

left coast crime³

PRESENTS

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HYATT REGENCY ALICANTE • FEB 12-14, 1993

Heartiest Congratulations to
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SUSAN DUNLAP

Guest of Honor
LEFT COAST CRIME 1993

LEFT COAST CRIME III: A WORD FROM YOUR SPONSORS

In the mystery genre, there is a familiar refrain most often found in those novels of romantic suspense featuring damsels in distress. "Had I but known", the cry goes as the desperate heroine faces extreme perils she could easily have avoided, had she but heeded the warnings. Had we but known . . . we would probably still have committed this folly, agreeing to produce a mystery convention for the authors, fans and fanatics.

After two years in San Francisco, we welcomed the chance to bring Left Coast Crime III to Orange County for a little Southern Exposure. This region has experienced a veritable explosion in crime writing in the past ten years, with new authors from both Orange and San Diego counties making their contributions to the field. The strength of the regional mystery conventions proves that interest in mystery and detective fiction continues to grow, as new writers generate legions of new fans.

Left Coast Crime III promises to be a memorable convention. We hope you will enjoy the variety of panels and special events scheduled throughout the weekend. We know we will.

The Anaheim Five

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Marsha Landreth

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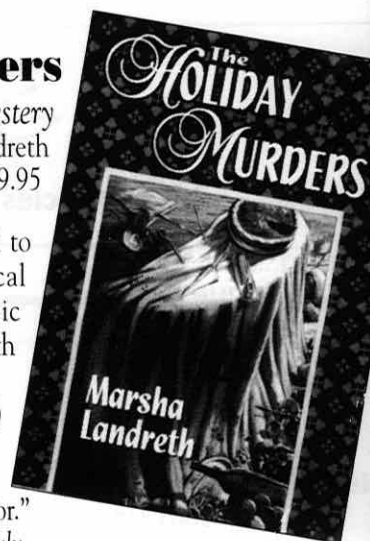


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— *Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

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— *Publishers Weekly*



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Robert J. Randisi

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CONFERENCE EVENTS

PROGRAMMING:

Royal Ballroom I-VI

BOOK DEALERS ROOM

Plaza Terrace I-V

HOSPITALITY SUITE

Room 1724

GAME ROOM

Granada - 2nd Floor

MOVIE ROOM

Pacific Salon

REGISTRATION:

Royal Ballroom Foyer

Registration opens at noon on Friday. Pick up your program packet and sign up for special events.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

Friday

First Timer's Orientation: 3:30 pm, Game Room (Granada)

Opening Ceremonies: 6:00 pm, no host bar, introduction of authors and door prizes, Royal Ballroom I-II

Mystery Play: 8:30 pm, Royal Ballroom I-II, special ticket required

Saturday

Continental Breakfast 8:30 - 9:30 am and day long refreshments provided by *Ballantine Publishing Group* in honor of Julie Smith, Hospitality Suite 1724

No Host Bar: 5:00 - 5:30 pm
Royal Ballroom V-VI

Autographing Roundtable & Pasta Bar
5:30 - 7:30 pm, Royal Ballroom V-VI

Sunday

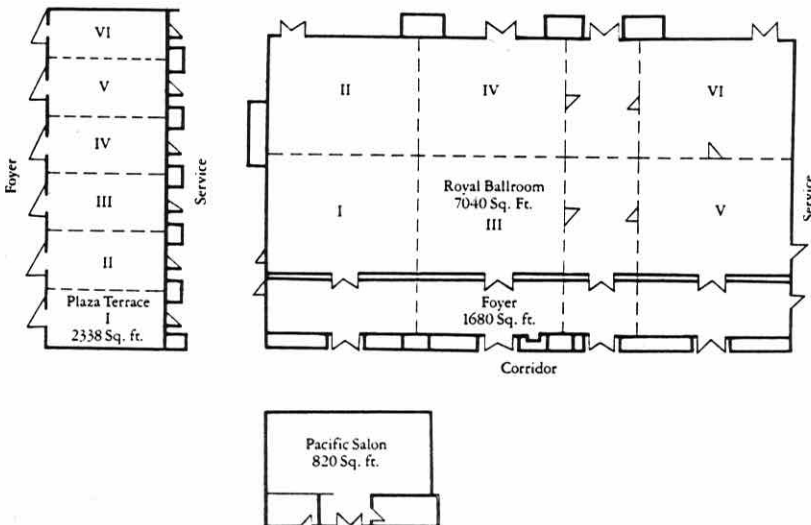
Get out of bed! Sisters-in-Crime Breakfast, 8:00 am, Royal Ballroom V-VI, special ticket required

No host bar: 6:00 pm, Atrium

Banquet: 7:00 pm, Medallion I, special ticket required



FIRST FLOOR



THE LOS ANGELES CHAPTER
OF
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SALUTES

LEFT COAST CRIME III



Sisters In Crime is a non-profit, non-political organization to support women in the mystery field and to raise the level of awareness of their contributions to the field. Membership is open to all who support the organization's goal.

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You must join National Sisters In Crime to be a member of the local Los Angeles Chapter. Please make two separate checks to cover both national and local dues. National dues are \$20.00—make check payable to Sisters In Crime. Local dues are \$15.00—make check payable to Sisters In Crime/Los Angeles.

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SUSAN DUNLAP

by

Leila Laurence

She is on President Clinton's list of preferred mystery writers. A favorite of librarians and booksellers, as well as fans, Susan Dunlap is an all-star member of Northern California's growing body of outstanding female mystery writers. A past president and founding member of Sisters in Crime, she is committed to promoting awareness of women in the crime writing field.

Winner of a coveted Anthony Boucher award for best short story of the year, she has twice been a nominee for best novel for her Kiernan O'Shaughnessy stories. She has twelve published novels featuring three independent, endearing and very different characters. Each represents a different sub-genre of the field: the amateur sleuth, the police procedural and the private detective. Readers will be glad to know that the early books are being reissued. The newest, Time Expired, featuring Berkeley investigator Jill Smith is due May, 1993.

Born and educated on the East Coast, Susan Dunlap came to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1968. Berkeley, which she calls the nation's most politically correct city, where many social innovations are born and a fair number of amusing mistakes made," is exploited fully in her novels involving Berkeley homicide detective Jill Smith. Quirky Berkeley is as much a character in the novels as Jill herself.

The sense of place is very strong in Dunlap's novels. Her descriptions of a horrifying Russian River flood or the colorful street life of Berkeley, for example, reveal the plot and provide realism.

Institutions that frustrate us all are not ignored. Susan says she hates that

sense of powerlessness that bureaucracies can create in people. Her novels include subtle explorations of social and environmental issues as well as public institutions. She is not above murdering an IRS agent or questioning the religious establishment.

She manages to tell a good story at the same time, building solid plotlines around fascinating female protagonists.



Vejay Haskell is a meter-reader in the Russian river area of Northern California. Readers love this amateur sleuth who appears in three early Dunlap novels. Because of her unique employment, she has access to everybody's homes and private lives and she fully involves herself. The Last Annual Slugfest is the

background for a humorous investigation into the murder of a local matron during the favorite "California slug" recipe bake-off. There are no Vejay Haskell novels planned for the future.

Susan says that her characters are not alter egos. Each of her sleuths is distinctly different. Kiernan O'Shaughnessy, the ex-medical examiner private investigator of Pious Deception and Rogue Wave, presented from the third person point of view, is a more complicated, more carefully drawn character. The maturity of the writer is evident. Kiernan also has something that other female writers wish they had thought of first: a gorgeous male housekeeper who is also a gourmet cook. Susan Dunlap artfully manages to keep him quite masculine and interesting without making him become Kiernan's rescuer.

She works hard to write intriguing characters, with the underlying idea that nobody is all good or bad. Secrets and their revelation fascinate her. She tries to explore those "secrets in the body that change your life. The ones people are too ashamed to reveal, even to themselves."

Only working on one book at a time, she allows herself to "sit and obsess and contemplate and be nosy." Usually having to rewrite the beginning and rearrange chapters, she does not always know how the characters are going to act and react. Unlike some writers, she does not follow a strict outline. If she knew everything that was going to happen, it would not be as much fun.

Susan Dunlap makes it clear that she loves what she does. She says "The reason we read a mystery is because it is a fantasy." She has great respect for the reader and does much to fulfill that wish we all have when we settle in with a new book. We hope that it will satisfy that yearning: that this one book will be thought provoking, entertaining, and a thoroughly good read.



BOOKS BY SUSAN DUNLAP

	1981	Karma
	1984	As A Favor
	1984	An Equal Opportunity Death
	1985	The Bohemian Connection
	1985	Not Exactly A Brahmin
	1986	The Last Annual Slugfest
	1987	A Dinner To Die For
	1987	Too Close To The Edge
	1989	Pious Deception
	1990	Diamond In The Buff
	1991	Rogue Wave
	1992	Death And Taxes
May	1993	Time Expired

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JULIE SMITH

by

Leila Laurence



A genetics professor once said that when one mixes races, all the dominant genes of both come out during the first generation, producing magnificent children. Julie Smith is a fascinating amalgam of California and Southern culture and she uses the best of both in her writing to create memorable characters and locales.

The first American woman to win the Edgar Allen Poe Award for best novel in over thirty years, she says her life has changed dramatically but she and her writing have not. She got her start in journalism. She was the first woman to be hired as a general assignment reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle. Being a reporter taught her not to be afraid to face a blank screen and how to meet

deadlines. She was terrified of her City Editor who told her, "god damn it! Don't get it right. Get it written." She used those years of valuable experiences to write two series set in the San Francisco Bay area.

Paul McDonald is an ex-reporter turned not-so-successful mystery writer. Ironically, Julie wrote about a male protagonist because she was advised that the public would be more interested in a male sleuth and it would be more commercial. Smith manages to do a good job of writing a male character. The reader does not have that uncomfortable feeling that comes when a character does something that does not fit. Huckleberry Fiend is a favorite of readers who enjoy literary mysteries. The mystique of collecting and the depiction of that special feeling evoked by great writers make this particular novel special.

Rebecca Schwartz is a very determined San Francisco attorney. She is sharp and funny and occasionally trips over a body. Featured in four novels, she is scheduled to reappear in Other People's Skeletons in late 1993.

Sourdough Wars is a fun example of how Smith combines a wonderful sense of place with dialogue to completely carry a story. With very little exposition needed, she moves Rebecca Schwartz through the streets of San Francisco and the wine country to the north in search of killers who covet the secret sourdough bread starter: the very heart and soul of San Francisco.

Using a more serious writing style, Smith again evokes a strong sense of place in New Orleans Mourning and The Axeman's Jazz. Exposing much of the culture that is particularly unique to New

Orleans, Smith's protagonist, Skip Langdon is a competent police officer with blatant, very human, insecurities. She is tall, awkward and not beautiful and easy for the reader to identify with. She does not quite fit anywhere. Smith draws on all of her experiences as a transplanted Southerner to create a memorable character who does not accept the precepts of an old culture that requires that women denigrate themselves.

Julie Smith believes that crime is a social problem that affects everyone. She has often said that "mean rooms" are what interest her: rooms where husbands and wives abuse each other and their children. Constantly educating herself in what constitutes the roots of crime, she reads psychology and other related materials. She feels that writers have a duty to "come to the rescue" and take on some responsibility through their work.

"The first task of the writer is to deal with your passion. Get it out there for the world to see, full of feeling and fire. Then follow through with caring." She says that if you grapple with the passion, it will come through on the page.

Julie Smith writes with passion and as a writer, she grows, setting new goals with each novel. She is a role model. And she is also a marvelous mix of all that is the best of two cultures. The perfect example of Southern hospitality, she gave this interviewer her complete, undivided attention while ignoring the pressures of an extremely tight schedule and served California healthfood style cookies.

NOVELS BY JULIE SMITH

- 1982 Death Turns A Trick
- 1984 Sourdough Wars
- 1985 True-Life Adventure
- 1986 Tourist Trap
- 1987 Huckleberry Fiend
- 1990 New Orleans Mourning
- 1991 Dead In The Water
- 1991 The Axeman's Jazz
- 1993 Jazz Funeral
- 1993 Other People's Skeletons

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A TOAST TO THE TOASTMASTERS

by

Kevin Moore

Choosing a Toastmaster for Left Coast Crime III was absolutely the easiest part of planning the convention. This was the first time that Orange County would play host to a mystery convention, and living in our own backyard were the County's premier literary collaborators, Ann and Evan Maxwell.

I first met Evan by telephone in 1986 shortly after reading and reviewing The Frog and the Scorpion for "As Crime Goes By", the mystery review newsletter published at the time by Anaheim Public Library. Over the next few years we spoke often, about the mystery genre, the political scene, the future of libraries and, of course, the Fiddler books. After a guest appearance by Ann and Evan at a Friends of the Library sponsored program, I knew that when the opportunity presented itself for an Orange County mystery convention, I had found the perfect toastmasters!

Two of a Kind, Inc. is both a legal name and an apt description of these long married writers. In retrospect, it seems both natural and inevitable that Ann and Evan's lifetime partnership should extend to their writing. Ann began writing in 1975 with a science fiction novel, then branched out into romance and romantic suspense. Evan was a journalist who worked for the *Los Angeles Times* as a staff writer covering international crime and national security issues. This background and Evan's expertise add color and authenticity to the Fiddler stories. Their first literary collaboration was 1976's The Year Long Day, a non-fiction work produced in conjunction with Norwegian photographer and hunter Ivan Rudd. This

joint effort convinced Ann and Evan that they may have found a whole new writing avenue and lead to the introduction of Fiddler and Fiora in Just Another Day in Paradise (1985).



Fiddler is an attractive, slightly mysterious, unconventional and independently wealthy character, who although divorced from Fiora, is nonetheless inextricably bound to her. Fiora is intelligent, coolly charming and an independent, successful businesswoman. The sparks fly between them but their relationship is a wholly satisfying one for the reader.

Ann and Evan take Fiddler and

Fiora beyond the boundaries of Orange County, in the realization that much of today's big crimes are international in scope and that to resolve them, one must "follow the money".

In the latest Fiddler novel, The King of Nothing, following the money leads to a Japanese connection and takes Fiddler and Fiora to Washington state. Widening the scope of the novels to give them a global perspective will, Evan believes, give Fiddler a freshness and relevance to contemporary life.

How much of Ann and Evan can be found in Fiora and Fiddler? Ann and Evan can finish each other's sentences, often know what the other is thinking and seem remarkably attuned to each other. But, says Evan, the true similarity is that he, like Fiddler usually gets the first word, while Ann, like Fiora, always get the last one.

After nearly twenty years of hard work and perseverance, the Maxwells are finally reaping the rewards. The Fiddler books gain a larger audience with each title, and Ann's romance novels have made her a best selling author.

May their collaboration continue, producing for the reader that unique blend of intrigue, romance, humor and excitement that marks their work.

Mystery and Suspense Fiction by Ann and Evan Maxwell

Writing as A.E. Maxwell:

- 1993 Come Hangman! Come Vulture!
- 1992 The King of Nothing
- 1991 Money Burns
- 1989 The Art of Survival
- 1988 Just Enough Light to Kill
- 1987 Gatsby's Vineyard
- 1986 The Frog and the Scorpion
- 1985 Just Another Day in Paradise

1981 Steal the Sun

Writing as Ann Maxwell (with Evan as co-author):

- The St. Petersburg Surprise (in progress)
- 1993 The Secret Sisters
- 1992 The Diamond Tiger

Writing as Lowell Charters:

1992 Thunderheart



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"In reporter Irene Kelly, Jan Burke has created a sharp, witty, and utterly endearing detective. GOODNIGHT, IRENE is like tangy chocolate: It's impossible to take one bite, or read one page, and not want more."

—Susan Dunlap, author of *Death and Taxes*

"Jan Burke is good news for mystery fans—a terrific new series by a fine new writer."

—Linda Grant, author of *Love nor Money*

"I absolutely loved GOODNIGHT, IRENE....As a devoted Sara Paretsky, Sue Grafton, and Nancy Pickard fan, I am always waiting for the next book—another writer I'm hooked on, another book to wait for."

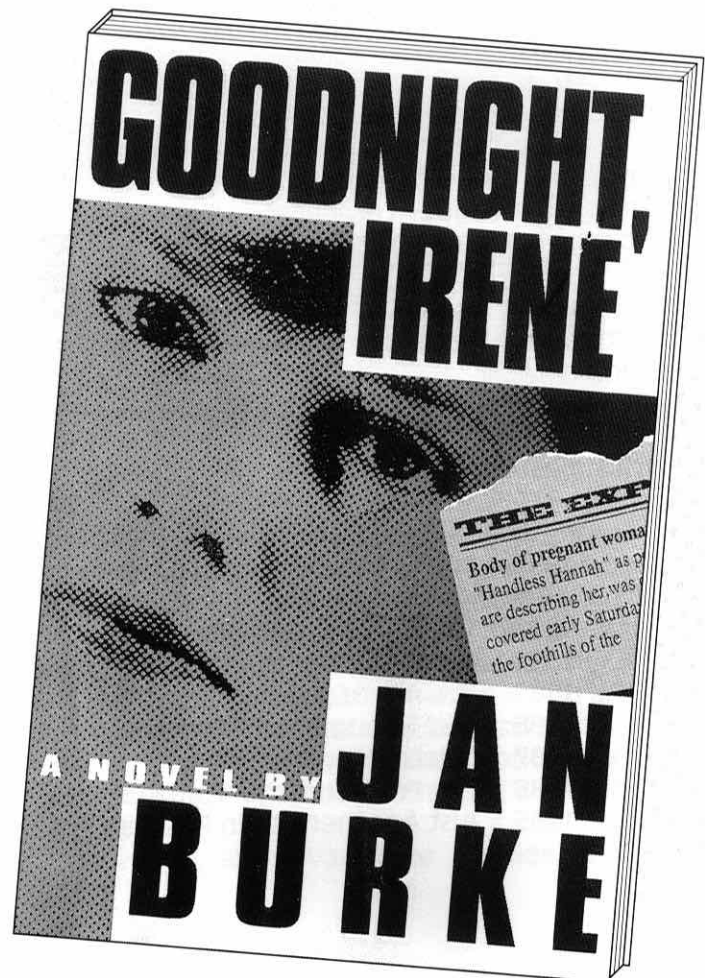
—Jessie Marvin Lazeroff, bookseller,
Village Green, Rochester, NY

"This is so good...the characters come alive on the pages...in a complex, well-plotted story, that is very well structured...a winner!"

—Tasha Mackler, bookseller,
Murder Unlimited, Albuquerque, NM

"Exciting debut mystery...brims with brutality...she writes with remarkable sensitivity about the physical and spiritual reactions of people terrorized by cold-blooded killers."

—*Publishers Weekly*



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UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

by

Nickolae Baker Gerstner

Basil had been gone almost two years. He was sixteen now and Wanda knew he would be bigger, but she hadn't expected a grown man to get off the bus and hug her and call her ma. The bright, straw blond hair was the same. He still had skin too much like milk, and across his cheeks was that red streak where the sunburn hardly ever faded. Not much else reminded her of the twig in knickers that went off to Myra's to attend high school.

"Aunt Myra sends greetings, and she sent you some dress material."

Wanda caught her breath. His voice was as deep as a preacher's.

"It's good of my sister to let you live with her, seeing as you want to so bad, but I'm mighty glad to have you home. Breaks my heart to think it's only for a week's summer vacation."

Basil carried the metal case she'd packed when he left home. It had been heavy for him then, but now you would have thought he was carrying a goose feather. They got on the trolley. They'd ride it to the end of Spring Street and walk the rest of the way. Staring up at Basil, Wanda hoped they'd run into someone she knew.

"Clark and Tyrone wanted to come to town to meet your bus, but Uncle Tom was at the house. He insisted your brothers stay with him. Thought it would be more natural for you to get home and find them waiting."

"More natural," Basil repeated, and his voice sounded even deeper.

Wanda laughed. "That Tom! He really wanted your brothers around to roughhouse with him. He never tires of it. Tyrone's got light skin like you, and you should see the black and blue marks he gets on his fat little legs. The marks

don't pain him, and he giggles when your uncle tickles him and tosses him around." She made a clucking sound. "Uncle Tom sure would have been a good pa, but like your grandma always bragged, he just never cottoned to silly women."

They were passing the picture show. It was Friday, and the picture should have changed, but it was the same one she'd seen last week. She hated it when they held a picture over, unless it was with someone like Clark Gable or Tyrone Power. Basil Rathbone was her favorite. He was real high-toned and smart.

"I was planning for us all to go to the picture show tomorrow night and then for ice cream sodas. I saved up for when you came home. But I saw that picture last week. It was about a murder. It was good, but there was too much talking. I couldn't make heads or feet of what was going on."

Basil looked back toward the marquee. "I saw that picture in the city. It was dumb. If the guy had been smart, he would have gone out on the lake with her and held her under the water. Folks would have thought it was an accident, not a murder."

Wanda thought about that. "I expect you're right, Basil. But then, how would they do the picture?"

He shrugged. "There wouldn't have been a picture. No one would ever have known, and that would have been that."

They got off the trolley and hiked down the long road to their little farm. When they reached the lane, Clark and Tyrone spilled out of the house to greet them. Tom came, too, grinning like Christmas. "Bassy boy, it's good to lay

eyes on you again. And look at you. Look at every inch of you. You're a man from top to bottom." He reached to shake Basil's hand, but Basil didn't notice.

Old Boots came lopping over, wagging his tail with more energy than he'd commanded in a long spell. Basil stooped to pet him, and he told his brothers he'd bought them presents. "With my own money," he said. "I delivered papers for a while, but then I started working at the stock yards Saturdays and after school. It's heavy work, but like I wrote, I can pay Aunt Myra for my keep and still save some."

"Working at the yards made you strong, Bassy. Your arms sure look nice and hard." Tom touched Basil's sleeve.

Basil jerked up. "D'you want to arm wrestle and see how strong I am?"

A good, warm feeling washed over Wanda. Here they were ready to wrestle, just that quick. It was like Basil had never been gone, and Wanda blinked away a silly tear.

They all went in the house, and Basil and Tom sat down facing each other across the table. They were two men now, but Tom sure was getting heavy. He had to be laying on pounds like a porker. And my goodness, she hadn't noticed before, but his hair was getting grey. Used to be it was as dark as Basil's was light. Wanda felt a rush of affection. Well, even if someday Tom's hair turned whiter than powdered sugar, he'd always be her baby brother.

They had slaughtered a hog special for Basil's homecoming, and thinking of porkers reminded Wanda to get the fresh ham in the oven.

Joey, her man, had died eight years ago when Clark was four and Tyrone was just newborn. Tom had pitched right in to help bring up the boys, and he was a big help around the farm, too.

Long ago, Wanda had wanted Tom to give up the cabin and move in with them. He'd refused, saying his cabin was his own spot, where he could

do what he wanted. Wanda understood that. Men had ways of their own.

The cabin was several miles away, tucked in the woods and right on the river. It was a great place for boys because of the fishing and all, and Tom sure liked to have the little boys in the area stay with him. He'd started insisting Basil stay with him right after Joey died, and when Basil went off to live with Myra, he'd wanted Clark to stay with him. That hadn't worked out. On the first visit, Clark had such a bad asthma attack that Tom had to tote him home in the middle of the night. From then on, Clark refused to sleep away from home. Lately, Tom had been saying Tyrone should spend time with him, but so far, Wanda hadn't let Tyrone go. She told Tom it was because Tyrone had a problem keeping his bed dry, but that hadn't happened for a long time. Truth was, he was her littlest chick. She liked keeping him close, but maybe she wasn't looking at things right. Maybe it was time to let him go and test his wings.

Wanda finished putting the ham in the oven, then checked to make sure no one had crept a finger into her blackberry pie and tried to make the hole look like an innocent crack in the crust. Suddenly Tom let out a giant howl. She spun around and saw him rubbing his arm.

"Bassy," Tom gasped, "that's not arm wrestling."

"That's how I arm wrestle. Want to try it again?"

Tom jerked away from the table.

"Not now, boy. I better help Clark with the chickens." Later Wanda noticed him through the window. Something seemed awkward, and she pondered, then realized. He was pitching feed left-handed.

When they ate supper, it sure didn't hurt Wanda to hear Basil praise her cooking. To hear him carry on, you'd have thought he hadn't had tasty food in his mouth since he left home which couldn't be true. Myra had

MUG SHOTS and RAP SHEETS

Whenever possible, photos and biographies of LCC III participants have been provided. We regret that not all authors are so represented either because of our press deadline, or the lack of readily available material.

NOREEN AYRES published her first mystery A World the Color of Salt in 1992. A former technical writer and poet, she has won several awards for poetry and short fiction.

K.K. BECK lives in Seattle in the same neighborhood where five generations of her family have lived. Humor marks her books, from 1984's Death in a Deck Chair, to the recently published The Body in the Cornflakes.

JON L. BREEN has been a professional librarian for 25 years and a published author for about the same length of time. An Edgar winner for his critical work, he is also the author of two series, one featuring bookseller

Rachel Hennings and the other, race track announcer Jerry Brogan.

JAN BURKE has recently completed the second book in her series featuring Irene Kelly, a reporter. Goodnight, Irene debuts this month from Simon & Schuster.

TAFFY CANNON, who has worked as a journalist, social worker, and screenwriter, has her first Nan Robinson mystery, A Pocket Full of Karma coming this spring from Carroll & Graf.

MICHAEL COLLINS is the author of the Dan Fortune novels, the longest-running detective series today. A winner of the Edgar and PWA's Lifetime Achievement Awards, his stories have been

included in Best Detective and Mystery Stories. He lives with his wife, novelist Gayle Stone, in Santa Barbara.

ROBERT CRAIS is a Los Angeles screenwriter whose three Elvis Cole mysteries The Monkey's Raincoat, Stalking the Angel and Lullaby Town have earned raves (and award nominations) from both critics and fans.

DEBORAH CROMBIE grew up in Dallas but has traveled extensively in England and Scotland so it is not surprising that her first mystery, A Share in Death (Scribner's) has a British setting.

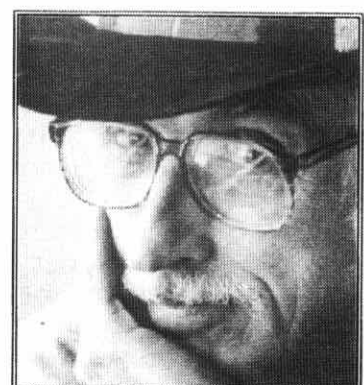
STAN CUTLER is an ex-TV writer (released with time served for good behavior) who has



NOREEN AYRES



JAN BURKE



MICHAEL COLLINS

belatedly followed his career of choice, publishing successive Goodman/Bradley mysteries titled Best Performance by a Patsy, The Face on the Cutting Room Floor, and now, Shot on Location. He lives with his artist wife, Victoria, high in the Hollywood hills, where he raises Japanese koi - and a little Cain, now and then.

JANET DAWSON's first novel Kindred Crimes was nominated for an Anthony Award. The sequel Till the Old Men Die is due in April from Fawcett.

JEROME DOOLITTLE is a former White House speechwriter, diplomat and newspaperman turned author. His first novel in the Tom Bethany series, Body Scissors, was a Shamus Award nominee and a Mystery Book Club selection. Two more Bethany novels have followed with a fourth due in 1994.

AARON ELKINS is an ex-anthropology professor who began writing mysteries ten years ago. His two series feature anthropologist-detective Gideon Oliver and art curator-sleuth Chris Norgren. They have been published in six languages, been made into a major TV series, and been selections of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Edgar winner Aaron lives on Washington's Olympic Peninsula with his wife Charlotte, with

whom he collaborated to produce the sports mystery, A Wicked Slice.

JEAN FEMLING is a 32-year OC resident and Southern California is her turf. She began by publishing fantasy and children's short stories. Her mystery novels include Getting Mine, and Hush, Money featuring Moz Brant. Jean's current work in progress is Love-Crazy.

SARA ANN FREED is Executive Editor at Mysterious Press, a division of Warner Books. Some of the writers she works with who are here at Left Coast III include: Marcia Muller, Aaron Elkins, K.K. Beck, Abigail Padgett, Alan Russell, Rochelle Krich, Noreen Gilpatrick. She edited one book by Julie Smith in another incarnation. She never edited a book by Sue Dunlap, but did buy a short story from her for an anthology.

BRIAN GARFIELD has published more than 70 books, most recently Suspended Sentences. Among his works are Death Wish, Hopscotch, Wild Times and the screen story for the cult suspense movie favorite The Stepfather.

JUDITH GARWOOD (Catherine Dain) was raised in Reno, Nevada, the setting for the Freddie O'Neal series. Her background includes a degree from UCLA, and several years as a TV newscaster.

NICKOLAE BAKER

GERSTNER's collaborative effort with Barbara Pronin, written under the name Barbara Nickolae began with Finders Keepers. Their second book Ties That Bind arrived in January 1993.

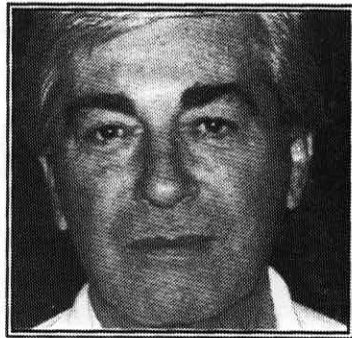
LINDA GRANT's novels feature Catherine Saylor, a San Francisco private investigator who specializes in high-tech crime. Grant's first novel, Random Access Murder was nominated for an Anthony Award for Best First Novel of 1988. It was followed by Blind Trust and Love Nor Money. Ms. Grant is the Vice President (President-Elect) of Sisters in Crime.

JEAN HAGER is the creator of two successful series featuring native American sleuths. The first, with Oklahoma Police Chief Mitchell Bushyhead has had both critical and popular acclaim. Her new series introduces Molly Bearpaw.

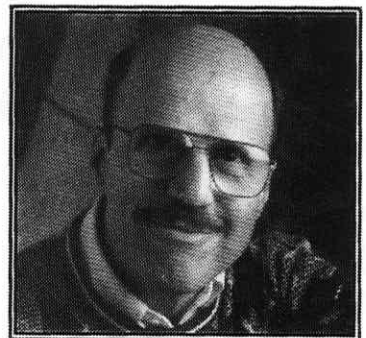
ORIETTA A. HARDY-SAYLES edits and publishes The Magnifying Glass, a newsletter devoted to informing mystery aficionados of news, upcoming events and activities. Along with Gary Warren Niebuhr, she published The Big Jacuzzi. Look for the Revised Edition of The Big Jacuzzi, and Farewell, My Lobby in 1993. Orietta will be the Mistress of Ceremonies in 1993 for Bouchercon XXIV in Omaha.



DEBORAH CROMBIE



STAN CUTLER



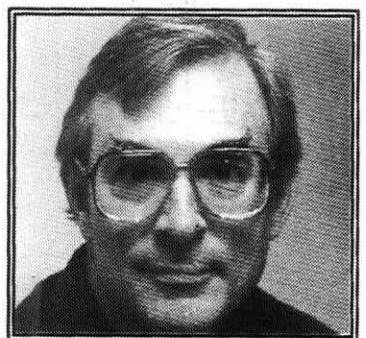
AARON ELKINS



JEAN FEMLING



SARA FREED



BRIAN GARFIELD



NICKOLAE GERSTNER



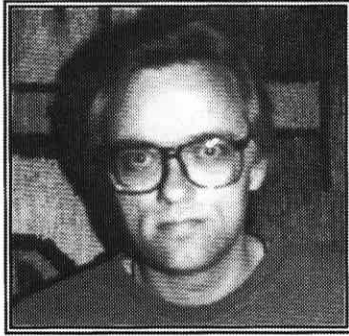
LINDA GRANT



JEAN HAGER



CAROLYN G. HART



KEITH HELLER



WENDY HORNSBY



JON A. JACKSON



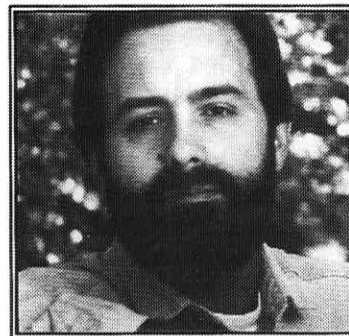
NANCY BAKER JACOBS



JERRY KENNEALY



KAREN KIJEWSKI



VINCE KOHLER

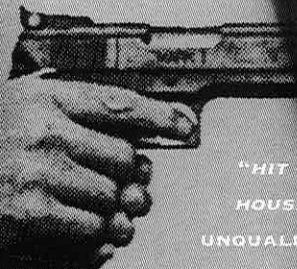


ROCHELLE M. KRICH

**"The best procedural
of the season."**

—Kirkus
Reviews

Hit on the House



"HIT ON THE
HOUSE IS AN
UNQUALIFIABLY
BRILLIANT
NOVEL."

—JIM HARRISON

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Jon A. Jackson



Atlantic Monthly Press

**"Back on the streets in top
form....Jackson expertly taps
the vein that Elmore Leonard,
another Motown scribe,
is noted for."**

—Publishers
Weekly

**"I greatly enjoyed
Hit on the House.
Jon Jackson
is my favorite
mystery writer."**

—Tracy Kidder



Author photograph by Steve Saroff

Jon Jackson has been hailed as "one of the best chroniclers of urban crime" by *The New York Times*. His first three Mulheisen mysteries, *The Diehard*, *The Blind Pig*, and *Grootka*, met with stunning praise. *Hit on the House*—with its atmospheric rendering of the grimy city of Detroit, its evocation of the mob world, its exceedingly well-drawn bad guys, and most of all the ever-likable, smart, and fallible hero Mulheisen—will not disappoint Jackson's fans, and will be sure to recruit first-time readers to the ranks of devotees.

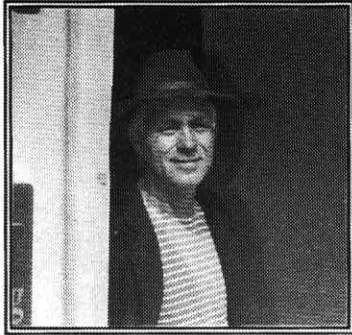
In June 1993, Atlantic Monthly Press will be reissuing *The Diehard* and *The Blind Pig*.

"The elaboration of the plot and the quality of the writing put *The Diehard* pretty close to the top of its class."

—The New York Times

"Jon Jackson's *The Blind Pig* is without a doubt one of the finest detective novels ever written—smart, funny and completely convincing."

—James Crumley



KEN KUHLEN



MARSHA LANDRETH



JANET LAPIERRE



CYNTHIA LAWRENCE



JOHN LESCROART



BOB LEVINSON



DICK LOCHTE



WILLIAM F. LOVE



MARGARET LUCKE

CAROLYN G. HART is the author of eight Death on Demand mysteries with sea island sleuths Annie Laurence and Max Darling. Hart was the first author to win all three traditional mystery awards, the Agatha, the Anthony and the Macavity. A new series featuring retired newspaperwoman Henrietta O'Dwyer (Henrie O) Collins debuts in September with Dead Man's Island. Hart is the immediate past president of Sisters in Crime.

KEITH HELLER lived in the Midwest, Japan, Spain and Argentina before moving to California. He has published an historical crime trilogy concerning eighteenth-century London. Currently, two crime novels in manuscript are seeking publication, the debut of a Wine Mystery series set in the San Joaquin Valley and a mystery about seventh-century China.

WENDY HORNSBY is a native of So. California, where she teaches US History and History of American Women at Long Beach City College. Her books featuring Kate Byrd and Lt. Roger Tejada have made a hit with fans. Her new series with filmmaker Maggie MacGowen, Telling Lies has expanded her readership. She also won the 1992 Edgar for Best Short Story for Nine Sons, from the Sisters in Crime 4 anthology.

JON A. JACKSON's fourth novel in the Sergeant "Fang" Mulheisen series Hit On The House hit the streets on January 22, 1993. Two of his earlier novels will be reprinted in May by Atlantic Monthly Press. Jackson is a devoted jazz fan, an avid angler and lives in the Montana Rockies.

NANCY-BAKER JACOBS is the author of the highly-praised Devon MacDonald private eye series, which includes The Turquoise Tattoo, A Slash of Scarlet, and the upcoming The Silver Scalpel. Nancy has worked as a private investigator, journalist and college professor. She lives on the Central California coast.

J.A. JANCE was co-guest of honor at LCC II and is the author of the immensely popular Seattle based J.P. Beaumont series. After nine books in that series, she created a new protagonist, Diana Ladd, who debuted in Hour of the Hunter.

JERRY KENNEALY is the author of the Nick Polo mystery series. Kennealy has been a licensed private investigator for over twenty years and is presently the vice president of Private Eye Writers of America.

KAREN KIJEWski has wowed both fans and critics with her Kat Colorado series set in Sacramento and environs. Her tough sleuth's latest outing is Copy Cat.

VINCE KOHLER, a journalist from Portland, Oregon is the author of Rising Dog, a humorous murder mystery set in the Pacific Northwest. It's the zany sequel to the popular and critically acclaimed Rainy North Woods.

ROCHELLE MAJER KRICH made her writing debut with Where's Mommy Now? which won the Anthony for Best Paperback Original Mystery Novel of 1990.

KEN KUHLKEN's first mystery novel, The Loud Adios won the St Martin's Press/Private Eye Writers of America Best First PI Novel Award. His new book, The Venus Deal is a prequel to The Loud Adios and will be published in April 1993. They are the first two books in a trilogy about PI Tom Hickey's trials during WWII. He has been honored as a National Endowment for the Arts literature fellow.

M.D. LAKE's Peggy O'Neill series is a favorite with women readers even though the author is male. The campus cop's latest mystery, A Gift for Murder is currently available from Avon.

MARSHA LANDRETH's novel Holiday Murders features Samantha Turner, M.D. In her second book Fountain of Youth, Sam tangles with the town's dog catcher.

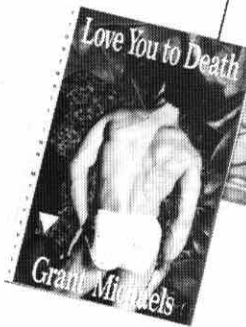
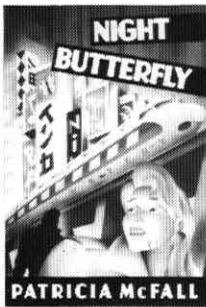
JANET LAPIERRE's mystery novels are set on the chilly, foggy, sparsely-populated California

ST. MARTIN'S SALUTES ITS LEFT COAST SLEUTHS

*K. K. Beck • Jean Fenling
Jean Hager • Jerry Kennealy
Vince Kohler*



*Ken Kuhlken • Margaret Lucke
Patricia McFall • Grant Michaels
Maxine O'Callaghan*



*Robert Randisi • Les Roberts
Walter Satterthwaite
Sheila Simonson • Serita Stevens*



ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

fictitious town of Port Silva. Children's Games, The Cruel Mother, Unquiet Grave, Grandmother's House and yet-to-come Old Enemies feature schoolteacher Meg Halloran and Vince Gutierrez, Port Silva chief of police and other town citizens.

LEILA LAURENCE manages R e c o r d s & Communications for a No. California police department. In law enforcement for 23 years, she spent 15 years dispatching police and fire calls. An avid collector and fan, she was involved in organizing Left Coast Crime I and II. She has published a number of articles on public safety issues for police journals and is currently at work on a 911 mystery.

CYNTHIA LAWRENCE is a new mystery writer who serves up terror with a side order of wit. Take-Out City is a Los Angeles mystery about food, obsessive love and murder. Publication is set for May.

ROBERT S. LEVINSON is president of his Los Angeles-based entertainment company. As a writer or producer, Levinson has worked on more than three dozen comedy, variety, concert and awards specials for network, syndication and cable airing. He recently completed his first novel, and is at work on a second, as well as a novel

set in the Golden Age of Rock and Roll.

DICK LOCHTE is a theatre critic and book reviewer. He has written three mystery novels featuring the unusual investigative team of a hard-bitten, middle-aged PI and a precocious teenaged girl.

WILLIAM F. LOVE has written three novels, including Bloody Ten featuring amateur sleuth Bishop Francis X. Regan and his Jewish sidekick, Davey Goldman. His fourth, Bishop's Revenge will be published in April 1993.

MARGARET LUCKE drew on her experiences in college and community theatre as well as growing up in a family with several artists in writing her first novel, A Relative Stranger. A life-long mystery fan, she has written several scripts for mystery weekends and events.

PATRICIA MCFALL has lived and traveled extensively in Asia, particularly Japan. This experience provided the background for her first mystery novel Night Butterfly. Patricia currently resides in Orange County, where she is working on her second novel.

ANNETTE MEYERS is the author of four mysteries featuring Smith and Wetzon, who operate a Wall Street head-hunting firm. Blood On the Street is her latest, and Murder: The Musical is due in

September.

MARTIN MEYERS and his wife Annette have jointly produced The Dutchman, first in a trilogy set in Old New York. Look for it under the name Maan Meyers. He has also written five detective novels featuring PI Patrick Hardy.

GRANT MICHAELS was never a hairdresser, but his amateur sleuth Stan Kraychik is a master stylist at Snips Salon in Boston. A Body to Dye For garnered a movie option, Love You To Death is now in trade paper, Dead On Your Feet is due late in 1993.

PHYLLIS ZIMBLER MILLER founded the LA Chapter of Sisters in Crime.

MARLYS MILLHISER is active in the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America and writes a column on regional mystery writers for Mystery Scene Magazine. Her newest book Murder at Moot Point, is the first in a mystery series starring Charlie Greene, a literary agent and unwed mother.

JILL M. MORGAN writes under three names (Morgan Fields, J.M. Morgan and Meredith Morgan) because it gives her the freedom to test herself in multiple genres. Her novels include suspense, sci fi, horror, historical and YA.

MARCIA MULLER has authored 20 mystery novels, 14 of which



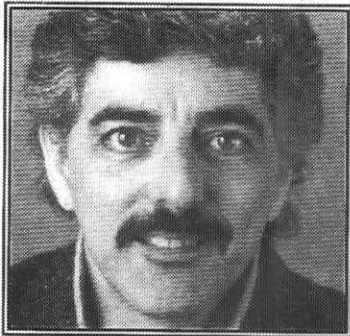
PATRICIA MCFALL



ANNETTE MEYERS



MARTIN MEYERS



GRANT MICHAELS



MARLYS MILLHISER



PHYLLIS MILLER



JILL MORGAN



MARCIA MULLER



MEG O'BRIEN

novels, 14 of which feature San Francisco private investigator Sharon McCone. In addition, she has co-edited (with Bill Pronzini) ten anthologies of mystery and suspense short stories, and 1001 M i d n i g h t s : T h e A f i c i o n a d o ' s G u i d e t o M y s t e r y a n d D e t e c t i v e F i c t i o n. She lives in Northern California with her husband, mystery writer Bill Pronzini.

MEG O'BRIEN is the creator of journalist-detective Jessica James, whose latest case is Eagles Die Too. She is also the author of the suspense thriller, The Keeper.

MAXINE O'CALLAGHAN'S nine novels include a series featuring Delilah West, one of the mystery world's pioneering female private investigators. O'Callaghan's work has been nominated for both the Anthony Award and the Bram Stoker Award.

ABIGAIL PADGETT, formerly a court investigator, now works as an advocate for the mentally ill. Her mystery series, beginning with Child of Silence features a protagonist who has a manic-depressive disorder. Strawgirl, will be out in 1993.

AUDREY PETERSON was a former professor of English lit before turning her efforts to full time writing. Her first six mysteries feature music

prof Andrew Quentin and his one-time graduate student Jane Winfield. Her last book Dartmoor Burial, introduces Claire Camden, a California professor.

GARY PHILLIPS was born and raised in South Central Los Angeles where he could write the insignia of the Slausons street gang before he knew his time tables. Reading Doyle's A Study in Scarlet at nine propelled him into the gripping regions of mystery and death, and he's yet to return. His first novel, Violent Spring is forthcoming from West Coast Crime Publishing.

ELIZABETH PINCUS is the author of The Two-Bit Tango, the first in a series featuring San Francisco private eye Nell Fury. Her second novel The Solitary Twist will be published by Spinsters Book Company in May 1993. Elizabeth resides in SF where she is a film critic for the SF Weekly.

BARBARA PRONIN has written Syndrome, Sing Sweetly To Me, and the forthcoming Thicker Than Water. As part of the writing team of Barbara Nickolae, she has also authored Finders Keepers, soon to be a Lorimar television movie and the just-published Ties That Bind.

CHARLES RAISCH is a writer and editor specializing in mystery and suspense fiction and crime writing. He is

currently an editor of New Mystery Magazine. He is working on his third novel and his first screenplay.

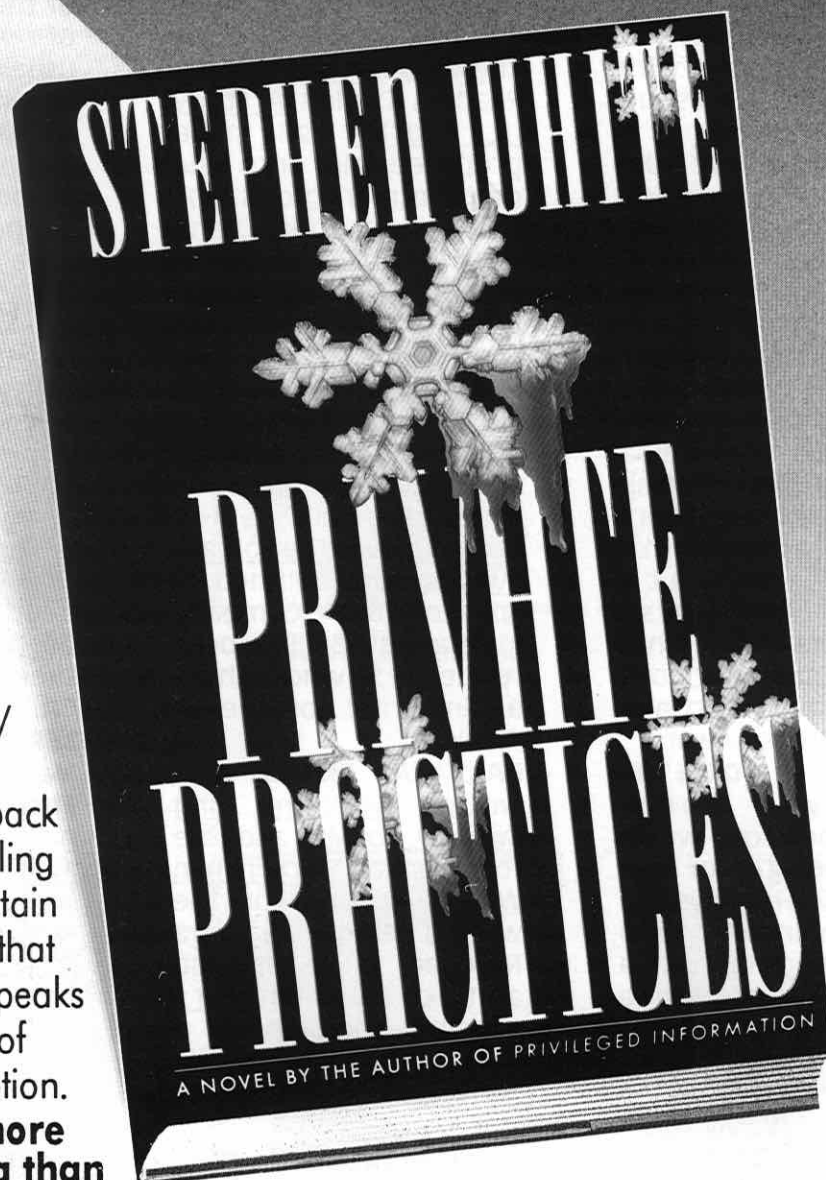
ROBERT RANDISI is the prolific author of more mysteries/westerns/anthologies than could be listed in this program book. He is the founder of the Private Eye Writers of America and can usually be found in the vicinity of a poker game.

GILLIAN ROBERTS' first mystery about schoolteacher Amanda Pepper, Caught Dead in Philadelphia, won the Anthony. The series now includes Philly Stakes and I'd Rather Be in Philadelphia. With Friends Like These... will be published this summer. Roberts is the nom de mystere of Judith Greber, a former Philly English teacher. When not killing people on the East Coast, Greber and Roberts make their home in Tiburon, CA.

LES ROBERTS won the St. Martin's Press/PWA Best First PI Novel Award for An Infinite Number of Monkeys. Since then he has continued the LA based Saxon series and created a new Cleveland based protagonist.

REBECCA ROTHENBERG'S first book, The Bulrush Murders was nominated for both the Agatha and Anthony awards in 1992. The book introduces microbiologist Claire Sharples. Rebecca, an amateur botanist and

The author of *Privileged Information*
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evil... prose as smooth and
fast as a downhill slalom."*



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*Publishers Weekly

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Penguin USA

divides her time between LA and the Southern Sierra.

JANET A. RUDOLPH is the director of Mystery Readers International and Murder on the Menu.

ALAN RUSSELL bemoans the fact that it is usually easier to find him than it is to find his books. At 6 ft. 7" tall, Russell is hard to miss in a crowd. His first two novels, No Sign of Murder and The Forest Prime Evil (the latter released this year), have garnered critical praise. In "real life" Russell is the general manager of an ocean front hotel. He will be exploiting that unique vantage point in a soon-to-be-released novel from Mysterious Press titled The Hotel Detective.

ROBERT SAMOIAN Deputy District Attorney for LA County for more than 22 years, is the premier collector of mysteries. Sought after as an expert speaker on collecting, his home in LA is a cathedral of books and a testament to his wife's good humor. He has written the New Releases column for Mystery and Detective Monthly since April of 1989. He sells used mysteries by mail as Raven Books.

SHEILA SIMONSON's second mystery Skylark was published by St. Martin's in Sept. 1992. Lark Daily, now Lark Dodge encounters murder, international intrigue and culture shock when she attends a

bookseller's conference in London. Mudlark, set on the Washington coast is forthcoming in 1993.

SHELLEY SINGER is the author of six mystery novels, including Following Jane from NAL/Dutton. The first in a new series, it features Barrett Lake, a woman detective who was first introduced in Sisters in Crime I. The second in the series Picture of David was released in Oct 1992. She has also written five books in the Jake Samson-Rosie Vicente series.

JANET L. SMITH is the author of Sea of Troubles and Practice to Deceive which are set in the Pacific Northwest and feature attorney Annie MacPherson. Smith is currently working on the third book in the series, which will take place in Washington's wine country.

SERITA DEBORAH STEVENS authored Deadly Doses: A Writer's Guide to Poisons, a Macavity Award winner. Her newest series, the Fanny Zindel mysteries began with Red Sea, Dead Sea. Fanny (a charming Jewish grandmother) begins her second adventure in England with Murderous Education.

JIM STINSON has produced four Stoney Winston mysteries. Like his amateur sleuth, Stinson has a background in filmmaking which infuses his writing with

authenticity.

GAYLE STONE's most recent novels are young-adult mysteries published by Knopf: Rough Stuff, Reel Trouble, and Fatal Error, in the Three Investigators' Crimebusters series. A former newspaper reporter and magazine editor-in-chief, she has written seven adult espionage novels and is currently working on a psychological thriller.

JESSE SUBLETT was a professional blues and rock 'n roll musician when he moved to Los Angeles from his native Austin, Texas in 1987. He has written three novels featuring a rhythm-and-blues bass player who moonlights as a detective in Austin, Texas (Rock Critic Murders, Tough Baby, Boiled in Concrete). He also writes short stories featuring a hard-boiled detective operating out of No. Hollywood.

JUDITH VAN GIESON was born in NY City. After graduating from Northwestern Univ, she worked in publishing for a few years. When divorced, she moved to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico and studied writing. Judith ended up in New Mexico and began writing the Neil Hamel series. She is currently working on the fifth book in the series.

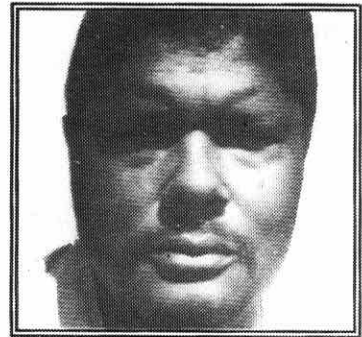
MARILYN WALLACE is the editor of the Sisters In Crime anthologies and



MAXINE O'CALLAGHAN



AUDREY PETERSON



GARY PHILLIPS



ELIZABETH PINCUS



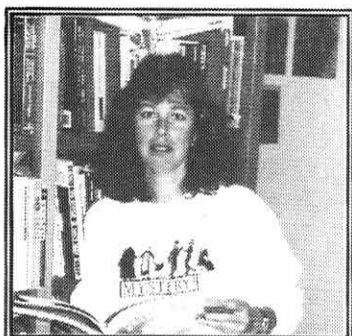
BARBARA PRONIN



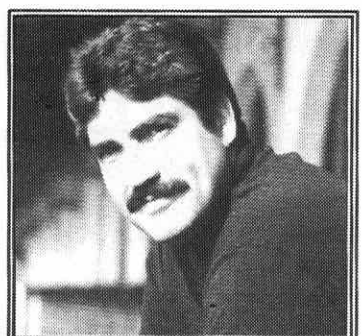
GILLIAN ROBERTS



REBECCA ROTHENBERG



JANET A. RUDOLPH



ALAN RUSSELL

the author of several novels of suspense, including So Shall You Reap.

STEPHEN WHITE's Private Practices marks the return of Dr. Alan Gregory, the amateur sleuth whose debut in Privileged Information explored the boundaries of privilege between patient and therapist.

DONALD A. YATES is a scholar of Latin American literature and author of Latin Blood. A Sherlockian, he is an investitured member of the Baker St. Irregulars. Now retired, he lives and works in the Napa Valley of California.



SHEILA SIMONSON



SHELLEY SINGER



JANET SMITH



SERITA STEVENS



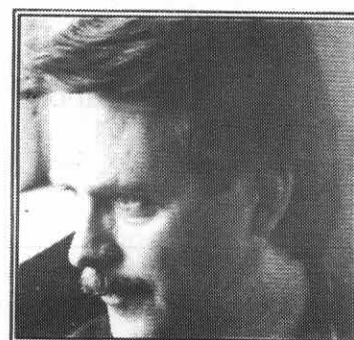
GAYLE STONE



JUDITH VAN GIESEN



MARILYN WALLACE



STEPHEN WHITE

SISTERS IN CRIME

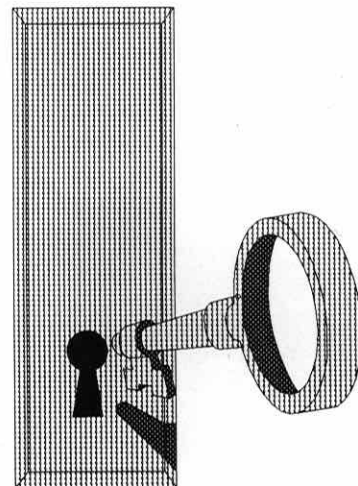
Orange County's Chapter of Sisters in Crime was formed last September at an organizational meeting at Mystery Ink in Laguna Beach, with our first official meeting on November 17, 1992. We launched our newsletter, *The Orange Herring* in November. Present membership is 32. We meet on the third Sunday of the month at 3:00 p.m. Beginning in February '93, meetings will be held at University Park Branch of Orange County Public Libraries, 4512 Sandburg Way, Irvine (off Michaelson between Culver and Jeffrey). For information call (714) 376-0244.

The **Los Angeles** Chapter of SIC meets the first Sunday of each month (excluding holidays) at the Beverly Hills Library, 444 N. Rexford Drive, 2:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public and are listed in the Sunday, LA Times Book Review Section under the calendar listing. Our guest speakers cover a variety of topics for mystery readers, writers, booksellers and others. In the past we have had the FBI, Orange County Coroner's office, female private investigators, agents and publishers. We have a Speaker's Bureau where you can ask for our talented authors to speak and sign books at your store or organization. For more information about the LA chapter of SIC write to: SIC, Box 3457, Lakewood, CA. 90712-3457.

San Diego Sisters in Crime began in April, 1992. We now have 70 members. We have monthly meetings with speakers, a book discussion group, and a monthly newsletter. Individual members have made contact for writers' groups. We regularly co-sponsor book signings/author talks with Grounds for Murder bookstore.

Published members including Taffy Cannon, whose first mystery, Pocket Full of Karma is coming out this spring; Abigail Padgett, whose first mystery, Child of Silence, was released in December; and Alan Russell, who has two books out, No Sign of Murder and The Forest Primeval.

General meetings take place the second Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm. For more information, please call 295-4219 or stop by Grounds for Murder Bookstore, 3287 Adams Ave., and pick up a membership form.



COLOR ME LLAMA

by Noreen Ayres

By the time of my morning run, the innards were being picked at by a raven.

Above the busy bird, long strands of eucalyptus swung gently in the wind.

The llama belonged to neighbors halfway down the block, the Sechrists. Kendra and Gary. We live in what real-estate people call an exclusive community, one in which most of us own some combination of livestock: horses, goats, and the regal llamas the Sechrists were the first to introduce. Our hilltop homes are like stone castles. We have views of the ocean. We play tennis in our own backyards.

When Gary gave his wife her first llama, we were all impressed. Such an original gift. The llama was soft, sooty, and slow. In its eyes you could read grievous histories--the kind of eyes I search for in human subjects, for I am a painter and I look for what others don't see. How often I fail.

Moldy alfalfa kills livestock occasionally. That morning, seeing the beautiful beast on its side, nonetheless I continued my jog. Nothing would bring the animal back to life, Kendra would be at the club, where I would soon stop in myself, and I knew the Mexican caretaker would handle the carcass soon.

As I brushed by the wine-colored

bougainvillea that spilled down a 200-yard slope at the side of the Sechrist home, I recalled how the black llama and its white mate as they stood against the pale blue shelter looked from a distance like a mural unto themselves. "I am here," they seemed to say, with their heads at an angle of disdain, "where are you?" Tidy animals, they visited a corner of the yard near the tool shed for elimination. This area was mostly hidden from view when the bougainvillea bloomed.

I stopped to re-tie my shoe, resting a foot on the fresh-split wooden railing Gary had installed on his off hours when he wasn't lawyering. When I looked back up toward the property, I saw someone in work clothes behind the tool shed, digging.

At first I thought it was the caretaker, and started to call to him about the llama. Then I thought it was Gary, for he would hide its dead bulk from Kendra if he could. But, no: I know my lovers' forms like Braille. It wasn't Gary.

Yes--Gary, my lover. I am what I am. Artists have no proper souls.

But there in the morning air, still breathless from my run and with mist flowering at my mouth, I felt deeply for Kendra, for all the Kendras, for her lost llama and her wandering man.

And so in that one moment, I stepped through the corral to say, Kendra, I'm sorry...so sorry about your llama, sorry about life and the way it is.

She didn't hear me coming. Locked to her moving shovel, she was purpose itself, a fresh pink to her cheeks and the sun firing her hair to spun copper.

Far on the slope above her, the snowy llama stared down.

Then I saw him. Impressed in the



umber band of fresh-turned soil as if posing for a frieze: Gary my heart, a tropic of reds on the tan shirtfront. Red, too, on his hands. Crimson across his handsome face.

Kendra, flinging the fertile earth first on his legs.

At Kendra's trial, she stared solely at me while I wept.

Now as I hang my new paintings, I hear her hollow voice say some people steal, some people murder.

My new exhibit is called Lignite, in honor of stone castles. My jewelry is jet. My clothes are carbon. My depictions of Soul are thin smoke on black canvas.

For I am the Coal. I am the Raven. I am the Eye of the Llama.

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A NEW BEGINNING

by Carolyn Hart

"Why? Are you tired of Annie and Max?"

This is the immediate response when I tell readers that next fall's new book, Dead Man's Island, is the first in a new series.

I'll answer the second question first.

No, I'm not a bit tired of Annie and Max. In fact, I'm looking forward to writing their next adventure, which I think will be the story of Henny running for mayor of Broward's Rock - with Laurel as her innovative campaign manager.

So why a new series?

Because life is full of unexpected surprises.

Although I don't like to write short stories (I find them terribly hard to do), sometimes an invitation to be part of an anthology is too much of an honor to decline. Such was the case with the Doubleday Perfect Crime anthology Deadly Allies, (Spring 1992), which carried words by members of the Private Eye Writers of America and Sisters in Crime.

So I wrote a short story, "Nothing Ventured," and the protagonist was Henrietta (Henrie O) O'Dwyer Collins, a retired newspaperwoman. Henrie O's late husband Richard gave her the nickname, saying that she packed more surprises into a single day than O. Henry ever put in a short story.

I liked Henrie O a lot, but, the story done, I didn't give it or her much more thought.

Here's where the octopus of fate, who will immediately be recognized by readers of Phoebe Atwood Taylor, arrived on the scene and changed the course of my writing. I had no idea that

the editor of the anthology (the invitation to participate came from Marilyn Wallace, co-anthologist with Bob Randisi) was none other than Kate Miciak, who is also my editor at Bantam.

The phone rang.

Kate said, "We have to have a series about Henrie O."

And so a new series was born and it's been exciting and fun and challenging.

The Henrie O books will differ markedly from those about Annie and Max.

Henrie O is written in first person. Max and Annie in third.

Henrie O's perspective is that of an experienced, sardonic, and acerbic older woman.

Annie's viewpoint is that of youth. Perceptive and intelligent but not jaded.

In the Henrie O books, I want to celebrate age and dispel forever the image of women beyond fifty as "little old ladies," a demeaning phrase.

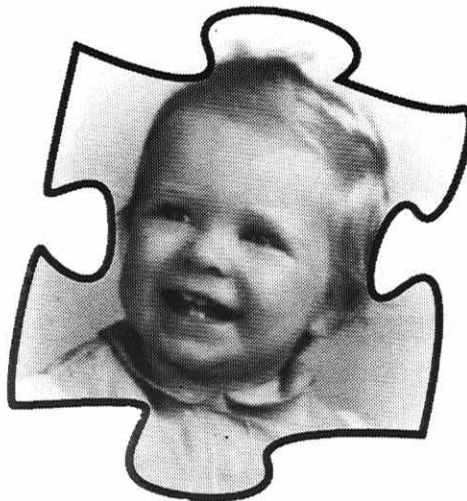
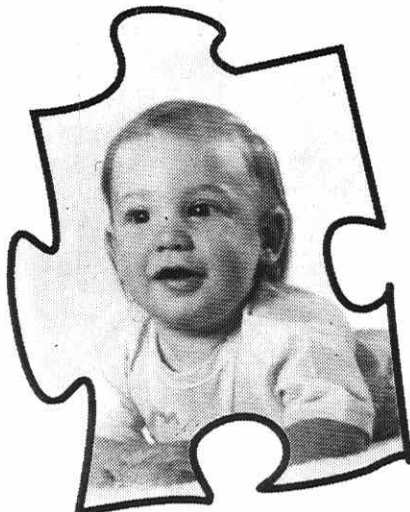
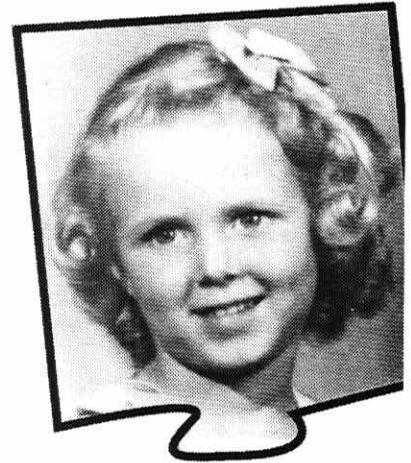
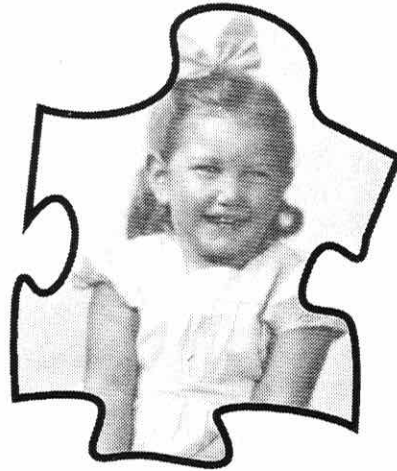
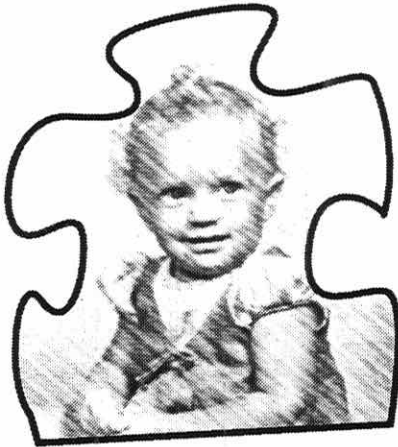
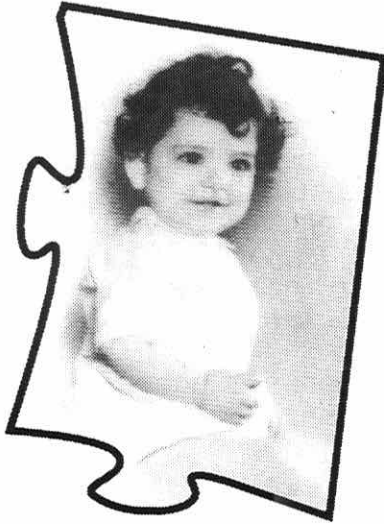
In the Annie and Max books while exploring fractured and poisoned relationships, I am also saying happiness is possible, good marriages can exist.

I'm just getting into the second Henrie O novel, then I will write the ninth Annie and Max.

And I couldn't be happier. I have lots of fun with Annie and Max. I hope to record their stories for many years. Yet I love writing about Henrie O. She is, to tell more truth than I possibly should, the woman I would have liked to be. I like her, and I hope readers will, too.

ATTENTION ALL FLATFOOTS!!!

Use your sleuthing skills to solve this mystery. All photos depict participants of Left Coast Crime III. See if you can correctly match the grown up with the juvenile mug shot. Turn in your "Guess" sheet at the registration desk. Answers and prizes at the Autographing Roundtable.



ON RAIN, FILM NOIR, AND FANATICISM

by

Jesse Sublett

The date is Friday, January 8th, 1993. Big, bruise-colored clouds are hosing the city down, just like they did yesterday. They will do it again tomorrow and during the week to come. I like it. Parts of LA are beginning to break off and slide down hillsides, fall into the concrete drainage ditch (still, out of sentimentality, I suppose) called the LA River. One thing that the great Raymond Chandler captured so well about this city is the fact that it breeds a deep sense of ambivalence. To really love this city, with its dark past and improbable future, unfolding with the grim certainty of a freeway pileup, you've got to hate it, too, and you've got to take a measure of pleasure when it takes a beating, like when its scandals unfold, when televised mobs burn and loot it, when earthquakes crack its artificial veneer, and when the rain does its damndest to scour it from the landscape. Because you know that, come morning, like the crack dealers and prostitutes the day after a task-force sweep, she'll still be there.

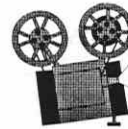
I'm staying inside during the big hose-down, working on a new screenplay, not even venturing out to the video store or gym. So the screenplay is going well; I'm averaging ten to fifteen pages a day. If the rain and, therefore, this page average, holds up, I'll be done with the first draft in about three weeks (which is about average for me.) Either that, or it'll have to be a mini-series.

But dedication to my work isn't the main thing keeping me indoors, cut off from contact with the rest of the world. The top of my 1970 Karmann Ghia convertible leaks, too, and although that contributes to my house arrest, it has nothing to do with the fact that I haven't

called any of my friends in a week. Nope, I blame it on the movies--my addiction to crime movies, to be specific, and to be even more specific, I blame it on the new Abel Ferrara movie, *Bad Lieutenant*.

My wife, Lois, and I went to see *Bad Lieutenant* on New Year's Day. Since director Ferrara's *Ms. 45* and *King of New York* are two of my favorite movies, and since I like *film noir* as much as I like the blues, chocolate, espresso, and Honduran cigars, my expectations were high. Advance word on the film had heightened my expectations, and so did the praise heaped on it in numerous reviews.

Moreover, in my opinion, 1992 was a good year for *film noir*, having seen the release of Bill Duke's excellent *Deep Cover*, Quentin Tarantino's



Reservoir Dogs, Eastwood's *noir* western, *The Unforgiven*, the new releases from that crowd of Hong Kong movie makers who have taken up where *Pekinpah* left off. (And that's putting it mildly; movies like *The Killer*, *Bullet in the Head*, *Super Cop*, *Hard-Boiled*, featuring orgiastic shoot-outs with body counts in the hundreds, have essentially spearheaded a new genre.) During '92, the leader of this pack, director John Woo, started getting the recognition he so richly deserves. His masterpiece, *The Killer*, reminds me of *This Gun For Hire*, Don Siegel's *The Killers*, *Point Blank*, and *The Wild Bunch*, rolled up in a ball of crystal methedrine and superheated in a blast furnace. So it was a good year for *film noir*, and Harvey Keitel (the **Bad Lieutenant** himself), whose

career has encompassed a series of tough-guy performances the likes of which have rarely been seen since the height of *noir* icons Robert Mitchum and Lawrence Tierney, was hot. Keitel had not only turned in another great performance in *Reservoir Dogs*, but had been instrumental in bringing young Tarantino's feverishly imploding caper film script to the screen.

Bad Lieutenant, to my mind, was not only a movie to look forward to seeing, but an important experience, like when the Stones used to come to town, back when they were still younger than your parents (hell, grandparents!).

The music allegory, for me, is unavoidable. My novels are set in the milieu that I know, the smoky clubs and dives of the blues musician, struggling to make a living the only way he knows how. Along the way, he elbows his way through back alleys and crime dens populated with sleazy hangers on, hustlers, dealers, and people too weird or damaged to exist in the nine-to-five day job world. Just like writers. Yes, that's the point. And the music isn't just a backdrop, soundtrack, or gimmick. It's a force of nature, sometimes a Holy Grail. But most of all, it's just another essential element of life-like crime fiction and *film noir*.

But back to *Bad Lieutenant*, and enough already with the build-up. We saw the movie. Anthony John Dennison (*Crime Story's* Ray Luca sat in the row in front of us and, while that was in itself exciting, we soon forgot all about him, because *Bad Lieutenant* is everything the rave reviews say it is. It is grueling, compelling, and relentlessly bleak. Keitel's nameless cop is at least as depraved as Orson Welles' Lt Quinlan in the '50s masterpiece *Touch of Evil*, and he wears his cloak of doom with similar panache, making it impossible to take your eyes off him for a second. But whereas *Touch of Evil* captures Quinlan spiraling toward oblivion still dedicated to putting the bad guys behind bars (no matter how many laws and moral codes have to be broken), Keitel's very bad cop seems only

dedicated to lighting the turbojets on his spiral into hell. Within minutes, he shows us that he knows every pit stop on that road, snorting coke after dropping his kids off at school, then smoking crack (in a tenement stairwell, keeping encroaching residents at bay by warning, "Stay back, police action!"), pocketing packets of drugs from a homicide scene, shooting heroin, guzzling booze, and wallowing joylessly with his junkie girlfriend in a junkie pad. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? Brilliantly scripted (by Zoe Lund, who starred in *Ms 45* and plays the junkie girlfriend here), the story uses the Mets vs. Dodgers world series to symbolize Keitel's inner moral conflict. This device leads to his certain doom as well, since he's bet the store on the wrong team and his bookie isn't a forgiving type of guy. But Keitel's character needs a different sort of salvation, anyway, and we know that, in the end, whatever the outcome of the world series, it will be huge and anti-climax. The lieutenant, you see, is a lapsed Catholic. A nun has been brutally gang-raped. She refuses to divulge the identity of the criminals, because she's already forgiven them. In an unforgettable scene, Keitel, goopy with drug and booze sweat, teeters on wobbly knees beside her at the altar, pleading with her to "get with the program."

Surprisingly, the movie has few scenes of actual violence. But the violence it wreaks on the viewer is more spine-chilling than a dozen *Die Hards* or *Terminators*. For me, the most disturbing moments in *Bad Lieutenant* come when Keitel's inner demons, tightening their grip on his soul, wrench from the dark abyss of his existence a blood-curdling HOWL the likes of which I've never heard before in any movie. It could serve as the anthem of existentialism, the futile final prayer of the damned, the theme song of *film noir*. More than any other aspect of a movie chock-full of great scenes, dark humor, and great performance by its supporting cast, that howl stays with me.

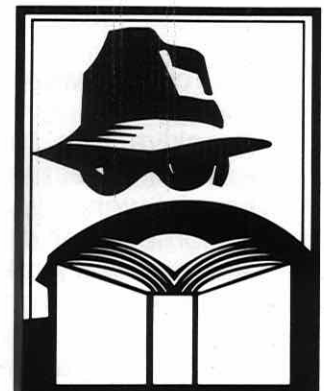
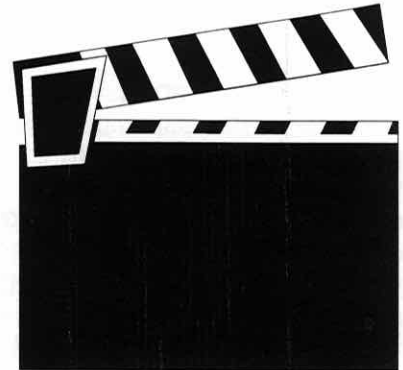
And that's why I'm in this self-

imposed exile. It's not the rain, it's not the fact that I want to finish my screenplay. I haven't called any of my friends or risked running into them at the gym or at the office because I'm afraid they haven't seen this vital, supremely important movie. Even worse, what I say, nonchalantly, "And, of course, we saw *Bad Lieutenant*," and they respond, "Oh? Haven't heard of it." I wouldn't like that. And I wouldn't like the answer that I'd most likely respond with. Does that make me a snob? More likely, I think, it just means I'm a fanatic.

But I believe that all writers and devoted fans of crime fiction and movies are, in their own fashion, fanatics, and that's why I decided to share this deeply personal experience with you. I'm not, usually, a person who joins clubs or attends conventions. But I am a member of Mystery Writers of America and Private Eye Writers of America. And I can think of no other type of convention I'd feel more at home at than one devoted to the crime genre. Like Keitel's howl, the tradition of crime literature is littered with defining moments that strike a deep chord within the converted, giving one a sense of brotherhood with fellow writers and fans, because these things are important. You don't have to explain why, they just are. I'm reminded of the controversy over Robert Parker's post-mortem collaboration on Raymond Chandler's unfinished *Poodle Springs*. I happen to be of the opinion that Parker did a serviceable job. You may disagree, and that's fine with me, too. But the only position with which I could never identify is having no opinion on the subject. If you're in that category, we can still be friends, and if you haven't seen, or haven't heard of, *Bad Lieutenant*, we can still be friends, too. But let's talk about something else.....

Let's talk about the weather. It's still raining. I like it. Excuse me, the phone just rang. It's OK, the answering machine picked up. It's some guy named Noah, wants to borrow my caulking gun. Should I pick up? I wonder if he's

seen....Nah, I've got a screenplay to write. I'll call him back next week, after the rain has let up.



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FOUR KINGS AND A QUEEN

by J.R. Roberts

It happened one weekend in Omaha. The last night that the poker game was going to be in town, and there were only five players left. Five players out of the twenty or so who were in and out of the game during the course of the weekend. With two tables at a time going each night, now they were down to one table, and five players--five of the ones who were there when the game first got started. They met at the Holiday Inn Saloon.

The regulars were there:

"Brooklyn" Bob, the scourge of the East. Folks said he ran a poker game everywhere he went, always had a deck of cards and some poker chips with him;

"Boston" Jerry played in all the games. The lawyer from Massachusetts wasn't real good, but he was damned lucky, and he was always reading' one book or another, tryin' to better his game;

"Minneapolis" Steve was painfully thin--so thin that there wasn't enough of him to twitch when he had a good hand. Still, he usually managed to misplay it, anyway;

"Dandy" Dennis, with his big cowboy hats and come-and-beat-me style was welcome in all the games, except when he brought some of those crazy games with him. You know, the ones that took longer to explain than to play;

And the lady in the bunch, "Gorgeous" Gayle, Dennis' wife. Tall, beautiful, with a head of flaming red hair, this lady held her own among the men, and then some. She wasn't afraid to get in there and mix it up with the boys.

And so the table was set-up, so to speak. Bob, Jerry, Steve, Dennis and Gayle.

It was Boston Jerry's deal.

"Do I deal clockwise or counterclockwise?" The confused look in his eyes was slightly magnified by his eyeglasses.

"You ask that question every time we play," Minneapolis Steve said.

"You deal clockwise," Brooklyn Bob said, with more patience than Steve was capable of.



"Okay."

Bob was on his left, and he gave him the cards to cut.

"Jesus," Steve said from Jerry's right. "I cut."

"The cut is always to the right," Bob explained patiently to Jerry.

"Thank you," Jerry said, grateful for Bob's understanding--but then that was Bob's forte. Patience and understanding. That was why he always walked away from the game a winner--not a whiner, like the others.

"Can we play poker here?" Dennis asked.

"Yes, we have a long drive back home," Gayle said. "We'd like to make some toll money. Right Den?"

"That's right, Hon."

Dennis and Gayle were staying with friends, and hated to play late.

"Do your horses refuse to travel in the dark?" Steve asked.

Dennis stared peevishly at Steve, who was ever the impatient one. Maybe it was because, good hand or bad, he managed to lose.

Dennis, who fancied himself the best poker player of the bunch said, "The longer we play, Minneapolis, the more you lose. I sort of feel sorry for you after a while."

"I'm dealin'," Boston Jerry said.

He dealt five card stud, because the less cards he had to deal the less confused he got. Everyone got one card down, and then the second card face up.

"Second card up!" Steve snapped.

"I know that," Jerry said, wearily.

"Well call 'em!" Steve said.

Jerry dealt in turn to Bob, Dennis, Gayle, Steve and himself.

"Ace of Hearts, three of clubs, six of spades, two of diamonds, King of clubs."

"What're we playin', low ball?"

Steve complained, eyeing his deuce suspiciously.

"Your bet," Jerry said to Bob.

"Quarter," Bob said. This was, after all, high stakes poker.

"Call," Dennis said.

"Call," Gayle said.

"I call," Steve said.

"Well, I guess I'll put in a quarter," Jerry said.

"Just say you call," Steve said.

Jerry ignored him and dealt the next card.

To Bob: "Ten of Hearts."

Dennis: "Five of diamonds."

Gayle: "Seven of spades."

Steve: "Deuce of Hearts. Pair of deuces."

And to himself: "Queen of diamonds."

"Well, it's about time," Steve said.

"My deuces bet fifty cents."

Everyone called, and Jerry dealt again.

Bob got a Jack of hearts, Dennis a four of spades, Gayle a nine of diamonds, Steve a four of hearts and Jerry a Jack of diamonds.

"Deuces still bet," Jerry said.

"I know that," Steve said. "Bet fifty cents."

Everyone called.

"Last card," Jerry said, and dealt out in succession a Queen of hearts, Ace of clubs, eight of diamonds, seven of hearts and Ten of diamonds.

Bob now had Ten, Jack, Queen and Ace of hearts.

Dennis had three of clubs, five of diamonds, four of spades and Ace of

clubs.

Gayle's hand was as follows: eight of diamonds, nine of diamonds, seven of spades and six of spades.

Steve had the two deuce, in diamonds and hearts, four of hearts and seven of hearts.

Jerry's hand read: Ace of clubs, ten of diamonds, Jack of diamonds and the King of clubs.

"Pair of deuces bets," Jerry said.

"I bet fifty," Steve said.

"I raise fifty," said Jerry.

"Raise that fifty," Bob said.

"Well, I raise fifty, also," Dennis said.

"Oh, I can't raise," Gayle said, since it was a three raise game. All she did was call all the raises.

"What?" Steve demanded, eyeing everyone. "A stupid five card game and you all can beat deuces?"

"What do you do, Steve?" Jerry asked.

"Well, I'm callin'," Steve said. "I've got to see these cards."

Jerry called.

Bob called.

"I have a straight," Dennis said, showing his hole card, showing the two of clubs.

Gayle said, "I have a straight, too," and turned over the five of clubs. Her straight went from the five to the ten.

"Ah, hell," Steve said. He turned over his hole card to show the case deuce. "Three deuces in five card stud and I can't win."

"I have a high straight," Jerry said, turning over the Queen of clubs. His straight went from the ten to the ace.

"So do I," Bob said, and turned over his King of hearts, "all hearts."

"A straight flush!" Minneapolis Steve said in disbelief. "In five card stud?"

"Sometimes it pays to live right," Brooklyn Bob said, and raked in his pot.

"You came in last that hand, Steve," Jerry said.

"So," Steve fumed, "what else is new?"

"Nice hand, Den," Gayle said to her husband.

LEFT COAST EYE Q

Test your Left Coast Crime knowledge by solving these mini mysteries...

1. What is the "essential ingredient" in the cooking contest judged by Vejay Haskell's boss, manager of the Henderson PG & E office?
2. In which Aaron Elkins mystery featuring Dr. Gideon Oliver does a man drown in the rising tide of Mont St. Michel Bay?
3. What is the nickname given to Fiddler's high tech, wheelchair bound friend?
4. What book by the late John Ball won the Edgar for best first mystery, then went on to win a best picture Oscar for the screen version?
5. Who were the co-guests of honor at Left Coast Crime I?
6. Who is L.A. Private detective Leo Bloodworth's amateur sleuthing partner?
7. What California writer is still creating new cases in the longest running private eye series on record? Who is the detective?
8. J.A. Jance's Seattle homicide detective J.P. Beaumont has worked with two partners. Name them.
9. In what book by Julie Smith does the main character play the piano in a bordello?
10. What fictional California private eye is both an ex-cop and an ex-con?
11. Name three Left Coast authors of private eye series who have themselves worked as private eyes.
12. Dashiell Hammett wrote only five mystery novels. Name three.
13. Who was Jim Stinson's amateur sleuth Stoney Winston named after?

... and turn in your "guess" sheet at registration to win fabulous prizes!

Continued from Page 14

food in his mouth since he left home which couldn't be true. Myra had learned cooking from their ma same as she had, but come to think of it, Ma always said Wanda had more of a knack for it.

Tyrone and Clark ate with their city presents on the table to be admired. Clark had a fancy, fold-up pocket knife with a pearl handle, and Tyrone had one with a wooden handle and a shorter blade. Wanda cautioned them to be careful. Knives were not meant to be played with even if they did make fancy presents.

Wanda had presents, too--pretty pink dress material from Myra and a handsome string of beads from Basil, but she wished he'd brought something for his Uncle Tom. Not that Tom seemed to be regretting a thing. More than once he set his fork and knife down to rub his hands together. "It was a fine looking boy we had Wanda. A fine looking boy when he went away, but no near so good as now. Just look at him. A full grown man."

Wanda had a hard time not looking at Basil. She wanted to stare at him every minute.

After supper Tom said, "I want to head back to the cabin before it gets dark." He gave Tyrone a big grin. "Get your night duds. Your ma won't miss you now that Basil is here. You can stay with me for a few days."

Tyrone was sitting on the floor, testing his knife by cutting little slivers of wood. He looked up. "Can I go, Ma? I'm big enough."

"Wanda sighed. "Well, I guess. Your uncle will take good care of you, but be careful not to fall in the river."

Basil still sat at the table. His forehead was wrinkled, like he was thinking hard. "You look all puzzled, Basil," she said. "Did you forget something at your Aunt Myra's?"

He jerked back from somewhere. "No, Ma, I was just thinking about that movie."

"D'mean the one that's playing in

town now? I thought you didn't like it."

He shrugged. "Maybe it wasn't so bad. But if a person had to, he could think out a better murder than the one that picture was about."

She carried the dishes to the sink. "Well, like I said before, that movie went over my head like a cloud getting itself chased by the wind."

Tyrone picked up his wood shavings and put them with the kindling. "Can I take my knife?"

Basil stood up. "You stay home with Ma. I'll go with Uncle Tom."

Tom hooted. "Suits me! Didn't mention it, because I figured you'd want to be home with your ma first night back. But come on. Come on. It'll be just like the old days."

Wanda was glad Basil had said such good things about her cooking. Otherwise she would have felt like a pup tossed out of the litter when she watched Tom and Basil going down the lane. She hadn't imagined Basil would go away his first night home, and when Tom had someone with him, he might stay away several days. Wanda still wanted them all to go to town for ice cream sodas Saturday night, even if they didn't go to the picture show, but now she wasn't sure Basil would be home.

But Basil came back early Saturday afternoon. Tom wasn't with him.

"I expect Uncle Tom will be along later," Wanda said.

Basil shook his head, then leaned down to pet Boots. "He went fishing at sun up. Took that rickety, little boat of his out on the river, and I hit the road and came home."

He was quiet for a moment, then he smiled. "I ran into Cathy Ann. She was in the woods picking blackberries. I helped, then I walked her home so I could carry her baskets. D'you know, Ma, Cathy Ann sure did get pretty."

Suddenly there was a ruckus, and Tyrone came running in. "Cut myself with my new knife." He held up a finger that

trailed blood. Basil grasped Tyrone's wrist and held his hand over the sink. He ran water on the cut, then took a scrap of flannel that Wanda handed him to press against the wound.

"Guess I should have brought you something else. You don't need that knife."

Wanda felt warm inside watching Basil taking care of his little brother. "Basil, it's good to have you home, even if it's only for a little while."

"Ma, I changed my mind about going back to Aunt Myra's. I'll finish my schooling

here and find work in town. And I'll do your heavy chores."

Basil's voice sure did make Wanda think of a preacher, and she stared at the dough she kneaded so he wouldn't see her eyes getting wet. "I'm glad you're staying, Basil. It's all my heart could ask for."

She was most truly a blessed woman. Such a fine, grown son! It would be a boon to his brothers to have him home, and it would be good for Tom, too. He sure did work hard, but now, with Basil's help, he'd get some rest.

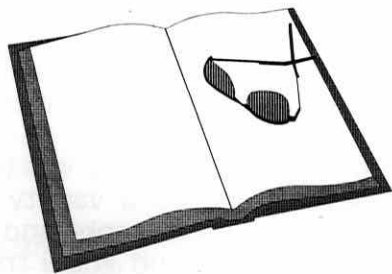


SNOOPING AROUND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

by

Marisa Babjak-Wiggins

One doesn't have to go far to find a mystery bookstore, with Southern California offering nine in three



counties. While all stores offer a variety of sub-genres, autograph parties, games, gifts, and special orders, each store's personality is as unique as each store's owner. Starting way south, in San Diego, we'll be snooping up the coast for a visit to some of the most unique mystery bookstores in the U.S.

Grounds for Murder is that excuse you've been looking for to take a weekend off in San Diego. Originally located in the Old Town Section, GFM moved a few years ago to a larger space in Normal Heights and recently celebrated their tenth anniversary. Offering a vast selection of hard and softcover, the staff at GFM command an in-depth knowledge of the inventory and of the authors. Sisters in Crime, an international organization which promotes female mystery writers has a chapter that meets monthly at GFM and anyone can attend. Author signings are offered. Grounds for Murder, 3287 Adams Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116, phone: 619-284-4436, Phyllis Brown proprietor.

Heading over to PCH we'll drive north to San Juan Capistrano. Across from the mission in a small shopping plaza is the **Green Door Mystery Bookstore**.

Look for six foot tall Basil, the butler, whose arm is draped with a napkin announcing "murder is served". After bidding Basil a fond adio, be careful not to step on the DOA lying on the floor, GDMB is a small, intimate place. While the selection is both hard and softcover, GDMB has one of the largest selections of softcover in the west with emphasis on female authors. Call for author signings. Green Door Mystery Bookstore, 31781 Camino Capistrano, Suite 105, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675, phone: 714-248-8404, Richard Hart, proprietor.

Back northbound on PCH we stop in Laguna Beach for a look at the newest mystery bookstore in the area. **Mystery Ink** carries some of everything--mystery, horror, non-fiction, spy/intrigue and used books. MI has summer autograph parties, so call ahead for a schedule. Mystery, Ink, 332 Forest Avenue, #9, Laguna Beach, CA 92651, Phone: 714-376-0244, Debra Mitsch, proprietor.

Heading inland, we'll say hello to Pat and Ed Thomas, owners of **Book Carnival**. BC has been in existence for twelve years and is very busy with author signings. While BC offers science fiction and fantasy, they are predominately THE source for mysteries in their area. There is a little more room to browse here compared to some of the other mystery bookstores, but the warmth and enthusiasm from the owners will make you feel cozy and at home. Book Carnival, 348 S. Tustin Avenue, Orange, CA 92666, phone: 714-538-3210.

The sun is just the right temperature so we decide to snoop further up PCH into the Naples section of Long Beach. Drop the convertible's top

and enjoy the view. Close to Long Beach Marina, **Sherlock's Home**, as the name implies, is Sherklockian and British influenced, but the shelves hold all types of mysteries. Here you will also find murderous knick-knacks, jewelry, games and cassettes. Local authors have been known to hang-out among the shelves. Owner Elizabeth Caswell puts on a festive air for parties and author signings with locals dressing to fit the theme. Ms. Caswell is an authority on mysteries, often gives talks in the area and produces a local cable show. The after hours phone messages are so amusing it's worth the dime just to listen. Sherlock's Home, 5624 East 2nd Street, Long Beach, CA 90803, phone: 310-433-6071.

Still further up PCH we head to the boardwalk in Venice Beach to **Small World Book's Mystery Annex**. As diverse as the people who congregate on the boardwalk is the selection offered in the MA. Visit on the weekends to soak in the ambiance and have a coke at the adjoining cafe. Terry Baker, mystery expert, is on hand to help you find just the right book. MA offers the best selection of vampire literature. Call the store to find out which author is schedule to appear as Ms. Baker's selection often includes exclusive appearances and your favorite writers from overseas. Small World Books is worth the time to browse. You'll find some of every subject on the shelves. Small World and the Mystery Annex are located at 1407 Ocean Front Walk, Venice, CA 90291, phone: 310-399-2360. Parking provided at the corner of Market and Speedway.

Let's go back to Orange County the long way by heading east into Los Angeles to the **Mysterious Bookstore**. With a twin store in New York, there is a smorgasbord waiting for ye who enters. From a rare first edition and signed Agatha Christie, to hard and softcover books, magazines, fanzines, collectibles, new and used, MB has an average 20,000 titles in stock monthly. As if that weren't enough, MB offers a title search service. Mysterious Bookstore, 8763 Beverly Blvd.,

Los Angeles, CA 90048, phone: 800-821-9017, Shelly McArthur proprietor.

Traffic is light today so we'll stray eastward to South Pasadena for a look-see in **Book 'EM**. This store was the victim of arson last year and rose up from the ashes in the present location. This is an all purpose bookstore (no used or collectibles) with friendly staff to help with selections. Call for author signings. Book 'Em, 1118 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030, phone: 818-799-9600, Peggy Riley, proprietor.

If you find yourself in Sherman Oaks, visit **Scene of the Crime**, located at 14450 Ventura Blvd. Owner Ruth Windfeldt's bookstore was the first in the area and carries a variety of hard and softcover, used books and mail orders. The staff on hand know their mysteries and offers excellent suggestions for something new. SOTC also has author signings. Phone 818-981-2583.

With arms loaded down with the latest in crime fiction, a few handcuffs and a Sherlock Holmes hat, we head to the car for the last time and spend the drive home debating which book we'll read tonight as we soak our tired feet.

Four Kings and a Queen continued.

"Nice hand, Den," Gayle said to her husband.

"You too, Hon."

B o b gathered up the cards, shuffled and said, "My deal. Comin' out. Seven card stud."

"Do you deal clockwise," Boston Jerry asked, "or counterclockwise?"

"Jesus," Minneapolis Steve said, "you ask that every time. . ."

Author's note: Any resemblance to actual persons living or dead is in your imagination.



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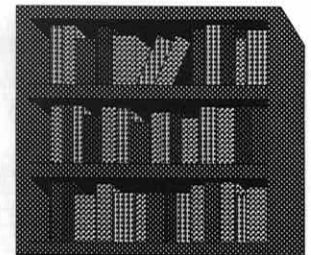
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The following article will appear in *Breaking and Entering: A Guide to Selling Your Manuscript, Finding an Agent, and Other Mysteries of Publishing*, edited by Jan Burke and forthcoming from *Sisters in Crime*

Choosing--and Using--a Critique Group

by Patricia McFall

As a new writer, you may have heard that you will need to write two or three completed manuscripts before you produce publishable work. This may actually be true (and may work fine) if you prefer to work entirely alone or do not wish to have personal feedback. But many of us have benefitted from the information, shortcuts, and camaraderie of a writing group. If you decide you are interested, how do you choose the right group for you? What kinds of groups exist, and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

College or Adult Education Writing Classes

College courses, which usually last from nine to eighteen weeks, have names like "Fiction Writing Fundamentals" or "Creative Writing" and are offered at local colleges and adult education programs, usually at reasonable fees. They may be taught by regular or adjunct faculty. The course description will generally tell you what to expect as to content, but be aware that different instructors take drastically different approaches. Prof A may be very theoretical, with lots of plot diagrams and examples from great literature, while Prof B does free writing in class, forbids criticism, and encourages students to discuss their personal lives. In other words, it helps to find out from the instructor or from current students what approach is being used, or to show up for the first class to find out. Depending on how you learn, you may want to look for a workshop format, where you read one another's chapters or short stories and give written and/or in-class criticism.

Advantages: Plenty of time to get the point. Opportunity to read and critique many other students work and to get copious feedback from various sources.

Disadvantages: High time commitment. May require you to read large quantities of student work. If class is large, may have little opportunity to submit work, since you have to wait your turn.

Extension Workshops

These are very short-term classes, from half a day to a few weeks' duration. They may have few or many students, are sometimes quite expensive, and have titles like "Writing the Mystery and Suspense Novel" and "Writing Fiction That Sells." These are intended to give a quick overview of techniques and writing tricks. They are often taught by published authors and can include valuable information about publishing and market trends.

Advantages: Often very useful to beginners as much information is concentrated into a short time. Little commitment involved.

Disadvantages: Cost. Depending on instructor's approach, may state the obvious,

with little practical information given.

Private Critique Groups

These are ongoing writing groups, usually small (under twenty people) that may meet in community facilities or in the members' homes. If led by an instructor or facilitator (usually a published writer), fees are charged, but self-help groups without a leader are, of course, free. The "rules" of the group can vary dramatically, from long-established, formal groups with elaborate rules for joining or submitting work to something approaching pure anarchy. The mood may be one of serious and professional concentration on the writing craft, focusing on publication; or of a support group, with participants primarily there to encourage one another to write in whatever way suits each individual. Most groups fall between these extremes.

Advantages: Opportunity to have work read often. Development of relationships with others. Gaining of personal support.

Disadvantages: Small group can be stifling or difficult if unharmonious. In groups without a facilitator, criticism can be unfocused and unhelpful.

Finding the Right Group for You

The above descriptions are, by necessity, a fast once-over. Ask yourself, in general, what kind of approach you are looking for right now, keeping in mind that your interests may very well change over time, and that different writing experiences may offer you different skills and abilities. Likewise, each instructor is apt to have different strengths for you to learn from.

How to Handle Your Group

When it comes time for the group to read your work, remember why you came to the group in the first place: to get useful feedback about your writing. One thing you can do to help get that type of feedback is to tell the members what you are looking for. If you are a terrible speller and would appreciate someone taking the time to mark up your manuscript, say so. If you're the world's best copy editor and resent people red-penciling your correct grammar to make it wrong, say that too (tactfully, of course). If you need a quick reaction to a very rough first draft, let your group know. If you're putting the last polish on a finished product, tell them that too. The more your readers know about what you're looking for, the better equipped they will be to give it to you.

If you've been paying attention during critiques, after a few meetings you will recognize the negative or even destructive personalities that can exist in any group. Learn to ignore them. You'll also find that some members are nice but plainly poor critics (basing this, of course, on their reactions to other people's work rather than to your own, so you know you're being objective). Ignore them too. And whatever anyone says about your prose, remember most of all to leave your thin skin at home. My favorite teacher put it this way, bless her heart: "The writing may need work, but there is absolutely nothing wrong with the writer!"

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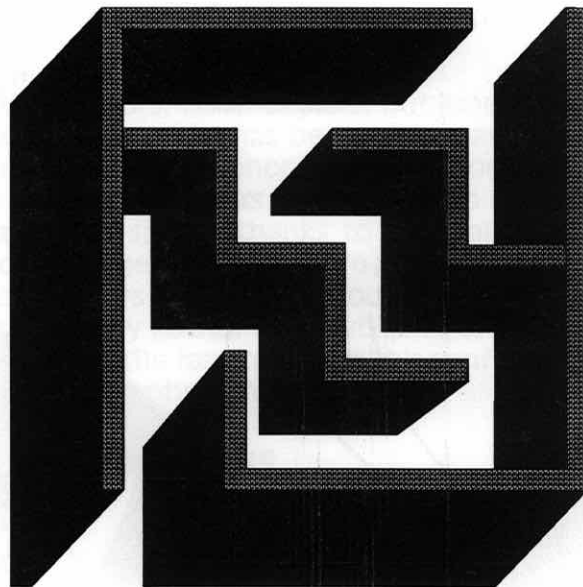
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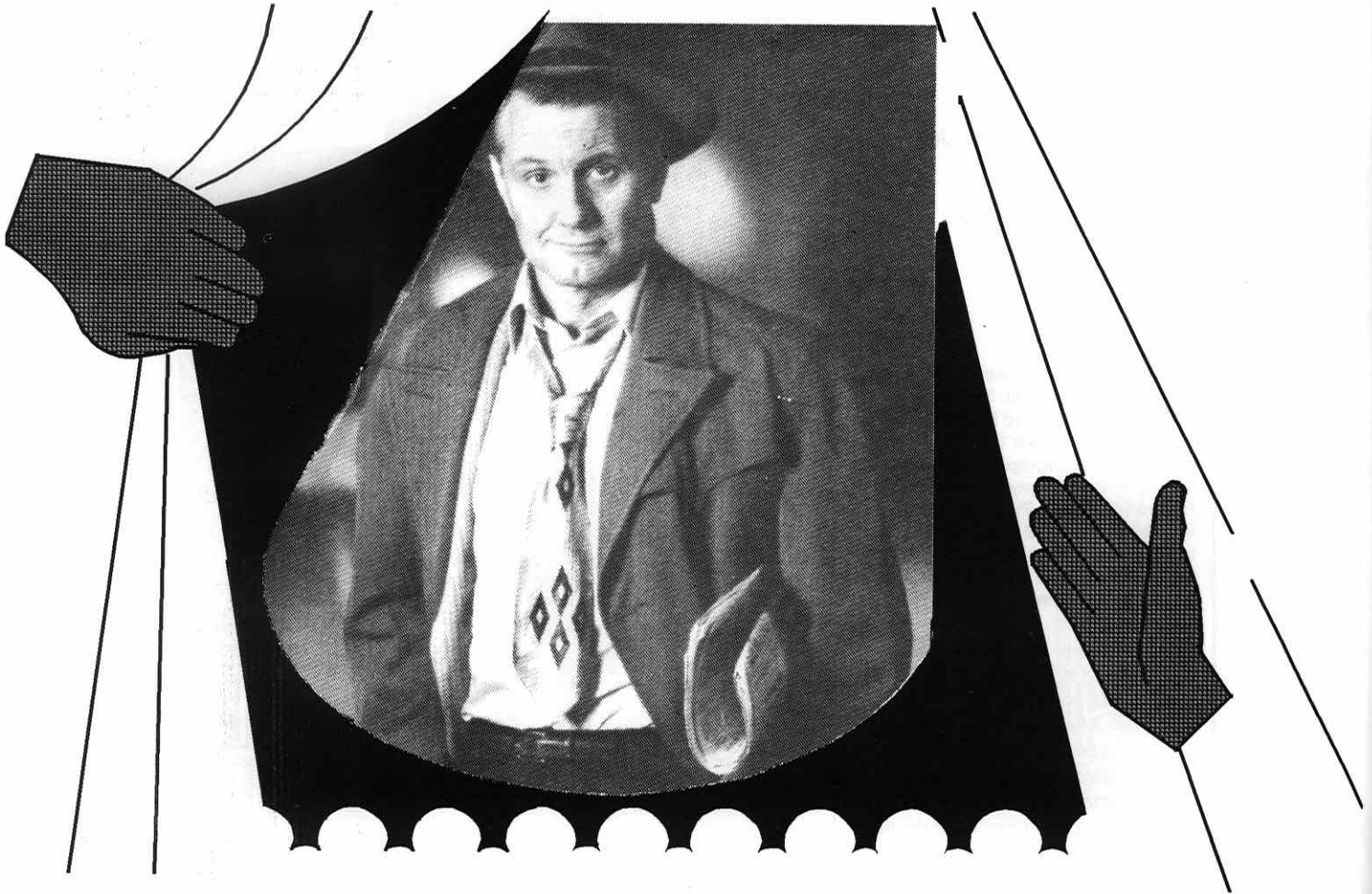
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LCC III is honored to have as a special guest at this year's banquet, one of the funniest men in Hollywood. Tommy Sledge has been a stand-up comedian for eleven years, and currently headlines at the Improv. He's previously been featured at the MWA Edgar Awards and has made guest appearances at numerous colleges, including USC and UC Santa Barbara.

He is the author of two books of humor Eat Lead, Clown! (1988), and Kiss It or DIE! (1992). He also appeared in the films "Lobsterman From Mars" with Tony Curtis and Patrick Macnee and "Million Dollar Mystery" with Tom Bosely and Kevin Pollack.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES. . .

The **Anaheim Five** would like to thank the authors, book dealers, publishers and volunteers who helped make "Southern Exposure" a reality. It has been our pleasure to accord Sue Dunlap and Julie Smith the much deserved Guest of Honor status in recognition of their significant contributions to the mystery field. Many thanks go to our good friends Ann and Evan Maxwell for serving as Toastmasters. A special thanks to the Ballantine Publishing Group, Villard Books and Delacorte for their generosity; Tommy Sledge for his incomparable humor; and the Sisters in Crime chapters for their encouragement and support. We are grateful for the contributions made by author and publisher alike and hope that LCC III has met your every expectation. And to the fans to whom this conference is dedicated, may you continue to read and may your numbers increase!



Tom Emens, this year's featured cover artist is a freelance illustrator and designer in Orange County. Tom is also employed as a part-time clerk for the City of Anaheim Public Library. He received his Fine Arts Degree from Cal State Long Beach.

Note:

Pats on the back to Ori Hardy-Sayles for sharing her expertise (as well as her mailing list), to Leila Laurence for her Guest of Honor interviews and to the Friends of the Anaheim Public Library for their volunteer efforts.

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