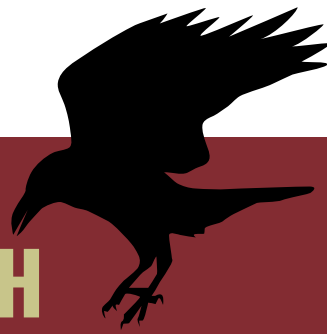


JULY 2025

# THE MARCH OF CRIME


SoCalMWA's monthly newsletter.



## Procedural/Private Eye Fiction

SoCalMWA Author Readings





An Evening with  
**PROCEDURAL &  
PRIVATE EYE AUTHORS**

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**Featured Guests & Co-Moderators:**  
Rachel Howzell Hall and Matt Coyle

**Readers:**  
Christopher Jones  
Aimee Kluck  
Dick Lochte  
John Shepphird

**Thursday, July 31  
7-8:30 p.m.  
Crowdcast**

**REGISTER HERE**

SoCalMWA is pleased to present our summer Author Reading event. Featuring **Rachel Howzell Hall** and **Matt Coyle** as our co-moderators, with additional readings by **Christopher Jones**, **Aimee Kluck**, **Dick Lochte**, and **John Shepphird**.

**REGISTER NOW!**

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## Jury Service

BY LESLIE S. KLINGER



I just completed my service as a juror for a set of literary awards, and my experience left me with a few thoughts. As a juror, I read a wide range of categories—the quantity was staggering at times, dozens of novels, scores of short stories, novelettes, novellas, and many anthologies and collections. But it wasn't only the quantity that staggered me—it was the scope and variety of the submissions. All of them fit the broad rubric of the genre, but the differences were amazing. Some were historical, some contemporary. Some were first-person, others third-person (and a few second-person). The characters were equally varied—young, old, straight, queer, rich, poor, Latinx, Black, Native American, and many other identifiers. The authors were just as varied, with an incredible range of life experiences and voices.

All this left me in awe. Writing—storytelling—belongs to the entire race of humans! We tell stories to explain our lives to ourselves or to create an alternate version of our lives. Stories let us experiment with different social models or rehearse our behaviors in the face of a wide range of crises. Stories bring us comfort and closure in a way that daily life can't.

It also left me grateful that there are so many people in this world who have the talent, perseverance, and courage to tell stories. I don't think of myself as anyone with talent. Instead, as a nonfiction writer doing what I do, I'd class myself as a scholar and a fan. I enjoy discussing other people's stories and the storytellers themselves.

The ultimate conclusion I reached about the jury process was the impossibility of the task. How could I select what was award-worthy? In the end, I decided that there was no way to decide what was the best in a category, only those that *I* liked the best.

Does this mean that I think awards are meaningless? Some might say that without knowing who decided the "winners," you can't use awards as a measuring rod of quality. There's probably a good deal of truth to that. When you've got a good jury, however, and there's agreement about what we liked best, I think that there are still real benefits to seeking out award-winning work. And of course, it is a great honor to be nominated! Meanwhile, keep reading!

Les

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10866 Wilshire Blvd.  
Suite 1500  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

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## It Doesn't Have to be Perfect

BY HOLLY WEST

Lately, I've been splitting my time between working on my own WIP and editing another writer's manuscript. I enjoy editing for others—sometimes, more than writing. It's a lot of work, but it's also a great way to hone one's craft.

It's also a reminder that even established authors write imperfect early drafts. Recently, I was asked to read and provide feedback on a manuscript written by one of the most successful writers working today. The resulting book was published in June, but reading it in manuscript form—before it had undergone professional editing—was an illuminating experience. I'm so grateful that the author allowed me access to their work in its early form.

I'm not gonna lie; it was a strong first draft. The story was solid from the jump, and the first hundred pages were tight. Much better than any first draft I've ever written. The characters were well developed. But after those first hundred pages, the narrative wandered a bit. I could tell the writer had a clear vision of the novel's beginning, but after that, they were still finding the story. Mind you, it was still good, but I knew it would be fantastic once their editor got their hands on it.

I'm happy to say the finished novel is great, and it's killing it in sales, as expected.

For all of you out there struggling to write your first novel, remember that even the best, most successful writers aren't brilliant straight out of the gate. Knowing this helps me pump the brakes on my constant need to edit as I write. Get that story down first, then worry about polishing it up.

None of this is easy, but it's what we do. Most writers I know, including myself, don't feel like they have a choice. We're driven to do it, even when it drives us to madness. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

Holly

## The March of Crime

The March of Crime is the newsletter of the Southern California Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America.

Editor: Holly West

Opinions expressed herein are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Mystery Writers of America Southern California Chapter.

Contact us at:  
[themarchofcrime@gmail.com](mailto:themarchofcrime@gmail.com)

Join the SoCalMWA  
Discussion Group

[groups.io/g/MWA-SOCAL](https://groups.io/g/MWA-SOCAL)  
(members only)

NATIONAL OFFICE  
Mystery Writers of America  
1140 Broadway #1507  
New York, NY 10001  
t. 212.888.8171  
[mwa@mysterywriters.org](mailto:mwa@mysterywriters.org)  
<http://mysterywriters.org>



## Save the Date!

### Inventing the Page: For Writers on Writing

On **Wednesday, August 13**, SoCalMWA and SinCLA present “Inventing the Page: For Writers on Writing.” This ticketed event will feature **Robert Crais**, Christopher Rice, and S.J. Rozan, with Gregg Hurwitz serving as moderator.

Join us for an evening of heart-stopping revelation and thrilling inspiration. To miss this event would be a crime!

#### **Inventing the Page: For Writers on Writing**

Wednesday, August 13 at 7 p.m.

The Skirball Cultural Arts Center

Magnin Auditorium

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA

[Tickets on sale now!](#)

## Calls for Submission

### Short Story Anthologies

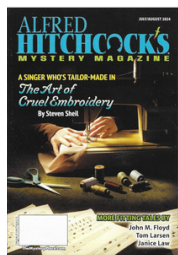
[Bouchercon 2026](#) in Calgary, Alberta, Canada (October 21–25, 2026), is currently accepting submissions for its [anthology](#). The deadline is October 1, 2025. The theme is Cross-Border crimes and mysteries. Submission guidelines are [here](#).

Malice Domestic (April 24–26, 2026) is accepting submissions for their upcoming anthology, *Murder Most Senior*. The deadline for submissions is August 31, 2025. Submission guidelines are [here](#).

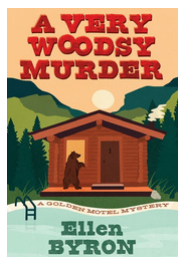
## Wanted: March of Crime Editor

### SoCalMWA Newsletter

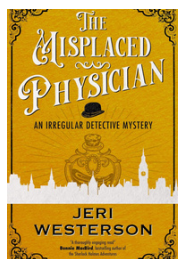
There is an opening for SoCalMWA’s newsletter editor. If you’re interested in taking on this paid volunteer position, please email Holly at [themarchofcrime@gmail.com](mailto:themarchofcrime@gmail.com) for details.



**Craig Faustus Buck's** short story “Home Game” (*Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, July/August 2024), which was chosen for Otto Penzler and John Grisham's anthology, *Best Mystery Stories of the Year 2025*, has been nominated for a Macavity Award.



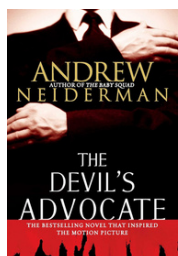
*A Very Woodsy Murder*, **Ellen Byron's** first Golden Motel Mystery, is nominated for an Anthony Award in the category of Best Cozy or Humorous Mystery.



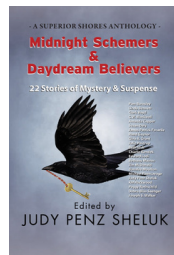
The third book in **Jeri Westerson's** Sherlockian pastiche series, *The Misplaced Physician*, An Irregular Detective Mystery, has just been released: Doctor John H. Watson is kidnapped and Holmes is out of the country, so it's up to former Baker Street Irregular Tim Badger and his associate Ben Watson to save the day.



*Embedded*, the first book in John Lansing's Dakota Judd thriller series, will be released on July 8 in ebook and paperback. Pre-order the ebook [here](#).



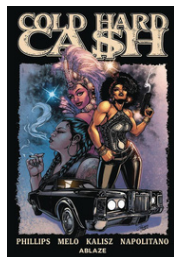
**Andrew Neiderman's** *The Devil's Advocate* was renewed for publication by Eksmo, Language: Russian/World. The publisher related that it proved to be a very successful publication for them, going over 18,000 copies.



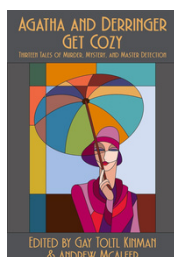
**Peggy Rothschild's** short story, “Ghost Wolves,” is included in the recently released anthology, *Midnight Schemers and Daydream Believers: 22 Stories of Mystery and Suspense*. Desire or desperation, revenge or retribution—how far would you go to realize a dream? This collection explores the possibilities.



The second in **Terry Shames's** Jessie Madison series, *Deep Dive*, comes out July 2 from Severn House Publishing. *Booklist* calls it a “must-read thriller.” Purchase through your local bookstores or at [Amazon](#).



**Gary Phillips** has brought one of his characters from prose to comics—outlaw courier Martha Chainey. In the graphic novel *Cold Hard Cash* (collecting the Comixology miniseries in hardcopy), former Vegas showgirl Martha is called to L.A. to help an old friend recover ten million dollars stolen from the nonprofit she heads. From Ablaze Comics.



One of the stories in *Agatha and Derringer Get Cozy*, edited by **Gay Toltl Kinman** and Andrew McAleer, was nominated for a Macavity Award in the short story category: “The Postman Always Flirts Twice,” by Barb Goffman.



**Dan Bronson** received the 2025 Robert Hargreaves Award from the Writers of Kern for his latest Jack Shannon mystery, *Shout at the Devil*.

# APPEARANCES & EVENTS



**Terry Shames** will be at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco on July 10 at 5:30 p.m. with author Christina Hillsboro, discussing “Agents of Change: The Women Who Transformed the CIA.”

To celebrate the release of *The Misplaced Physician*, An Irregular Detective Mystery, **Jeri Westerson** will be at the following locations in August (find her full schedule at [JeriWesterson.com](http://JeriWesterson.com)):

**AN IRREGULAR DETECTIVE MYSTERY PARTY!**

Please bring a friend and RSVP to [jeriwesterson@gmail.com](mailto:jeriwesterson@gmail.com)

<b>AUG 2 OC</b>	Book Carnival! Saturday, 2 PM 348 S Tustin St, Orange, CA
<b>AUG 3 LA</b>	Sisters in Crime "What If?" Panel Sunday, 2 pm Radford Studio Center 4024 Radford Ave, Studio City. <b>MUST REGISTER AHEAD OF TIME.</b> See my website.
<b>AUG 16 ON-LINE</b>	LIVE ONLINE Event! Saturday, 2 PM <b>YOUTUBE LAUNCH</b> <a href="https://tinyurl.com/55zjsz25">https://tinyurl.com/55zjsz25</a>
<b>AUG 23 LA</b>	The Book Jewel Saturday, 2 pm 6259 W 87th St, Westchester, CA
<b>AUG 25 IE</b>	Coffee with the Author! Mon, 3 pm. Canyon Lake Library 31594 Railroad Canyon Rd, Canyon Lake


**GO TO JERIWESTERSON.COM FOR FULL DETAILS**  
**EVEN IF YOU CAN'T ATTEND, PLEASE CONSIDER ORDERING THE BOOK FROM THESE 2 BOOKSELLERS.**



**Donis Casey's** “Tell Me Your Story” guest for July is actress/writer/documentary filmmaker Penny Peyser. Artists of any stripe cannot help but create, and Penny is the poster child for continuous creativity. Her second book, *Sonnets From Suburbia: Romance Dance*, came out last year. Check out Penny's tale beginning July 20.



**Paul Levine** interviewed Pulitzer Prize winning journalist **Dave Barry** about his new book, *Class Clown: The Memoirs of a Professional Wiseass* at Live Talks Los Angeles.



[View Project](#) [Share](#)

EP 174 - Deanna Raybourn - KILLS WELL WITH OTHERS  
[OutWithDan](#)

Entrant  
OutWithDan

Award(s):  
Individual Episodes-Interview, Distinction 2025

**Dan White**, creator and Host of the OutWithDan podcast, recently won the 2025 Communicator Award for his episode with guest Deanna Raybourn, known for her historical mysteries. His win was for Interview of Distinction. OutWithDan will issue its 200th episode this summer. Dan is also proud to serve as Vice-President of Sisters in Crime Los Angeles.



**Ellen Byron** will be the toastmaster at the 2026 Malice Domestic convention.

## Technical Surveillance for Mystery Writers

Event Re-Cap by **Travis Richardson**

On June 8, author Adam Sikes gave a talk about “Technical Surveillance for Mystery Writers” at the Wende Cold War Museum in Culver City. Adam knows the world of spies and espionage. As a former paramilitary agent for the CIA, he has seen cutting-edge high-tech, only available to governmental agencies, become off-the-shelf everyday electronics. He showed footage from the 1998 movie “Enemy of the State,” where government agents equipped with aspirational technology like facial recognition, voice recognition, and satellite imaging could locate the evasive characters played by Gene Hackman and Will Smith. This technology is in use today. When carrying a cell phone, your device is emitting data that can be extracted in a variety of ways, including GPS, cell towers, Bluetooth, and NFC. Bad actors could create their own “cell tower” in a van to extract your information or even walk nearby with a device to capture your data. Every digital transaction (i.e., noncash) we make is recorded, and for \$200, you can find out a great deal of information from private companies on just about anybody.

When Adam was working for the CIA, he had to enter “skiffs”— Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities (SCIFs)—where cell phones and other communication devices were stowed away, and outside devices could not penetrate. When social media first hit the scene, intelligence agency employees were told to stay away from it. Now, those agencies recommend all personnel have social media accounts, because not having one looks weird, and spies on the other side search for anomalies like that. Sometimes, to evade surveillance, spies resort to “sticks and stones” tactics, like marking buildings with chalk, handwritten notes, etc.



Beyond your phone and computer, items such as HVAC systems, cars, appliances, and even some clothes are also tracking data. Spies no longer use rental cars because their movements are tracked. As Israel demonstrated by exploding Hezbollah pagers, a country can get into the supply chain and exploit it. Russia and China have been collecting information on American citizens, with the People’s Republic of China going as far back as the 1990s in collecting big data. But corporations also have a lot of data on people, and one bad actor can do a lot of harm.

It should be noted that when spies are in the field, things often don’t go according to plan. The units may not have the proper equipment for the job (or it doesn’t work), and they must improvise in the moment.

Adam, who has utilized his surveillance expertise in his novels, also covered ways to limit the interception of some data, like using VPNs (Virtual Private Networks), TOR (The Onion Router), and End-to-End Encryption. He also noted that when people go dark (turn off phones/devices), this is considered suspicious behavior, and adversaries may look for patterns.

A big thank you goes out to **Gary Phillips** and **Jennifer Younger** for putting this talk together, along with the Wende Museum for hosting us. The Wende is free to the public and currently has an espionage exhibit. Also, thank you to Adam Sikes for his sensational talk. You can find out more about Adam and his novels at [AdamSikes.com](http://AdamSikes.com).

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# CRIME CALENDAR



2025

July 19: [Books, BBQ, & Beer, Los Angeles, CA](#)

July 31: [Author Readings—Procedurals/PI, Crowdcast](#)

August 13: [Inventing the Page, Los Angeles, CA](#)

August 21–24: [Killer Nashville, Franklin, TN](#)

September 3–7: [Bouchercon, New Orleans, LA](#)

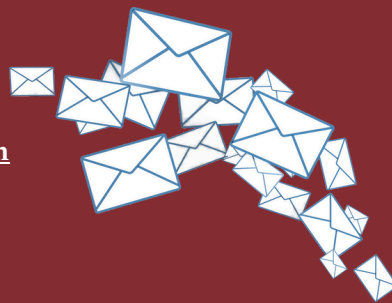
September 25: Author Readings—Thriller/Suspense

October: Gumbo Party, Los Angeles, CA (Date TBD)

November 20: Author Readings—Noir, Crowdcast

*For events without links, save the dates, and we'll send details as soon as they're available.*

If you know of an event that belongs on the Crime Calendar, email [themarchofcrime@gmail.com](mailto:themarchofcrime@gmail.com) with the info.



# THE LAST WORD



“I cannot help but think this is a bad idea, Harry,’ said I to the king. But I was only his jester, and as is the usual practice with bad ideas, the ones wishing to perpetrate them are deaf to advice.”

*Devil's Gambit*  
by Jeri Westerson