efficiency models that dominated the twentieth century and move toward an innovation model. In Section 2, we'll take an exploration into specific areas of your organization, deeply tied to innovation but sometimes overlooked. These include leader and follower dynamics, organizational design, strategy, information sharing and learning, values and ethics, organizational culture and human capital development. Each one of these parts of your organization will play a critical role in how successful your innovation program will be in the long run. Finally, in Section 3, we're going to spend some time revisiting your mission, vision and goals, as well as those things that you'll need to focus on, in order to, successfully execute your innovation efforts. Finally, we'll tie things together at the end and challenge you to take some next steps. That's the game plan. So let's dive right in.

“...an engaging and evocative work...”

— *Kirkus Reviews*

# INTO THE CARPATHIANS

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE HEART AND HISTORY  
OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

PART 1: THE EASTERN MOUNTAINS



# ALAN E. SPARKS

AUTHOR OF *Dreaming of Wolves*



## ROMANIA

### *March 25. Denver International Airport.*

Here I am again, on a plane, heading to London. . . and then what?

Why such dread, when the unknown is precisely what adventure requires? It has been there, churning in my stomach for the last two weeks, ever since I made my final commitment: “Yes, I will work on the ‘backup team’ (as Peter called it) for *The Way of the Wolf* expedition.” “Yes,” I could have added, “I will sleep in a tent for the next four months, at who knows what uncomfortable and awkward spots along the length of the Carpathian Mountains, amongst who knows what kind of bandits and bears, finding food and water who knows where, cleaning myself and my clothes who knows how, negotiating roads dominated by who knows what kind of crazy drivers” (see *Dreaming of Wolves*).

How will I shower? I really must shower once a week at least, especially when it’s warm. In fact, my main concern is not how cold and frozen it might be in the beginning, but how hot and muggy it will be at the end.

My nights have crawled with fears, some reasonable, most not, but my mind blowing them all out of proportion into anxious nocturnal shrapnel. Or so it seemed when I arose and came to my senses. Riding along to the airport, I had a faint hope the bus would spring a flat. I’d miss the plane and that would be that. A face-saving excuse, surely.

I’m even more apprehensive than two years ago. Is it because I know more now? Or do I just have the attitude of a hobbit: Why put myself through hardship and uncertainty when I can stay safe and comfortable at home?

The answer is obvious. After my last experience in Romania, it’s safe to say I’ll never again feel satisfied staying safe and comfortable at home. *Is a need for adventure coded in our genes? I suppose risk takers, over time, may have the better chance to propagate. . . if they survive.*

*Full moon over the wing,  
the dark expanse of Nebraska below.*

I was under no obligation. Peter had found someone else for the backup team after I declined back in January. His original plan of doing the expedition a year ago had fallen through when he failed to get enough sponsors. I had moved on, even contemplating a



return to a software job, when he contacted me last fall. I was tempted—my old reliable backpack fighting the computer screen for my loyalty—but after several exchanges with Peter, wherein I asked lots of reasonable questions about how we would pull it off, I balked: “Well, I’d like to, but I don’t think it will work out. . . .” I mitigated my disappointment in myself, and my guilt, by writing and editing publicity pieces for the expedition.

Then the software prospect fell through: All my conscience needed to start asking, “Why not?” Of course I could find lots of reasons why not. But they were not enough. Not enough to stop me from dreaming of wolves again. How many evenings had I lain awake nostalgic for Transylvania? For the moon riding the clouds above the silvery ramparts of Piatra Craiului; for the plaintive howls of Poiana and Crai asking to join Curly and me as we strolled along the pot-holed road; for the cow bells, sheep bleats, and yells and whistles of the shepherds. . . . I even missed the constant scent of things burning. I was nostalgic for spontaneity and a close connection with the earth. Had I forgotten the difficulties? Yes, of course. We always forget the difficulties.

As the bus rolled along to its inevitable destination at Denver International Airport and I accepted the fact that its tires would remain inflated, my nerves finally quieted. The decision had been made, I was on my way, there was no backing out. . . . I was at peace. Then, another wave of anxiety. *Are the Buddhists right? Is there no real “self”?*

My self was being swept back and forth by violent tides—inconsistent thoughts, feelings, desires, and fears, from one moment to the next. Part of me wanted to go, part of me didn’t. *So who am I? Am I a single being? Or is inconsistency a proof of free will?*

“I can still back out,” I thought. “Just don’t get on the plane. Do what you want and only what you want. What does it matter what others think?”

“But what do **I** think?”

“I’m going, that’s what I think. Stop imagining the negative, start imagining the positive. This adventure is beginning now. I’m taking the long way home. . . .”

*But why this feeling I won’t come back?*

### *Monday, March 28, Aarad, Romania*

Jürgen, Thilo, and I are at a “two-star” hotel (according to the sign outside) in Aarad, Romania, just over the border from Hungary. The room is austere, with stark blue walls, somber brown carpet, small rickety beds, and a bathroom whose cracked and missing tiles, moldy grout, wall-less shower, and rusty running sink make you wonder whether you’d be any cleaner for cleaning there. But we had little choice, arriving late last night after an all-day drive from Munich.

Crossing the border yesterday was abrupt, like walking through the wardrobe of Narnia, except into a land of wondrous squalor rather than wondrous enchantment. I remember Thilo uttering a subdued moan as he scanned the roadside, where mud, rust, and poverty ruled the landscape. Dilapidated shacks and the shells of houses and lots of smoke—I don’t remember Romania being this bleak. Maybe part of it is the season, with no snow and no greenery to hide the mud and marrings of humans. Or maybe border

towns are particularly decrepit. Or maybe it was just something I had previously become used to.

After our passport check at the crossing lots of unsavory looking characters were hanging about, grouped under glaring neon lights and looking ready to pounce, so we drove on through fatigue and the blackness of night. We took the first hotel a few kilometers beyond the border, feeling lucky to have found one.



I'm in a jetlag-induced fog as I try to remember the events following my arrival two days earlier. Jürgen was waiting in the terminal of the Frankfurt airport, holding a white poster with "The Way of the Wolf" neatly inscribed in big black letters. Presaging a fountain of practicality, Jürgen noted in very hesitant and broken English that we'll be needing the sign for four months. "For eco-volunteers."

*Yes, of course. Good idea.*

With thick whitening hair, a pleasant though tentative smile, and a glint in his eyes, Jürgen seemed nice enough. But he was older than I expected (my age), and seemed a tad too rotund for months in the outdoors.

"Sorry. Thirty-five years before I learn English. Not much since. Some in Asia," he said in his apologetic tone.

"Your English is better than my German. I'm happy to meet you, and thanks for picking me up." I tried to speak slowly and enunciate clearly.

A little more small talk was followed by an uncomfortable silence as we navigated through the terminal. *Well, I'm in it now*, I thought, as we grabbed my suitcase and backpack. The airport was my last link to my comfortable, *known* life. The only honorable way home now will be through four long months, thousands of kilometers, and surely many difficulties. As we walked along to his car hauling my luggage, I stole furtive measuring glances at my new companion.

That first night we stayed at Jürgen's parents' neat townhouse in the small neat town of Babenhausen. Jürgen's parents were at least as pleasant as Jürgen, if a bit more rotund. His father spoke only a few words of English, his mother a few more, but their hospitality was wonderful. His mother had made a memorable road tour through the Western US—the Zion, Bryce, and Grand Canyon route. As jovial and maternal as a mother could be, she immediately adopted me, quickly and efficiently serving up a much appreciated and ample German meal for this travel-starved guest, with lots of potatoes, eggs, and sausages. Although at home I try to eat only meat that has been "humanely raised" (which hopefully also means humanely killed)—whenever I'm a guest I generally take an attitude attributed to Gautama Buddha: I eat what I'm offered.

In the evening, we viewed slides of Jürgen's motorcycle trip last summer through the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and northern Romania to visit a friend. Apparently we'd be passing near the friend's cabin during the expedition, where maybe we could even cop a shower and sleep on a bed. The knot of fear I had been carrying in my stomach started to ease. Maybe this whole thing is doable after all. Maybe it'll just be a long road trip.

**“Highly recommended for writers at all levels of their careers.”**

—Betsy Ashton, President of Virginia Writers Club

# DIGITAL WRITER SUCCESS

How to Make a Living Blogging,  
Freelance Writing,  
& Publishing Online



**LESLIE TRUEX**





# CHAPTER ONE

## Establishing Your Digital Writing Career

ON A TYPICAL DAY, I write three or four articles, work on a book or two, participate in social media, and answer email. At least once a week, I do a podcast and pitch an article idea to an online magazine. Every few months or so, I submit a book proposal or synopsis to a publisher and/or self-publish a book. In essence, I write a lot for many different markets. Sometimes it feels like plate spinning, trying to keep all my blogs, clients, submissions, and projects straight. But I didn't start out like that. Like eating the proverbial elephant, you need to start one bite at a time.

If you're just beginning your online writing career, it's best to begin with one idea and take it step by step—or plate by plate. The first item on your writing career agenda, before you start blogging, pitching articles, or writing a book, is to put your writing career foundation in place. In this chapter, you'll learn what it takes to be successful and the tasks you need to do to keep your writing career legal.

### **What It Takes to Be a Successful Digital Writer**

Earning a living writing requires more than the ability to string words together. You need to be organized, diligent, patient, fast, confident, and willing to go the distance. Your success depends on your ability to:

- Do what it takes: There's a lot about writing that isn't fun. In fact, some of it is hard while other parts are tedious. But if you're going to succeed, you need to do the activities that will make your writing pay.
- Take 'no' for an answer: Rejection is a part of writing. Every writer, big and small, including Stephen King and J.K. Rowling, was told 'no.' Rejections are the ultimate test of your dedication and willingness to do what it takes.
- Take criticism: Editors will send back work they want you to change. Readers will leave unkind reviews. The first reaction is anger and wanting to defend your work. But if you can step back and view your work and the criticism objectively, you might discover feedback that will improve your writing.

- Exercise self-discipline: Dorothy Parker said, “I hate writing, I love having written.” I agree 100 percent. (I feel that way about exercise as well!) Writing is harder than it seems. Sometimes the words don’t flow, or when they do they’re awful. But if you don’t write, you don’t make money, so you need to develop the self-discipline to get your behind in the chair and your fingers tapping on the keyboard.
- Be accountable: People who comment on your blog will expect a response. Clients want the article delivered at the day and time agreed to in the contract. Even though writing is a solitary job, there are others who rely on you to engage, meet deadlines, and fulfill obligations.

### **Setting Up Your Writing Business**

Don’t let the word *business* scare you. You can make a living writing as a contract worker or freelancer. Or you can set up an *official* business without much hassle or expense. Your decision on how you set up shop should be based on knowing the pros and cons of each option. Below are all the steps you need to take to insure your writing career is legal.

### **Zoning and Other Work-At-Home Restrictions**

Zoning in residential areas nearly always has restrictions on operating a business, even a solitary one such as writing from home. As a writer, it might seem silly to worry about business zoning, but I urge you to check and sign a waiver or whatever is required that allows you to run your writing business from home. Why? Because if you’re found out, you could be fined and possibly forced to stop or move.

Your city or county zoning office will have information about whether or not and how you can work from home. In most cases, if you aren’t going to have clients, post a sign, or work with dangerous materials, you can get a waiver.

Also check your homeowner’s association’s covenants and restrictions and your lease or rental agreement for any policies regarding working from home.

### **Decide your legal structure**

If you’re planning to freelance only, you can get away with not creating a business; however, if you’re going to blog or self-publish, you should establish a business. A sole proprietorship is the fastest and easiest way to set up a business. All it requires is a business name and license from your local city or county’s business office. If you use your given name, such as Sally Smith or Sally Smith Wordsmith, you won’t need to do anything further. If you create a business that doesn’t use your given name, such as *Write Right*, check first with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (<http://www.uspto.gov>) to make sure the name isn’t trademarked, and if it’s not, you’ll need to file a fictitious name statement (sometimes called doing-business-as or assumed-name statement) with your county clerk’s office.

As a sole proprietor, you and your business are viewed as one entity. That means your personal and business assets are fair game if you’re sued. To protect your personal assets, such

as your home, you can set up a single-person limited liability company (LLC). Most states now make it easy for a single-member business to set up an LLC. I did it online in Virginia in ten minutes. With that said, it's not something you just file and forget. There are laws and rules that govern how LLCs are run. NOLO offers informative books on starting and running an LLC. Or, for a few hundred dollars, you can hire a legal service.

Just like in a sole proprietorship, you'll need to come up with a name for your LLC. It can include your given name, which allows you to avoid filing the fictitious name statement. Or, you can come up with a business name. Most states require that Limited Liability Company or LLC be included in the business name. Check your state's agency that regulates corporations to make sure your business name isn't already in use along with searching the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

As a single-person business, you can file your taxes using your Social Security number, even in the case of an LLC, as long as you operate as a disregarded entity. While the LLC establishes a separate entity from you as a person, the IRS continues to view you and the LLC as one. If you plan to hire employees, you'll need to get an Employer Identification Number (EIN) (<http://www.irs.gov/Businesses/Small-Businesses-&Self-Employed/How-to-Apply-for-an-EIN>). Your bank may want you to have an EIN for an LLC, as well. They are free and can be obtained at the IRS online.

### **Open a separate bank account**

Regardless of how you decide to manage your career, you'll want to create a separate bank account for your writing income and expenses. Even as a contract worker, you can be eligible for tax benefits, but the IRS prefers to see financial proof of your income and expenses separate from your personal account. If you're a contract worker, you can open a regular account. If you've set up a business, you'll need to open a business account. In both cases, you'll need to bring your Social Security card and any other business paperwork (i.e. LLC documents) to the bank when you open the account.

### **Checklist to Setting Up Your Writing Business**

- Check on home business zoning in your area.
- Decide on a business structure.
- Decide on a business name.
- Check the USPTO that it's not trademarked.
- File paperwork for LLC if you've decided to create a company.
- Request an EIN (optional for LLC unless you plan to hire employees).
- Obtain a business license.
- File a fictitious name statement if your business name is not your given name.





# PASSOVER

APHRODITE      ROBERT P.  
**ANAGNOST & ARTHUR**



**S**heriff Phil Wise took a light drag, flicked his cigarette, and with a heavy boot heel ground it out on the gray, painted boards of the front porch at 23 Burnt Chestnut Road. His Surefire flashlight flickered. Mist descended, enveloping the gables and fretwork of a tiny village nestled between the ocean and the Chesapeake Bay—a remote neck hidden on the Delmarva Peninsula. The sheriff inhaled again and frowned. Burnt carbon must have coalesced over some fire pit and migrated down the road, picking up dew from sodden oaks and maples.

Wise's deputy, John Crockett, unbuttoned his yellow rain slicker and stepped onto the porch, mumbling curses as he bumped one knee on a cast-iron rendering pot. He glanced over his shoulder as though something were following. He reached into the coat and pulled out a dog-eared copy of the Dalai Lama's Little Book of Wisdom. He patted it, then returned the slim volume to his pocket.

"Good read?" said Wise.

"Helps turn off the internal monologue." The deputy pointed to his head.

The sheriff insisted on going back to the houses of both H.V. Ewell and Revel Petty every few days to re-examine the evidence. Ewell's home was the first scene of a series of possibly serial murders that had resulted in an exodus from Zebulon, Virginia's community of three-hundred souls. After nine visits, he still feared he'd missed some crucial clue.

"Want me to go in?" said Crockett, sounding ready to recant as soon as the offer had passed his lips.

The 1930s clapboard foursquare was mounted on a dozen or so new brick pillars. Like other farm houses in Zebulon, it rose two stories and had four sash windows upstairs, a clear transom above the entry, and two groups of three windows on the ground floor. The heavy green front door had a huge frosted glass oval. The porch was cluttered by bicycle parts, tires, chains, and assorted hand tools. A small sign screwed into the wall beside the front door read Ewell's Bicycle and Small Engine Repair.

“Guess you oughta come. Take a look around. It’s your post, Johnny.” The sheriff unclipped a saucer-sized ring of keys from his belt.

“Reckon I oughta keep watch out here.” Crockett unzipped his jacket, then zipped it up again.

“Suit yourself,” said the sheriff, sorting through the keys.

Crockett studied his own long fingers as if they belonged on someone else. “Strangest spring ever. Must be that global warmin’. Wouldn’t be surprised if we saw snow on Easter.”

Wise gazed at the copper moon, almost full, but blurred by moisture and Magnolia leaves drooping under dew. It was like the tropical moon of a rainforest.

“Be a big fat one tonight,” Crockett said. When Wise threw him a puzzled look, he added, “Full moon with a face like a clock in a hall.”

“Don’t tell me about fat moons,” said the sheriff.

Using an embroidered handkerchief, Wise wiped away the sweat that had popped out on his forehead, then slipped the carefully folded cloth in his back pocket. No sooner had he tucked it in, than moisture beaded his brow again. His eyebrows felt like icy caterpillars.

He pulled down the crime-scene tape that sealed the door. “Post out here to cover my behind. I’ll go on in and ruminate about the parlor some more.”

A grackle dove out of the night sky onto the porch. The deputy flipped his hat to shoo it away. “Hsst! Get outta here, you vicious little bastard.”

“You’ll stay in fine fettle right here,” said the sheriff. “Probably till morning anyway.” The deputy frowned. “That’s some funny joke, Sheriff.”

“Yet you ain’t laughing, Crockett.” Wise stared down at his chubby hand, illuminated by the Surefire as he turned the key in the lock. As was his habit, he fortified himself to enter the crime scene by muttering under his breath, “Sweet Jesus, here I come.”

He crossed the threshold and slapped at the wall until he found the light switch. He turned his flashlight off and slid it back into his belt, then checked for the Glock 22 in his holster. The fireplace was empty but the air still smelled of burnt cedar. Everything looked the same as it looked on the night of the first murder. He didn’t know why he felt drawn toward the site again and again. Or what he might be looking for. In most cases, crime scenes suggested obvious events, especially when there’d been a violent death. Possibilities seemed endless. But in this case all explanations seemed stranger than the crime scene itself.

He crossed to his usual seat, a worn velvet wingback near the door, and sat. The chair exhaled as he settled on its cushion. It let out a held breath.

Each piece of furniture had been pulled away from the walls as if by enormous magnets, then apparently levitated and set down again at random. No scuffs, no drag marks on the furniture, walls, or floor. No signs of damage whatsoever. The armoire that held the television had turned its back on the sofa that had shifted its legs off the carpet that had been rolled up like a fat wool cigar. The sofa now faced the wall. The end tables were stacked like children’s blocks, and the framed pictures all hung catawampus. A planter’s desk had been laid flat on its back, like a corpse, doors



closed tight in its frames, glass unbroken. The two floor lamps—unplugged, stripped of shades—had migrated to the kitchen. In the midst of all this jumbled furniture a grandfather clock stood tall and straight like a cop directing traffic. It was as if the furnishings, all blind, had walked to random places and parked themselves—illegally.

The sheriff studied the hole in the middle of the pine floor. The three-foot opening had penetrated even the sub floor, leaving an eerie portal to the crawl space below. The edges were smooth, burnished, and round, as if the object that had broken through had whittled, sanded, and charred them. No other sign of damage to the house, no scatterings of books, or papers, or clothes. Only ash stains and blotches of blood spread like purple bruises on the walls. And there had been no robbery.

Near his feet lay a photograph of H.V. Ewell and his sister and parents, standing in their Sunday best in a black and white row framed by gold. Something about the picture itself stirred in the edges of his mind. *Why?* He didn't know.

Two full moons past, the house had been lit like a Jack-O-Lantern from within, grinning brilliantly in the dark. Finally, Mathew Harper, the neighborhood pharmacist, had called the sheriff by cell phone to report, "Mr. Ewell left his front door and all the windows open. The place was lit up like someone was having a Halloween party. Didn't look right," Harper had said, "So I went on in."

The pharmacist had found Ewell skewered by the shaft of the stop sign from a nearby intersection. The body was dangling two feet below the cast-iron chandelier made by the blacksmith who'd built the house in 1935. Loops of bicycle chain coiled like a segmented snake around the head of the stop sign and wrapped the outstretched arms of the chandelier.

The victim had been kababbed through the lower back and out the belly like a spear-gunned grouper. He'd drooped there, head and limbs hanging. Strings of bowel draped with omental fat had escaped the torn abdomen, stomach spilling fragments of lamb chops, cabbage, and un-chewed peas. Blood had splattered the floor beneath him. Judging by the semicircular pattern, the medical examiner, Dr. Rachel Shelton, had deduced that before H.V. Ewell died, his aorta had been punctured. Swinging in a slow arc, Ewell's body had sprayed the wall like a hose.

When Wise finally left the house again, the first touches of dawn were patrolling, probing the closed, locked windows. Zebulon, as usual this early, lay quiet. The town's painted Victorians, some predating the Civil War, flaunted sweeping gingerbread-trimmed porches in their drowsy, wet sleep.

Wise glanced at his watch and walked into the front yard, nodding as he passed his deputy. Still as marble, Crockett now stood under a bare crape myrtle, cradling his rifle under one arm. He opened his book. Pink dawn illuminated the pages as he read, moving his lips.

"Don't go droppin' things, Johnny," said the sheriff. "You look like a gold miner's pack donkey."

"Sheriff Wise," Crockett said. "Who do you think it is we're after?"

"Hell if I know. Somethin' that kills people, Johnny." The sheriff blew into the early morning air to see whether it was cold enough to condense his breath. It wasn't...yet.

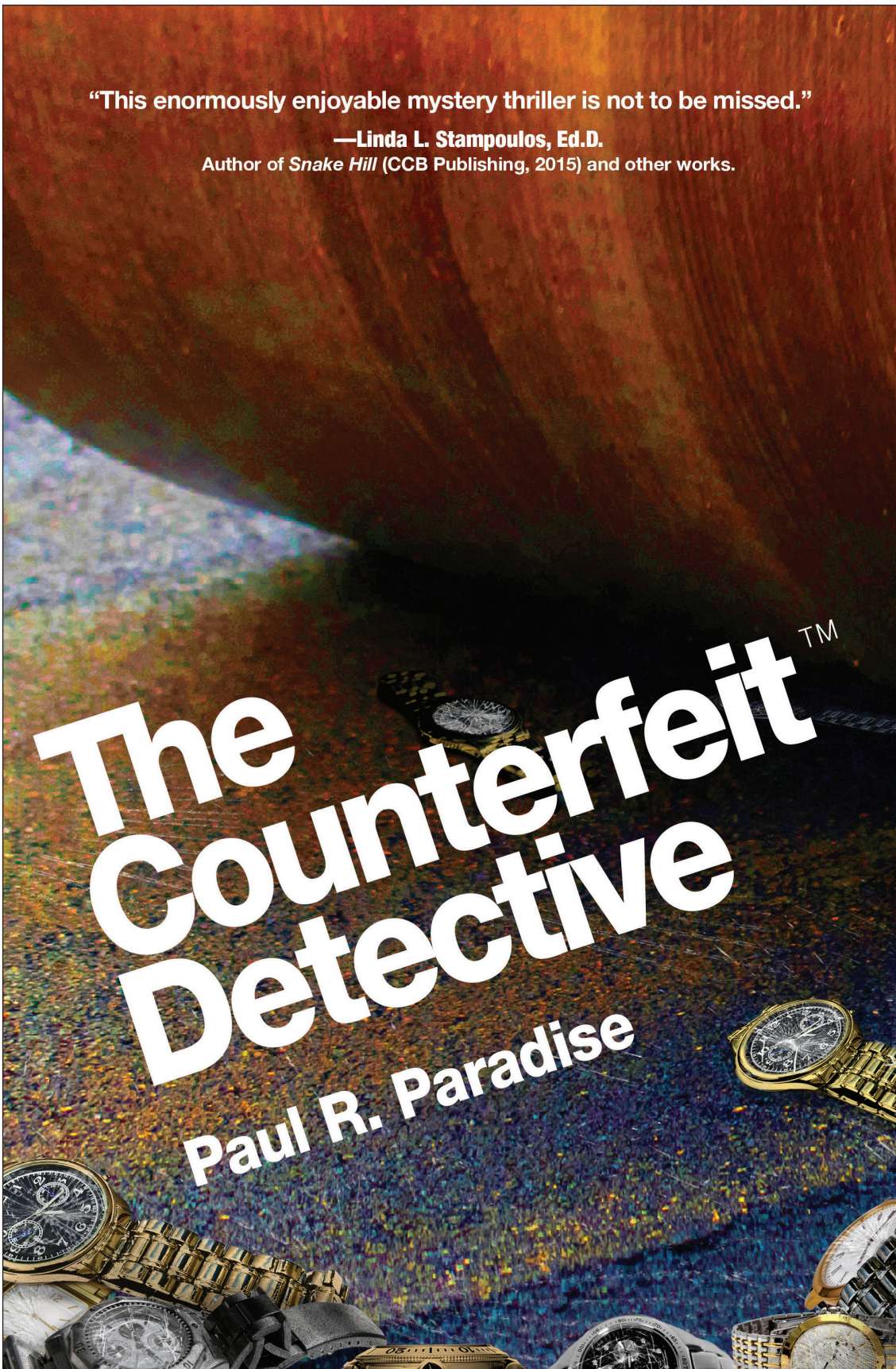
"This enormously enjoyable mystery thriller is not to be missed."

—Linda L. Stampoulos, Ed.D.

Author of *Snake Hill* (CCB Publishing, 2015) and other works.

# The Counterfeit Detective™

Paul R. Paradise





# *The Counterfeit Detective*

Paul R. Paradise

## DESCRIPTION

WHEN HIS BEST informant, John Hwa, is stabbed to death, Manhattan private investigator Theo Jones believes the family 'curse' that has claimed generations of men in his family will come true again. First his brother George died in the 9/11 terrorist attack, then his father in a construction accident. Would he be next?

Twenty years ago, the counterfeiters were harmless street peddlers like Hwa selling knockoff Rolex watches and Louis Vuitton bags. Nowadays, his life is in constant danger. When Jones infiltrates an interstate knockoff ring, his investigation is stymied after his wife, Linda, is terrorized by anonymous telephone death threats. She flees with their son and Jones must decide what is real and what is fake, whether hanging onto his family is more important than a career as a private investigator. To answer that question, he'll have to survive a death trap set by the counterfeiters, and discover the truth about the family curse.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- The FBI has cited trademark counterfeiting, also called commercial or product counterfeiting as the "crime of the 21st Century." Intellectual property law is popular.
- The author is well known for his book *Trademark Counterfeiting, Product Piracy and the Billion Dollar Threat to the U.S. Economy* (Praeger, 1999, 2000). This scholarly book sold out the first print run in five months and is concerned with a business crime that costs the U.S. economy.
- Artists in the fine arts and entertainment field will enjoy the book because of its focus not only intellectual property but also its look at the rise of commercial art as envisioned by Andy Warhol.
- The story is based on an award-winning short story.

## AUDIENCE

- Private eye and mystery fans
- Legal professionals (lawyers, paralegals, secretaries)
- Business and marketing professionals
- Fashion-conscious women in their 20's and 30's

## AUTHOR BIO



PAUL R. PARADISE has authored numerous books and articles and been interviewed on the radio for his expertise with trademark counterfeiting, called "The business crime of the 21st Century," by the FBI. *The Counterfeit Detective* is based in part on a book excerpt of real life investigator David Woods that appeared in *PI Magazine* and later in his book *Trademark Counterfeiting, Product Piracy, and the Billion Dollar Threat to the U.S. Economy*, as well as a short story that was awarded Honorable Mention in the 2008

Writers Digest Fiction Competition. The author began his career as staff writer for T.F.H. Publications and later branched out into law enforcement with articles published in *Electronics Now*, *Police, Law & Order* and *PI Magazine*.

## ONLINE

<http://paulrparadise.com/>

**Publisher: Koehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram Publisher Services**

**PUB DATE: 11/20/2015**

**SOFTCOVER, \$15.95, 978-1-63393-086-5**

**EBOOK, \$4.99, 978-1-63393-087-2**

**Trim : 6x9, Pages : 242**

**FICTION: Mystery & Detective/Private Investigator**

## MARKETING

- Author has developed a website and plans on posting a video on Youtube.
- Author is also committed to hiring a publicist.
- The author has managed to obtain some high level radio interviews and plans to obtain a list of radio shows that he can write to directly. He also plans on contacting the Mysterious Bookshop in Manhattan.
- The author plans on doing local book tours.

 **koehlerbooks™**

**INGRAM**



# Chapter One

I KNOW THE SHOCK of learning you're going to die. First, there's disbelief and denial, followed by anger, and then an eventual acceptance of your fate. I was in the acceptance phase that morning as I boarded the Brooklyn-bound subway for a rendezvous with John Hwa, my best informant. I would have looked forward to receiving a tip about the underground market in designer knockoffs—but I was contemplating a premonition my wife, Linda, had last night.

I had arrived at the detective agency filled with dread because her premonition was about death. *My death!* Coming on the eve of the one-year anniversary of my brother George's death was more than enough to rattle me. After a sleepless night, I thought about cancelling my meeting with Hwa. If I had, I would have saved myself a major headache.

He was supposed to meet me in front of a tenement building on Greene Avenue in Bed-Stuy, also called Little Harlem. I took the C subway to Nostrand Avenue, exited and started walking. To reach the rendezvous point, I had to pass through a block of rundown and abandoned brownstone row houses. The stench of decaying food and stale urine coming from inside an abandoned building on the corner led me to believe squatters had taken refuge. To those watching through boarded-up windows, I looked like just another middle-aged junkie in raggedy jeans and cowboy boots searching to buy crack. I wasn't carrying a gun. I rarely carry one.

I was a block away when I heard a woman shriek. I quickened my pace, as I looked up and then down the street. Nothing. I turned the corner, and across the street I saw a man on the sidewalk and two others in jeans and hoodies fleeing. I rushed to where Hwa lay flat out on the pavement. He had been stabbed. A switchblade was deep into his chest. I recognized his girlfriend, Jenny Ling, kneeling next to him and cradling his head. I squatted next to her.

"What happened?" I had met her last week and knew her English was poor.

"Them . . . them!" She pointed to two men on the run, now blocks away.

"Are those the attackers?" I asked.

"Yes, *aieeo, aieeo.*" She shook her head in anguish.

I watched them get inside a blue Chevrolet Camaro. I never saw their faces because of the hoodies. The driver started the engine and drove away in a flash.

“Easy, John.” Hwa was in pain and gasping for breath. “Take it slow. Who were those men?”

“Don’t know.” Pain shot across his face, as he tried to sit up.

“Whoa, man, lie back.” I placed a hand on his shoulder to steady him. His eyes were glassy and blood seeped through his shirt. I snatched the cell phone from the holster on my belt and dialed 9-1-1.

While I identified the location and the victim, Jenny gritted her teeth and reached for the knife handle.

“Don’t touch him,” I said. “He’ll bleed to death if you pull it out.”

I had taken first aid and knew only a surgeon could safely remove it. The danger came from the depth of the puncture and whether vital organs had been hit.

She withdrew her hand and stammered, “Try—try to help.”

“Let me handle this.” Hwa was wearing a blue shirt. The knife’s black handle bobbed up and down with each breath. I unbuttoned his shirt and lifted up the right front panel about two inches to view the knife blade; it was in deep, but fortunately there was little bleeding.

Jenny gasped and started sobbing, tears streaming down her cheeks. I realized she shouldn’t have seen the exposed knife. I let go of the shirt, put an arm around her shoulder. I could feel her trembling. “Help is on the way . . . Please don’t cry.”

A crowd formed around us. “Everyone move back,” I said. “The police are coming.”

When she had settled down, I told her Hwa’s head should be resting on the ground. Using my hands for support, I lowered it with great care from her lap.

I took off my jacket, doubled it, and gently pressed against the sides of the knife.

His eyelids started to flutter. I feared he was going into shock. “John . . . John! Don’t do this. Stay with us.”

“Hurts . . . like hell,” he muttered.

Hearing him speak was a relief. His condition appeared stable for now. *Thank God*

I could do nothing else for him. I felt helpless as I waited for the ambulance. *What’s taking so long?*

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I couldn’t help wondering if the stabbing was connected to Linda’s premonition, which coincided with the anniversary of my brother’s death in the 9/11 terrorist attack. George, who was forty-eight, shared the sad fate of generations of men in the Jones family who had died young and violently. I rarely discussed the family history with Linda—until his death. After that, a barrier formed between us as she urged me to change careers and get out of the dangerous private eye profession.

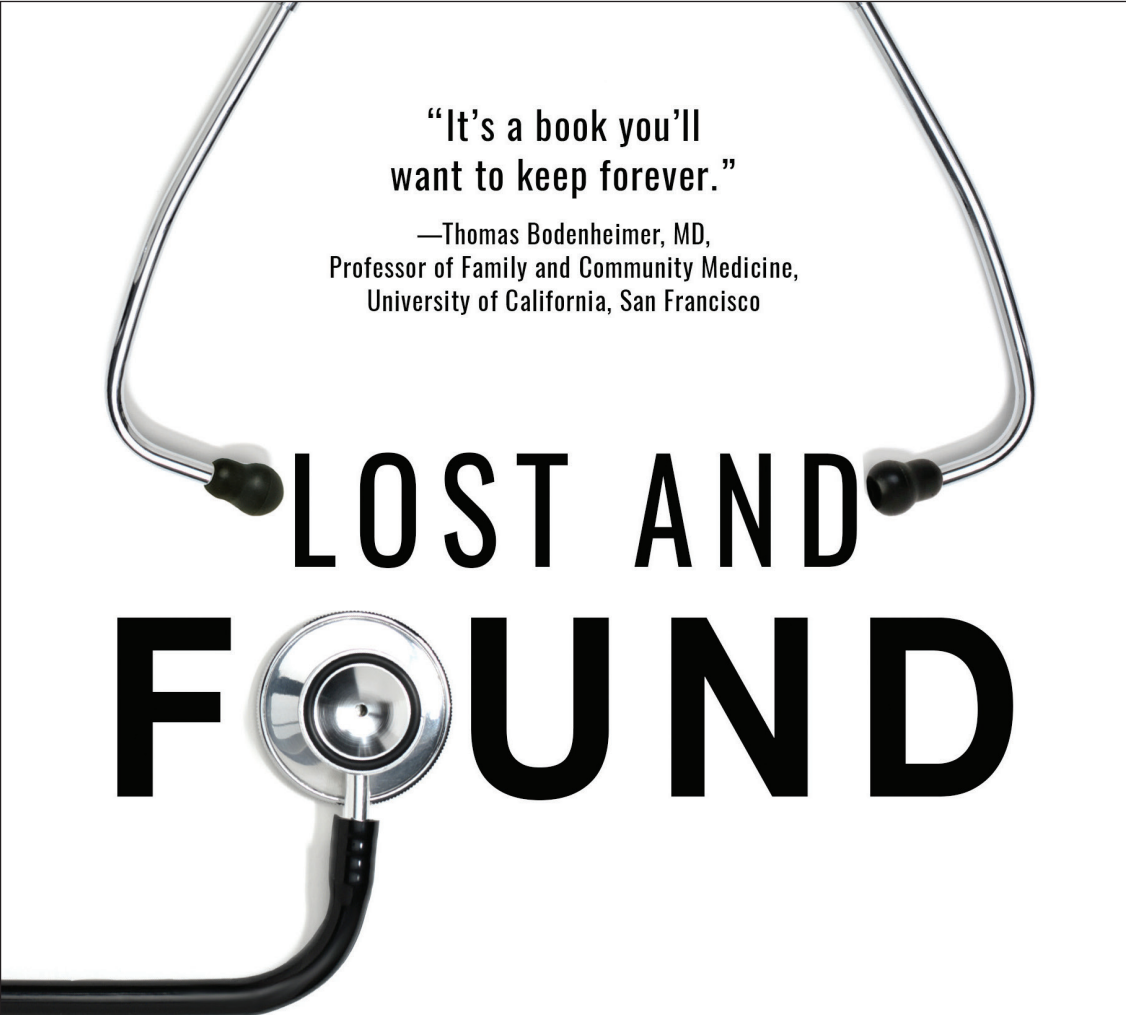
Until last night.

© ©

“It was terrible—” Her shrill voice hit like ice water.

I turned and found her face hovering over me like an apparition. Even in the bedroom’s darkness, I could see alarm mirrored in her eyes.

I bolted upright, looked past her, afraid a stranger was there. Nothing moving. “Linda, what is it? What’s the matter?”



**“It’s a book you’ll  
want to keep forever.”**

—Thomas Bodenheimer, MD,  
Professor of Family and Community Medicine,  
University of California, San Francisco

# LOST AND FOUND

**A Consumer’s Guide  
to Healthcare**

**PETER B. ANDERSON, MD  
AND PAUL H. GRUNDY, MD**  
with Tom Emswiler and Bud Ramey

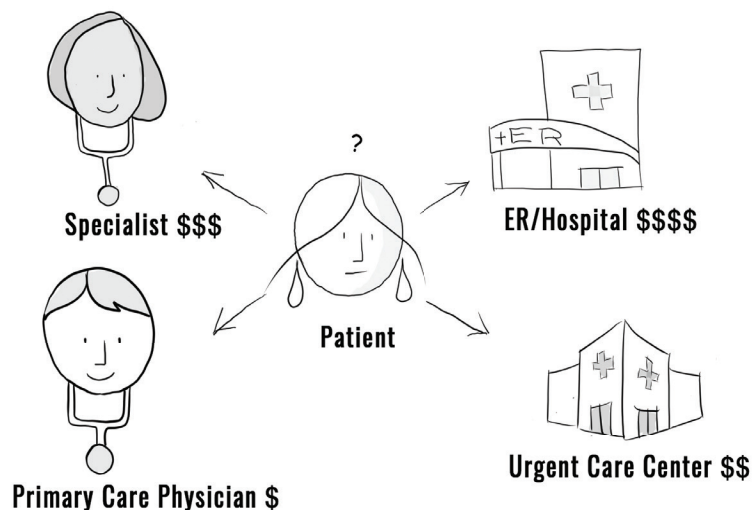


# Chapter 1

## AMERICAN HEALTHCARE'S 12 FACTS OF LIFE

“SPACE,” READS THE INTRODUCTION to *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, “is big. Really big. You just won’t believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. And so on.” That tongue-in-cheek description could almost be used to explain the field of medicine. The last several decades of research and intervention have yielded more discovery and progress than ever before while greatly expanding the scope of medical possibility.

Thanks to remarkable advances in technology, increased knowledge of the intricacies of the human mind and body, huge strides in diagnostic and treatment strategies, and extensive pharmaceutical development, an explanation of how healthcare has changed in recent years can be fairly lengthy. And while doctors and researchers may not want to dwell on the potentially negative side of medical progress, the truth is that all this innovation has also helped create a healthcare system that’s increasingly more complex, inconvenient, and expensive.



It's overly complex because of the often necessary but nonetheless overwhelming body of regulations that surround healthcare, the turf wars that can exist between and among administrative and clinical staff, and the baffling array of insurance and reimbursement options in place.

The inconvenience is an unavoidable part of an approach which, despite the growing efforts toward centering care delivery around the patient, still revolves around the needs of medical providers, who operate predominantly out of a set location with limited hours.

As for expenses, let's get a sense of scope before we consider how things got that way:

Healthcare currently consumes about 18% of the Gross National Product (GNP) in the United States. To give you some perspective on how that figure has increased, it was just 5% in 1960. What that means in the big picture is that we disburse a larger percentage of our national spending on healthcare than on shelter, food, and clothing put together. For a comparison, we spend 2.5 times more per family than the average of the other economically developed nations in the world.

On a personal level, this burden is beginning to translate (and already has for many people) into higher out-of-pocket expenses for copays and deductibles, as well as higher health insurance rates at best and insufficient or non-existent coverage at worst. When the costs of healthcare are transferred to employers through increased rates for providing insurance coverage to employees, the cost of everything else goes up, too.

The reasons behind the crippling expense include everything from high prescription drug prices, excessive administrative costs, and a legal system that forces doctors to practice defensive medicine to the for-profit component embedded in our healthcare system and many Americans' rejection of restrictions on the kinds of lifestyle choices and behaviors that lead to disease and disability. And the list goes on.

While the complex and interrelated factors that influence the high cost of our nation's healthcare can all be improved, it will take time and a lot of wrangling between the vested interests that are involved. But one of the principal causes of expensive healthcare on which we can make a more immediate impact is our less-than-optimal access to primary care.

Whether patients are insured, underinsured, or uninsured, not being able to see a primary care physician in a timely manner or not having the coverage or financial ability to do so has led to increasing numbers of urgent care and emergency room visits as well as hospital admissions. Lack of access has also resulted in treatment that's deferred to a time when the condition moves from minor to serious. All of these options are considerably more expensive than simply getting in to see a doctor when you first experience a problem.

In fact, the issue of primary care access forms the core of these "12 Facts of Life" we compiled to sum up some of the concerns related to healthcare that are likely to have a direct impact on you:

1. When people get sick or injured unexpectedly, they're seldom able to see their own doctor because appointments may not be available on short notice.

2. Appointments are typically rushed, and the provider is often more focused on entering medical record data into the computer than communicating directly with the patient.

3. For the sake of convenience and sometimes even necessity, patients end up in urgent or emergency care and see a doctor they've never met, pay much more, and often receive unnecessary (and expensive) tests.

4. The aging population of Baby Boomers threatens to overwhelm primary care providers because of the time needed to handle the complexity of their medical conditions. Many older people have multiple chronic conditions as they advance in years.

5. Due to the poor access to primary care, almost 50% of adults with chronic diseases aren't getting adequate treatment, and about 45% of all healthy adults aren't getting recommended care. This lack of chronic care management and preventive tests leads to much higher expenses later when conditions become severe and require a higher level of care.

6. Our healthcare system is oriented toward treatment rather than prevention. More than 40% of American deaths are due to lifestyle issues and are therefore essentially preventable. Life expectancy in the U.S. is ranked 38<sup>th</sup> out of all industrialized nations.

7. Businesses struggle with the high costs of providing healthcare benefits to their employees. This expense has become the largest sector of the entire American economy and is stunting job development.

8. The multitude of public and private insurance systems is complicated and confusing to healthcare providers as well as patients.

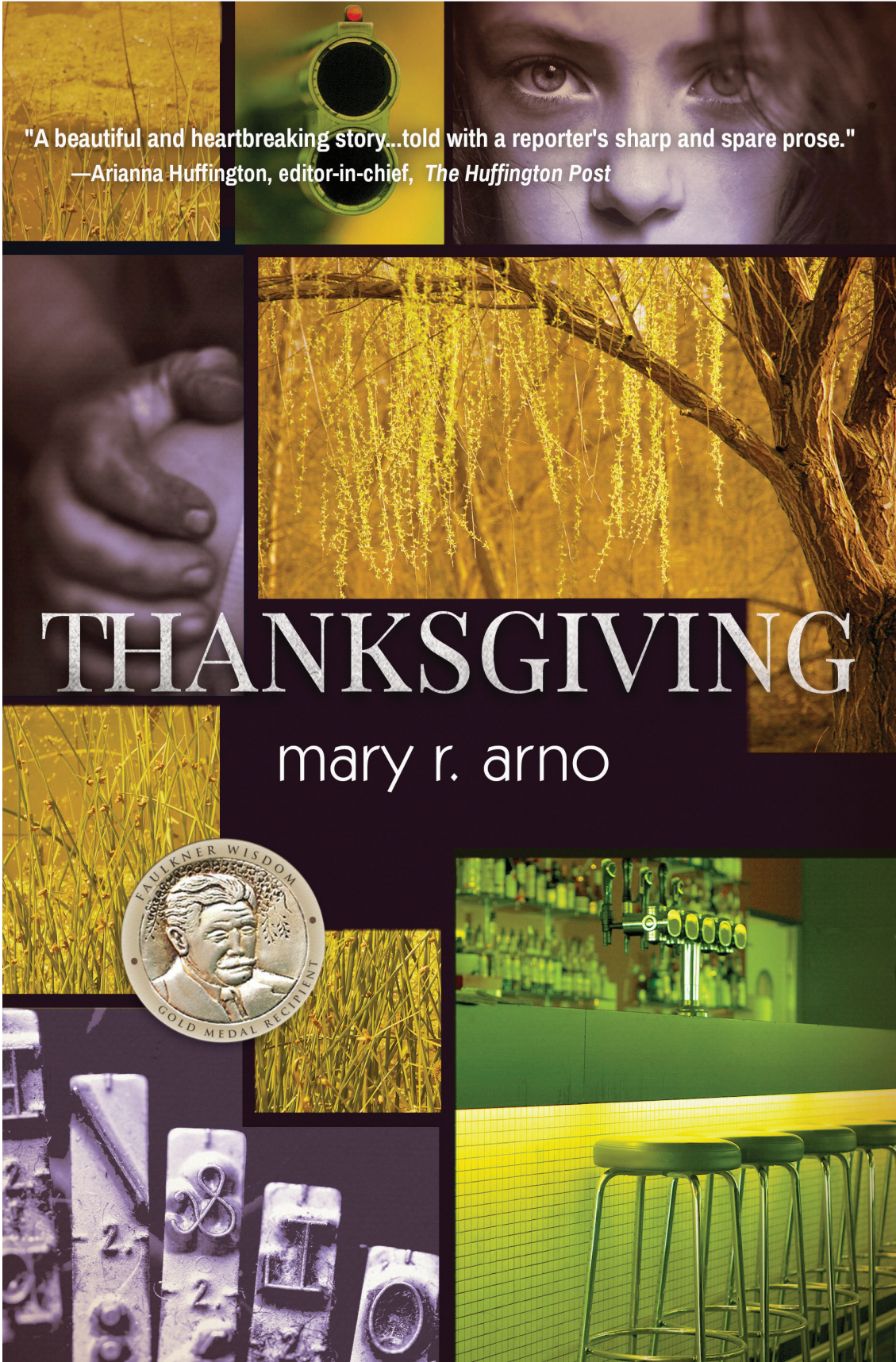
9. Hospital systems build state-of-the-art facilities, but a high percentage of people can't afford to go to them.

10. On the other hand, because hospitals must provide 24/7, full emergency response to anyone who comes through their doors, regardless of ability to pay, costs shift to the businesses, people, and third party payers who can. Fees add up quickly, and as an example, the average ER bill for a person showing symptoms of what turns out to be a common cold has climbed to \$800-\$1,200.

11. Uninsured people must often rely on the ER for free primary care. Unable to afford health insurance costs (which have generally increased every year for the last decade), they jump into the safety net of the ER to get the care they need—at around 10 times the cost of a primary care physician.

12. Our high-cost medical care is the single greatest cause of bankruptcy proceedings for individuals and has a similarly negative effect on businesses, states, and the nation.





"A beautiful and heartbreaking story...told with a reporter's sharp and spare prose."  
—Arianna Huffington, editor-in-chief, *The Huffington Post*

# THANKSGIVING

mary r. arno



# Thanksgiving

Mary R. Arno

“A beautiful and heartbreaking story...told with a reporter’s sharp and spare prose.”

—Arianna Huffington, editor-in-chief, *The Huffington Post*

“An excellent writer, highly recommended.”

—Tom Franklin, award-winning author of *Crooked Letter*,  
*Crooked Letter and Hell at the Breech*

## DESCRIPTION

NEW ORLEANS, SUMMER 1965: Nancy Drew, the Beatles, Hurricane Betsy. For four young people, it is a time for sailing lessons, clandestine cigarettes, facts of life, guilty secrets.

Playing girl detectives, Peg and Emmaline hitchhike to the Winn-Dixie, where Emmaline hopes to find her runaway sister. Harry, Emmaline’s brother, lurks on the edges of their toxic, disjointed family.

Meanwhile, Mimi catches the measles at her family’s summer cottage. Sent home with the family’s housekeeper, she gets a taste for grown-up adventure and a glimpse of the compromises and deceit that come with it.

As seasons and years go by, each of the four must come to terms with what happened that summer and what they did—or didn’t do. *Thanksgiving* slowly reveals the adult ugliness festering beneath the summer idylls of childhood.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- New Orleans has a vibrant literary scene, anchored by the Pirate’s Alley Faulkner Society, the Faulkner Wisdom Competition and the Tennessee Williams Literary Festival.
- The author is connected to New Orleans’ two competing newspapers—the Picayune, now largely online as nola.com, and the *Advocate*.
- Mary Arno’s husband owns a television station, WBBZ-TV in Buffalo, NY, and hosts a talk show on that station.
- The Facebook page Friends of *The Times-Picayune* Editorial Staff, of which the author is a member, has 1,551 active and lively members, many of whom now work for other local and national media.
- The author has newspaper contacts in many cities, including Los Angeles and Orlando.

## AUDIENCE

- Newspaper and television reporters
- Readers of Southern fiction
- Baby Boomers
- Women & book clubs

## MARKETING

- Author has a website/blog. She is on several social media sites including Facebook, Goodreads, Pinterest, and Twitter. She plans on creating a video trailer. Possible promotion on the Huffington Post website. Facebook ads will target Louisiana, Mississippi Gulf Coast, Texas, and newspapers within those regions; and people living in or from Southern United States.
- Shari Stauch of Where Writers Win is working on other placement for the trailer, including Jet Blue Airlines’ onboard advertising, particularly on Southern routes.

**Publisher:** Koehler Books

**Distributor:** Ingram

**PUB DATE:** 11/26/2015

**SOFTCOVER,** \$12.95, 978-1-63393-157-2

**HARDCOVER,** \$24.95 978-1-63393-181-7

**EBOOK,** \$4.99, 978-1-63393-158-9

**Trim :** 6x9, **Pages :** 158

**FICTION:** Coming of Age

## AUTHOR BIO



Mary R. Arno is an award-winning author and journalist who has worked at newspapers

across the southern United States, from Los Angeles to New Orleans to Orlando, with a couple of others in between. As a reporter and editor, she covered everything from murders and refinery explosions on the police beat to small-town politics to national political conventions and campaigns. At the Los Angeles Times, she was part of teams awarded Pulitzer Prizes for covering the L.A. riots in 1992 and the Northridge earthquake in 1994. A native of New Orleans, she lives on a farm in upstate New York with her husband and the youngest three of her four children, spending as much time as possible in the city of her birth.

## ONLINE

[www.maryarno.com](http://www.maryarno.com)

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**INGRAM**



## CHAPTER ONE

### kenner

ARKANSAS WAS THE LAST street for as far as you could see in the newest, barest western end of Kenner, Louisiana. The residential grid where Peg Hennessy grew up was perfectly symmetrical—every lot fifty feet across, one hundred feet back. Twenty-four houses on a block, twelve on each side. A smooth white concrete ribbon of a street, no lumpy bricks with tree roots that could trip a kid off her bike. Of course, a few trees would be nice . . .

*Buzz, buzz, chop, chop, mow, mow. Pile drivers pound thirty-foot logs into the ground on the next block of Arkansas. Then the cement mixers spawn neat, identical rectangular slabs, each with a driveway extending like the tail of an amoeba. Sturdy foundations prove New Greenlawn Terrace is quality—at least that’s what Daddy says. These rows of houses along alphabetically ordered state-named streets will last. They won’t sink into the marshy mud or end up leaning and tottering into a wobbly middle age like the tiny, wooden houses in Old Greenlawn. No, this is 1965, and Daddy says New Greenlawn is built for the ages.*

Houses were springing up, but the neighborhood still had plenty of wilderness to play in. If you could get through the tall grass behind the Hennessys’ fence, you could walk from their backyard to Lake Pontchartrain and into St. Charles Parish without seeing another house or street. The kids in the neighborhood called it the Weeds back there. There were thorny bushes of wild blackberries, which they sometimes picked. But they usually ate most of them before they got home. Also, there was the Canal, which was actually a ditch that emptied into Lake Pontchartrain.

*The kids in my family are allowed to play in the Weeds, but we aren’t supposed to go near the Canal. My mother says we could drown. But I am eleven, and I know that drowning is pretty unlikely since the Canal is less than a foot deep. Of course, you could sink in the mud.*

*I don’t like going back there much because it stinks, but my four little brothers and their friends play there a lot. Sometimes we come back smelling awful, and Mama hoses us off before she lets us inside.*

*People in Kenner are different. Mama says some of them are not well bred. Some of them say “ain’t” and one boy says “nigger.” Also some of them have funny accents, and there are a lot of Protestants, mostly Baptist. In the summer, they go for Bible lessons. They call it Vacation Babble School, which sounds pretty funny.*



Some of the families had come from places farther away than New Orleans. Emmaline Mackey, for example. She was almost two years older than Peg, but only one grade ahead because they started school later where she comes from. Also, her family moved a lot.

*Emmaline likes to go back in the Weeds and doesn't mind the smell. We look for rocks and smash them open with a hammer to see if the insides sparkle. We take picnics so we don't have to come in for lunch. Mama always makes me a bologna sandwich or peanut butter. Emmaline fixes her own. Once she made a Bosco sandwich.*

\* \* \* \*

Looking back on it, Peg realized that Emmaline knew all kinds of grown-up stuff, a lot more than Peg, which could be embarrassing. Sometimes Peg tried to pretend she knew, like when Emmaline talked about French-kissing with Merle and asked Peg if her father ever French-kissed her. Peg was horrified and couldn't think of what to say.

"Why do you call your daddy Merle?" she asked.

"He's not my daddy."

The girls had stayed out too long and Miss Ruby, Emmaline's mother, was pretty mad. When they had got back to where the street ended in the Weeds, they could hear Miss Ruby yelling out of the kitchen window. "Emmaline, Emmaline! Git in here, girl!"

Emmaline looked a little scared. "You come in, Peg," she said over her shoulder as she ran ahead. "Then she won't hit me."

Peg wasn't too crazy about facing an angry Miss Ruby. Even worse were Emmaline's older brother, Harry, and his friends, who mostly didn't wear shirts or go to school. They just worked on the cars and motorcycles parked in their driveway. Definitely not well bred, Peg thought. But Peg wasn't a chicken, so she followed Emmaline. When she got to the door, Miss Ruby was holding Emmaline by the arm and whispering in her ear in a kind of hiss.

"Girl, you was supposed to be washing—Oh, hi, Peg." She let go of Emmaline. Bright red stripes from her fingers circled Emmaline's upper arm. "Well, give your friend something to drank." Miss Ruby walked away. When she opened the door to the back bedroom, Peg could hear men talking.

"You want some coffee?" Emmaline asked.

"You're allowed to have coffee?"

"Oh sure, I can even make it." Emmaline took the coffee pot over to the faucet, ducking below the brown swags of flypaper speckled with dead insects draped over the sink. She ran water over the used grounds, then put the pot on the stove and lit the burner. Blue gas flickers surrounded the blackened bottom of the tin pot. Emmaline rubbed her arm, but Miss Ruby's finger marks didn't go away. After a couple of minutes, she got a dishtowel, turned off the burner, lifted the pot, and poured two cups. It didn't look like coffee. It looked too light even for tea. Emmaline put milk from the carton into both cups and then heaped in three spoons of sugar. Then she stuck the wet spoon back in the sugar bowl and passed it over to Peg. Peg shook a spoonful into her cup, took one sip, and almost spit it back.



**CLYDE SUTTON**

**WILLIAM**



## CHAPTER 1

# CONFUSION

WILLIAM GLANCED AT the wall.

“All you need to do is see your body as invulnerable, much stronger than any steel.” And then he just walked right through the concrete wall of the building. Like it was the most normal thing in the world. You can imagine the effect that had on all the government observers and scientists assembled in that secret room assuming they were there to expose another fake.

William smiled as he stepped back through the ragged hole before the dust settled. Light shone around him from the sunny day outside and the sparkles from the floating dust created an eerie effect for the people in the gloomy room.

“The time you kindly allowed me for my lecture and demonstration is well over so when you have some more questions for me, you know where to contact me,” William said before he walked out of the room—except by the door this time.

Of the many memories William shared with me that was one he particularly treasured; he recalled happily the shocked look on the faces of all those dour experts and scientists as he stepped back into the room. They had come face to face with something alien to their world view and, deep down, they stubbornly refused to admit it was possible despite having seen William walk through a wall with their own eyes. He had shattered their secure little view of the world.

I first met William in Los Angeles after spending the day wasting time at Disneyland, doing all those touristy things. I walked out of the park and got on the bus from Disneyland to Anaheim, where I was staying at a motel for a few days.

This guy was one of a group of people who got on the bus at a later stop. He looked kind of unkempt with wild hair and beard as he stood gazing down the aisle, so I went back to staring out the window and ignored him. There were lots of empty seats, but after a while he slowly walked down and, after putting his backpack on the seat in front, sat down beside me with a big smile showing through his beard. I was more than a bit nervous, as I was travelling alone and there was nobody sitting near me.

He gave me a hug while I tried to shrink back, which is not easy when you are squashed against the window in a bus seat. When his face was beside my ear he whispered “Please



play along, I'm really sorry about this" and then gently kissed my lips. Oddly enough my strongest thought was that I don't like bushy beards.

He started talking happily as the bus moved off, peppering me with questions about how my day was going and what I was doing on the bus. When he stopped for a breath I just stared back at him and then said quietly, "If you don't tell me what's going on here I am going to start screaming."

He paused for a few moments and seemed to go kind of blank. After an eerie few moments he said, "I can tell you are trustworthy and I don't know why but it seems important that I tell you the truth. Will you promise not to tell anybody about me or alert the police if I tell you why I sat here?"

All I said was, "Okay," while thinking this had better be good.

"First of all," he said, "I am on the run trying to hide from the government, or rather a clandestine part of it." He saw the look on my face and quickly added, "but don't worry, I'm not a threat to you. I have not done anything criminal, other than being different.

"To their way of thinking that is enough to make me a threat and require that I either be under their control or eliminated. Two men were chasing me earlier and another two who I am sure are also working with them drove by while I was sitting here. Agents have been alerted to look out for men fitting my description, and while I don't know if there were agents watching or not, I prefer not to take the chance. I got on the bus and came to sit by you as we are obviously fairly close in age. Making it look as if we are close friends or lovers does not fit my profile and should make them think I am not the man they are looking for."

I noticed he was turning his head and looking behind regularly while he was telling me this. He sat silently for a time, still looking around occasionally, finally relaxing.

"It looks like they are not following us."

As the bus approached another stop a few minutes later, he signalled the driver that he wanted to get off. When the bus was pulling over he said, "Goodbye," and stood up to retrieve his pack from the seat in front. Feeling irritated by his casual dismissal I blurted out, "But you didn't even tell me your name." He just smiled, walked down the aisle and got off. I watched him walk down the street until he was out of sight, feeling both angry with him and disappointed that he never once looked back.

It is unusual for me to let other people get under my skin, but the oddness of the encounter kept the memory returning to plague me. I replayed the conversation over and over again in my head, trying to figure out if he had been for real or just some weirdo having fun at my expense. The problem with me is once something excites my curiosity, I just can't let it go.

\*\*\*\*\*

I went on the Universal Pictures day tour the next day but didn't really enjoy myself as I spent most of the time feeling angry with somebody I didn't even know. About the only thing that cheered me up were the Jurassic Park and Revenge of the Mummy rides, which brought back happy memories of when I had seen the movies with friends from the technical institute where I had trained.

The following morning I got up early to catch the bus to Las Vegas feeling good because I was on the move again and getting out of LA. I'm not interested in taking bus tours to look at the houses of actors or Pamela Anderson's star on Broadway or other idiot touristy activities. *God, people, will you get a life or something?*

I love travelling and doing new things, the more challenging the better. Seeing the Grand Canyon has always been on my to-do list, and I was enjoying the rush of anticipation at fulfilling a long-held dream.

As the Greyhound pulled into a service center on the way to Las Vegas I saw him standing where the out lane left for the highway. He was obviously trying to hitch a ride. I got off the bus following the other passengers toward the diner; then on impulse, I turned around, bumping into the old lady behind me when she couldn't stop in time. After my apologies I walked slowly up behind him, looking at him carefully.

He was slouching slightly, looking relaxed or maybe resigned—someone your eyes pass over without ever really noticing. He definitely was travelling light, wearing the same clothes he had been wearing in LA—well-worn and faded like his pack, but they had been freshly washed. It's amazing the amount of information you can get in a glance.

*God, why am I even thinking like this? He is almost certainly paranoid and delusional but at least I know he doesn't need his mum to do his washing for him.*

At a whim I said loudly—and as deeply as I could—“This is the police, hold it right. . .” His transformation was startling and incredible. He spun around with his fists clenched while adopting some kind of martial arts stance. The slightly dishevelled or pathetic look was gone. There was no doubt he was a fighter and had reacted instinctively. He scared me enough to make me step back a pace or two. He was looking around and over my head for the real threat, having sized me up, instantly dismissing me before really noticing me.

His gaze finally settled on me as realization dawned and he snarled, “You are that girl from the bus in Los Angeles, aren't you? What the hell do you think you are doing?” I could feel the anger radiating from him.

I guess if I had thought things through a little more I should have expected this sort of reaction and would have handled things differently, but I tend to be a bit impulsive. Feeling angry at myself now as well him I said, “Look, it was only a joke, forget it,” and started walking back to the diner.

After a few moments of indecision he grabbed his pack and followed me. By the time he caught up we were at the door. He stopped me with a light touch on my shoulder saying, “Can we talk for a minute?”

“I don't have much time before the bus goes so you can come in and talk to me while I have something to eat if you want to.”

He looked around, sighed and then said, “All right.”

I realize, with the benefit of hindsight, that he only followed me back because of his intense sense of honor. He had yelled at me and felt he needed to explain and apologize, which overcame his usual reserve and caution. If I had walked up to him and spoken politely to him, he would have been polite to me too but would have ignored me at any deeper level and then moved on.



*First Sequel to*  
**DRAGON HEARTS: Love in China**

# **DRAGON HEARTS**

*Eagle in China*

*Carol Ann Nix*



## SANDSTORMY REALTIOSHIPS

**March 3, 2010**

**W**hat did Yo and I talk about last night at Pizza Buffet in Beijing? Us—him and me—Yo and Carol. That was a first. We are happy with our relationship. We won't tag it with a name or plan for the future. Yo is an honorable, traditional Chinese man. I love that, but tradition places demands on him. I am an American and considerably older than Yo. Aging won't stop. Are Chinese tradition and a significant age difference insurmountable obstacles? Time will tell. For now, we will kick back and enjoy each other. Yo believes in destiny. I believe in God. As far as I am concerned, anything can happen.

Spring Festival is over. We are officially in the Chinese Year of the Tiger. Spring semester is beginning at Fanzhidu School in Beijing, as I continue teaching Chinese university students here. A few words of explanation: All my students and colleagues are Chinese. They use English names to help Americans and other foreigners who are either too lazy or too inept to remember pronunciations of Chinese names. I will place myself in the inept category. I just cannot master pronouncing the likes of “Zhang Zhiyao.”

I am also excited about teaching two new American Law courses at world-renowned Peking University—an institution where significant historic events took root—the Cultural Revolution in 1966—Tiananmen Square protests in 1989.

**March 4, 2010**

Ever hopeful, I texted Yo. “I invite you to my apartment on Sunday for dinner and a stab at studying English.”

“I don't know if I can be with you,” he replied. “Our Fanzhidu boss James wants us Chinese teachers to hand out promotional brochures on Saturday. Teachers shouldn't

have to pass out propaganda. It's not professional. We aren't marketers. Anyway, hope I am free on Sunday."

### **March 6, 2010**

Hot water went on strike in my apartment. Not Wen Wen's fault. The main pipe in the building broke. Both my home telephone and Internet service are down. Totally Wen Wen's fault. She forgot to pay the bills. Wen Wen is my best lady friend in Beijing and my landlady. She is an infinitely better friend than landlady.

I rendezvoused with Wen Wen in the lobby of Swissotel in downtown Beijing. Swissotel is a luxury hotel in Hong Kong Macau Center where Fanzhidu corporate offices are located. Wen Wen wore a new coat—buff-colored cashmere with full fur collar. She bought it from her cousin Ling for 900 Yuan (\$150.00). We ate at our favorite Korean restaurant. "I saw the publisher man for the second time," said Wen Wen. "I like him better now, but my parents think he's too old. I like older men. They're more mature and reliable. I am thirty. A man anywhere between thirty-five and forty is good for me."

Yo texted, "Sorry, we can't be together tomorrow. I have to hand out more brochures. Have a nice weekend."

"Can we get together after you finish working?" I replied.

"No, I need to prepare to teach Monday classes. Hope you understand."

Big sigh.

### **March 8, 2010**

"Happy Women's Day!" was Wen Wen's early morning text. I had to Google the term to learn that International Women's Day is celebrated in China. The United Nations theme for IWD 2010 is "Equal Access to Education, Training, and Science and Technology: Pathway to Decent Work for Women." My question: Do we even celebrate International Women's Day in the United States? Shouldn't we?

My toilet doesn't flush. I called Wen Wen. "You're out of cold water," she explained. "I need to buy more. In China you have to buy cold water and hot water separately. I can't buy more until tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? What do I do now?"

"Pour a bucket of water down the toilet. Everything will go down with it," she said. I held my nose and poured. More and more, I am learning acceptance. Perhaps that is one reason I'm in China.

My Fanzhidu colleague Lisa married shortly before I arrived in Beijing last October. Together we paged through her wedding photo album. What a beautiful bride she made. Lisa is happy. Her husband does all the cooking.

I received my first ever email from my married niece Annie back home. Bad news. Her husband left her. He wants a divorce, but still wants to be friends. I would scratch his eyes out if I were her. I was their wedding photographer. It was my gift to the newlyweds. I thought their marriage would last. I thought wrong. No one can accurately predict which marriages will flourish and which will wilt—not even a fortune-telling Chinese monk in a Buddhist temple.

I told Yo about my niece's broken marriage. "I'm not surprised that people divorce," he said. "You can't know someone until you're married."

"If you date long enough, you can know a person pretty well," I said, "but you cannot know if the two of you will change in compatible ways after marriage. Too many spouses get weird after the wedding ceremony."

### **March 10, 2010**

I called Yo. "James is sending me back to Jincheng," I said. "Mr. Wang is sponsoring more promotional English classes. He promised an American teacher but couldn't find one in a week. Lisa calls this an emergency. Mr. Wang will lose face if he doesn't produce an American teacher. No worries. He won't lose face. He will produce me."

"Will I come with you?" Yo asked. "I want to be your teaching assistant."

"I hope so," I said. "James will make that decision. We will find out everything tomorrow."

Seeing Tony at school reminded me of the lovely silver necklace he bought for his girlfriend in Jincheng last week. "Did your girlfriend like her gift?" I asked.

"She was moved," he said.

"She smothered you with hugs and kisses, didn't she?"

"How did you know?"

I smiled a knowing smile. "Women everywhere love gifts from boyfriends and husbands. Hugs and kisses are our global expressions of gratitude."

### **March 11, 2010**

I continue self-flushing the toilet. It could be worse—it might not flush at all.

Lisa brought me up to date on Jincheng. I will leave Beijing tomorrow morning on the express train—*alone*. No Yo. No Tony. Nobody.

### **March 12, 2010**

It was Yo's duty to get me to the train on time. My phone rang at 6:30 a.m. It was Yo. "I'm on my way to your apartment with the Fanzhidu driver," he said. "Are you ready?"

I frowned. "You're early. Tell the driver to slow down." Yo knocked on the apartment door too soon and mumbled when he found me still packing. "Hurry, Carol."

"Okay, okay, I'm doing my best." I self-flushed the toilet one last time and closed the apartment door behind us. Beijing's rush-hour traffic was particularly snail-like and snarly. Yo kept glancing nervously at his watch. James would blame him if I missed the train. When the driver jerked to a halt in front of the station Yo grabbed my suitcase and forged his way through the crowd. "Follow me," he said. "Stay close." A security guard blocked him at the last security gate. Only ticketed passengers were allowed beyond that point. I would have to find the reserved car and my reserved seat alone. I was doomed.

Yo said something to the guard in authoritative, rapid-fire Chinese, and the man opened the gate, allowing us both onto the boarding platform. Huge sigh of relief.



“Angela Correll has proven yet again  
she’s a storyteller of the first order. Read this book!”

—BRET LOTT, BEST SELLING AUTHOR OF *JEWEL*,  
AN OPRAH BOOK CLUB PICK

ANGELA  
CORRELL

*Guarded*

# Chapter One

THE OLD STONE house looked solemn in the September afternoon. Even the birds were quiet, as if in respect for its suffering. Annie stared at charred stones, glassless windows, and a scorched chimney jutting into the blue sky, all evidence of the fiery injustice done only weeks ago.

Glass in the fanlight window over the front door was gone, a casualty of the water pressure that night as men guided hoses to the fire in the upstairs room. There was no time then to think of collateral damage. The goal was to save the house.

The door stood slightly ajar. Annie slipped inside, her running shoes crunching on pieces of glass, the stench of smoke still heavy in the air. They had left the house just as it was after the fire, not daring to move anything out until the insurance company had done its own investigation. Now it was disappointingly over, with no prize at the end of the waiting. The check her grandmother received was a fraction of the repair estimates.

“Well, that’s that,” her grandmother had said.

For all her love of heritage, home, and family, Annie knew Beulah was ultimately a frugal realist. To counter her own disappointment, Annie went for her daily run through the barn lot, following the farm lane to the stone house, as if the house might tell her how it could be saved.

The downstairs rooms had damaged plaster and warped wood floors from the water. She went carefully up the stairs and looked into the room where Stella, the renter, had left a candle burning. The fire had leaped up a curtain near the chimney, burning a hole in the roof.

Amidst the destruction, Annie closed her eyes and imagined the house as it was in her childhood, before her mother’s illness, before the house went into the hands of whoever needed shelter and offered cash by the month.

Windows open, curtains dancing in the honeysuckle-scented breeze, and a vase of lavender on the bedside table. Clinking pans in the kitchen, the smell of savory cooking, a crackling fire in the great stone fireplace. In the summer, her mother tended to her small garden, or the patch

of lavender just beyond the back door. In the winter, the rich brew of coffee warmed and comforted the adults sitting around the fire. Story after story fueled laughter, while Annie and her childhood friend Jake occupied themselves with a game or puzzle nearby.

The house offered no answers and only fueled her discouragement. Outside in the fresh air, she plucked a green walnut off a tree and breathed in the scent that whispered *summer is over*. If the house was not repaired soon, the fall rains and winter wind would invite even more destruction.

Annie set off on a run back to the house she shared with her grandmother, this time crossing the wooden bridge spanning Gibson's Creek and then onto the tree-lined road bordering the branch. Once she reached May Hollow Road, she relaxed as the rhythmic thumping on macadam cleared her head. After a half mile, she turned right into her grandmother's long and winding driveway just across from Betty and Joe Gibson's small bungalow. The white plank fence lined the curving driveway, newly repaired and painted, the result of her hard work this summer after losing her job as a flight attendant.

Betty Gibson's faded pink Cadillac was parked in the driveway. Annie slowed her pace, not in a hurry to see their nosy neighbor, especially today. Betty had taken to stopping by a couple times a week since Annie had moved home. Betty's smothering interest in her personal life had grown annoying. The screen door creaked when Annie opened it and the chatter of a female voice stopped as soon as she stepped into the mudroom just off the kitchen.

"Is that you, Annie?" Betty called. "I was telling Beulah the zinnias are beautiful. If the frost holds off, they'll be perfect for Scott and Mary Beth's wedding."

Annie steeled herself, remembered her customer service training as a flight attendant, and smiled before entering the kitchen.

Betty was sitting across from her grandmother at the farmhouse table, her curly blonde hair held back by two barrettes, her eyes wide with interest. They were both drinking iced tea, empty dessert plates in front of them.

"I surely hope the weather is good," Betty said. "Evelyn is about to work herself to death."

Annie busied herself with pouring a glass of iced sweet tea.

"But I really don't understand why Evelyn is goin' to all this trouble. I mean, Scott and Mary Beth are no kin to her," Betty said. "I know they met while taking Sunday dinner with you and Evelyn on your mission of mercy to the local single folks, but she's acting like they are her own children. Here's her own son, Jake, nearly about to marry Annie, and she won't have nothing left over to give."

"Jake and I aren't even engaged," Annie said. "Evelyn will have lots of time to recover from this one."

"You know Evelyn loves a party," Beulah said.

"It's a mighty big expense," Betty said, with a disapproving shake of her head. "How much you expect she's paying for all this?"

"Scott and Mary Beth have good jobs. They're paying for the wedding," Annie said. "Evelyn's hosting it."

"Well, I'm glad to hear it," Betty said, leaning back in her chair. "I did wonder."

Annie felt like she had thrown a mouse to the cat.



“Would you like a piece of Betty’s derby pie?” Beulah said, pointing to the pie on the counter.

“Kentucky Nut Pie. You know all that trademark business,” Betty corrected, with a dismissive hand wave.

“Sounds good,” she said, her opinion of Betty softening. The pie plate was still warm, and Annie’s mouth watered as the knife cut through the pecans and soft chocolate morsels.

“Speaking of you not being engaged,” Betty said. “It’s time enough with you and Jake, don’t you think? Why, you two have known each other since birth. When we gonna hear weddin’ bells around here?” Betty said, her head cocked to one side.

The chocolate chips were still warm and melted in Annie’s mouth. She closed her eyes, enjoyed the sweetness, and ignored Betty’s question.

“I showed Betty the estimates for fixing the old stone house,” Beulah said.

“Higher than a cat’s back,” Betty said. “What do they think coming in with prices like that? Law have mercy! Joe and me were talking about it last night and he told me there’s a fella over in Rutherford who has a business selling salvage from old houses. He pays good money to take an old house apart. They take out all the good wood, the trim work, and the fireplace. Why, Joe said there’s no telling what he’ll pay for the stone house with all those old limestones to be reused. Just think about it, Beulah. You get the money from the insurance, little as it is, and then you get paid again to haul off all the pieces and parts. A bulldozer can take care of the rest and there you’ve got a nice place to build a new house, if Annie and Jake ever get married.”

“That so?” Beulah said.

“Don’t you like the idea, Annie? Your age group is all so interested in recycling and such. Repurpose; isn’t that what they call it today? I heard the word on *The Today Show*. You know, I used to love Matt Lauer; I could have sopped him up with a biscuit. I’ve gone off him lately. What do you think, Annie?”

“About Matt Lauer?”

“No, honey, about salvaging a house for recycling,” Betty said.

“Houses should be used as houses whenever possible,” Annie said, and glanced at her grandmother.

“Well, I better get supper started,” Betty said, and pushed back her chair. “Joe comes in at four-thirty hungry as a bear, and if I don’t have something on the table, he goes to paw at the refrigerator and mess up my organizations.”

Beulah stood.

“Don’t get up, I’ll see myself out,” Betty said. “See you tomorrow night, Beulah.”

The screen door slammed behind her. Annie turned to her grandmother.

“How do you stand her? She’s always digging for something.”

Beulah laughed. “She doesn’t bother me. You have to understand, Betty was the Tobacco Festival queen for three years in a row when she was young. In fact, when Hollywood came ‘round years ago to film a Civil War feature, they picked her to be a stand-in. Life has never quite measured up since then, so she has to hunt down her own excitement.”

“It’s no excuse,” Annie said. Though it did shed a glimmer of light on Betty’s personality, not to mention her buxom features and straight white teeth.



Meiſha Camm

Brewer  
Archives

# Chapter 1

“PLEASE, MOM, NOT another one. I don’t want to go on this trip. I don’t want to leave Pete.”

I begged, pleaded, and screamed, as Mom dragged me across the lawn and motioned for me to get into the car, so we could head to the airport. This time we were going to Rwanda—and we would be living in a tent. A *tent!*

“Ophelia Brewer, do not have any worries. It’ll be an adventure, and while we’re gone Pete will be well taken care of by Gramsie and Grandpa. Plus, I gave them an extra box of bacon flavored doggie treats for him,” she replied.

Throughout Mom’s childhood, she was not permitted to travel outside the perimeter of the fence surrounding the house where she grew up. When she became an adult, she vowed to venture to every crevice of the earth, dragging along my father and me.

Since I was born, eleven years ago, my destinations with Mom have included Australia, Russia, Haiti, Japan, Brazil, and India. Now, we were in Rwanda, sweltering and sweaty.

The humidity there was as thick as soup and the temperature was a staggering one hundred five degrees. It was even difficult to move around. I dreamed last night of being back home in Virginia and being rescued by the ice cream truck that was filled with Firecracker popsicles. I was about to bite into one just as Mom woke me up and gently ordered me to get out of bed and get dressed.

“Darling, this will be exciting. I promise. Our tour guide has promised to give us an inside look into the history of Rwanda,” Mom explained.

My father and she were all smiles as we left our tent.

“They are coming,” I said, after my father grabbed my hand.

“Ophelia, I already see the others approaching the bus,” Dad replied.

“No, that isn’t what I mean. Please listen to me.”

My parents ignored me by starting a conversation with a couple from Italy who were on the same tour bus as us. The couple regarded me with interest.



“Your hazel eyes are gorgeous,” the Italian woman noticed.

“Vivian, Tom, your little one has the potential to become a runner. I coach track at a high school in Rome. She is going to be tall,” the Italian man commented.

“Thank you,” I nodded, still trying to get Dad to listen to me by tugging on his blue Polo style shirt.

My heart raced as the driver started the bus and drove off. My stomach felt queasy, as though the bus was spinning. Sweat poured down my face. I didn’t know why I was having an anxiety attack, but the fear was real.

“Good morning, gentleman, ladies, and children. Please look to the right. It appears there are elephants with a baby in the green pasture. The little one was just born yesterday,” Gahiji, the tour guide, announced.

Everyone clapped and gawked at the elephants as my vision blurred. People whipped out their digital cameras and smart phones, as they tried to capture the newborn elephant.

“Dad, something bad is going to happen,” I pleaded, almost in tears. “I think we’re going to be attacked by—”

Suddenly, we heard banging from the back of the bus, causing the driver to make an abrupt stop. The thumping grew louder and harder. The bus was moving to the rhythm of the chaos. Within minutes, the bus was pushed over on its left side, causing us to tumble and the rear doors of the bus to split open.

Everyone screamed. A gorilla entered through the rear doors, and the enraged beast let out a piercing yell. Out the window, I saw at least five others clawing the side of the bus and the tires. We were all trapped. I could barely move. The gorilla seized my father’s neck and lifted his other hand to strike him, but Gahiji, upright on a knee, shot the gorilla in the arm, causing it to let go of my father. Then, he fired shots in the air to give the others a warning. All of them ran away. By now, I was hardly able to breathe.

When it was safe, the passengers evacuated the bus. The local police and paramedics arrived, tending to bruises and cuts. My mother had to carry me out, observing how pale I was.

“Dad, I told you they were coming,” I whispered.

“Ophelia, how did you know?” he asked.

I paused. My mouth was so dry.

“Speak, child,” Mom ordered.

“I touched Dad’s left hand. I saw it happening before everyone else did,” I explained before I fainted into her arms.

I was rushed to a local hospital by ambulance with my parents. After conducting several tests, the doctor concluded I had suffered a heat stroke and dehydration. Within hours, I was pumped with fluids through an IV and we were sent back to the tent campgrounds.

A week later, my parents and I completed the African tour and returned home to Virginia Beach, Virginia. Six years had passed. We rarely spoke of the incident that had occurred in Rwanda.

# Chapter 2

“WHAT ARE YOUR plans this afternoon?” Dad asked before puffing on a cigarette. Over the years, Mom had been nagging him to stop smoking.

“A little driving here and there,” I said, as the wind lightly blew my curly locks in the air. When my parents handed me over the keys to an emerald green Nissan Sentra, my cheeks had turned rosy red with excitement. The car wasn’t brand new, but I didn’t care because it belonged to me. The days of waiting for my friend Jill or my parents to pick me up or drop me off were over. Not to mention begging my mother for her car came with a two-hour lecture on safety driving rules and regulations.

“Be careful,” Dad said, nodding.

“I will. First, I’m going to drop off these boxes of canned goods at the Food Bank.”

I muscled the heavy boxes into the back of my car. Throughout my childhood, my parents and I volunteered at the local food bank and homeless shelters. My mother was relentless in telling and showing me that she didn’t want a selfish and ungrateful child.

Dad noticed something in the tree next door.

“John,” Dad sharply called out to the neighbor’s five-year-old son he had spotted climbing up the tree.

“Come on down from there,” I said, in a lighthearted tone; I didn’t want to scare him.

“No, I want my kite,” he whined and continued to inch up the tree, attempting to get near the red colored object that was stuck between two tree limbs.

“Maybe his parents can get him down from the tree,” Dad said, before knocking on their front door.

In the meantime, I called 911 from my cellular phone. John climbed even higher in the tree. The fire department would probably have to use their ladder to get him down.

Rushing from the house and toward the tree, his mother, Linda, looked up, using her hand as a shield against the sun. “Son, we’ve been looking for you. Mommy wants to give you a hug. Please come down from the tree.”

“I almost have my kite. I’ll come back down after I get it.”

“ . . . discover anew the power of the Gospel to awaken your life  
and the irresistible invitation to fall in love with the ‘wildness of God.’”

— Tim Shriver, Chairman of Special Olympics,  
author of *Fully Alive: Discovering What Matters Most*

# Perfect

Sacred Stories from  
the Heart of a Dad



**John T. Wagner**



# 1

## Boogie Boards



*“My name is Legion,” he replied,  
“for we are many” (Mark 5:9).*

## READ

Psalm 93  
Mark 5:1-20

## SILENCE.

I have never met a kid that loved the water more than David. As a family we love the ocean. There is something about the rhythm of the waves, the pounding nature, the physicality of being in the surf, the surge of water, the weight—how it wraps itself around you almost like a hug—the constant ebb and flow, the unpredictability, the washing machine-like nature of being tumbled over backwards by a wave—what I often like to call a “slobberknocker”—and somersaulting, head over heels, towards the beach. David absolutely loves it, the rougher the better.

We have friends who live and own places near the beach in St. Augustine, Florida. It has become one of our favorite places to visit, either over a spring break or in the summer. One thing that we realized shortly after we moved to New York is that here they also have a *winter break*, which generally happens the second week of February when it is so cold here you think you moved to the Ukraine.

Two years ago, on our first *winter break*, we went to St. Augustine, to the beach. What we didn't realize is that it was *winter* there as well. We got off the plane, and instead of it being 85 degrees and sunny, which is what we were hoping, it was 55 degrees, cloudy, with a 25 mph wind.

## BEACH

That didn't stop David. After unpacking the car and getting settled, we decided to *take a walk on the beach*. We weren't down there fifteen minutes when we look up and he is in the water.

Two things David doesn't have that you would expect most kids his age to have—a temperature gauge on his body that basically says, “If this water gets five degrees colder, it will ice over. The ocean will turn to a massive glacier of ice.” Maybe it's the Down syndrome, maybe all the hummus and pasta, but for some reason, David's body is not telling him that.

The other thing he doesn't have is a healthy sense of danger. “These waves are two stories tall. If I go out there now, they will toss me up on the beach like a banana.” That thought doesn't occur to David.

So we were literally the only people on the beach from maybe where we were to Miami, and our son is in the water. Gae looks at me with that “you're the dad, do something” look, and all I can think is, *What happened to the normal teenage kid who likes to lie on the couch in a warm apartment and listen to iTunes and text his friends all day and watch old shows and eat?*

## GOD

Sometimes I think when God created the oceans, he was thinking of David. He thought for a kid who struggles to get his body to do some of the things other kids can do, to go in the direction he would hope it would go in, I want to create a place where this child feels most alive, most free, where he can feel and touch and taste the *wildness of God*, even if he isn't sure how to say it or even what it is. He just knows that when he is in that ocean he is free. He is no longer a "kid with disabilities," a kid who struggles to run or to walk. He is alive, weightless, floating, feeling, laughing, and the blood is pumping rapidly through his veins . . . being held in the precious hand of God.

## STORY OF LEGION

*Mark 5:1* says, "They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes." This was a *bad neighborhood* and the disciples knew it. *Good people*, certainly good Jews, didn't go through here unless they had to. And they didn't have to. But Jesus said, "Get in the boat, we are going over to the other side." So they did.

I remember when Gae and I were first married. We moved into a small apartment on New Jersey Avenue in Washington, DC just across from Dunbar High School.

There was a large housing project just down the street that was built in the late '60s by the Catholic Church named Sursum Corda. This was the mid '80s—the crack epidemic had just hit DC, and we were quickly becoming the murder capital of the world. Marion Barry, our mayor, was in full force, and there I was with my beautiful, blonde-haired-blued-eyed-Texas-native wife, married all of about two weeks, walking together through one of the toughest, most difficult, hardened, and drug-infested communities in DC.

Gae looked at me at one point and said, "I think this is where we should start. This is where God would have us."

I thought, *You have to be crazy! We will get annihilated down here. We won't last five days.* We were there seven years. We had crossed over to "the region of the Gerasenes."

## POSSESSED

No sooner had Jesus landed on shore before this man who is described as being a "man with an evil spirit," a man so strong and so possessed he breaks the chains and the shackles on his feet and cuts himself, a man no one can subdue, a man unclothed and out of his mind, runs to Jesus.

At that point, I would be saying, "Everybody back in the boat! Hurry!" Not Jesus. I wonder how many times over the course of three years these guys thought, "I can't believe we are doing this. This is nuts."

The man shouts, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" The demons knew him. And they feared him. They knew their power was no match for the power of the Most High God.

## COME OUT

"Come out of him you evil spirit." They begged him and he "gave them permission," and the evil spirits came out and went into the pigs (*v. 13*). Power. The Bible says that they "rushed down the hill and into the lake and were drowned."



"Benita takes us on a journey that promotes self-honoring strategies to transform our fear and self-doubt into power. Her words empower us to reinvent ourselves with courage and confidence."

—Lenda Murray, Eight-Time Ms. Olympia

*A Guide for Women Who Dare  
To Achieve Their Dreams*

**Reinvent  
Your Life  
*in the*  
Second  
Act**

**Benita  
Adams**



# INTRODUCTION

If you're a middle-aged woman struggling with transitioning into this new phase of your journey, then *Reinvent Your Life in the Second Act: A Guide for Women Who Dare to Achieve Their Dreams* is for you. It inspires, encourages, and motivates “Second Actors,” women who aspire to embrace change. This is a little book with a big impact. As you move through its pages, you will encounter encouraging words that will help you R.E.S.E.T. your life through **Reinvention, Education, Self-Discovery, Engagement, and Transformation**.

Instead of traditional chapters, *Reinvent Your Life in the Second Act* is divided into “parts.” Think of these “parts” as the areas of your life you want to work on. Take one part at a time and decide what changes you want to make during each one.

Start with **Reinvention**. Here you begin your journey of change, deciding what you want and don't want.

Next comes **Education**, because to truly make a lasting change, you need to teach yourself key concepts that will help you start your new journey.

Then there's **Self-Discovery**. Who am I now? What did I want in my younger years that I put away because of fear or lack of opportunity?

After that comes **Engagement**, because now that you've learned some things about yourself, you must use them as the basis to put positive action into practice. Make and keep promises to yourself to engage in the world around you. Go out there and do what you love.

Last, you're ready for **Transformation**. It's truly about changing your life and walking in your truth and the new knowledge and power you've discovered during this R.E.S.E.T. journey.

At the end of each section, a list of activities will help you put your plans into action. This includes writing your thoughts, ideas, and feelings in what I call your R.E.S.E.T. Journal. You'll have space to start the journal at the end of each part, and can elaborate on your thoughts at the end of the book in an extended journal section. This journal will help you chart your progress. Seeing how far you've come will motivate you to keep traveling toward your transformation.

In this journey, together we'll explore the possibilities and challenges that are ahead of us in this new phase of our lives.

Let's make the rest of our lives the best of our lives. Let's reinvent ourselves.

# *PART ONE*

## **REINVENTION**

Reinvent—“To make major changes or improvements to (something).”

*Merriam-Webster.com*



## **A WOMAN IN TRANSITION**

After I was let go from my TV news job, it felt like the world had dropped from under my feet. I had dedicated more than a decade to honing my reporting skills, and suddenly it seemed all for nothing. After a long pause and remembering that I'd always had other dreams, I chose to see my firing as a positive event. Having to transition was forced on me, but I realized that this was a good thing.

Oftentimes when we're in our Second Act, we're forced to reinvent ourselves—transitioning into a new career path or personal sphere is not by choice. But it's how we respond to this forced change that makes all the difference . . . and a positive response is always the best.

As for me, I'm reinventing my life by making better decisions about what I want to do and how I want to live. I'm focusing on what's important to me, like my health and getting into the best shape I've ever been in. I'm investing in myself financially and emotionally. I'm reviving long-held dreams of writing and traveling, things I wasn't able to do when my children were young.

Some of my personal experiences may mirror yours. I want to support you in your journey as I continue traveling down my own path of self-discovery, and hopefully in coming together, Second Actors, we'll all grow.

So let's explore what it takes to reinvent ourselves.

## **TIME FOR A CHANGE**

Reinvention is all about change—extreme change. Change is exciting and scary. Sometimes we can get stuck in a rut, and we're not sure how to get out of it. My pink slip pulled me out of my rut, but not everyone gets that type of extra hand to force them to move up and out. In those times, as someone once told me, "You have to know when to leave the party." Is it time for a change, your reinvention? If so, what's holding you back?

## **SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR REINVENTION**

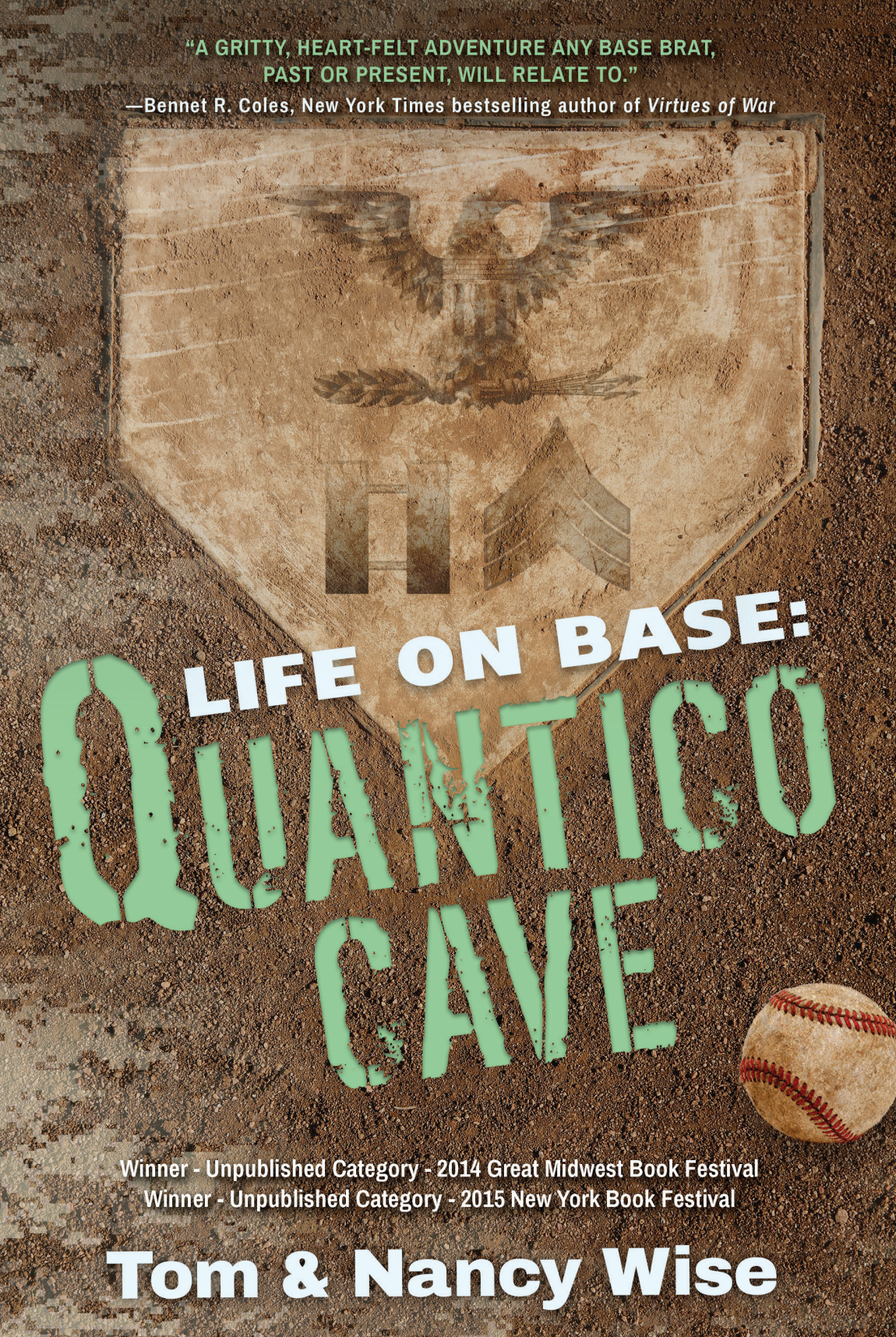
Recently, I read an article online called "Secrets of Successful Women—6 Life Lessons from Maria Shriver." Here's a look at the lessons that piece detailed, with some lessons from me too:

- "Accept that letting go of other people's expectations is a process." Second Actors, as women, many times we can be pleasers and let others identify us. Work on your own self-identity, but know it takes time.



"A GRITTY, HEART-FELT ADVENTURE ANY BASE BRAT,  
PAST OR PRESENT, WILL RELATE TO."

—Bennet R. Coles, New York Times bestselling author of *Virtues of War*



**LIFE ON BASE:**  
**QUANTICO**  
**CAVE**

Winner - Unpublished Category - 2014 Great Midwest Book Festival  
Winner - Unpublished Category - 2015 New York Book Festival

**Tom & Nancy Wise**



# *Life on Base: Quantico Cave*

Tom & Nancy Wise

**“A gritty, heart-felt adventure any base brat, past or present, will relate to.”**

—Bennet R. Coles, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Virtues of War*

**“In a world where very few people treat or recognize the military with the respect they deserve, *Quantico Cave* is a breath of fresh air.”**

—Mike Hartner, Award-winning Author of *I, Walter (The Eternity Series)*

*Winner - Unpublished Category - 2014 Great Midwest Book Festival*

*Winner - Unpublished Category - 2015 New York Book Festival*

## DESCRIPTION

For Stephen, his life on base is much the same as most other children's. The difference is in the details. Look both ways before crossing a tank path and be sure to check if the spent bullet casings you find in the long-abandoned trenches are actually empty. Sports stop at the sound of the evening trumpet call as he and his friends stand at attention while the flag is retired. Quantico Cave is a story of friendship and competition, and when Stephen meets up with a friend he once knew at a previous home station, the contest hits a whole new level that places everyone at risk.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- In 2011 there were over 2.2 million active duty and reserve military personnel and another 91 million civilian workers engaged in military services.
- Approximately 80% of children in military families are under high school age.
- Quantico Cave brings the culture and experiences of military children to life and is of interest to military and civilian children alike.
- The award winning authors have a large military family history with five family members recently serving in the middle east conflicts.

## AUDIENCE

- Middle grade and YA readers who like action, outdoor sports, adventure, and fantasy.
- Readers who like military culture.
- Readers who like a strong central character that over comes obstacles.

## AUTHOR BIO



Tom and Nancy Wise are award-winning authors. Their first novel, *The Borealis Genome*, is the grand-prize winner of the Chanticleer Book Reviews Dante Rossetti 2013 Award for YA Novels and 2014 Cygnus Award Lab Lit Category. Thomas grew up in a military family moving from base to base as the child of a Marine, living the life of an officer's brat in times of war while Nancy was raised the youngest child of a

WWII veteran. When not working together on their novels, Tom teaches at University and authors articles on project management topics and nonfiction books published by Gower Publishing in the UK.

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**6" x 9", 124 pages**

**Softcover: \$12.95,**

**978-1-63393-138-1**

**Hardcover: \$21.95,**

**978-1-63393-261-6**

**Ebook: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-139-8**

**Pub Date: Dec. 23, 2015**

**BISAC CATEGORY**

**FICTION: Coming of Age**

**ONLINE:**

**<http://www.authorthomaswise.com/>**

 köehlerbooks™

**INGRAM**



## MAP AND A COMPASS

Stephen's breath hung in the air, white in the early morning sunlight filtering through fresh fog that tangled in the low brambles of the Virginia woods. He hunkered alongside his topographical map, head down, butt planted in the grass. This orienteering challenge was his chance to do what a real Marine can do. His chin was propped on one bent knee that jutted out like a pale, bald mountaintop from his blue jean shorts. He wore his favorite t-shirt, marine drab with a scarlet-red Marine globe and anchor emblazoned on the front. Watching Jimmy from the corner of his eye, Stephen pondered their next move. *Get it right. Semper Fi.*

Jimmy looked like a deflated balloon as he stood next to Stephen. "We're lost? Oh man. I can't—"

Stephen cut him off quickly. His head wobbled on top of his knee as he muttered, "Nope, we're not," without lifting his gaze from the map. "I got this." *And Dad is watching.*

"We ain't?" Jimmy sounded hopeful. His eyes scrunched as he focused hard, trying to see the map folded to their location. "I can't lose. My Dad'll kill me."

"Stop. Alright?" Stephen mustered all the manliness of his twelve years and hoped his voice sounded more confident than he felt. He stole a quick glance toward the shadows. The camo-clad figure that followed the boys' every move through the woods watched. Stephen tried not to look in that direction. *Dad's watching. He's counting on you.*

"They're struggling, too." His head bounced on his knee as he talked. "Look." His eye, against his will, darted back to the shadow as he pointed to the map with a grubby index finger. "Where the lines come real close," he said, peering through the blond hair that hung over his eyes. "Remember?"

\* \* \* \*

The map was a swirl of long, snaky black lines that defined the hills and cliffs of the Virginia woods in amoeba-like, concentric shapes. It was mostly green but showed a creek as a thin blue line through the center that served as a quick reference point for their location. Jimmy looked closely to see if he could locate the small clearing surrounded by

a grove of pine trees in which they had stopped.

“This is cool.” Jimmy looked away from the map to check out the small circle of Christmas trees. “We could use this spot.”

“This is us.” Stephen traced the lines with his finger and glanced at Jimmy once again to be sure he was watching. “See the lines getting closer? The closer, the steeper.”

Jimmy’s head bobbed in agreement. “Yep.”

“Remember?” Stephen asked, recalling the briefing before they left the starting point. “You’re three years older than him,” his Dad had told him. *Be a leader.*

“We could use this spot.”

“Yeah,” Stephen agreed, taking a quick look around the clearing. “I like. So—” he began, when Jimmy cut him off.

“So,” Jimmy jumped in, “these curves are the steep part, right here.” He quickly pointed down the hill and grinned, looking intently at Stephen. “Right?”

*We’re losing time.* Take a breath and be calm, he reminded himself. Just like Dad said. “Okay. That’s north.” He pointed to the edge of the map and turned the compass dial so that *N* aligned with the red arrow. Stephen felt that queasy feeling creep into his stomach. *Marines get it done. You want to be a Marine, then do this.*

Jimmy dropped to his knees, snatched an edge of the map, and pulled.

“Wait.” Stephen held on.

Jimmy tugged harder at the tightly creased paper.

“Stop. It’ll tear.” *We don’t have time for this.* He took another deep breath and let it out slowly, trying to focus on the task. *Dad is counting on me to beat Stan this time.*

“Let me show you.”

Stephen let go and raised his hands in exasperation. “Fine. All yours.” He lifted his chin from his knee, leaving a deep, red, half-moon shape where his chin had pressed.

“This way’s north,” Jimmy said as he spun the map and glanced over his shoulder.

Stephen, feeling embarrassed, looked, too, toward the shadow of his dad, listening by the tall pine behind them. *Be a leader.*

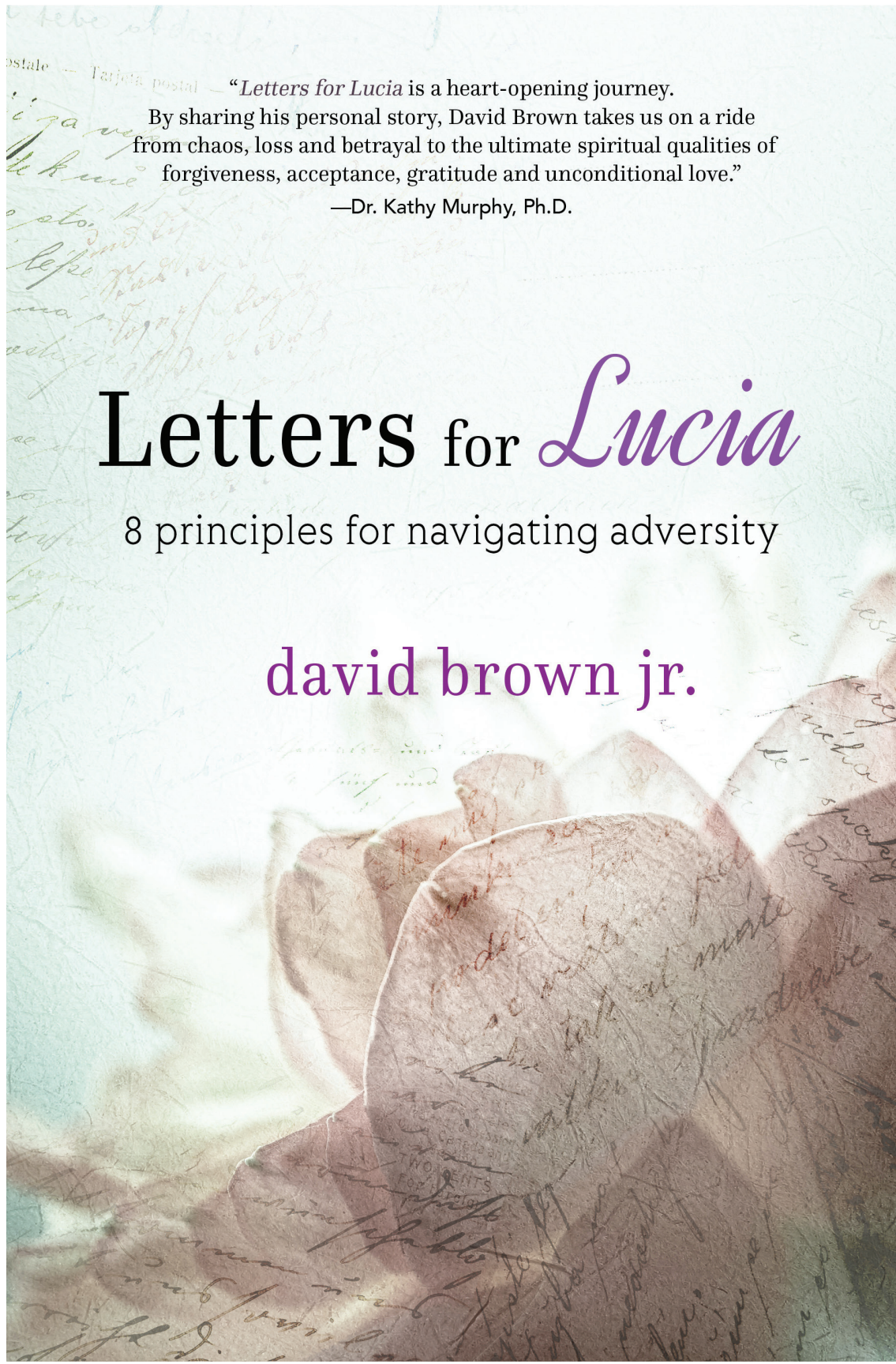
Jimmy continued to rotate the map until north on the map aligned with north on the compass again.

“Here.” Stephen put his finger on the goal in an attempt to regain a leadership position. An *X* carefully scratched into the map with a sharp pencil marked it. Based on the tight, flat topographical lines bunched along the curve, they were approaching a sharp hill at the edge of what looked like a short cliff. “We need to get there pretty quick,” he said, looking southwest of their position.

Jimmy abruptly stood and sighted a line with his arm. With his hand held flat, he moved his arm in a chopping motion to emphasize their path.

“Pick a target,” Stephen told him as he carefully folded the map and tucked it inside his shirt. He could feel the pressure building inside. They had to move faster. *Stay calm and be steady,* his father’s words played again in his head. He shoved the compass into his front pants pocket as Jimmy declared, “Got it.” He then took off in a short hop.

“Hey.” Stephen’s shout was more like a loud whisper, but it was enough to cause Jimmy to stop almost mid-hop. “Slow is smooth.” Together they finished, “and smooth is fast.”



ostale — Tarjeta postal — “Letters for Lucia is a heart-opening journey.  
 By sharing his personal story, David Brown takes us on a ride  
 from chaos, loss and betrayal to the ultimate spiritual qualities of  
 forgiveness, acceptance, gratitude and unconditional love.”  
 —Dr. Kathy Murphy, Ph.D.

# Letters for *Lucia*

8 principles for navigating adversity

david brown jr.



# ***Letters for Lucia***

## **8 Principles for Navigating Adversity**

**David Brown, Jr.**

*"Letters for Lucia is a heart-opening journey."*

—Dr. Kathy Murphy, Ph.D.

*"Letters for Lucia is a must-read for every parent, every child, everyone growing into soulfulness."*

—Dean Robertson, author of *Looking for Lydia, Looking for God*

*"David Brown Jr. has given us a new path: listen, learn, grow!"*

—Dr. Ronald Paul Hill, Ph.D., Richard J., and Barbara Naclerio,  
Chair in Business, Villanova School of Business

### **DESCRIPTION**

A new husband and father, David, finds himself dealing with the largest tragedy of his life, the international abduction of his 11-month old daughter. Rather than being governed by resentment and anger, he begins to see life from a lens of compassion and forgiveness. Reflecting on the experiences of the separation from his daughter, David recognizes that he is in the middle of a spiritual awakening, which birthed 8 principles that allowed him to find peace. Not knowing if he will ever see his daughter again, David writes letters to his daughter sharing the principles, hoping that she practices them as she grows up. He explains to readers how the principles can be applied so they too can find peace in their lives.

*Letters for Lucia* is a story of love, forgiveness, and healing.

If you are currently dealing with a form of adversity in your life, or are holding on to issues from the past, this book will inspire you to change how you perceive and manage life through your circumstances. In addition to sharing his story, David includes reflection questions which encourage the reader to take their own journey of self-discovery to identify and work through blocks that can prevent peace. His management of the separation from his daughter will provide you with hope, while explaining a set of principles that can change how you manage adversity and interact with people around you each day.

### **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- Self help guide to managing difficult situations
- Taps into cross-cultural differences and impact on family views
- Core of the principles are based on teachings of spiritual masters
- Father daughter story will appeal to father's rights groups and alienated fathers
- Principles are applicable to all negative life situations
- Reflection questions begin introducing spiritual/life coaching concepts

### **AUTHOR BIO**



David Brown Jr. is a former senior leader in financial services. He earned his degree in finance at University of Delaware and an Executive MBA at Villanova, as well as, studying organizational leadership, psychology of leadership and organizational dynamics. He has a high desire to encourage others to awaken to their passions and begin to lead more purposeful lives. Sharing his personal story awakened his heart to loving kindness and compassion and further fueled his desire to help others. David is a certified Reiki Master practitioner and life transformation coach.

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**6" x 9", 154 pages**

**Softcover: \$13.95, 978-1-63393-193-0**

**Hardcover: \$24.95,**

**978-1-63393-195-4**

**Ebook: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-194-7**

**Pub Date: January 1, 2016**

**BISAC CATEGORY**

**SELF-HELP: Personal Growth**

**SELF-HELP: Motivational &**

**Inspirational**

### **AUDIENCE**

- Men & Women 18+, especially parents
- Multi cultural, especially African-Americans
- Spiritually awakened individuals
- Anyone dealing with a current or past tragedy, or coaches/teachers of same
- Followers of spiritual and thought leaders such as Eckhart Tolle, Dr. Wayne Dyer and Deepak Chopra and Tony Robbins

### **Online**

<http://www.davidbrownjunior.com/>

 köehlerbooks™

**INGRAM**

## PREFACE

A real and frightening experience  
inspiring the most phenomenal shift  
in perspective of my entire life.

*I*n November 2013 my wife fled the country taking our baby daughter with her, shocking beyond all my efforts to rationalize it. My wife and I had married only a few months before after a brief courtship, unexpected pregnancy, and tentative beginning of family life. A chance meeting on an evening out with friends brought us together and was made even more interesting by our different family and cultural backgrounds. I, nearly nine years her senior, am one of two children of an American, middle-class family and have lived, earned two college degrees, and begun my career in the northeastern U.S. The petite, dark-eyed young woman that I met that evening had only lived in the U.S. ten years, having relocated with her mother and brother from Uzbekistan when she was fifteen. She was working part time and going to college.

Our beautiful baby girl, Lucia, was born the week of Thanksgiving 2012. As wonderful and amazing as that was, it also initiated insecurities in our marital relationship, parenting confusions, and disagreements about finances. When Lucia was eight months old my wife and I agreed to live separately but jointly care for Lucia, she during the week and I during weekends. On one of the Saturdays that I was to get Lucia for the weekend, I received an e-mail from my wife telling me that she had gone away and taken Lucia with her.

After contacting local, state, and federal authorities and an attorney I found myself with little or no viable action to take. I reached out to many sources and advisors and persistently made inquiries. Although I have tried to reach my wife through numerous e-mails and texts, she has responded only three times, and I have no other means of contacting her.

Soon after that terrible day, a series of experiences and two distinct stories began to unfold that have changed my life as profoundly as my baby daughter's disappearance.

Beginning small and swelling to larger and larger waves, I began to experience a personal, spiritual awakening. It registered so prominently that even amidst the chaos and mental challenges, I experienced an inner core of peace, and I began to flow real compassion toward my wife, regardless of the outcome of the situation.

Only days after they left I began to feel an urgency to write to Lucia, whom I desperately missed. There was no way to know when or how we would be reunited nor was an actual address known. Although Lucia was not old enough to read, writing the letters to her became an outlet for constant thoughts of her and a channel for my emotions. The profound shift in understanding that I have been experiencing has inspired me to identify a set of principles for leading a purposeful life and share them through daily letters to my daughter. This book, *Letters for Lucia*, brings together many of the letters, discovery of these principles, and aspects of my spiritual journey. These principles already exist within all of us. I celebrate the positive aspects that have been the focus of many wise teachers and masters, and I deeply appreciate the ways in which my fears and anxiety have been soothed.

Up until this trauma I have been very fortunate to have lived a calm and supported life. I was raised by loving parents, have a close relationship with my sister, and enjoy thoughtful family members and supportive friends and coworkers. From an early age I had great models for responsibility and values.

Initially, these chaotic circumstances seemed unnavigable and unimaginable. A number of months before meeting my wife I had been introduced to the practice of meditation and several spiritual philosophies. So I leaned on them, reaching for calmness, peace, and clarity. In my daily meditations, prayers, and general thoughts a greater good completely unfolded. The overwhelming anxiety and fear dissipated as eight principles came to me one by one. These principles—heart, awareness, intention, acceptance, compassion, forgiveness, loving unconditionally, and gratitude—formed a framework for living purposefully.

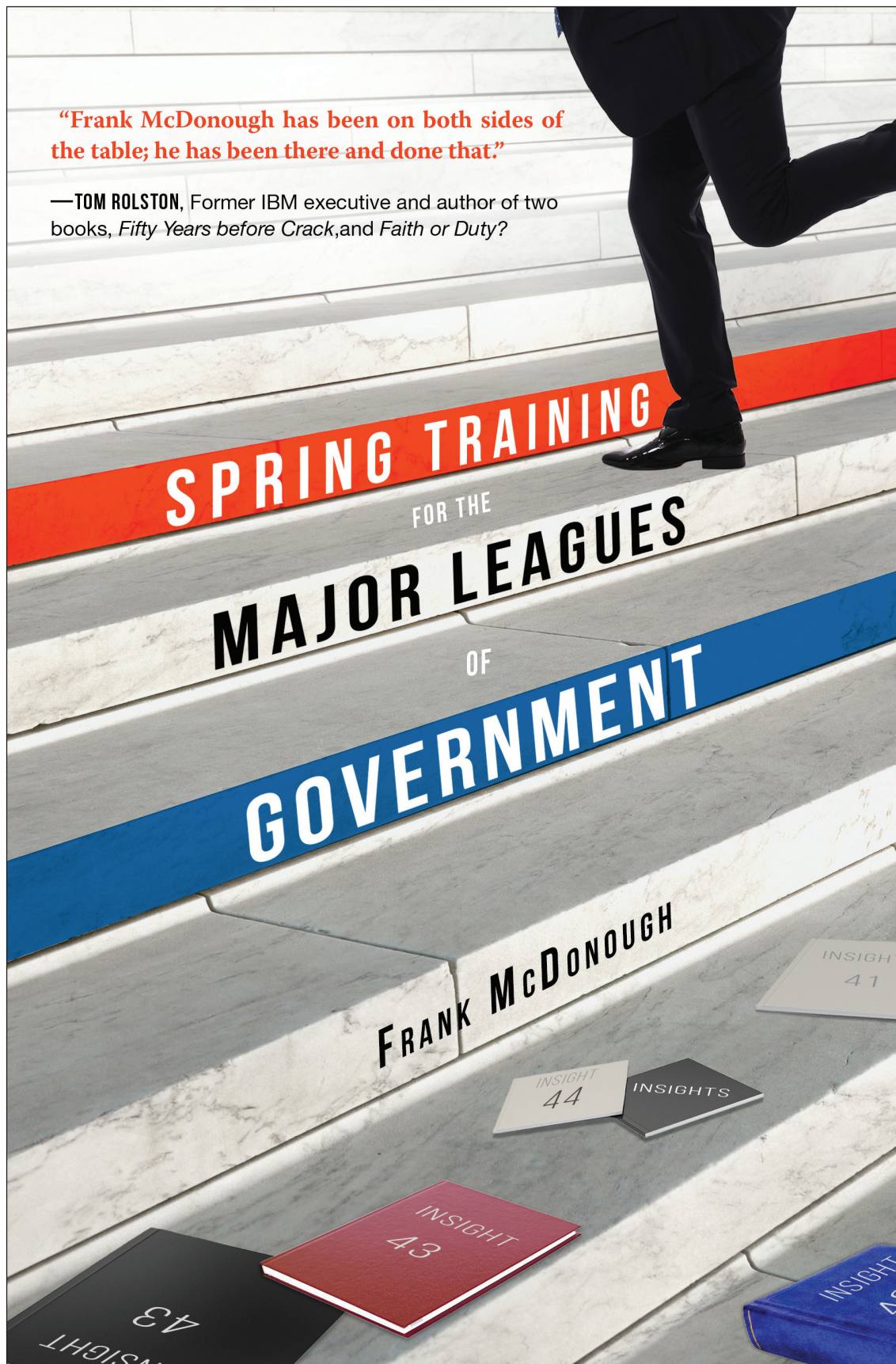
Expressed by great teachers and masters, many of these principles have been connected to well-known religions or philosophies. I've intentionally removed religious affiliations from this book, preferring to present to readers an open invitation to experience the principles as an enhancement to their own personal philosophies. I believe that this approach is truly powerful because it elevates our similarities. My hope is that once our similarities have been ushered to the front row, long-practiced judgments about dividing differences will fade away. Just imagine the joy that could happen if we all came together with a new emphasis on similarity! Incredible, peaceful experiences could be launched for all of planet Earth.

And in my opinion that mirrors the intention of God, Source, Creator—the name is unimportant, as the heart knows. Gradually, and profoundly, I have begun to live with a deep gratitude for all that had happened.



**“Frank McDonough has been on both sides of the table; he has been there and done that.”**

—**TOM ROLSTON**, Former IBM executive and author of two books, *Fifty Years before Crack*, and *Faith or Duty?*



# Spring Training for the Major Leagues of Government

Frank McDonough

**“Frank McDonough has been on both sides of the table; he has been there and done that.”**

—Tom Rolston, Former IBM executive and author of two books, *Fifty Years before Crack*, and *Faith or Duty?*

**“This book . . . can benefit everyone who seeks a successful career in the service of their country.”**

—John *Sindelar*, Member of the Federal Senior Executive Service, and Principal, Sindelar Group, LLC, a Public Sector Consulting Service.

The White House has approved Brian’s selection for a high-level job in the government. After the initial excitement, he realizes there is a lot he does not know. He tells a friend, I need a mentor, someone who has been through what I am going to experience.

Spring Training for the Major Leagues of Government with its 44 chapters containing examples, statistics, and anecdotes, is a mentor for high-level officials carrying titles like Deputy Assistant Secretary, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Attorney General, and Inspector General, Director.

In addition, Spring Training for the Major Leagues of Government has insights for industry officials working on or seeking contracts with government. Citizens and graduate students, too, will observe and learn from the insights in Spring Training.

Many have said as they left their high-level job, I wish I knew what I know now when I sat down at my desk on my first day on the job. Spring Training for the Major Leagues of Government gives new appointees to high-level jobs the insights to be successful from their first day on the job.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- The goal of Spring Training is to accelerate the learning process of high-level officials:
- Improve their chances for success,
- Help them avoid pitfalls that threaten reputation and performance,
- Enable them to move smoothly through the ranks of senior government jobs, and
- Position them for advancement to even higher-level jobs in government, or in the private sector.

## AUTHOR BIO



Frank McDonough held senior executive positions in four U.S. government organizations: the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Treasury, and the General Services Administration (GSA). In addition, he worked in management positions with IBM.

Also, he represented the U.S. in international discussions with the G 8-Government On-line Working Council, OECD, World Bank, the International Council for Technology in Public Administration (ICA), and other World Forums.

He has spoken more than 300 times on technology issues in government. From 2009-present, he works on contract for the University of Texas in Mexico City, teaching graduate students about managing advanced technologies in the near future.

**Publisher:** Koehler Books

**Distributor:** Ingram

**PUB DATE:** 2/15/2016

**6" X 9", 362 pages**

**SOFTCOVER, \$19.95, 978-1-63393-174-9**

**HARDCOVER, \$29.95, 978-1-63393-176-3**

**EBOOK, \$7.99, 978-1-63393-175-6**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE: American Govt.**

## AUDIENCE

- Targets officials appointed to or striving for positions with titles like Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department Head, and other titles.
- This includes the ever-changing pool of 8,000 political appointees, plus 8,000 Senior Executive Service career officials, and thousands more at the top level of General Schedule jobs (GS-15's),
- For industry officials working on or seeking contracts with government.
- In academia, professors could consider the book for final semester graduate students who intend to work in or market to the government.
- Citizens seeking a greater understanding about the internal workings of government

## ONLINE:

<http://frankamcdonough.com>

 koehlerbooks™

**INGRAM**

# 1

## SIX CATEGORIES OF PERSONNEL WORK IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

There are four main groups of employees in the federal government with “fences” between them and little camaraderie. In addition, a fifth category, contractors, supports the government as an invisible workforce with almost five times the number of government employees and a sixth category, Congressional Staffers supports elected officials in Congress.

### **Elected officials:**

Congress is the most powerful group in government because it appropriates money for government programs and because it writes the laws that govern society. There are 100 members of the U.S. Senate and 435 members of the House of Representatives. In addition, there are the president and the vice president, the only two elected officials in the Executive Branch.

### **Political appointees:**

There are about 7,800 political positions appointed by the White House. Almost half of them are part-time jobs on boards and commissions, according to John Kamensky, a senior fellow with the IBM Center for the Business of Government.

The full-time political appointees include:

- 1,200 appointments that require Senate confirmation
- 1,400 Schedule C officials-people appointed directly by the president without competition
- 800 non-career senior executives
- 800 members of the White House staff, including 100 assistants, deputy assistants and special assistants who control the president’s incoming and outgoing correspondence and meetings
- Two “body men” who follow the president’s every step, carrying his jacket and medicines and placing his phone calls



Some presidential appointments languish in the clearance process more than a year, causing some nominees to withdraw their application. No wonder then, when applicants run the gauntlet and actually get the jobs, they may feel a bit superior and members of a select club. Congress changed this process in 2011, attempting to streamline the confirmation process.

Recent new presidents have appointed more political supporters than their predecessors. George W. Bush, for example, named 12 percent more political appointees and 33 percent more Schedule Cs (a sub-category of political appointees) than Bill Clinton.

## SENIOR CAREER OFFICIALS

There are 8,000 career officials in the Senior Executive Service, and they are at the top of the career ladder in the civil service system. Many SES officials have worked in the government for 20 years or more, and most can quite capably initiate and manage complex programs. However, there are a few dodos in this category as in any group of people.

Senior career officials make many of the judgment calls and tradeoffs that determine the success or failure of an agency's programs. They are also the key communications channel between political appointees and the lower levels of the career service and contractors.

## THE CORE OF THE CAREER SERVICE

Working under the Senior Executives are about 1.6 million career civil servants, not counting Postal Service employees and the uniformed military. All occupy positions in General Schedule slots, ranging from GS 1 to GS 15. The GS 15s, excluding scientists, manage the day-to-day machinery of government, with those at lower ratings assisting. The number of government employees has not changed since 1950, but their skill sets have, as you would expect after 60 years in a period when information and telecommunications technologies have emerged with a blast.

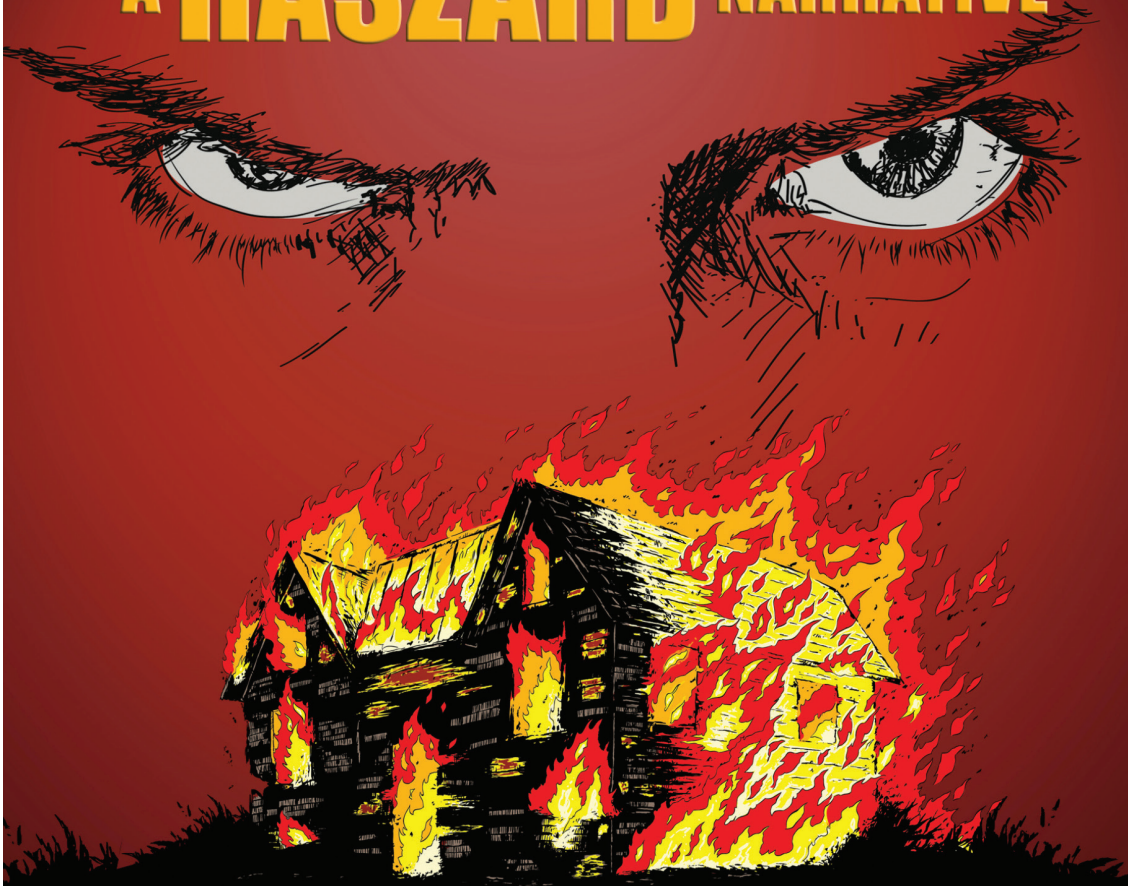
Career employees assisted by contractor personnel (in certain jobs) serve as food and drug inspectors, passport handlers, tax processors, aviation controllers managing airline traffic, accountants, policy analysts, procurement specialists, and workers in hundreds of other specialties, including the care of wounded veterans, and ensuring that the elderly, poor and disabled at the lower end of society receive Medicare and Social Security support.

Two out of three government employees work in just four departments: the Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Justice, including the FBI. Note that the majority of Americans rarely have any contact with these organizations.

The media often claim that rules protect the government employee to the point that it is impossible to fire anyone, creating the possibility that incompetents could populate the workforce. To the contrary, in fiscal 2013, the government terminated or removed 9,559 employees for discipline or performance problems. The Veterans Administration, one of the largest agencies, fired 2,247, the most of any agency. <sup>9</sup>

KEVIN E. HATT

A **HASZARD** NARRATIVE



**NO REASON FOR  
INSANITY**

# *No Reason for Insanity*

Kevin E. Hatt

## DESCRIPTION

Intrigued by the bizarre events surrounding the murder of a friend, Haszard is asked by the family to look in to the matter. Against the advice of his friends, he begins making enquiries, and is disturbed when he realizes that it may well be someone he knows.

As progress is made, further events occur, endangering the life of Haszard and his friends, and he is forced to delve into the deepest recesses of his resourcefulness . . .

*No Reason for Insanity* is a crime/mystery/black comedy narrative, displaying the versatility and lateral thinking of Haszard, the narrator.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- The Haszard narratives are unlike most crime novels in that Haszard is not a conventional character
- The author is British and has a command of the story line that is compelling for American reader
- The supporting characters are all very individual
- A significant characteristic is Haszard's working through the problems with his "weird brain", as it is often referred to, and he never gives up, displaying reckless tenacity

## AUDIENCE

- Readers of mystery and detective novels
- Readers who love British characters
- Followers of the author

## AUTHOR BIO



Kevin E. Hatt is the author of the Haszard series of narratives. His interest in writing began at school, and he carried it on into his twenties, writing for fun. He wrote the first two Haszard stories in the late eighties, but shelved the project until 2009, when he revived and updated it, going on to write seventeen stories. With the stories having been well received by friends, Kevin published the first five books, and after good reviews is furthering the project.

In 1984 he commenced his training as an Operating Department Practitioner, rising to the height of deputy head, before leaving the profession in 1999 to pursue his other love, that of art. Kevin worked as an art consultant, demonstrator, teacher, retailer and framer, but returned to the medical profession in 2010. His main passions are cricket, running, humour, ale and curries. He lives with his wife of twenty-five years and his twenty-three-year-old daughter. Kevin has never been to Ipswich. Or Scunthorpe.

**Publisher:** Köehler Books

**Distributor:** Ingram

**6" x 9", 248 pages**

**Softcover: \$15.95, 978-1-63393-245-6**

**Ebook: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-246-3**

**Pub Date: Feb. 1, 2016**

## BISAC CATEGORY

**FICTION: Mystery & Detective**

## Online:

<http://www.kevin-e-hatt.co.uk/>

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**INGRAM**



# CHAPTER ONE

HUMAN NATURE IS a peculiar beast at the best of times. It makes us do what we do, in the way that we do it, and it will almost certainly remain a mystery until the end of time—most certainly a good thing.

This story begins on a Thursday morning in summer, a few weeks after returning from holiday. It was a busy time, with a large number of cricket matches to play, along with Sabrina moving in with me—full-time.

\* \* \* \*

Sabrina, my soul mate, was excited, very excited, as was I, since neither of us had officially cohabited before. Sabrina had virtually been living with me for seven months. Even so, her moving in full-time was a major landmark for us both; she no longer had the safety net of her seldom-used house as a bolt-hole. Neither of us saw this as a problem, though, since we'd never had an argument in all the time we'd been together, rarely even a disagreement. The timing was fortunate, as Becky, who she shared with, had moved to Dubai with Mick; it was a spur-of-the-moment decision, the money being just too good to turn down.

Sabrina worked as a Sister in the orthopedic clinic at our local hospital, where I also worked part-time as an operating theatre practitioner. When I wasn't there I was at my picture-framing emporium, which was where I'd be working that day.

We parked in my private space at the rear of the shop and walked around to the front, whereupon Sabrina and I said our farewells. Following our customary kiss goodbye she began the five-minute walk to the hospital, the bouquet of her perfume remaining with me. Watching her wander off, I smiled at the sight of her long, light-brown hair waving in the gentle summer breeze. She turned around to give me a final wave before rounding the corner, disappearing from sight.

Still smiling I turned around, beginning the short walk to the shop, when something struck me as odd. Allott's, a florist, hadn't opened. Gerry and Sylvia were never late opening, never! The couple had been dedicated to their business for twenty-five years,

struggling in even when they'd been suffering from the most aggressive viruses, barely being able to talk. In their absence, Alec and Donna, their son and daughter, would take the helm, which suggested to me that they hadn't gone away. Besides, Gerry and I often met up for a chinwag, and he'd have mentioned it.

With my thought process working overtime I entered the shop, deactivated the alarm and turned the radio on, instantly feeling pleased to hear one of my favorite songs. Rather than commence the day's workload, I made the executive decision to sit back behind the counter, listening to the remainder of the breakfast show that put me into a good spirits for the day with witty remarks and humorous topics, along with contributions from the listeners, accompanied by the best music around, past and present.

Throughout the show, though, I couldn't help but ponder the whereabouts of Gerry and Sylvia. Something felt wrong. Had they been in an accident of some kind? I sincerely hoped not. I was aware that their son Alec was due to be married in the near future, but closing the shop couldn't possibly have anything to do with that. So what could it be?

After half an hour I made an apology to the radio, locked the shop up, and made my way over to Taste Buds, the sandwich bar next to Allott's, in the hope someone there would know.

"Don't tell me—a bacon sandwich," Annie said as I leaned on the counter. Annie was a chirpy lass in her early twenties.

"No thanks, Annie. But I was just wondering about Gerry and Sylvia. They haven't opened, and that's odd."

Annie shrugged. "I don't know. I've been in here all morning, although I did wonder why they hadn't put their head around the door. Why don't you try them at home?"

I frowned. "Yeah, I will."

"Do you want your usual at lunchtime—or are you going against the advice of your dietician and losing me trade by sneaking off to Piercarlo's?"

The dietician Annie was referring to was Sabrina, who detested Piercarlo's—even though it made the best pizza in town.

"I hadn't thought that far ahead . . . I'll try them at home. Thanks, Annie."

I wandered back over to the shop, deep in thought, the peculiarity of the situation continuing to niggle away. Once inside I dug out my list of phone numbers, found Gerry and Sylvia's, and dialed.

After a few rings it was answered.

"Hello?" a toneless female voice said.

"Is that Sylvia?"

"No, it's Loretta, Alec's fiancée. Who is this?"

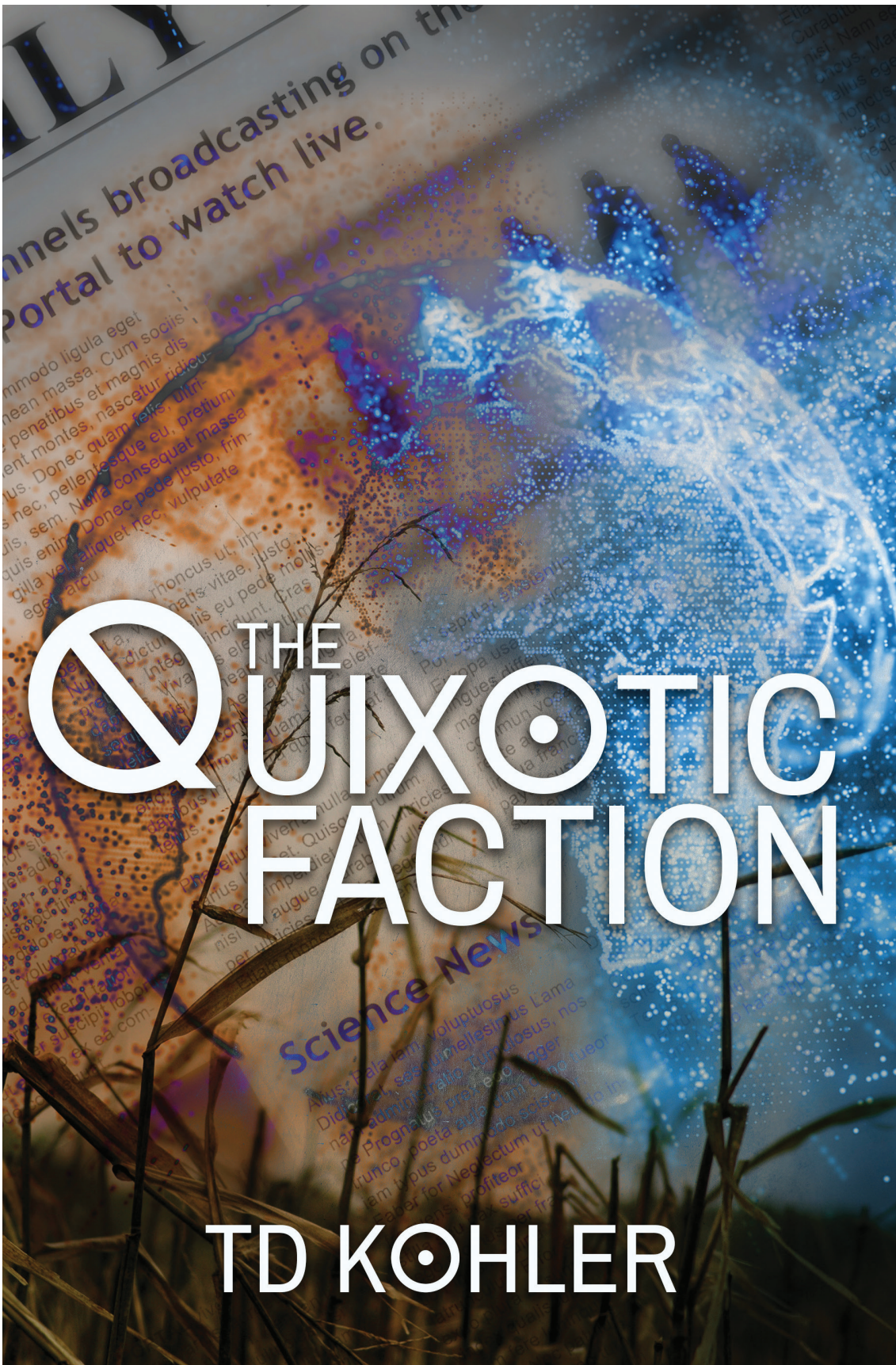
"It's Haszard, from the framing shop," I said, beginning to feel uneasy. "I noticed the shop wasn't open and wondered if everything was all right."

"Hang on." Loretta went quiet, and I heard a door close. "Haz, I don't know how to say this—Gerry's dead."

I didn't know what to say. How could Gerry be dead? I saw him the previous evening and he looked fine. He even waved to me as he passed the shop.

"How?" I finally managed.

All I could hear was the sound of Loretta breathing.



Channels broadcasting on the  
portal to watch live.

THE  
QUIXOTIC  
FACTION

TD KOHLER



# *The Quixotic Faction*

TD Kohler

## DESCRIPTION

Admiral Julian Kay creates a small, unlikely team that is drawn to the heart of Louisiana chasing an atmospheric anomaly that appears to have a single point of origin. They come face to face with an organization with operatives that are right out of legends and mythology. Discovering that their pasts have been erased and now wanted by the FBI, they form an improbable alliance to try and stop a thief who is using a deadly energy that should not exist.

Can they survive long enough to get their pasts back, clear their names and solve the mysterious anomaly origin?

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- Introduction of new plausible super heroes that the average person can relate to
- Showing plausible answers to mysterious events that have occurred in the Louisiana/Texas area
- Introducing the intricate world of the Majestic 12

## AUDIENCE

- Readers interested in conspiracy
- Readers of science fiction
- Readers who are enjoy plausible fiction
- Ufologists

## AUTHOR BIO



TD Kohler has written a screenplay called Dawn of Dark Universe. He joined the United States Navy and is currently serving as an Electronic Technician. He has traveled to Japan, Guam and Afghanistan and many other places. Favorite past times are shooting pool, fishing and people watching.

**Publisher: Koehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram Publisher Services**

**PUB DATE: 12/15/2015**

**SOFTCOVER, \$-.-, 978-1-63393-171-8**

**HARDCOVER, \$-.-, 978-1-63393-173-2**

**EBOOK, \$4.99, 978-1-63393-172-5**

**Trim : 6x9, Pages : ---**

**FICTION: Science Fiction/General**

**FICTION: Science Fiction/**

**Alternative History**

## MARKETING

- Author is planning on creating social media sites for his work, including a Facebook page and a Twitter account.
- Author is looking into doing a book signing at the Naval Exchange in Guam, possibly at the Micronesia Mall.
- The author is thinking about doing a video for youtube.

 **koehlerbooks™**

**INGRAM**

# JULY 17, 2015

BANQUE SOCIETE GENERALE DE INTERNATIONAL, KATY, TX

JULY 17, 2015

1539 HOURS

WITH THE HEAT and humidity having reached record indexes, it makes the town of Katy, Texas look as if it were melting. Outside Banque Societe Generale de International Bank a gentlemen wearing a three-piece suit gets out of his brown 1969 Cadillac Deville and assesses the surrounding area. Scratching his chin, just under his beard, he adjusts his sunglasses and walks into the bank.

The air conditioning washes over him, giving him the feeling that he is about to walk through a portal into a different world. The bank door closes behind him, closing out the melting world. Without drawing attention to himself, he locks the doors and begins assessing the interior. He counts the customers and employees as he sets his briefcase on one of the counters. Sliding a front panel on it, he reveals a series of computerized controls. Taking a moment, he adjusts the earpieces to his MP3 player and checks the people in the bank again. With apparent satisfaction he reaches to the thumb locks, turning the dials. The briefcase begins to emit high levels of radio and electromagnetic energy.

Watching the person in front of him who is filling out a bank slip, he observes his facial expression. The man unknowingly starts to furl his brow, showing signs of anger. After making a few more adjustment to the thumb dials, the customer's expression turns to confidence and even pleasure.

He whispers to himself, "This is going to be interesting." Satisfied, he calmly turns away from the briefcase, checks his watch, and walks to take his place in line.

Across the bank, another man accidentally bumps into a young woman. The woman glances up and their eyes meet, and for an instant, an immediate attraction is formed. They smile as the young lady reaches up and caresses the man's cheek. Dropping the paperwork he was holding, he wraps his arms around her in an intense, passionate embrace. As the couple begins to unabatedly kiss, it catches the stranger's eye, and a fleeting smile quickly forms and vanishes.

To his right, a middle-aged woman reaches out and caresses the young skin on the woman in front of her. The younger lady looks down and follows the strange hand as it intimately draws her in, and she turns and acknowledges the older woman. A faint smile forms as the girl slowly reaches up and gently grazes the nape of the motherly figure. Her hand moves down and cups the larger breasts of the older woman. Dropping her large purse, paperwork spills out on the floor; the woman clumsily takes the younger one's cheeks in her hands and draws them closer as they begin to passionately kiss. Another fleeting smile forms on the stranger's face again and disappears just as quickly.

All around him, the bank's customers and employees begin to escalate in passion and intimacy with each other as the interior scene of the bank takes on a semblance of a Roman bathhouse. The stranger steps around and over some bodies as he moves to the door to the right of the tellers; he knocks and from the other side a pair of semi-dressed employees open the door. As he enters, the employees continue where they were interrupted and no longer acknowledge the stranger. Making his way to a vault room, he begins to search some of the employees clothing that was strewn about, until he finds a key ring of magnetic key cards. Holding them up, he stares intently at a particular smaller, older safe.

Throwing the key cards aside, he continues to search the piles of clothing. Inside the lapel of a woman's jacket he unpins a smaller set of two keys. He unlocks part of the safe. Realizing that the safe also requires a combination, he looks back at the mangled bodies. Tilting his head, he tries to figure out who would have the combination. Walking over to a woman who has a man pinned to a wall, he taps her on the shoulder and points to the safe. The woman, without releasing the object of her desire, points to an open door. When he gets to the doorway he sees three men servicing a larger woman.

Knocking on the door, the intruder gets the attention of the large woman being groped by the three men. Cupping his fingers, the stranger beckons the woman to come with him. As the woman gets up, she gently touches the jaws of each of the men. She reaches the door, and the men redirect their passion towards each other.

Taking a moment, the stranger allows her to look back into the room. Remaining speechless, she smiles and directs a gleam of bliss at the stranger while he directs her towards the safe. After she works the combination and the safe is opened, she hastily makes her way back to the three men.


The stranger pulls out a metal tray holding two small, index-card-sized, gold ingots with what appears to have strange picture glyphs and a series of markings that resemble cave writings. Looking them over, he removes his suit jacket, revealing a backpack. He takes a moment to admire the three-by-five-inch ingots one last time before he places them inside the bag.



"Mystery fans will find a lot to love about  
*Virginia is for Mysteries II.*"

—Mary Burton  
New York Times and USA Today  
Bestselling Author

# Virginia is for Mysteries



## VOLUME II

Meriah Lysistrata Crawford — Adele Gardner — Debbiann Holmes  
Maria Hudgins — Teresa Inge — Maggie King — Kristin Kisska  
C.B. Lane — Vivian Lawry — Michael McGowan — Kathleen Mix  
Jayne Ormerod — Yvonne Saxon — Rosemary Shomaker  
Rosemary Stevens — Linda Thornburg — Heather Weidner  
Lee A. Wells — Ken Wingate

# COMING CLEAN

BY MERIAH LYSISTRATA CRAWFORD

“ROAD TRIP?” ANDREA ASKED as I climbed into her car a little before one.

We’d planned to spend Friday afternoon together since I had the day off and she didn’t work on Fridays, but hadn’t decided on anything specific in advance.

“Heck yeah,” I said. “Where to?”

Andrea shrugged and pulled away from the curb as I buckled up. “South?”

I smiled. “My favorite direction. Onward!”

She smiled a bit stiffly and turned on the radio, both of which were uncharacteristic.

“Hey,” I said. “Wassup?”

She shook her head. “Rough week. Let’s just drive for a while, okay?”

“Sure.” I sat back to watch the world go by.

Andrea headed northwest on East Broad toward downtown Richmond, then turned onto I-95 South. We were outside the city in minutes, passing the huge Philip Morris tower with its cigarette brand names painted on the side, and then long stretches of trees interrupted by billboards. Another twenty minutes and a shopping mall later, the sign for I-85 came up.

“What’s that way?” she asked, pointing at the sign.

“No idea. Atlanta, maybe? Yeah. And Raleigh, I think. Only, not in that order.”

She nodded and took the exit, and we angled inland.

Three and a half hours later, we were still going, still listening to the radio, and not talking. My brain had switched to autopilot, and I’d just been gazing at the scenery, thinking fondly of road trips during my childhood when we played car games, sang goofy songs, and called out unusual license plates. But finally my stomach started grumbling, so I suggested we find dinner. I figured that would be a good time to talk, too.

We ended up, fifteen minutes later, at a Cracker Barrel in Salisbury, North Carolina.

After Andrea parked the car, she leaned back in her seat and sat for a moment, both of us a little stunned by the silence and stillness.

“Sherri, you always said you’d help me if I was in trouble.”

“Of course.” I reached over and squeezed her forearm. “You know I’ll do anything I can to help.”

She and I had been close since sixth grade when we discovered a shared love of reading, a hatred of peanut butter and jelly, and the skill to cut school without getting caught. Now, at forty-six, we’d been through the usual tragedies and triumphs together—emergency room runs, my divorce, her mom’s death, chest pains, poison ivy, kidney stones, and on and on. We’d helped each other survive them all. I couldn’t imagine anything I wouldn’t do for her.

She nodded. “Okay. So, let’s eat.”

“But—wait.”

Andrea let out a giddy laugh. “C’mon! Food now, talk later. *Me hug-ree!*”

That was what her son Aiden had said as a child when he was hungry, and it had become one of our inside jokes. I smiled and went along, as always.

After we made our way through the dizzying array of tchotchkes, candles, and T-shirts in the gift shop, we settled at a table near the front windows and ordered. And then I tried, tried, tried to get Andrea to tell me what was going on. She wouldn’t.

“Too many people around,” she said, which was fair.

Instead, she talked about her crazy sister and her jailbird uncle. Her daughter’s success in high school and her son’s progress in the Marines. Her neighbor’s nasty, howling dog and her cat Lulu’s prowess as a hunter of houseflies. She talked about her volunteer work at the Poe Museum. She asked for my opinion of the latest round of *American Idol* contestants, but I hadn’t been watching.

When we were done, I paid the bill since we were using her gas, and we got on the road again. We were still heading south, still blasting the tunes—and still not talking. This went on for so long that I finally gathered we weren’t going home that night.

“Where are we headed?” I asked.

“South,” she said.

“Yeah, I noticed, but you could have warned me to pack a bag or something.” I said it lightly because it didn’t bother me particularly. I like spontaneous trips—was thrilled, actually, to be doing something different. But still . . .

“You’re always complaining that you don’t get out of town enough.”

“True.”

“Well, then.”

So, on we drove. I offered to take the wheel a few times—especially when she started to yawn. Each time she declined—maybe afraid I’d get back on the highway headed north. But I didn’t have plans for the weekend. I was in the clear until nine Monday morning, when I was due at work. And it would not be a tragedy if I had to call in sick. I hated that damn place.

At a little past eleven, I pointed out a billboard advertising a hotel seven miles away, near Hogansville, Georgia. She nodded and I leaned back, and we were quiet except for the bland ’90s music on the radio. I decided I would insist on driving when we got



started in the morning, and we'd damn well find a different station to listen to.

We stopped at a drug store off the exit, and I grabbed some essentials. My road-numbed brain finally noticed that Andrea was following idly in my wake, not picking anything off the shelves.

"Why aren't you—" and then it hit me. "Andrea! You packed a bag, didn't you?"

She looked sheepish and shrugged.

"Bitch," I said, shaking my head. I was annoyed, but too tired to be angry. She didn't do it with malice or even selfishness, really—she just wanted to make sure I didn't make waves or thwart her plans. I was the last one to complain that she wasn't perfect, though, so I just paid for my purchases, and we stumbled back to the car.

Once we arrived at the hotel, Andrea grabbed her bag from under a blanket on the floor behind her seat, and then we checked in. She paid for the room from an envelope full of cash. She was the queen of credit cards—always trying to earn points for miles—so it struck me as odd, but I figured her husband, Bobby, or her mom had given her some cash, and she was just going to use it rather than waste time hitting the bank to deposit it.

All I really cared about by then was grabbing a shower, brushing my teeth, and getting to bed. Andrea brushed first, and then I took over the bathroom for a while, and by the time I got out, she was already asleep—or pretending to be—in the bed near the windows. She was clearly avoiding my questions, and it was starting to worry me—a lot. In the morning, I would make sure we talked before we got on the road.



Despite my best intentions, I found myself back in the passenger seat the next morning, heading south again, looking for a restaurant. Still no answers, and I was starting to add *peev*ed to *worried*.

I'd pressed her to talk, but all she said was, "Sweetie, I need to eat first. You know how I am in the morning. It's all a big ol' fog until I get some coffee and a big plate of something greasy."

Breakfast had always been her favorite meal. I was more a dinner person. Give me a yogurt or some fruit, and I was a happy camper until noon. But I was still a bit dazed from the drive the day before, so I let it go. It was easier to sit back and wait, let her do her thing. She was a force of nature sometimes, like a herd of cattle stampeding.

We spent almost an hour at an IHOP not far off the highway. Andrea spent the entire meal talking about reunions, picnics, and trips to Virginia Beach. Three-bean salad and deviled eggs, cold fried chicken and Rice Krispy squares, fresh steamed shrimp and corn dripping with butter. Volleyball, Frisbee, and even skinny-dipping after an evening of surprisingly tolerable box wine and penny poker. I'd been there for most of it, and it was great to reminisce. I forgot, sometimes, just how much fun we'd had together.

That's when I realized something had to be *really* wrong. This wasn't just a lighthearted trip down memory lane. She was trying to cement our ties because she was going to drop something big on me. Something huge.

This time, I didn't bother asking her in the restaurant. I reached for the check when we were done, but she took it, paid in cash again, and we left.

**THE**  
**SUPER**  
**COUPLE**

*a formula for*  
**EXTREME HAPPINESS**  
*in*  
**MARRIAGE**

**CHRISTINE M. BACON, PH.D.**

# THE SUPER COUPLE

A FORMULA FOR EXTREME HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE

Christine M. Bacon, Ph.D.

**Her own marriage was so painful and troubled that author Dr. Christine Bacon actually prayed for her husband to die.**

Fortunately, the progressive chaos remained confined to a four-year separation, serious communication discord, infidelity, and her husband's pursuit of reconciliation. At some point she realized that reunification would mean changing everything — ineffective communication styles, bad habits, attitudes and levels of commitment. Bacon vowed to herself that "this second time must be forever."

After receiving her Ph.D. in marriage communication, Dr. Bacon interviewed nearly 100 *Super Couples* to discover whether extremely happy marriages were a matter of fate or formula. Did they get lucky, or was "super" something that could be learned? Her surprising findings inspired a turnaround in her now happy and fulfilling marriage and have led to the same for thousands of other couples. Seekers who delve into *The Super Couple* will access this formula, glean fresh insights to the "six faulty assumptions" that often lead to marital failure, and embrace a practical and inspiring redefinition of love that will reinvigorate a tepid or troubled marriage and transform it to terrific.

Hungry for the formula? *The Super Couple* is a feast of relationship sustenance for the mind, the heart, the family unit and the eager spirit willing to grow the extra mile. It's a small investment in a lifetime of happily ever after.

## KEY SELLING POINTS

- 95% of all Americans will marry or seek to marry in their lifetimes.
- According to the American Psychological Association and numerous studies, healthy, happy marriages support the physical, emotional, mental and social well-being of the family members involved. Yet a reported 40 to 50 percent of marriages in the U.S.A. end in divorce.
- The S.A.C.R.E.D Super Couple formula incorporates proven relationship-success insights, techniques and strategies culled from the real-world experiences of nearly 100 extremely happy, thriving and eager-to-help "Super Couples."
- The Super Couple formula is applicable to marriages worldwide regardless of cultural, socio-economic, religious or any other diverse differences.

## AUDIENCE

- Married couples in troubled marriages seeking to regain happiness
- Unmarried or dating couples who plan to marry as well as divorcees planning to one day remarry.
- Marriage and family counselors, educators and practitioners, and priests and pastors working with married couples or those preparing for marriage.
- Social Scientists in the fields of communication, relationships, happiness or positive psychology.

## AUTHOR BIO



Christine Bacon, Ph.D., holds three degrees in communication. Her doctoral dissertation merged marital humor with her own experience and her desire to teach individuals and couples how to build and nurture what Bacon calls Super marriages. She is the wife of a retired Navy officer and a former life-skills educator at the Navy's Fleet and Family Support Centers. Her expertise includes teaching couples and individuals to successfully manage conflict, anger and stress, and more than fourteen years' experience leading pre-marital seminars with Catholic Charities. Bacon also runs CMB Communication, Inc., which focuses on strengthening relationships (intimate, familial and professional) by teaching effective communication skills. Her Super Couple seminars teach the science of extreme happiness in marriage. She hosts her own radio show, *Breakfast with Bacon: The Relationship Doctor*, broadcast from Hampton Roads, Virginia. Her articles have been featured in both *Catholic Online* and *Designed to Flourish*.

Publisher: Koehler Books

Distributor: Ingram

PUB DATE: 2/14/2016

6" X 9", 222 pages

SOFTCOVER, \$15.95, 978-1-63393-201-2

HARDCOVER, \$24.95, 978-1-63393-203-6

EBOOK, \$4.99, 978-1-63393-202-9

FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS: Marriage & Long Term Relationships

## MARKETING AND PUBLICITY HIGHLIGHTS

- Social Media- This book will be marketed on three websites: [www.breakfastwithbacon.com](http://www.breakfastwithbacon.com), [www.super-couple.com](http://www.super-couple.com), and [www.cmbcommunication.com](http://www.cmbcommunication.com). It will also be promoted on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter. Videos will be posted on Youtube as well.
- Book will be marketed on author's radio show every week. A Super Couple Seminar will be held at the Va Beach Convention Center in 2016.
- TV and radio interviews are being pursued both locally and nationally.
- Book Signings and author events will be lined up in numerous cities around the U.S.

## ONLINE

[www.breakfastwithbacon.com](http://www.breakfastwithbacon.com)

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**INGRAM**



## PREFACE: THE SUPER COUPLE

Ever since I was a young teen—likely right after hormones began to kick in—I have found myself interested in the current subject matter: why some couples seem to remain extremely happily married while others don't. I am certain it wasn't to the degree that it is now—a degree I would label as a passion or even an obsession—but clearly, in a meaningful way that has stood out in my mind. It was more than three decades later that the label *Super Couples* was given to these special couples. (Little did I know that my own marriage would later fuel this obsession because mine was anything but Super.) As a teen, I had labeled these couples as “cute.” You know the kind. I only need give one or two sentences of description and you, too, will say, “Oh, I know a couple just like the ones you're talking about! They're so in love! They'd be perfect for your study!” I know this because nearly every time I articulate my definition of a *Super Couple* this is the response I receive.

Now my description may not sound too academic or formal, especially for one holding a Doctorate in Marriage Communication, but that's deliberate. We don't need heady theoretical descriptions. We need something we understand and something that works—something that we can apply to our everyday lives and marriages in a meaningful and passionate way. This has seemingly been my mantra throughout life without even my realizing it until recent years. That is, what's the point of knowing this intellectually stimulating stuff if you can't give me an example and better yet, give me some specific instructions on how I should apply it or what I should do differently?

My passion for *your* extremely happy marriage runs deep because it was born out of my passion for my own marriage—the extremely happy marriage that I, too, yearned for but did not have...yet. My marriage began in 1983 like most other marriages. We were passionately in love:

Me: “Oh, I love you!”

Him: “No, no I love you more!”

Me: “Oh I can't live without you!”

Him: “I never want to spend a day apart from you!”

Both: “I can’t wait until I get to wake up next to you every single day for the rest of my life!”

You get the picture. I remember the days well when my young Navy boyfriend was so many states away from me and all I thought about nearly every minute of every day was being with him again. Every thought in my head and every cell in my body were constantly focused on this handsome young suitor and the next time I could hear his voice, see his face or, best of all, *be* in his arms again. It was a joyful anguish every young lover has likely endured.

I recall begging my mother to let me have my own phone line in my room so that I didn’t have to share a line with any of my siblings once my lover did call. And when he did call we would sit on the phone for hours—literally hours—sometimes just breathing while no words were spoken. Though we’d run out of words, it was as if we were somehow closer to each other through that phone line than we were if we’d hang up. We took in all we could get of each other. I remember the first month my phone bill was \$337! Remember, this was 1983 and that was *a lot* of money. My mother hit the roof “You could have bought a washing machine with that money!” The next month she yelled “And *that* was the dryer!” This pattern continued for about two and a half months, but soon thereafter the pain of separation would end as I happily married my lover on August 3, 1983. Oh how I loved that man! And I am certain that he loved me. As I look back nearly three decades I can remember no other time in my life that I was as blissfully happy as I was those few short months my young suitor courted me.

Ok, this book is not about me. Well, it’s not *all* about me. It is about you. It is about you, your marriage, and the possibility of you, too, becoming a Super Couple. However, to tell you how to do so, how to *be* so, I must use my own marriage as an example... of what *not* to do.

In August of 1987—two daughters and four anniversaries later—I left my husband. I left him because I *hated* him and no longer felt joy at being in the same room with him but rather felt only pain—deep and miserable pain. Allow me to not yet divulge the causes of that deep pain here as they will be chronicled throughout the following chapters. Suffice it to say divorce seemed the only option. Well, actually it was the second option. Amidst my hate, I shamefully prayed for him to die. (Everyone pities a widow you know, but a divorcee?...not so much.) Know that I am not proud of those words today, but who would I be if I weren’t totally honest?

We were separated for four years and “reconciled” in 1991. We were still unhappy. Well, I was, but I’ll explain more of that later. Some years later and already into my formal education in the field of marriage, I was conversing with a male colleague of my husband—a very intelligent and rather high ranking and educated military officer. Somehow the conversation turned to marital infidelity and I stated that “Fifty percent of all marriages that endure infidelity go on to survive and often thrive” to which this man replied “That’s a bunch of crap. I don’t know a single marriage that has survived infidelity!”

I remember that day nearly two decades ago as if it were yesterday. I remember it clearly because his statement silenced me (a grand feat in and of itself)—but not because of what you may think.

“Convincente y a menudo hechizante.”

—Doctora Ann López, Directora Ejecutiva del Centro para Familias de  
Trabajadores Agrícolas



# GUERRAS de LECHUGA

HABIA UN MOVIMIENTO QUE DESAFIÓ  
EL SISTEMA RACISTA EN EL CAMPO  
COMO NUNCA ANTES.

Trabajo y Lucha en  
los Campos de California.

BRUCE NEUBURGER



# **Guerras de Lechuga**

por Bruce Neuberger

## **DESCRIPCIÓN**

EN 1971, BRUCE NEUBURGER, joven, sin trabajo y radicalizado por las luchas de los Derechos Civiles y los movimientos revolucionarios de la década de 60s, consiguió empleo como trabajador agrícola en el Valle de Salinas, California.

El viaje comienza en un momento notable, después del nacimiento de la Unión de trabajadores agrícolas (UFW) y el consiguiente aumento en la militancia de los trabajadores campesinos. Una huelga poderosa estalla en 1970 y convierte ese fértil valle en un campo de batalla entre los trabajadores y los rancheros. Lo que comienza como un trabajo temporal se convierte en una década de lucha y de duro trabajo al lado de los trabajadores inmigrantes que alimentan la nación.

Como participante en los esfuerzos de organizar y protestar en el campo, de las huelgas y boicots, Neuberger experimenta personalmente el movimiento de los trabajadores agrícolas que sacude al sistema racista del apartheid en los campos de California--y las fuerzas que convergen para controlar y destruir ese movimiento.

Parte autobiografía, parte informado comentario del trabajo agrícola, el movimiento laboral de Estados Unidos, la economía política de la agricultura y la corriente revolucionaria de la época, Guerras de Lechuga es un relato escrito desde la perspectiva de los campos. Neuberger retrata a la gente que se encuentra, obreros campesinos, compañeros radicales, los jefes de empresa, policías y matones de la granja, vivo e indeleble, dando un aspecto humano, a veces humorístico, a menudo dramático, al conflicto entre capital y trabajador en los campos de California de la década de los 1970s.

## **PUNTOS DE VENTA CLAVES**

- Historia de los trabajadores agrícolas y la política en la década de 1960
- Una combinación muy eficaz de imágenes crudas, narrativas personales convincentes, y los datos históricos y políticos



## **BIOGRAFÍA DE AUTOR**

Bruce Neuberger es un ex trabajador agrícola, un activista político revolucionario, un organizador de los soldados GI durante la Guerra de Vietnam, un escritor y editor de publicaciones de varios movimientos políticos, un taxista, y, por los pasados veintinueve años, un maestro de escuela de adultos y del colegio comunitario de San Francisco. Lettuce Wars—ahora Guerras de Lechuga—es su primer libro.

**Editorial: Café con Leche**  
**un sello de Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**  
**6" x 9", 570 pages**

**Tapa blanda: \$26.95,**  
**978-1-63393-010-0**

**Elibro: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-011-7**

**Fecha de publicación: 14 de febrero**  
**2016**

**MEMORIAS : Agricultura**

## **AUDIENCIA**

- Los lectores interesados en el movimiento obrero de los Estados Unidos
- Los lectores interesados en revolución cultural



**INGRAM**

# INTRODUCCIÓN

## SAN FRANCISCO, 1984

EL CREPÚSCULO HABÍA LLEGADO unas horas antes de que mi turno terminara. La fila de taxis frente al St. Francis Hotel en San Francisco era el juego de azar de siempre. Quedarse en la fila y arriesgarse o recorrer las calles en busca de pasajeros y esperar ser rebotado por toda la ciudad como una bola de *pinball*. Entrar en la fila porque, como la gente que juega en las máquinas tragaperras, siempre existe la oportunidad de ganar el premio gordo. Aquí inviertes tus minutos, no tu dinero, pero la expectativa es similar. Un viaje al aeropuerto representa la mejor ganancia. Es mejor apostar aquí, que desplazarse o arriesgar con las llamadas de radio—de hecho un radio manipulado— aunque en el St. Francis, podrías fácilmente quedarte esperando por quince o veinte minutos para conseguir un recorrido hasta el embarcadero de sólo \$5.

Uno de los dolores de cabeza y una de las atracciones de conducir un taxi, es que los dados siempre están rodando. En un trabajo por horas tienes la seguridad de saber lo que te vas a llevar a tu casa al final del día. Un taxista nunca sabe. No importa que tan mal es tu día o incluso la semana, la oportunidad de ganarte el *premio gordo* anda detrás de cada llamada y de cada “señal”.

Las compañías de taxi de San Francisco, centraron exclusivamente la atracción por el riesgo en la descripción del trabajo de taxista cuando, en 1978, respaldaron una proposición electoral que ganó el favor de los votantes. Se estableció un acuerdo de arrendamiento. De repente, los empleados de las compañías de taxi eran “contratistas independientes”. ¡Independencia! Uno de esos términos seductores que ocultan realidades menos atractivas: la pérdida de beneficios de salud y de retiro provistos por la compañía, todos los beneficios. Independencia, sí claro, te quedas por tu cuenta, ¡buena suerte!

Mientras la fila en el St. Francis se deslizaba lentamente hacia adelante y mi taxi avanzaba por pulgadas hacia el frente de la jauría, mantenía mi vista en los huéspedes que salían por la puerta de entrada. Este con maletas, aeropuerto; aquel en ropa casual,

probablemente camino del embarcadero; detrás de ellos una mujer bien vestida aferrada a una bolsa de Macy's, quizás de regreso a su casa en Marina o en Russian Hill.

Cuando un hombre alrededor de los cuarenta, ataviado con traje y corbata, salió por la puerta llevando una maleta de mano y un porta trajes, mi expectación aumentó. Y cuando llegué al primer lugar y escuché el golpe de la mano abierta del portero en el portaequipajes de mi taxi Desoto azul y blanco, me sentí agradecido, ¡un aeropuerto! Mi irritación con la extendida y hambrienta mano del portero (gesto hecho con mucha delicadeza para que el cliente no se diera cuenta), mientras colocaba el equipaje en el baúl, se apaciguó con la seguridad de un viaje de \$30. Inmediatamente empecé a calcular mis opciones, podía jugar a la ruleta del aeropuerto o volver pelado de regreso a la ciudad.

Cuando mi pasajero se instaló en el asiento trasero, nos dirigimos por Powell hasta Ellis, de ahí bajamos a Stockton cruzando Market, hasta entrar a la autopista por la calle Cuatro. Miré a mi benefactor por el espejo retrovisor. “¿Qué línea aérea?” “United”. El hombre tenía la cara carnosa de aquel que no es extraño a la mesa de comer. Su cabello castaño estaba corto, pero lo suficientemente largo como para peinarlo hacia un lado. Sin ningún vello facial. Un comerciante o un abogado, supuse. No era un turista, se veía demasiado práctico y sensato para serlo.

Yo estaba aún en mis primeros años como taxista, lo que significaba que todavía me fascinaban las conversaciones, anticipando algún intercambio interesante o alguna historia para pasársela a mis amigos taxistas, en el estacionamiento donde esperábamos para entregar nuestras hojas de ruta, las entradas y los sobornos (propinas) al despachador del turno. La apreciación y el entusiasmo para hacer esto que caracteriza los primeros años en el trabajo y que quizá para algunos mantiene la atracción más tiempo, esta se desgastaba gradualmente, como la banda de rodamiento de los neumáticos de mi taxi, por las implacables obligaciones del tráfico y por la tiranía de la repetición.

Puede que sea cierto que cada persona que se sube a un taxi es potencialmente una historia, pero como cualquier labor de minería, toma energía y esfuerzo el recuperar una pepita de oro entre la escoria del parloteo normal. Ese día, mi energía se elevó un poco, vigorizada por la buena fortuna de un recorrido al aeropuerto. Así que excavé.

Me enteré de que mi pasajero regresaba a Chicago, o quizás era New York, después de varios días de reuniones.

—Me encanta tu ciudad —, dijo como muchos visitantes suelen hacer—, pero no pude ver mucho esta vez, demasiadas reuniones largas.

—¿Y qué tipo de reuniones eran esas?

—Pues negocios de abogados hombre, estrategias legales y todo lo demás.

Un abogado, como yo pensé, pero lo de “hombre” en medio de su comentario me hizo pensar en algo menos simple de lo que su apariencia transmitía. Estaba buscándole otro enfoque a la conversación cuando él comentó—. Me estaba reuniendo con algunos de sus rancheros locales. Bueno, no exactamente locales, de Salinas, ¿no es muy lejos de aquí, verdad?

— No, no muy lejos,— le contesté—. ¿Qué tipo de rancheros?

—Rancheros de lechuga y verduras—, me informó —que buscan cómo salirse de sus contratos con los sindicatos.



"A poignant account of the tangled lives of  
American expatriates in Africa and the Africans they love."

—CHRISTOPHER CONTE, former reporter and editor for the The Wall Street Journal

# The Virgin Journey

THE REPORTER TRILOGY: BOOK ONE  
A Novel

MAZZI WAMPAMBA

# CHAPTER ONE

**G**ary Stokes was born and raised in the Los Angeles area. He encountered movie stars daily. He worked as an intern for filmmakers during his younger years, which made him develop a special liking for the arts and the movie industry.

As unemployment started to hit the West Coast, so did natural disasters. Gary needed to find a job now that he had graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles with a degree in film management. His dream was to make and manage movies in Los Angeles. But the film industry was, like much of the country, in an economic tailspin, leaving filmmakers very selective about which projects they took on.

It was hard to get into this business as a newcomer, even with the four years of intern experience Gary had while attending college. To his credit, Gary had done a double major, adding journalism as a safety net. Gary had even done some freelance writing for magazines and worked as a reporter for his college newspaper.

Gary's father had worked for a company in Los Angeles that had lots of foreign connections with media companies and financial institutions. As a result, Gary had travelled with his dad and learned about different countries at a very young age. Gary was proficient in French and had, what his teachers called, a natural ear for language. He impressed several of his father's foreign business associates as a quick study, showing an uncanny ability to understand their native languages.

\* \* \* \*

Michael Hayes, Gary's best friend during college, was one of the luckiest young men in the Los Angeles area. He had studied investment management and his family was well off. His father was a hedge fund manager and a partner in the company that employed Michael. Since Michael was Gary's best friend, Gary felt at ease asking Michael for a temporary abode while he looked for work. Michael had a beautiful apartment overlooking the Woodland Hills and was happy to help out his college friend.

Gary stretched and rubbed his back, which always ached after a night on the sleeper-couch in Michael's living room. The couch was meant to be temporary while Gary searched for jobs and pursued his endless dream of making it big as a producer in the movie industry. He had already been up for hours, preparing his resume and getting it ready to mail out to potential employers. He watched, sleepy-eyed, as his friend prepared a fresh pot of coffee.

"Forget about movies," Michael said from the kitchen. "You need to develop a passion for something useful, like journalism. With journalism," he continued, "you could get out of the country and go anywhere in the world, especially to countries where no one else wants to go. After all, you did journalism as part of your double major in college. Come on Gary, use that opportunity . . . Plus, I bet one of your dad's connections could open some doors for you."

Gary grinned and rolled his eyes.

"You're kidding, right? Why would I want to go to countries with diseases and crime and civil wars? That is what journalism is all about these days. Every journalist is flocking to the Middle East and Africa to report on wars and people dying."

Michael was not kidding. He continued to enlighten Gary about the plight of living in a big city without a job, and yet educated enough to run a country. "Before long you will be joining gangs and doing all sorts of crazy stuff. I tell you, try journalism. You might even like it".

Gary thought about his friend's suggestion, and he realized that he needed to get out of Los Angeles. He woke up very early and started mailing out his resume. He contacted his dad who gave him three names to contact; two worked for media companies and already knew Gary.

Gary put together application packages and took the eight-block walk to the post office, mailing them to almost every major U.S. media company. He was careful to only send them to those companies that had overseas offices. He knew landing a job in an overseas news bureau, especially with such little experience, was a long shot. He even wondered whether any of his packages would be opened.

After a few weeks of no replies, Gary became discouraged.

"What if all these guys I sent my packages to think I'm a joke?" Gary asked his friend over dinner.

"Why do you say that?" Michael asked.

"Well, I just wondered," Gary said.

"No need to create drama for yourself; you have enough drama going on right now. Just wait. It takes time for responses to come back, especially during a dry season like this one," Michael said, trying to calm Gary.

Gary had resorted to frequenting movie sets to pass his time, watching whatever was being "cut," since he had nothing else to do. His friend told him to seek some kind of employment at 7-Eleven, which was just a few blocks away, but the young manager there turned him down, giving a very lame excuse. "Sir, one of the duties here is to keep gangs out of this store and I'm not convinced that you can handle that specific duty."

That maimed Gary so much that he gave up on seeking service jobs.



One afternoon, as he returned back home from a movie set, he decided to pick up Michael's mail. Normally, he would not touch it since he thought that would violate his friend's privacy. But when he opened the mailbox, there was only one letter, and it was addressed to *Mr. Gary Stokes*.

Gary had given up on any good news coming from anywhere, so he took the letter in with him and put it on the dining table with the intention of reading it later. After all, there was no hurry in opening rejection letters.

Gary forced himself to be positive. He liked cooking, so he decided to make dinner for himself and his friend. Gary headed toward the kitchen and started preparing a delicious *coq au vin*.

"So, any mail today?" Michael asked during dinner. "By the way this chicken is absolutely to die for. What is it?"

"*Coq au vin*. It's a French recipe that my mom used to make on Saturdays; I'm not sure why on that particular day . . . and, yea, there's a letter that came in today. I picked it up from the mailbox. I hope you don't mind. It's from United Press International, but I haven't opened it yet. I'm fuckin' tired of opening rejection letters."

"You know you have to open it. Stop this negative thinking already. What if they wanted you to call them today before they closed, and now the letter is sitting there, not opened? And by the way, it's now seven—all offices are closed . . . Let me open it for you, Mr. Negative."

"No, I'll do it," Gary protested. He read it aloud:

*"Dear Mr. Stokes: Thank you for your interest in United Press International. We strive to recruit energetic and adventurous young men and women of your caliber. Would you please call the telephone number below for an interview as soon as possible since we are seeking to fill up this position within the next few weeks? Please note that this position is stationed in East Africa and if you happen to like the position, and us, we will have to move very quickly to get you over to our Nairobi office in Kenya. We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible.*

*Sincerely,  
David Zack"*

"Let's go out drinking, right now, because tomorrow will not belong to you. It will belong to United Press," Michael said, more excited than Gary, who didn't seem to comprehend what was unfolding.

They both had a great time at the nearby sports bar. They talked about everything and they made fun of the anxiety that Gary had been experiencing.

"Can you imagine yourself in the jungles of Africa?" Michael joked.

"No, I cannot. Do you know anything about Africa? I sure don't," Gary replied.

"All I know about Africa is from *Tarzan*, the movie. Wow, you will be living under a tree," Michael laughed.

"A FAST PACED, ACTION-PACKED THRILLER. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!"  
—THE COLUMBIA REVIEW

DEVIL  
IN  
THE  
GRASS

A THRILLER

CHRISTOPHER BOWRON



# ***Devil in the Grass***

**Christopher Bowron**

“Jack looked Henrietta straight in the eye. He didn’t believe in the devil—Satan, or Set, whatever they wanted to call him—yet he couldn’t help but feel he was selling himself, well, to the devil. He shook his head. “No such thing,” he told himself. “Is there anything that I have to sign? Do I owe you any percentages if I get a contract?”

“Absolutely not. I am a wealthy woman, Jackson. Having a piece of your soul is payment enough.” She laughed. “Of course I am just kidding. We Satanists are allowed humor.”

Jack felt the tingling of goose bumps forming on his arms and scalp.

## **DESCRIPTION**

When his pro football career fails, Jackson Walker returns to his home in southwest Florida to sort out his life. He lands an internship with Republican state senator James Hunter, whose Clean Water Bill puts him at odds with influential members of The Brotherhood of Set, a Satanic cult. They have deep roots in Florida, and are led by the sinister Henrietta LePley.

After Walker begins a relationship with a member of the Brotherhood, he is framed for the horrific killing of two elderly people. To clear his name, Jackson turns to his Seminole family to evade the police and a particularly nasty bunch of malevolent characters who specialize in the disposal of dead bodies. The Everglades provides an ancient and frightening setting for the unfolding action that will prove whether Jackson Walker will pull himself free from the dark evil that lurks there.

## **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- Offers an accessible and plausible depiction of satanists and Devil worship
- Uses an NFL pro as the main character
- A rye account of Southern politics
- Uses the Everglades as part of the setting

## **AUDIENCE**

- Readers who love a dash of horror
- Readers who like a fast-paced, action-packed thriller
- Readers who have a keen interest in southwest Florida and the Everglades
- People with an interest in the occult and the paranormal.
- Fans who enjoyed *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

## **AUTHOR BIO**



Christopher Bowron’s roots stretch back four generations in historic Niagara-on-the-Lake, voted the prettiest town in Canada. Christopher is the owner of a successful Real Estate Brokerage, Niagara-on-the-Lake Realty. He has a bachelor of arts from Brock University and is a lover of fine wine, sport and a story that takes you away. Christopher has a second residence in southwest Florida where he has spent a good part of his life since childhood. Southwest Florida is the backdrop for his first novel, *Devil in the Grass*. Christopher is currently working on a sequel to *Devil in the Grass*, a thriller called *The Senator*. Jackson Walker returns to find himself in another paranormal mix up as he attempts to run for the Florida State Senate. Is the Church of Set seeking to derail his bid, or is it new and if possible, more dastardly entity?

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**6” x 9”, 258 pages**

**Softcover: \$16.95, 978-1-63393-206-7**

**Hardcover: \$26.95, 978-1-63393-170-1**

**Ebook: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-207-4**

**Pub Date: March 1, 2016**

**BISAC CATEGORY**

**FICTION: Thriller**

**Online:**

**[www.ChristopherBowron.com](http://www.ChristopherBowron.com)**

 köehlerbooks™

**INGRAM**



# 1

## PURGATORY

JACK THANKED THE STOCKY Seminole woman with a nod as she handed him his coffee in a tin can. She had been sent by his grandfather to look after him while he was in hiding. The can burned the tips of his fingers as he held it gingerly. *No coffee cups?* He reminded himself this was a hunt camp in the middle of nowhere. He stirred in some sugar and watched the woman as she left through a tattered drape that half-covered the only doorway. The room contained nothing more than a cot, a table, and two chairs. The plank-board floors and walls were a collage of warped paneling and narrow horizontal logs. The room smelled musty, with a slight undertone of rotting wood. The lone window looked out over the grass plain and wetlands of the Big Cyprus Swamp. A rusty piece of bug screen attached to the frame was covered with duct tape. The hot breeze did little to change the oppressive, stifling heat pressing down on Jack's already sagging shoulders.

Jack took a sip of the strong coffee, careful not to burn his lips on the hot tin. He set the drink down on the table and leaned forward, running his hands through his sweat-drenched hair, his mind churning. He'd become a shell of the man he had once been. Perhaps it was the fact that he was sober, or perhaps it was the reality of his dire situation, that allowed him to lay a finger on the truth for the first time in years. He breathed a heavy sigh. His mother's death during his senior year in college had hit him harder than he'd been willing to admit. He blamed himself in part, and had a hard time dealing with his guilt. He'd buried his emotions, trying his best to be the strong guy. But then he'd cracked. His fall from grace had been steady, including substance abuse and the demise of his professional football career. He'd allowed himself to slide into despair, to the point where he felt he didn't know himself anymore.

Jack stared at the ceiling, slowly shaking his head. He remembered idolizing great football players like Joe Montana and John Elway when he was a teenager, trying to emulate the way they played the game. He appreciated their skill, but it was the fearlessness with which they marched onto the field that had mattered to him; they seemed oblivious to the adversities they faced and allowed their abilities to produce great results, unhindered by doubt. Jack worked hard to exhibit many of the same characteristics during his high school football days, and then later at the University of Florida. He'd grown into a person that his teammates looked up to, the one who didn't back down. He was a gamer.

Jack had fallen a long way from that standard these past few years. He didn't blame anyone. He'd become soft and apathetic. He'd made a half-assed attempt to clean himself up after hitting what he thought was rock bottom. He realized now that he had never dealt with the root of his problems, he'd only masked the symptoms.

The magnitude of his situation and the possible consequences hit him like a slap to the forehead. He picked up the *Naples Daily News*, which lay at his feet. It was the third time he'd read the front page since waking an hour earlier. His picture was prominently displayed with the headline beneath it:

#### **CULT LEADER SLAYS TWO IN CLEWISTON**

*A Fort Myers man in his mid-twenties is the subject of a massive manhunt in connection with the slaying of a man and woman in the small town of Clewiston, near Lake Okeechobee Tuesday night. The suspect, Jackson Walker, is described as 6-foot-2, with dark hair and athletic build. He was last seen in LaBelle, east of Fort Myers.*

*Walker, a local football star, played three years for the University of Florida Gators. Walker was later drafted by the Cincinnati Bengals and played three years in their system. He currently works as an intern for Sen. James Hunter.*

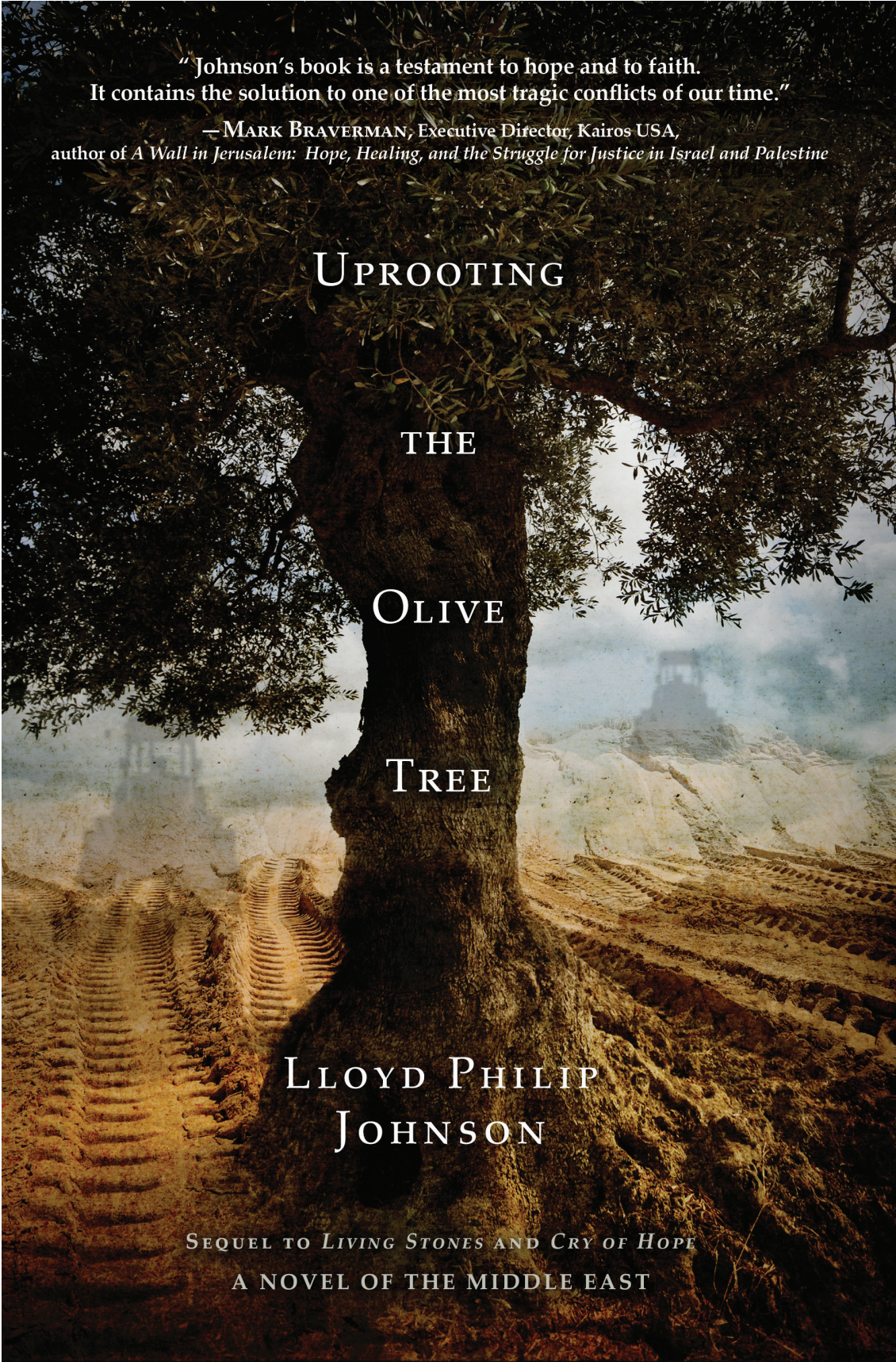
*Walker is believed to be connected with a local Satanic cult called The Brotherhood of Set, based in South Florida. Not much is known about the cult, or whether it is associated with other Satanic sects within the country.*

*Details and names of the deceased are being withheld pending further investigation. Anyone with information or knowledge of his whereabouts should call the Lee County Sheriff's hotline. Walker is considered armed and dangerous.*

Jack threw the paper into the far corner of the room. "Fuckin' hell! . . . Cult leader, armed and dangerous? Come on." He shook his head. Jack possessed nothing more than the clothes on his back and a little cash in his wallet. Reading the newspaper again infuriated him.

*The Naples Daily* was a small rag, but by now his story could be on WINK news, maybe even Fox TV, his history dissected and the media hounding anyone closely associated with him. He shook his head once again. *This doesn't look good.* He stood up and paced the small room. He was not a devil worshiper, nor was he a cult leader; he needed to prove his accusers wrong.





“Johnson’s book is a testament to hope and to faith.  
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— MARK BRAVERMAN, Executive Director, Kairos USA,  
author of *A Wall in Jerusalem: Hope, Healing, and the Struggle for Justice in Israel and Palestine*

UPROOTING

THE

OLIVE

TREE

LLOYD PHILIP  
JOHNSON

SEQUEL TO *LIVING STONES* AND *CRY OF HOPE*  
A NOVEL OF THE MIDDLE EAST



## PROLOGUE

Ashley glanced at her watch. “We have time. Let’s drive on.”  
Najid looked at his bride, his beautiful American, her face flushed with excitement. He smirked. “You could get yourself in trouble again. But some people never learn.”

“Yeah, but it’s fun being together, and I feel very safe with you after all we have been through . . . and survived.”

Winding along the contours of the hillside near Bethlehem in their rented car, the evergreen forest of the Cremisan Monastery reminded Ashley of the Pacific Northwest near Seattle; the fresh smell of the trees along the drive up toward Mount Rainer. Below Bethlehem lay the open orchard of olive trees, and above as well as across the valley, the large white buildings shining in the sun surrounded by a high wall—the Israeli settlements. They suddenly broke out into the open and saw an Israeli Jeep parked halfway across the gravel road. The soldiers inside signaled Najid to stop.

“We Palestinians call them flying checkpoints,” Nijad said to Ashley. “Why would they put one here on this back road leading to Walega Village, or what is left of it?”

One young private jumped out and approached the car carrying his automatic rifle. “Let me see your passports.” He appeared to be no more than eighteen years old.

Najid, rolling down his car window, looked to Ashley for her passport as he dug into his own pocket for his Israeli ID.

“Do you live here?” Nijad asked.

The soldier jerked upright with a puzzled look on his face. He seemed to stumble for words. So Najid asked the same question in Hebrew.

He glared at Najid. “I’ll ask the questions.”

Najid laughed, but continued in Hebrew. “I thought we were in Area A in Palestine. So why are you here demanding to see my ID from my own country? We Israelis have no legal jurisdiction here?”

The young soldier signaled the Jeep, and another IDF colleague with an automatic rifle approached as Najid handed the documents out the window. They waited while the two Israeli Defense Force guards conversed away from the car, scanning them. Ashley asked Najid what this was all about.

“I’m not sure, but we’ll find out.”

Najid looked around, hearing the clank of Israeli bulldozer treads. They had a new highway nearly completed. He could see the concrete foundation along the wide, new roadbed for the partially completed six-meter concrete wall in the distance.

“Should we just turn around?” Ashley asked, her shoulders and hands raised. “We don’t have to go on to Walega.”

Najid heard a hint of fear in her voice. At that moment, the second soldier approached.

“Where are you going?” he asked in Hebrew.

“To Walega Village.”

“Walega doesn’t exist.”

“I know. It did until you people destroyed and buried it. We’d at least like to see the view over the valley to the west. We have to be back in Bethlehem soon.”

“You’re an Israeli Arab citizen. Why are you here with an American woman? What is your purpose?”

“She’s my wife. We have every right to travel freely in both lands. And in a democracy like ours in Israel, we expect to be treated well. I respect your doing what you are ordered to do because you are a soldier in a chain of command. So please respect us and return our papers. We will complete our trip, turn around, and return shortly.”

They sat and waited in the car for ten minutes while the second soldier spoke on his telephone.

“What’s happening, Najid. It’s hard just sitting here, not knowing what they are planning to do.”

“These kids don’t know what they are supposed to do with us, so they call their superior. And we wait. We have no other choice. I have learned over several years, you have no other options because they with their guns have the power. Occasionally they use them. This is just a part of living under military occupation.”

“I guess freedom is selective here,” Ashley remarked, shaking her head. “If you are one of those Israeli settlers up there at the top of the hill, you probably have it.”

“You’re right—oh, here come the soldiers.”

Three of them approached the open window ordering Najid to step out of the car.

“We have done nothing wrong. Please return our papers.” Speaking in Hebrew with his hand outstretched through the open window, Najid didn’t move.

The older-looking guard jerked the car door open, grabbed Najid, and threw him to the ground. “You’ll do as we say.” He raised his rifle at the now prostrate Palestinian as Ashley screamed and bolted out of the car. A second soldier blocked her from coming close to Najid as the first one struck Najid hard with his rifle butt. Najid lay gasping for breath, covering his chest with his hands. Ashley pushed the young guard aside to kneel by the man she loved.

## CHAPTER 1

The intermittent rumble as waves crashed on the Mazatlan beach put Ashley Wells Haddad to sleep but not for long. Najid, her new husband, awakened to her shouts of “No, no, you can’t do that” and her fists striking out and hitting him. Their honeymoon had been idyllic up to that point, high up in their Mexican-beach hotel room overlooking the crashing sea and crimson clouds at day’s end. They both loved the sea smells, a treat for in-landers.

As he put his arms around her, she turned toward him, her long, blond hair following. He kissed her in a silent embrace. What caused this sudden outburst? It wasn’t the calm Ashley he knew so well over the past two years. His mind raced wondering how one’s brain processed at night the events of the day. The images could often seem so real. He didn’t want Ashley to worry about their future. Perhaps the traumas of the past still bubbled beneath her conscious mind.

“What’s going on, my love? Dreaming about getting injured in the bombing, or kidnapped in Jerusalem?”

“No, no.” She sighed. “I’m just so glad it was only a dream.”

So what was bothering her? The wedding in Oklahoma City went so well. Ashley’s mom and dad couldn’t have been more affirming. His parents had come from far away in Israel, and even the senator from Oklahoma attended the reception.

Ashley’s breathing slowed as he felt her relax. He squeezed her arm wrapped around his shoulder, listening to the calming waves. A silver light streamed in the window from the moon’s reflection on the Pacific Ocean. She kissed his cheek. Her hair smelled of some fragrant flower he couldn’t identify. He could lie here with Ashley forever.

“I’m sorry, Najid. I woke you up. I didn’t realize that I hit you.”

“No problem. I was beaten once in an Israeli jail a lot worse than that.”

Ashley chuckled, but quickly became serious. “You’re holding out on me. I’ve never heard that story.”



"Presents a powerful message and common sense ideas for everyone who is concerned about the future of our society."

—Ed Meese, Former US Attorney General



# Culture Leads Leaders Follow

Al Sikes

# ***Culture Leads, Leaders Follow***

by Al Sikes

## **DESCRIPTION**

What happens when the cultural shapers don't care how their actions are changing America? What are the consequences when the adornments of power and money become predominant, leaving behind the invisible line drawn by Judeo-Christian values?

*Culture Leads, Leaders Follow* is part memoir, part cultural critique and captures the potential for a new countervailing force.

## **KEY SELLING POINTS**

- A clash with Howard Stern, while Sikes led the Federal Communications Commission, triggered Stern's ultimate demise as a broadcast radio host.
- The author has a distinctive voice shaped by a unique blend of experiences.
- *Culture Leads, Leaders Follow* provides an intimate view of the world of power politics and business, while giving encouragement to those who want America's values to go beyond financial spreadsheets and political polls.

## **AUDIENCE**

- Persons with cultural interests and concerns about how the U.S. government works.
- Readers who are active in secular or sectarian organizations with cultural reform missions.
- Schools and Libraries

## **AUTHOR BIO**



Al Sikes draws insights from wide-ranging experiences that began in the Midwest and moved east to the power cities of Washington and New York. Sikes' leadership helped shape the arc of 21st century communication technologies from positions as Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and then President of Hearst New Media.

Sikes' bold leadership at the FCC eliminating barriers that blocked new technologies, led to digital TV, radio and mobile phone services. He also began actions against Howard Stern that resulted in Stern wishing Sikes dead on his daily radio show.

Sikes' technology insights and his collaborations with technology pioneers were captured in his first book, "Fast Forward."

Beyond his work in business and government, Sikes draws on experiences chairing The Trinity Forum Board, tending a small apiary with his wife, Marty, and leading a growing jazz festival in his hometown of Easton, Maryland.

While living and working in New York City, Sikes founded READ ALLIANCE, which trains teenagers to tutor children with reading deficiencies. In 2004, the Manhattan Institute chose Sikes as one of eight winners of the Social Entrepreneurship Award. This award recognizes enterprising individuals who are helping Americans realize their full potential as citizens and members of society.

**Publisher: Köehler Books**

**Distributor: Ingram**

**6" x 9", 150 pages**

**Softcover: \$12.95,**

**978-1-63393-165-7**

**Hardcover: \$24.95,**

**978-1-63393-167-1**

**Ebook: \$4.99, 978-1-63393-166-4**

**Pub Date: March 1, 2016**

## **BISAC CATEGORY**

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY:**

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**INGRAM**

## TIME ZONES AND LEADERSHIP

*Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites... Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.*

Irish-born philosopher Edmund Burke

I remember the winter of 1985 as especially harsh, the kind of chill that you don't forget. Washington's damp and penetrating cold is like that.

I had flown to Washington on a gray December day from St. Louis to meet with the Secretary of Commerce in President Reagan's Administration, Malcolm Baldrige. His office was warm—the Secretary had an employee that kept the fireplace well stoked.

I was meeting with Secretary Baldrige about a job. The White House had told Baldrige that President Reagan was prepared to nominate me to head the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, a job in the Commerce Department, if he approved.

Baldrige, whose nickname was Mac, was in his mid-60s, tall, lean and thoroughly plainspoken. His sister, Letitia, who had been Jacqueline Kennedy's social secretary, wrote books on etiquette. Mac didn't read them.

Mac, whose body was somewhat bent, was often more cowboy than Cabinet secretary. His hobby was calf-roping and he was still entering rodeos at age sixty-four.

It was said that Mac would only take a call on the first try from the president and "any cowboy." This folklore about the man behind the big desk turned out to be instructive.

I had entered Mac's office with at least a slight trepidation. Prospects were quickly giving way to realities and, for me, selling a broadcast business I had started in 1978 and moving to Washington would be a wrenching change. My first 45 years had been in small



towns and cities in Missouri where, by contrast, ambitions were more modest, power-based cleavages fewer and accomplishments often understated.



I grew up being told, and then believing, that America was exceptional. It had helped transform Harry S. Truman from a machine politician in Kansas City, Missouri, into an international leader. Then, Dwight David Eisenhower came home after leading the Allied Forces in World War II to serve two terms as President. His leadership talents and caliber were not in doubt.

My formative years were enriched by stories of Truman, a home state president, and Eisenhower. They, responding to a deeper set of values, led America in peacekeeping while providing international assistance to the people ravaged by war.

And my parents made sure I attended Sunday School, where sin and the possibility of redemption were featured.

At the earliest cognitive moment in my life, I became familiar with my Dad's necessary service—fighting Fascism on foreign shores. Dad had joined virtually all males of his generation and fought in the Asian Theater in World War II. He served as an enlisted man.

Dad's generation then built an extraordinary engine of prosperity. The economic engine mostly produced goods and services that improved lives. Most people had to work hard to satisfy needs and consumer credit was not yet flowing. Mom and Dad saved and saved and saved, and finally built a house. True discretionary spending was a modest part of the economy; savings were more notable.

By the time I started down my professional path, I was certainly academically and religiously familiar with human weakness. As a student at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, I had studied political science, history and philosophy. As a law student at the University of Missouri, I had looked at several centuries of case studies detailing man's inhumanity and the court's reaction.

But by the time I finished law school in 1964, America was at a new beginning. It was on a trajectory that in many ways was far different both culturally and economically from my first two decades.

As I look back now, the early narratives in my life were about character. World War II and America's leadership in helping to rebuild war-torn countries provided dramatic lessons of character. The end of all my father and mother's stories and admonitions was about character. And the narratives of the popular culture in the 1950s and 60s were mostly not at war with the upstream influences in my life—the influences that flowed from family, teachers and the church. There were cultural tensions—rock and roll supplied the primary irritant—but the cleavages were much less pronounced.



I was no longer young—or impressionable—when I arrived at Secretary Baldrige's office. An abrupt change in my attitudes or approaches was not going to happen.

Baldrige occupied a gymnasium-sized office that featured old-school elegance and was decidedly male in adornments.



**John Köehler, president and publisher.** John is the company founder and is an award-winning graphics designer, and the author of five books. He earned a BFA in Communications Arts and Design from Virginia Commonwealth University and attended graduate studies at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. John's professional career includes being art director of a major advertising agency and founding a design studio. John lives in Virginia Beach, VA and is active in ministries, including a special needs ministry, a cause he is still very much dedicated to. John won the 1991 Boomerang World Championship in Perth, Australia and was a member of the Foster's Boomerang 2000 Team, a touring troop that taught professional athletes, and others, the gospel of boomerangs



**Joe Coccaro, vice president and executive editor.** Joe is chief editor, and in charge of acquisitions. Joe joined the company after nearly three decades as reporter, columnist, editor and senior newsroom manager at several major newspapers, including Virginia's largest and most widely circulated daily, The Virginian-Pilot. Joe holds an MA in writing from the S.I. Newhouse School of Communications at Syracuse University. Joe has won dozens of individual writing awards and has edited work that has been nationally recognized. He has coached hundreds of news writers, novelists, and non-fiction authors, and has taught writing at two Virginia universities. He also has written books. Joe is a competitive runner and cyclist, and five-string banjo picker. He lives in Cape Charles, VA on the Chesapeake Bay.



**Kellie Emery is a graphic designer** who recently graduated from the Art Institute of Virginia Beach with a BFA in Graphic Design. She creates text layouts and designs book covers that are coming soon to a bookseller near you. She is also an illustrator, an acrylic painter, and face painter. She has worked on several film projects in the art and assistant director departments at Regent University. Kellie plans on living in Ireland one day, making cheesecake and art with her polar bear, Toulouse. But for now, she resides in Portsmouth, Virginia.



**Denise Van Dyke is an acquisitions editor** who holds a BA in English and French from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She holds a Masters in English Literature from Old Dominion University. An avid reader and writer, Denise has dreamed of joining the publishing world since she was in high school. She is thrilled to realize this dream at Köehler Books, where she assists the publisher in the processes, methods, and systems involved with publishing books of all forms. When she is not working or studying, she enjoys reading children's literature and honing her creative writing skills. Denise currently resides in Virginia Beach with her husband and their four furry and adoring pets.



**Nora Firestone, acquisitions editor.** Nora has published more than 1,200 articles as a reporter and feature writer for the Virginian-Pilot and Inside Business news journal and has authored two books: A History of Optometry in Tidewater, Virginia and soon-to-be-released The \$10,000 Apostrophe, as well as the instructional Design, Build and Manage Your Own Website workshop manual. Nora has been featured in books, on radio and TV and in numerous print articles, both locally and nationwide, and has secured valuable media attention for others. She owns Step-by-Step Presentations, which develops and leads instructional presentations and training workshops covering various elements of professional writing, do-it-yourself website building and management, effective media relations and outreach.



**Dean Robertson, acquisitions editor.** Prior to taking up writing with various essays and her debut book, Dean Robertson was a school teacher, retiring in 2006. After suffering a bad fall in 2013, Dean ended up convalescing at the Lydia Roper Home. There she met the amazing women who inspired her to teach them about the Bible. Soon it became clear that she was the student, and so the journey of the book began. She is the author of *Looking for Lydia*, *Looking for God*.