

The Public Safety Writer

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The Vegas Mob Tour

On Friday, April 20, those attending the 2007 PSWA Conference will have the opportunity to experience Las Vegas as never before. Thanks to Las Vegas author and PSWA member Denny Griffin, all are invited to participate in the Vegas Mob Tour. Attendees who wish to take the Tour will be able to purchase tickets at half price (\$28.25). Details about ordering and paying for your tickets will be provided at signup.

The experience begins at 9:30 p.m. in the showroom of the Greek Isles Casino with an introduction and short film about Vegas's mob-connected past. After that, it's off to the bus and a trip back in time, to when money was being skimmed from the casinos and sent back to the Midwest crime families by the bagful, those who posed a threat to mob operations were "whacked," crooked cops provided information to the bad guys, and the man next to you at the craps or blackjack table might be a fellow tourist or a hit man.

Although the main focus of the tour is the reign of Chicago Outfit enforcer Tony Spilotro (Joe Pesci's character in *Casino* was based on Spilotro), you'll also hear about how Vegas came to be what it is today. Things such as the background behind Bugsy Siegel's Flamingo project, and the early influx of Teamster money that financed casinos, hospitals and shopping malls. And this was all at a time when banks considered Vegas to be too risky an investment.

In addition to the information imparted about the organized crime days, tour operator Robert Allen, who has been a musician and comic in Las Vegas for over 30 years, has story after story about some of the characters, both famous and infamous, he's rubbed elbows with.

Because this is a special Tour for conference attendees only, Denny has arranged for a special guest or two to ride along.

For more information please visit:

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

Why Go to a Writer's Conference?

Marilyn Meredith

With PSWA's annual conference right around the corner, some of you may wonder how you will benefit by attending . As a veteran of many writing conferences including at least three put on by our group, I feel well-qualified to tell you.

For any writer, fiction or non-fiction, fledgling or veteran, the most important thing about attending a writer's conference is that it revs up your writing engine. As you listen to the presenters, ideas will begin racing through your head. By the end of the conference, you will hardly be able to wait to get home so you can start writing.

At any writing conference, you will be surrounded by other writers who have the same goals and aspirations as you, and the same need to put their ideas or stories down on paper to share with others. You will have opportunities for networking with other writers and some will become lifelong friends.

We have a great conference planned for this year where you'll learn many new things about the writing profession. You'll have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with the speakers of your choice. **Ronnie Garrett**, the editor of *Law Enforcement Technology Magazine* will tell about what her magazine and others like it are looking for from writers. Publisher, **Billie Johnson**, Oak Tree Publishing, will be attending.

You'll learn about the nuts and bolts of writing from writing a business plan and making good use of your time, from **Marilyn Olsen** to a panel on writing well with member authors, **Denny Griffin**, **Keith Bettinger** and publisher, **Billie Johnson**.

Former private eye and published author of both true crime and fiction, **Joyce Spizer**, will tell us how to turn fact into fiction. Published short story writer and anthology editor, **Robert Knightly**, will tell us how to write short stories.

Sarah Cortez, multi-published and award winning poet and author of magazine articles, essays and textbook chapters, will discuss relationships between editors and authors.

You'll learn what you need to know about contracts from published

author of fiction and non-fiction, **Liz Martinez**.

Once you're published you need a web site. **Janet Murphy** of Stephens Media Interactive and Community Link, will tell you why and what a website needs.

Joyce Spizer, Denny Griffin and I will share our methods of Power Promotion.

If you're looking for alternative means of being published, you might try electronic publishing. Published author, **John Shembra** will cover this topic.

We have two terrific luncheon keynote speakers, **Mike Murphy**, Clark County Coroner on Friday, and Saturday, **Sgt. William J. Cassara**, published in many law enforcement magazines and book author.

Come to PSWA's conference and you'll be inspired, educated, meet some great people and have lots of opportunity for networking. And for some extra fun, sign up for the Gangster Tour. You're bound to have fun—you'll be in Las Vegas.

Be sure to sign up before March 15th!

Marilyn Meredith
<http://fictionforyou.com>

Book Signing Experiences of an Unknown Author

Denny Griffin

In the following paragraphs I recount my first two signing experiences. I realize that other authors have had far different results than mine. There are a number of factors that can contribute to the success or failure of an event. They include the genre of the book, the quality of the store manager handling the event, and the experience and personality of the author. To those of you who had success right out of the starting gate, I congratulate you. I suspect, however, that a number of writers may have had experiences similar to mine when they were just starting out.

Many new and unknown authors who are fortunate enough to get their manuscript published, suddenly find themselves confronted with a fact they may not have given much thought to earlier: Getting their book in print was only the beginning. Next comes the equally important task of marketing their work.

Upon this realization, a lot of us spring into action to develop a marketing strategy, something we really should have done before the

manuscript was even submitted to the publisher. We check writer message boards and buy “how to” books for ideas and guidance. Some of us come away from our research with the ingredients of a marketing plan we think will work for us. Frequently that plan includes book signings. I know mine did.

At that early stage in my writing career, I envisioned being seated at a table in a Borders or Barnes & Noble with stacks of my new book in front of me. No doubt there would be a pretty long line of readers eager to get my signature on their copy. As the scenario of my coming out event went through my mind, questions arose. Should I just sign the customer’s book, or should I say something? If so, what? Should I keep my conversation with the customer brief, so as not to annoy the other people waiting in line? How should I dress? How many pens would I need? What if I got writer’s cramp? It wasn’t long before I had decided on answers to these questions and others. I convinced myself that book signings were the way for me to go. In my mind, that kind of exposure would launch my writing career like a rocket. There would probably be some media coverage; stores would be competing for my time. All fired up, I threw myself into the effort to land a gig at a brick and mortar store. Move over King, Pileggi, and Grisham. Denny Griffin was on his way.

Six weeks and two failed signings later, I had gone from thinking I was on the verge of becoming a celebrity to the depths of despair. It seemed that virtually nobody wanted to buy my book, signed or otherwise. I asked myself if it was time to move on to something else. Fortunately, with the encouragement of my wife, family, and friends, I didn’t give up. Instead, I did an analysis of my book signing endeavors. I came to the conclusion that it wasn’t a problem with my book. I realized that I had focused in on book signings as a panacea, without having done the research to truly understand what was a realistic goal for a first-time author like me. I had focused on signings and excluded other marketing options that may have worked better for me. The stars in my eyes had clouded my vision.

I should have seen the trouble coming at the start. When I had difficulty getting the Community Relations Manager (CRM) at my local Barnes & Noble to return my calls, it should have been apparent that she didn’t consider the presence of my book or me to be critical to the success of her store. However, I attributed her lack of enthusiasm in getting back to me to the fact that she was very busy, and didn’t yet realize what a great seller my book was going to be.

When I did finally get a meeting with her, she was pleasant enough, but rather negative. First there was the issue of my book being print on demand (POD). She said POD books were not returnable and the store was not allowed to purchase them. If I wanted to do a signing, I’d have to provide the books and there would be a consignment arrangement with a 70/30 split of the sale price. And my share would be sent from corporate headquarters in six weeks or so. I must admit that this news

took me aback. It was another failure of researching on my part. I should have known about the POD situation ahead of time, but I didn't. Trying to keep the disappointment from my expression and voice, I agreed to her terms.

She then hit me with another zinger. The store didn't do individual signings for POD or self-published authors. Instead they scheduled group signings a couple of times a year. There was some good news, however. The next such event was scheduled in two weeks. If I could get my books shipped to me in time, she'd include me in the signing!

When I left that store, the POD and consignment issues didn't have a lasting impact on me. I was going to have my rear end at a table in a real bookstore. That was what mattered; that was what it was all about.

I ordered 50 books from the publisher — *Would that be enough?* — and paid extra for expedited processing and shipping. The math was pretty simple. With the 70/30 split, I'd just about break even financially. But that didn't matter either. I was going to become known. Even though the store wouldn't stock my POD book, they would take orders for it and I could leave a few copies on consignment. While the deal wasn't exactly what I'd anticipated, I told myself it wasn't all that bad.

Using the signing at B&N as leverage, I went to the other local bookstore — an independent — and scheduled a signing for the week after the B&N event. This one also required me to provide the books and split sales with the store, but at 80/20 this arrangement was better for me, and I'd get paid on the spot.

When the big day arrived, I found myself seated with four other local authors at two folding tables in the back of the store. We introduced ourselves and had to sign some paperwork regarding the consignment sales. Shortly after the CRM left us, someone mentioned having not seen any postings announcing our presence. It turned out we hadn't missed the signs; there weren't any. There were no announcements over the PA system either. For the next two hours, during which a total of five books were sold, we talked to each other about the writing business in general, and our event in particular. One of the guys who had more experience than the rest of us — he had two self-published books out — said we shouldn't be disappointed. He'd done a few of these events and they tended to run about like this one: little or no promotion, and few sales. He said he attended mainly to get out of the house and meet new people, not with any great sales expectations.

I left my signing debut with one sale — I didn't receive my payment until nearly six months and several phone calls and e-mails later — and a sense of disappointment that is difficult to describe. The next week I sold two books. I returned home that day with 47 unsold books that had been charged to my credit card, no other events scheduled, and no idea of what to do next. I wasn't even sure if I wanted to have anything more to

do with the writing business.

Now, several years later, I thank God for those failures. I learned from them; they were a turning point for me. With the support and encouragement of those who care about me, I got serious about writing and that crucial, but often overlooked part of the business: marketing. However, that's another story.

Ed. Note: Be sure to come to the conference and hear what Denny has to say about marketing.

<http://www.authorsden.com/dennisngriffin>

In Memoriam

Dr. Armand E.R. Mulder
April 28, 1947 - January 13, 2007

Dr. Armand Mulder, a proud and long time member of PSWA, passed away at Stanford University Hospital after waging a courageous battle against leukemia. His philosophy was the same as Sir Winston Churchill's, "Never Never Never, Ever Give Up."

Armand was born in Indonesia, come to the U.S. via Holland. He enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and served during the '60's. He pursued a career in law enforcement in the Bay Area, working over 33 years at police departments in Palo Alto, San Mateo, Livermore, Oakland and Richmond. During this time period he received his Ph.D.

Armand was a professor at Golden State University in San Francisco, taught for the University of Phoenix, and also taught various classes about law enforcement all over the world.

Those of you who attended last year's PSWA conference had the pleasure of experiencing Armand's intelligence and wit, while hearing him speak about what was going on in his life, as well as helping the group with goal setting for PSWA. Dr. Armand Mulder loved PSWA and what we stand for—the encouragement and support of anyone who is in the public safety field and/or writing non-fiction or fiction about any area of the public safety arena.

Armand, you will be missed.

Announcements



New to the Public Safety Writers is **Sunny Frazier**, author of *Fools Rush In*, Wolfmont Publishing. Frazier's first novel, set in California's Central Valley, focuses on an area of law enforcement often overlooked: support staff.

Protagonist Christy Bristol is an office assistant at a substation of the Central County Sheriff's Department. She is roped into a narcotics investigation by an ex-boyfriend, that ultimately results in her being kidnapped by methamphetamine dealers.

The book hinges on the fact that many drug dealers are superstitious. Frazier's knowledge of astrology and 11 years of employment with an undercover narcotics team makes the book an authentic read. The story is loosely based on a case worked by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department.

Frazier is also a contributing author of *Seven By Seven: The Seven Deadly Sins Anthology*. Seven authors were chosen in an international competition to write seven flash fiction stories, one for each of the seven deadly sins. Stories could be no longer than 600 words. The book is published by Wolfmont Publishing.

-  **Tim Dees** was re-certified as a Certified Protection Professional by the American Society for Industrial Security. Tim has held the certification since 2000, and it has to be renewed every three years. Re-certification involves documenting continuing education, participation in professional conferences and activities, and contributions to the protective services industry. Tim has also relocated back to Kennewick, Washington after living in Maryland since August 2005. He continues as the editor-in-chief of Officer.com, now working from a home office.
-  New Publishing Company for first time authors. **Komenar Publishing**. Check out their web site.
-  Long time member, **Marilyn Meredith**, has two new books out, the third in her Rocky Bluff P.D. series written under the name F. M. Meredith called *Fringe Benefits*. The other is the latest in the Deputy Tempe Crabtree series, *Calling the Dead*. Visit Marilyn's website to view book trailers about the books:
<http://fictionforyou.com>
-  The Battle for Las Vegas: The Law vs. The Mob, by Dennis N. Griffin (ISBN 0-929712-37-4), from Huntington Press Publishing, is a great read and a fascinating walk through the history of Las Vegas as you have never seen it before. Forget the glitzy lights and action on the casino floors; the real action was happening behind the scenes, in the penthouses, the offices, the police departments, the bars, and the homes, in Chicago, in Cleveland, in Kansas City, and Las Vegas. While you may be familiar with some of the players like Bugsy Siegel, Lucky Luciano, and Jimmy Hoffa, you will also meet Moe Dalitz, Tony Accardo, Joe Aiuppa, Lefty Rosenthal, Anthony Spilotro, and many others who fought the battles behind the glitz. This was during the time when the customer was king, long before the corporations came in to make it a family entertainment and convention center. This was the time when Vegas was truly Sin City.
-  **Marshall Frank's** latest non-fiction book is hot: *Militant Islam in America*. The book was commissioned by a publisher in Europe to research and write this shocking expose. For more information

visit <http://www.marshallfrank.com> The book is available at Amazon.com.

In about a month, Marshall Frank's new non-fiction book of police/homicide memoirs titled *From Violins to Violence* will also be available on his web site.

Send mail to tdees@policewriter.com with questions or comments about this web site.
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