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## PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER FALL 2011 ISSUE

Editor: Marilyn Meredith, [mmeredith@ocsnet.net](mailto:mmeredith@ocsnet.net)

This is your newsletter, please contribute articles, your news, book reviews, or anything else you think might be of interest. It is also open to the public, so it's a great place to share your expertise.

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Fellow PSWA members,

After the two weeks or so of summer we had this year, we Pacific Northwesterners are now back to foggy mornings and 60 degree high days. We're out of our canoes and kayaks, back in our fleece vests, sandals and wool socks, ready to enjoy yet another cup of the dark, rich coffee for which we're famous and get to work on that manuscript we've been putting off.

Even if it isn't exactly wool socks and sandals weather where you are, the advent (or perhaps just hint) of fall should likewise inspire you to get back to your writing. For some of you this may mean actually starting that Great American Novel you've always wanted to write, or starting research on that magazine article that's due in a few weeks or even getting out that journal and writing just a couple of paragraphs a day.

If the real problem is just having the inspiration to get started, help is as near as your

computer keyboard. If you're already a PSWA member, make contact with your fellow members through the listserve. They're always there to share information, make suggestions and give encouragement. If you're not a PSWA member, click on JOIN on this website. There, you'll find all the details on the many benefits the organization has to offer whether you are an accomplished award winning novelist or a hopeful first time writer.

This edition of the online newsletter is just a sample of the incredible talent and willingness to share that you'll find as a PSWA member.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Marilyn Olsen, President  
Public Safety Writers Association

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### **9/11** by **Robert Haig**

I am at the long end of life. It is the eve of September 11th. A day that changed the way we do things. The one thing it did not change was the strength and courage of the warriors who protect us. I was fortunate to be able to spend most of my life as a Detroit Firefighter. I worked with men and women who took it for granted that they may lose their lives in the performance of their duties. A recent visit from my son Bobby, who is a Detroit police officer, reminded me that they too always walk with death when on duty. I was astounded when Bobby told me that his department suffered 18 line of duty deaths in the twenty-five years he has been on the job. Almost all were killed by gun fire. The attack on the World Trade Center killed 343 Firefighters, 23 New York police officers and 37 Port Authority personnel. All died trying to save those trapped in the burning buildings. All were heroes.

Retirement found me missing the action of active duty and I was like an athlete long past his prime. I decided to dedicate the rest of my life to promoting the fire service. I started by writing a book about my experiences. I joined the Public Safety Writers Association. It was here I found others who had spent their lives being involved in public safety. They were a mix of police officers, dispatchers, military people, and folks with an intense interest in those who protect us. It is my new family and they are nurturing my development as a writer. We even have a queen, so it gives our group a regal atmosphere.

We meet once a year for an annual conference. It is a happy time for me. You are in a room full of people who have looked death in the eye and survived. They too write books about their experiences and create novels that reflect some the incredible actions they were involved in.

It has been ten years since 9/11. A time to reflect on the toughness and resolve of those who protect us. I would like all of you who read this short essay to walk up to the next police officer or firefighter you see and thank him for his service. It doesn't happen a lot and believe me it will be appreciated. I hope to see you at next year's conference.

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### **MAKING YOUR DESCRIPTION RELEVANT** **and INFO DUMPING**

by **Holli Castillo**

I have learned two important lessons since I wrote my first novel *Gumbo Justice* that I tried to utilize in the second novel, *Jambalaya Justice*. Both of these things I learned

through writing, but the first one was reinforced at the PSWA conference this past July.

### Relevant Description

The first one I didn't realize I had actually learned on my own until I attended one of the panels at PSWA and it was explained to me. I thought my writing was stronger in my second book, but I wasn't sure what made it better. I had made conscious decisions to proceed differently with such things as description, especially of places, which is not my *thing*, which is kind of sad living in New Orleans where setting is almost *everything*. But when I was writing my descriptions, I didn't actually realize what I was doing.

Here is my thought process. I hate writing description. It doesn't feel natural to me, and when I read, that's the part of the book I'm likely to skim over. I love the action and story in James Lee Burke novels, but my God please get me out of those descriptions. I'm more of a hidden metaphor kind of girl and don't enjoy being assaulted by similes.

So I decided in *Jambalaya Justice*, after getting some small amount of criticism that I didn't put enough of New Orleans in *Gumbo Justice*, that I was going to try to pound it into people's heads exactly what New Orleans is like. But that's not exactly my style, and the one thing that will make my eyes leave the page and turn to the T.V. is description that reads like description. I don't need a news report, I need to get into the characters' heads, hearts, and souls, and dive into their stories.

One way I found to combat the description problem was to combine my description with what I call a point. Describing something isn't good enough, it needs to be for a purpose. Why am I telling what a cashier looks like? Who cares? Everyone has seen a bored cashier. Maybe I describe my cashier to show what a zany bunch of people we have in New Orleans. Now I have a reason to let you know what a New Orleans cashier might look like. In *Jambalaya Justice* one cashier has piercings and a tattoo. And yet she's insecure and extremely law-abiding, her appearance a foil for her personality. And typically New Orleans. Now, I'm familiarizing you a little with New Orleans by setting the tone and letting you in on some of our city's secrets—even freaks can get jobs serving the public down here. Drive two parishes over and you'll find the rules change.

And I did the same with the settings. Maybe people do care what New Orleans looks like, sounds like, smells like, and maybe a reader does want me to go on for twenty pages describing the French Quarter and its derelicts. But I'm thinking I don't want to waste that kind of space, because I had to edit about 30,000 words out of my original manuscript to begin with. So if I'm going to include descriptions, they need to serve a dual purpose and accomplish another goal.

What I think are my most interesting descriptions are those that depict the seediness of New Orleans, seen through my character's eyes. There's the purpose, to create a 3-dimensional backdrop for the story. I also use description to highlight the difference in the social and economic levels in the city, my protagonist living blocks away from her parents approaching poverty while her parents live in an affluent neighborhood. And I tried every time I described something, to have it mean something, even with the description of people that we take so much for granted in novels. It doesn't matter that my protagonist has olive skin, dark eyes and red hair, except for the fact that she's adopted and looks nothing like her father or brothers, which matters to her and is another dynamic of the story.

At the conference, during the discussion of setting, someone mentioned about relevant description, and like a lightning strike I realized that's what I had been doing. Not necessarily intentionally, but instead of just blurting out description because it felt like the right spot to describe something, I had inadvertently wrote to make my descriptions relevant to my character and the plot.

Now I'm thinking of how much better my next book will be when I actually create relevant descriptions on purpose.

## Info Dumping

Something I learned through screenwriting classes but actually had to put into practice in *Jambalaya Justice* was avoiding the big Info Dump. Info Dumping occurs when there is a significant amount of back story that needs to be told in order for the story to make sense, and the writer can't think of a clever way to get the information out there other than to just say it. It's a trick not to fall into the trap, especially if your work is part of a series and some of the information is necessary to understand the current work. Also, very complex characters, which are the best kind, always have a lot of back story to them, and getting this information across gracefully and seamlessly is difficult.

The goal is to tell the back story without the reader realizing you've just spent a paragraph catching him up. I don't know that I've perfected the skill, but I do have some pitfalls to avoid.

First, never put the back story in the opening of the book. The more important it is to the plot or to the character, the longer you should wait to put it in. Sometimes, you can build suspense by leaving out some of this back story until much later in the book, making the reader want to know why a character is doing something or acting a certain way. This can be an effective way to build suspense if you also leave little bits of the information along the way like a bread crumb trail, so when you finally explain that part of the back story, the reader has an epiphany, that aha moment that gives many readers justification for choosing your book over so many others they could have read.

Second, think of the most interesting way to reveal the back story. Can it come out in an interesting way other than just explaining it? Is there another character's point of view in your book so that a different character can explain the back story? For instance, instead of your main character thinking, *If only my mother hadn't been dismembered by my father my life would have been different*, you might have an antagonistic character mention to someone else, "Well of course she's a psycho. I mean, her father did dismember her mother after all. Some of that must have rubbed off on her." Or a sympathetic character might think it or bring it up. Maybe someone who cares about her finds a newspaper clipping of the incident, or overhears Mean Girls talking about it. It's something to play with, utilizing the characters already in your novel.

Third, sometimes there is no other way to get the info out than through your protagonist. If your book is written in first person or close third person and there is no other character's point of view, there might not be as many options to get the past out there. In that case, don't find a single spot in the book to dump it all. Sprinkle it throughout, no more than a short paragraph or two at a time if possible. In *Jambalaya Justice*, I initially put all the information I needed to get in at one spot near the beginning of the book through my protagonist's thoughts, and then one by one moved the pieces of information out to other characters or other spots until it was all somewhere else in the book. Some of it doesn't even come out until the second or third-to-last page of the book. A good way to keep track of this that I didn't think of until I was almost finished finding homes for my information is to keep a bulletin list of what is absolutely essential to include in the novel, and then find places for it. It ends up being easier to pepper the back story throughout the entire work that way.

Which brings me to the fourth point. Make the list of essential back story facts and then figure out if every point really is essential. While you might want your reader to know something in particular about one of your characters, if it isn't integral to understanding the plot, the character's motivation, or the relationships between the characters, you might not need it. Readers don't need every layer of the character onion peeled for them in every book. Only include past history or back story that has a purpose that can't be achieved any other way.

If you have a series, if people want to know everything there is to know about your characters and what has happened to them in the past, they will buy the earlier books.

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

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### **JOHN BRAY'S THOUGHTS ABOUT WRITING PROGRAMS**

I don't know much about creative writing programs. But they're not telling the truth if they don't teach, one, that writing is hard work, and, two, that you have to give up a great deal of your life, your personal life, to be a writer." Doris Lessing, Persian-born novelist and short story writer, born 1919.

My opinion is that writing programs, of any kind, deemphasize the part about how hard it is to become a writer and how much one gives up to attain that goal. Otherwise, potential students might become disillusioned before they begin. Suddenly, a proponent of writing programs would find themselves with many fewer students.

Ah, but then, if one perseveres, begins to write, merits some modicum of praise from peers, critics, readers, yea, even unto acquisitions editors already knee-deep in slush piles, the struggle becomes worth the candle. Consider for a moment what one must keep in mind while feverishly crafting that lucid prose, structuring the plot as we type: avoid adverbial dialog tags assiduously, writing in the passive voice is frowned upon, don't repeat words over again, keep punctuation, errors to a minimum. You get the picture: don't let a serious, sad plot sag in the middle by using alliteration, try not to name your characters with the same name. I wouldn't, if I were you, stop the action by beginning to preach. Then, just when one has a completed *manuscript*, check it for spelling errors.

Be prepared to let the telephone ring. E-mails must go unanswered for days. Even when the door bell rings, overcome that burning curiosity to find out if your neighbor's house is on fire. You will know that you have finally arrived as an author of worth when a note from your spouse informs you that his/her lawyer will be in contact. Ah well, no matter, you have a publisher for that book you spent so much time wrestling with. One more piece of advice, try not to end sentences with prepositions like *with*.

--John Bray

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### **ATTENTION ASPIRING ABOUT-TO-BE PUBLISHED AND NEWLY-PUBLISHED FIRST TIME AUTHORS**

by W.S. Gager (Wendy)

I just want to give a little pep talk to aspiring, about-to-be published and newly-published first time authors. Don't give up!

I was the one who couldn't close her mouth for six months after finding out A CASE OF INFATUATION would be published after it won the Dark Oak Contest in 2008. I kept thinking that I would wake up and it was all a dream. When Oak Tree Publisher Billie Johnson put the book in my hand at the 2009 PSWA conference, I couldn't still believe it. My disbelief cost me lots of time when it comes to promoting that I am still trying to make up.

I vowed to be ready when A CASE OF ACCIDENTAL INTERSECTION came out in 2010. Everyone would know the name of my book and my sales would soar. I'd won the Public Safety Writer's Association award for unpublished fiction. I worked hard on the internet creating a blog and doing lots of guest blogging and building a network of friends and colleagues. Every time I checked Author Central for Amazon, I wanted to cry. My books

dropped off the list of Oak Tree's bestselling authors that are sent out monthly and are great motivators.

As I wrote A CASE OF HOMETOWN BLUES I struggled with my self-esteem. Was this writing business worth it? Everyone who had read my books liked them. Were they only being nice because it seemed like only friends and family had read the books? I couldn't break out and reach a larger public. What was I doing wrong?

I still don't know what I'm doing wrong and it may be nothing. It just takes time, energy and diligence. I do know I'm excited to start writing the fifth Mitch Malone book this November and have started editing the rough draft of book 4. I love the writing part and that feeds my soul. That has carried me through along with what a wise woman told me during a conversation at the PSWA conference that authors don't really see much name recognition or following until their third book. (Thanks, Billie!) I'm finding that to be very true. Many places that wouldn't consider earlier books are interested!

I'm getting great reviews for A CASE OF HOMETOWN BLUES and was even mentioned as a promising Michigan author in the same sentence with Detroit mystery writer icon Loren D. Estleman. So when you can't get anyone to review your book or you think you are the only one who has read it besides your mother, just be patient. Keep blogging, twitting and networking. It will begin to come together usually when you least expect it.

[http://www.amazon.com/Case-Hometown-Blues-W-Gager/dp/1610090179/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1311040194&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Case-Hometown-Blues-W-Gager/dp/1610090179/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1311040194&sr=1-1)

W.S. Gager  
 Author of Humorous Whodunits  
 A Case of Infatuation & A Case of Accidental Intersection-Now Available  
 A Case of Hometown Blues - Coming this summer!  
[www.wsgager.com](http://www.wsgager.com)  
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## **WHY I CHOSE THE EBOOK PUBLISHING ROUTE**

by Dave Knop

I'd like to say it's because I get to keep more money. That is partially true, but no, the real reason is I really wanted to get published.

Oh, I did all the things you were supposed to do. I am a long-term member of a great writing group. I had friends outside of the group edit my manuscript as well. I did all the good writerly things (rewrite, rewrite, and rewrite), and I went to all the writers' conferences in San Diego and LA. I talked to agents. I talked to editors. I talked to Big Name authors.

I did my research. I went online and found agents and editors who would be interested in my genre. I think I developed a list of nearly one hundred, or so. I sent out query letters, and when requested, I sent out synopses, bios, chapters, and manuscripts. Whatever the submission guidance of a particular agent/editor required, that's what I sent them. Most of them answered my letters. Some were form-letter responses, some looked like a human had composed them. Most of them said the same thing: "Not for my list."

Now, as a writer, I appreciate feedback from any and all sources and I use it to improve my writing. You got to admit "Not for my List," is not a useful comment. It also meant to me that the list maker did not read my manuscript. I did find one publisher who actually read it, provided very good comments and recommendations, and proposed to print my book. When we got to the final negotiations, it turns out he wanted me to pay him to print and distribute the book.

This is not what I had in mind. Writing is my hobby. I love making up characters and situations. Writing a novel is like living in a world you invented. What's not to love? So, as much as I enjoy my hobby, I'm not going to pay someone to print my book.

This is where ebooks come in. At most conferences I have attended, invariably at least one panel addresses the growing market share of electronic books which is currently about 30% (dollar amount) of the total non-education book market. Some panel members welcome this technological innovation, while others, most notably editors from the bigger publishers, view ebooks as a threat. As a retired Marine officer, I like to compare (mostly in jest) this view with the concern of US naval officers who talk about the Chinese developing an aircraft carrier.

eBooks have many advantages for most new writers because you can do the whole thing yourself and avoid print book roadblocks. You don't need to find an agent. You don't need a publisher. You still have to pay someone to get the book online, but not a lot.

To publish an ebook, you need to translate the digital manuscript to a reader compatible language (epub), something you can do with the proper software, or you might want to choose one of the many vendors on the Internet who specialize in that sort of thing. Some charge for translation (varies around \$100 or so), some take a percentage of your future earnings, but there is no 15% cut to any agent. In most epub translation shops, no one edits your manuscript, so there are no mouths to feed there. I'm not suggesting that you don't need to edit your manuscript. A good writer always submits professional work.

So once you are online with your new ebook, the advantages of the Internet kick in. Books stores may have thousands of customers, but the Internet is available to tens of millions. Distribution is instantaneous and complete. No more "not in stock" for anyone and no mailing costs. Impulse buyers have to wait seconds, not weeks, for an ebook.

Most new authors have to promote their own books (If you just received a \$100,000 advance, why are you reading this? Get back to work.). Promoting an ebook on the internet is really no different than the effort required to promote a print book. Promotion costs money, but not always. When doing an Internet search for promotional opportunities, be sure the first word in the search phrase is the word "free."

So you excite a customer with your promotion and now it comes decision time: buy a \$27.00 hardcover from an unknown author, or a \$10.00 ebook? Not a difficult choice, is it? An author gets up to 8% royalties from the print book and up to 80% from the ebook, that's \$2.16 versus \$8.00. Everybody wins.

So, now I get bragging rights as an (e)published author and I get to keep most of the money. In the world I've invented, I have ordered an Aston Martin Virage Coupe. What's not to love?

\* \* \*

## **WHY I'M STICKING WITH MY SMALL PRESS PUBLISHERS**

by Marilyn Meredith

I was e-published before anyone really knew what that meant. My first time was with an e-publisher who did a great job editing, but the only way to read the book was on a computer—no such thing as an e-reader back then—and it was almost impossible to figure out how to order it.

More e-publishers popped up as did a great e-reader called the Rocket. I signed on with several different e-publishers over the years. The Rocket was purchased by Sony and it was years before they came out with their version. Nowadays, you can pick and choose whatever kind of e-reader strikes your fancy.

When the print-on-demand printing process came along, most e-publishers began putting out companion trade paperbacks. The product varied, but many of the publishers, now considered small press, are now recognized in the publishing world.

I write two series with two different small press publishers. Both print quality books and see that the books are on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and all the other places books are sold—e-books and trade paperbacks. The publishers are responsible for things like barcodes and ISBN and AISN numbers, designing the covers, making sure the insides of the book look good, and editing. Editing is probably the most important component.

Yes, I have to promote, though both publishers do quite a bit of promotion of their own. I use the Internet in various ways to promote—my own personal blogs, blog tours, social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. With the paper books, I do book and craft festivals and fairs, appear at libraries, writers group, teach at conferences where my books are sold.

All this comes down to the fact of why I'm sticking with my small independent publishers, I'm already busy and I do need some time left to promote. Remember, I said I write two series? That means two books a year must be written and sent off to my publishers. I don't have time left for anything else.

Aren't we fortunate that today we have so many choices as a writer?

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## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS/ AN INVESTIGATION**

by John Bellah

In the mid-1980's I was working as a patrol supervisor for the public safety department of a major university located in a large West Coast metropolis. This university is surrounded by an area with lots of crime and even though it is a private university, it is protected by a staff of public safety professionals who have arrest powers and carry firearms.

One morning in late October I was called directly to see the captain, second-in-command of the department, and quickly informed of my new, temporary assignment. My assignment was to conduct an internal investigation of an officer accused of falsifying a report—a serious offense, which could end the law enforcement career of the officer, who I will name as *Mike Johnson*\*. Mike, was not only a friend, he was also my first training officer who “broke me in” when I joined the department seven years previously.

Being a 10-year veteran of the sheriff's department, and having about the same amount of time with “The University” Mike was a competent and experienced career law enforcement officer, having survived at least one officer-involved shooting incident in his career. Mike was of Afro-American descent and if he felt his rights were being infringed upon, Mike would voice his displeasure—and righteously so. Thus, Mike was not a favorite of Administration. On the face of it, it appeared that Mike falsified his report, scrawled the victim's signature on the bottom, and later submitted false testimony to cover up his report.

In my opinion, Administration had two reasons why they chose to involve me—one being, that I have a reputation for digging towards the truth, or two, they wanted to use me as their “hatchet-man” for getting rid of the proverbial burr under their saddle. While I suspected the former, I feared the latter.

My “marching orders” were to take as much time as I needed to get to the bottom of things. This included being reassigned from my patrol duties, and unlimited overtime. However I needed to reach a conclusion very quickly due to the sensitive nature of the matter. Thus, I began one of the most convoluted, yet rewarding investigations in my 32-year law enforcement career—an investigation that I did not need or want. I knew from

the beginning that it would be sensitive, partially due to a white victim and black officer, let alone the fact that the accused was a friend. Life is stressful enough without this being dumped in my lap.

### **FACTS:**

This incident started in a routine fashion—the reporting of a series of obscene telephone calls, with a named suspect, who the victim claimed to have met on one previous occasion. The victim reported that the calls occurred on October 3rd. That same day she called the department to report the incident and Mike Johnson was assigned to take the report. With Mike's 20-plus years of experience, he wrote a complete report, recording dates, times, along with the suspect's name.

Being that this was a misdemeanor, we had two options—to handle the incident “in-house,” through the university's student judicial process, or as a criminal matter with a request for a criminal complaint to be filed with the city attorney's office. *Adrienne\**, the victim in this matter, related she was severely traumatized by the incident and definitely wanted something done about the suspect making the telephone calls. Adrienne, however, did not desire criminal prosecution. Later her father would step in demanding prosecution; however, Adrienne never followed up on this. She also requested that the telephone company place a “trap” on her telephone so incoming calls could be identified; however she never followed up on this, either.

The case was referred to a Judicial Hearing, partially due to the fact that the accused (*Irwin\**) denied all of the charges. He brought documentation—a letter from his instructor stating he was attending class at the time the obscene telephone calls were allegedly made.

Adrienne stood up at the hearing, proclaiming that the calls actually took place on September 30th, three days earlier and accused Officer Johnson of falsifying the report. She was adamant that everything on the second page of Officer Johnson's report was false and she denied that the signature at the bottom of the report was hers.

University officials were very concerned that one of their own officers would knowingly file a false report, and later offer false testimony, thus, an internal investigation was generated.

### **THE INVESTIGATION:**

I started out by separately interviewing the victim and her roommate, *Megan\**. With their consent I tape-recorded their statements and as part of the process I had each person hand-write a statement and sign them. I also photocopied both their student identification cards and driver's licenses. This helped me to “lock-in” their statements and gave me a handwriting sample as well as giving me multiple signature exemplars on both the victim and her roommate.

I obtained a copy of the tape made at the hearing. Adrienne and Megan, both during the interviews and in their testimony, were adamant that the calls occurred three days earlier than what was reflected on Officer Johnson's report and accused him of altering the report. Adrienne related that she was still extremely traumatized by the incident and was seeking psychological counseling by telephone from her therapist in her home city. She also admitted that she had been under the care of this therapist for some time previously.

Both girls' statements were similar, almost as if they were rehearsed. I was also beginning to see some discrepancies, however, this is circumstantial evidence—something I would find a lot of in this case. I was not able to shake their contention that the calls were made three days earlier than what was originally reported.

Unfortunately the signature scrawl on the report did not match the signature samples that I obtained, giving credence that the victim never signed the report. This did not look good

for Mike as the handwriting looked similar to Mike's writing style. That department's report forms required a signature by the complaining person, which at times officers would forget to obtain and would "fake it." Unfortunately, this was beginning to look like the case—which could well terminate Mike's career.

I took the handwriting exemplars to a handwriting expert at an outside agency. Unfortunately, neither he nor I could make a determination that the signature on the report was made by Adrienne. In my interview of Johnson, he remembered that when Adrienne signed the report, his clip-board was resting on the edge of the arm of a couch, which wobbled. This could account for the signature discrepancy—again circumstantial evidence.

I interviewed *Irwin\**, the named suspect in this case. Like the other involved individuals Irwin was also a freshman. Understandably, he was also extremely upset, to the point where his mother flew out from the East Coast to try and make sense of what was going on.

Irwin, considered somewhat of a "geek," by his suitemates, revealed that he had ongoing problems with two of the three residents of his dormitory suite, a fact that was confirmed by the building's Residence Advisor. I also learned that *Larry\**, one of the suitemates had equipment tapped into the telephone lines which could record conversations made on both telephones in their suite. This fact was confirmed when I interviewed the Resident Advisor, who told Larry to cease-and-desist tapping the telephone lines and personally supervised Larry removing the equipment.

Irwin also related that Adrienne approached him in hopes of an introduction to his roommate, *George\**, who was the son of a well-known celebrity. Contrary to Adrienne's contention that she met Irwin on one previous occasion, she socialized with him on several occasions and would constantly telephone him in hopes of being connected to George, and left at least one note on his suite door.

Irwin's burning goal in life was to eventually become a doctor and any accusations of sexual misconduct would end his career before it started—facts he related to his father in a telephone conversation from his dormitory phone prior to the hearing. When Irwin's father asked if he made the obscene telephone calls, Irwin answered that he didn't and he had a letter from his instructor stating he was in class when the alleged telephone calls to Adrienne took place.

Investigation revealed that according to the Admission's Office, five unauthorized copies of Irwin's class schedule had been printed. Roommate #3—*Joshua\**, worked in the Admissions Office, and had access to the computer system, and later admitted to accessing Irwin's class schedule.

#### **TYING EVERYTHING TOGETHER:**

I was able to confirm that Adrienne, the "victim" in this case, had a history of psychological problems and admitted to past therapy. Adrienne became infatuated with George, the celebrity's son, and befriended his roommate Irwin, in order to get an "introduction." George wasn't interested in Adrienne; perhaps he suspected that she had some psychological issues. In reading Adrienne's written account along with other written material she gave me, showed strong indications this was not a sheltered and innocent 18-year-old, but an individual with some vivid fantasies.

When Adrienne's efforts didn't work, she conspired with the other two suitemates to "get" Irwin. She filed a false police report naming Irwin as the obscene telephone caller, failing to realize that Officer Johnson was a professional and not some minimum-wage security guard, who took a detailed report. I believe Larry accessed the telephone call between Irwin and his father, learning what Irwin's defense to the charges was. When it looked as if their scheme was beginning to unravel, the conspirators then had Joshua access Irwin's class schedule find a time slot when Irwin was not attending class and when Adrienne

would be at her dormitory. Thus, Irwin would not be able to supply an alibi. Adrienne then falsely testified at the hearing to cover-up the incident—at the expense of Mike Johnson's career.

By this time I had plenty of circumstantial evidence, however, I needed hard evidence. As a matter of routine, incoming telephone calls to most law enforcement agencies are recorded, and this particular agency was no exception.

The true facts of the incident came to light in Adrienne's telephone call to the dispatcher to report the incident on October 3rd. Adrienne was adamant that the calls came in on that date, with no mention of any calls being made three days earlier, on September 30th.

### CONCLUSION:

Often in law enforcement, things are not always as they initially appear as exemplified by this case. As much as I would have liked to see the conspirators held to answer for their crimes; filing a false police report, conspiracy, wiretapping, and illegal computer access, let alone violation of federal statutes concerning unauthorized access of student information. Unfortunately, to my knowledge, no criminal action came of it. It is unknown what, if any university sanctions were made. At minimum, Joshua in the Admissions Office should have been terminated for accessing the computer without permission. Unfortunately, private universities often protect their own.

Irwin went on to graduate and head towards his career goal. George's name appears from time-to-time in *People Magazine* as well as similar publications. The last time I contacted my old department, Mike Johnson retired to go fishing.

*The author, John L. Bellah has written numerous articles for several law enforcement publications. He has served in law enforcement for over 32 years in municipal and university law enforcement in both patrol and investigative assignments. Currently he is retired from the California State University, Long Beach Police Department and working in the private sector.*

\* All names in this article have been changed to protect the individual's privacy.

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### MEMBER NEWS

**Jim Guigli** was invited to attend the FBI Citizens' Academy Fall 2011 Class in Sacramento. He's attended two classes so far, and spent an afternoon at the Stocton PD range shooting FBI weapons.

\* \* \*

The 2nd novel in **Robert Knightly's** NYPD procedural series, ***The Cold Room***, will be available in October; from the Brit publisher, Severn House, in the UK and U.S., probably only available from Amazon. First was ***Bodies In Winter*** which sold out.

Bob will be in Philadelphia Nov.3-5 on a panel at the Mid-Atlantic Popular American Culture convention (all academics except myself); the title of the 'paper' I'm giving is 'Turning A Life Into Crime Fiction' (adlibbed and unwritten.)

\* \* \*

**John Wills** has a non-fiction book publishing this fall. ***Women Warriors: Stories from the Thin Blue Line***. It's a collection of true stories about women in law enforcement. Each story is written by the woman who lived it. Stories such as the lone woman on patrol who rescues a kidnapped child, to an officer who humorously defuses a situation involving an

Outlaw Biker Gang. The stories will captivate readers and give them an insight into what women face as they put on the uniform each day. The book will be available in print and ebook, and will also be sold from the Law Enforcement Memorial Gift Shop in Washington, D.C.

\* \* \*

### ***Jambalaya Justice***

by **Holli Castillo**

New Orleans prosecutor Ryan Murphy is back in the second of the Crescent City Mystery Series, ***Jambalaya Justice***. As Ryan tries to settle into life as a Strike Force prosecutor and navigate the sometimes murky waters of being a Girlfriend, a hooker is murdered in a crackhouse, sending Ryan on a quest for to find the killer. Ryan has a secret connection to the hooker and will do whatever it takes to make sure the murder doesn't end up as yet another unsolved New Orleans homicide. When she's not hounding the detective on the case or following up on clues behind his back, she has her own cases to deal with, including a five victim mob hit, a nasty domestic violence case, and the armed robbery of a strip club. Ryan just wants justice for her victims. By the time the weekend ends, she'll be lucky to stay alive.

***Jambalaya Justice*** won first place for the 2011 PSWA Best Unpublished Novel and is the follow up to *Gumbo Justice*, first place winner of the 2011 PSWA Best Published Novel.

For more information:

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

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

Copies available now at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com)

\* \* \*

**Marilyn Meredith's** latest Deputy Tempe Crabtree mystery is now available as an e-book and trade paperback, ***Bears With Us***. Deputy Tempe Crabtree has her hands full when bears turn up in and around Bear Creek, a young teen commits suicide and his parents' actions are suspicious, a prominent woman files a complaint against Tempe and her preacher husband Hutch, a love affair from long ago comes to light, and a woman suffering from dementia disappears.

Available as a trade paperback and e-book direct from the publisher

<http://mundania.com/book.php?title=Bears+With+Us/>

and from Amazon.com and all the other usual places.

\* \* \*

Book Title: ***Mining Sacred Ground***

Author: **David E. Knop**

Blazing Trailers Link: <http://www.blazingtrailers.com/show/1663/>

Reviewed By: Gene Riehl

Reviewer URL: <http://www.generiehl.com/>

Review:

Wow! Make yourself plenty comfortable before you start reading David Knop's *Mining Sacred Ground*, because this beautifully-written story will take you places no one in his right mind would go. Knop has invaded territory formerly the exclusive property of Tony Hillerman, and you'll get not only a native-American view of the world, but a chilling ride

alongside a worn out ex-Marine trying to do the right thing even though he's pretty sure he'll die in the attempt.

**Excerpt: *Mining Sacred Ground***

Sleep came hard that night. Romero's mind bounced between the sudden death of his cousin here and the events that led to his own banishment back home. Thoughts of what he had tried to do at Cochiti Pueblo and how badly it turned out ricocheted around his head like spent bullets. Each attempt to roll over shot pain through his ribs. And through it all, the unblinking eyes of the coyote he saw on the ridge burned in his brain. He bolted upright at the sound of a foot scuff, his efforts punished with pain.

"You gonna feel sorry for yourself all day?" Taza stood at the foot of his bed. The old man wore a headband, a loose-fitting shirt under a vest, and knee-high moccasins. He looked like drawings of Cochise from history books.

"I could've shot you." Romero said, clutching his chest.

"With this?" the old man said, holding the rifle Romero had placed next to the bed last night. "You better fix that door."

"You want something?" Romero snapped away the covers. He noticed he'd gone to bed clothed.

"Naw, but I know you do."

\* \* \*

**Bob Doerr** reports, "In November, the fourth book in my Jim West mystery series will be released. This one, titled **ANOTHER COLORADO KILL**, is set in the Colorado Springs area. It will be available in hard cover, paperback, and e-book (Kindle, nook, etc.). The book will be available on Amazon, B&N.com, and some book stores. The following is offered as a quick peek:

"It was supposed to be a short, fun golf outing, but when Jim West and his friend Edward "Perry" Mason stumble across a dead body in a restroom at a rest stop along I-25, things turn bad and then only get worse.

With the golf outing shot, West intends to stay in Colorado Springs only for a day or two. However, when two more murder victims turn up – one with West's name handwritten in her notebook - the heat on West skyrockets. The police instruct him to stick around, and soon he discovers that while the police may want to pin the crimes on him, the killer wants him out of the picture. Way out – like dead.

West's only ally is Lieutenant Michelle Prado, a tall red head with large green eyes that captivate West. Assigned to keep an eye on West, Lieutenant Prado decides the best way to do so is to keep him close. West and Prado do their own digging into the investigation. In the process, Jim wonders how close their relationship will evolve.

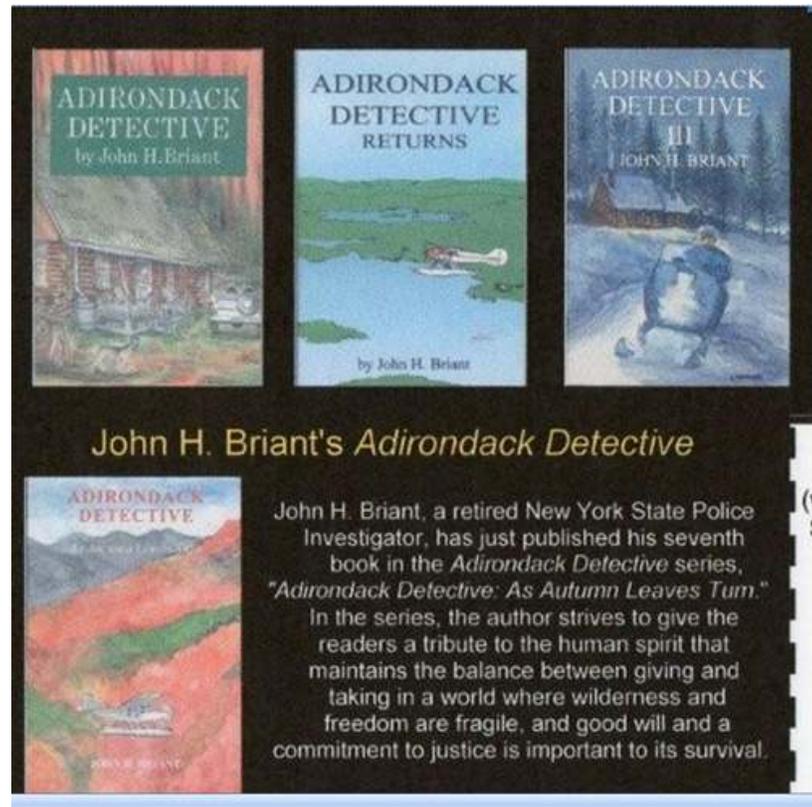
It seems to West that as the police focus less on him, the killer intensifies his focus on him. Barely surviving an initial confrontation, West realizes he must take the initiative. If he doesn't, or perhaps even if he does - he may end up as just another Colorado kill. "

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

\* \* \*

From long time member **John Briant**, he informs us all of his book are still available including his latest,

**'ADIRONDACK DETECTIVE: THE YEARS PASS'.**



**The End**

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