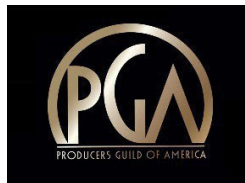


# Rights Catalog for Book to Film/TV

## WINTER 2025



**Sharlene Martin**



**Literary & Media Manager/ Producer\***  
206-466-1773 (PT)

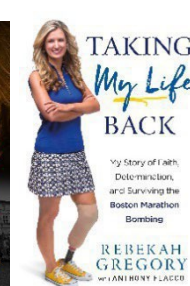
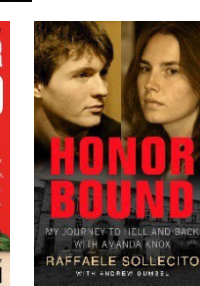
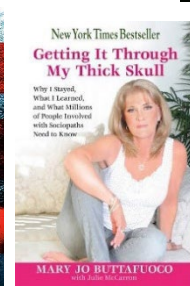
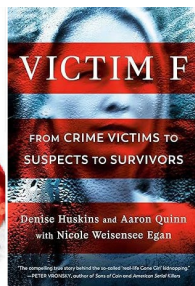
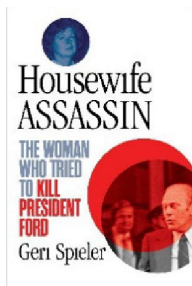
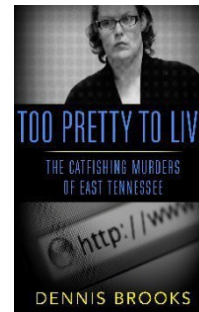
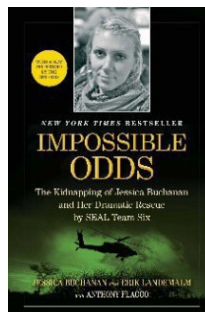
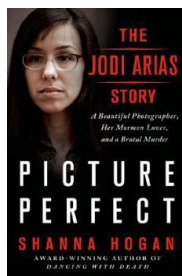
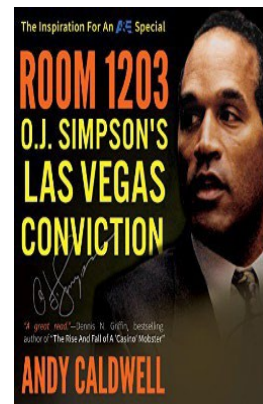
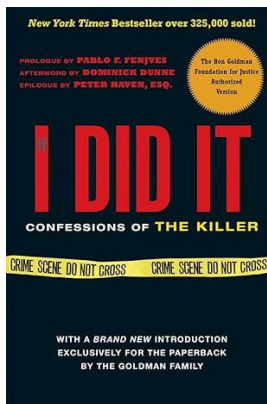
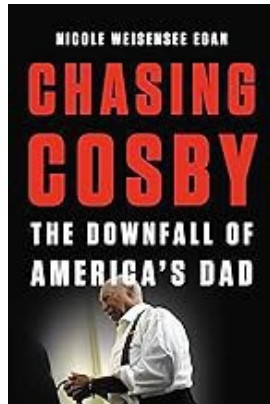
[Sharlene@MartinLit.com](mailto:Sharlene@MartinLit.com)  
[www.MartinLiteraryManagement.com](http://www.MartinLiteraryManagement.com)

*\*Sharlene Martin is attached as an EP to MLM projects per contractual agreement with clients.*



Sharlene Martin began her working career for American Airlines after college and quickly moved up the ranks to be one of 14 Flight Attendant Recruiters hiring their first male flight attendants in the NY, NJ, CT area. Shortly after that, in 1985 she founded Helping Hands, the very first American nanny agency servicing the tri-state area and founding the International Nanny Association. She was named Entrepreneur Magazine's Homebased Entrepreneur of the Year and was named Connecticut Entrepreneur of the Year by the CT Chamber of Commerce. That led to the Harvard Business School using her agency, *Helping Hands*, as a case study for their students. She was also honored and presented with the *Spirited Woman Award* in New York City in 1987 by Sherry Lansing. She sold her company when she moved to California in 1990.

She began working in television in 1993 as a partner in Martin/Walker-Lampley Productions, a company formed with Bree Walker, a prominent CBS news anchor. She later spent time as a reality television developer for Media Savvy, and as an Associate Casting Director for the famed Casting Director, Joy Todd. Her most challenging project for film was casting the movie "Gods and Generals," with 156 speaking roles. She spent several years at various key creative positions in the entertainment industry while raising her two children while they attended Oakwood School. In 2003, after a meeting with a screenwriter/author (who later became her husband!) she was encouraged to form her own literary agency--- **Martin Literary & Media Management**. She chose to primarily represent **adult nonfiction**, a genre she continues to love to this day, although Martin Literary Mgmt. has a team of seven who represent all popular genres of books. Sharlene has represented some of the top true crime books in publishing and conducts her business with a strict policy that any crime-related book she represents must always be told to benefit the victim, never the perpetrator. Here are just a few of her notable true crime book sales:



Many of Sharlene's authors have had their books boosted as serial reprints in prestigious publications such as Readers' Digest, People Magazine, WHO, and the London Times. Other client appearances include 60 Minutes, The TODAY Show, The View, Fox and Friends, Good Morning America, The Early Show, 20/20, 48 Hours, Discovery Channel, Inside Edition, The 700 Club, ET, The Insider, ABC Nightline, Dr. Phil, Anderson Cooper 360, CNN, HLN, Discovery ID and Fox News and the former OPRAH show.

She is actively doing business with major film and TV companies for adaptations of her clients' books, and shares the *MLM Book to Film-TV Rights Catalog* with key people in the entertainment industry on a quarterly basis. It's also updated with new sales weekly at [www.MartinLit.com/film-tv](http://www.MartinLit.com/film-tv). Sharlene is a member of the Producers Guild of America (pga), and has adapted books from MLM clients including one of the top Hallmark Hall of Fame's acclaimed movies, *Front of the Class*, starring the late Treat Williams, Patricia Heaton and James Wolk.

Some of her producing credits include:

\*Executive Producer for **Apple TV+** straight to series one-hour scripted highly acclaimed mystery, *HOME BEFORE DARK*, directed and executive produced by **Jon M. Chu** (Wicked, Crazy Rich Asians), based on her client, Hilde Lysiak, a 14-year-old crime reporter and publisher of the Orange Street News, and author of the Scholastic Branches six book series, *Hilde Cracks the Case* and *Hilde on the Record: Memoir of a Kid Crime Reporter*.

\*Executive Producer of Lifetime's movie, *The Pregnancy Project*, which garnered the two top *Imagen Awards*, for *Best Primetime Movie/Special* and *Best Actress (Alexa Vega)*. Currently streaming on HULU.

\*Co- Creator/Producer of the crime reality series, *DEADLY SINS* for Discovery ID. Ran six seasons.

\*Co-EP for the season of specials, *EPIC MYSTERIES* for Discovery ID.

\*Executive Producer with Outpost Entertainment for A&E's documentary *OJ: Guilty in Vegas*.

\*Executive Producer on *Secrets of a Marine's Wife* for Sony Television at Lifetime.

She is currently in development on a number of projects based on her clients books and enjoys collaborating with screenwriters, producers, directors and production companies. See full credits at [www.IMDB.com](http://www.IMDB.com) (Sharlene Martin (1) )

Additionally, she is co-author with her husband, NYT bestselling author Anthony Flacco, on the books *Publish Your Nonfiction Book* (Writer's Digest Books) and *Literary Fails: Totally (sic)!*

Publishers, editors, writers and entertainment execs consistently express their joy in working with someone who is such an avid fan of great writing and an enthusiastic guardian and representative of her clients' work. She employs this personal touch in all her business relationships and credits it with her proven record of success.

*\*Sharlene Martin is attached as an EP to MLM projects per contractual agreement with clients*



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*Most recent offerings placed in  
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*TRUE CRIME/Scripted or Unscripted*

*ADULT NONFICTION*

*ADULT NOVELS*

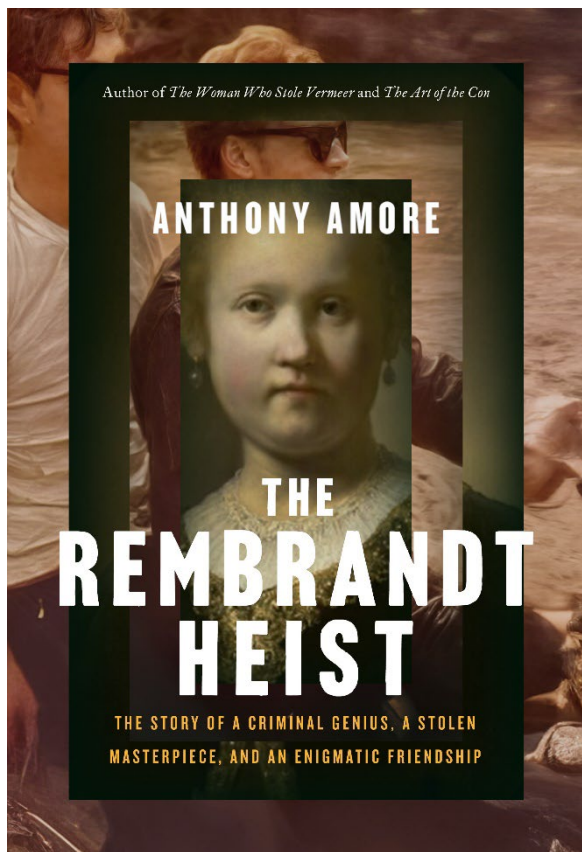
*PICTURE BOOKS*

*MIDDLE GRADE & YA*

*UNSCRIPTED*

**TRUE CRIME**

**Scripted or Unscripted**



# THE REMBRANDT HEIST

The Story of a Criminal Genius, A Stolen Masterpiece and an Enigmatic Friendship

By Anthony Amore

Pegasus Books, November 2025

For years, legendary criminal Myles Connor had cleverly averted the police and lengthy prison sentences for a host of notorious crimes, including countless bank robberies and drug dealing. He even stood trial for a double murder he didn't commit. But his favorite crime was art theft, and it would be at the center of his greatest heist—the 1975 theft of Rembrandt's *Girl with the Gold Trimmed Cloak* from the storied Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The heist came a year after he and a gang of trusted criminal associates traveled north to Monmouth, Maine, where they robbed the estate of the famed department store magnate Frederick Woolworth. Though he knew masterworks were nearly impossible to fence, he couldn't resist the opportunity to steal

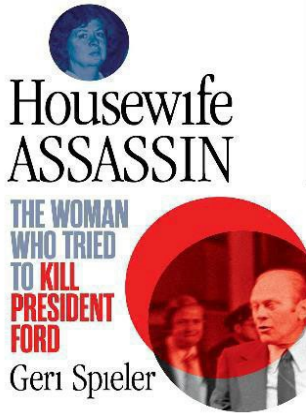
works by the A.C and N.C. Wyeth. A year later, he'd be arrested by the FBI and State Police trying to sell the works just a couple of hours before he was to be on stage performing one of popular rock concerts. As the FBI agent placed Myles in the back of the police sedan, he told him, "We got you now, Connor. Let's see you get out of this one." Connor calmly replied, "Just you watch me." The amused state police detective remarked, "Well, it's going to take a Rembrandt to get you out of this one."

Connor, a MENSAs member, had other plans. As he considered his options, the words of the state police detective percolated in his mind: "...a Rembrandt."

On a spring day in May of 1975, Connor donned a blond wig and hat and recruited a few trusty, hard men and drove to the Museum of Fine Arts. They pulled into the circular drive on The Fenway and walked in as visitors. When they reached the second floor, they went directly for an unmistakable masterpiece by Rembrandt, then known as *Portrait of Elisabeth van Rijn*, on loan to the MFA from the family of Robert Treat Paine, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Pushing two elderly guards aside, they yanked the oval oak panel from the wall and ran out of the museum, but not before firing warning shots to threaten any would-be heroes. Then they sped away with the paintings.

Soon, Myles enlisted his closest friend, a straight-arrow music businessman named Al Dotoli, to return the painting to the Feds in order to complete a deal Connor brokered to turn a decades' long sentence into a slap on the wrist. The elaborate plan Dotoli concocted to successfully and safely get the painting back into the hands of the authorities without compromising himself and his career is the stuff of Hollywood.

Thanks to unprecedented access to Connor, Dotoli, and the art world, *The Rembrandt Heist* tells in great detail the story of this masterful theft of a Rembrandt and its long-lasting implications. This theft marked the first time that a masterpiece was stolen for use as a get-out-of-jail-free card, a tactic that today is mirrored around the world by art criminals looking to trade art for freedom. It's a tale that is stranger and more fantastical than any movie, and it's completely true. [www.AnthonyAmore.com](http://www.AnthonyAmore.com)



# Housewife Assassin:

## The Woman Who Tried To Kill President Ford

By Geri Spieler  
St. Martin Press/Diversion Books

*TV Representation by Elizabeth Newman at Literate.*

**WHAT IF** ... a country club mother and doctor's wife took **Dead Aim** at the President of the United States and came within six inches of killing him?

**WHAT IF** ... we find out this would-be assassin was also:

... a paid informant for the FBI

... a double agent for the radical underground

... picked up and released by the Secret Service just 14 hours before she tried to kill the President?

... the shooter who carried out the **plot** of a group of federally identified conspirators who set out to kill the president?

**That assassin was Sara Jane Moore.**

Sara Jane Moore was a despondent housewife searching for an escape from her stale, suburban life as a mother and homemaker, only to seek her independence through the unlikeliest of decisions...planning to assassinate the president. At the beginning of 1974, she was a Suzy Homemaker housewife to a successful doctor, mother to her son, and a model “Reagan boosting” country club member. By 1975, she becomes the only woman ever to fire a bullet at a sitting president. The \$64,000 question is “Why?”

It all starts on a cold February evening when the domestic terrorist organization Symbionese Liberation Army releases a hostage recording of their latest victim, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst.

“Mom...Dad...” The sounds of Patty pleading for her parents to give in to the SLA’s demands for a massive food giveaway sear into the minds of anyone who heard them. They certainly changed Sara Jane’s life. And changed the course of history.

Like a twisted, real-life version of Forrest Gump, Sara Jane’s volunteering leads to working with most of the significant historical players in the war between the Feds and San Francisco’s radical underground. She starts as an apple-cheeked soccer mom handing out meals to the needy, becoming one of the trusted confidants of both the Hearsts and the extremists. Only then does she get the most unlikely call of all: an invitation into the FBI.

This soon-to-be would-be assassin was first a paid FBI informant. Through divorce, betrayal, and murder, Sara Jane slowly becomes radicalized herself, unbeknownst to her handlers at the Bureau. The vice tightens further when she becomes a double agent, feeding intelligence to a group of federally identified conspirators who were out to kill the President.

Through the lens of a thriller with shocking twists and horrifying revelations based on deep research, this book answers the obvious question, “Why would anyone try to assassinate Gerald Ford?” with a bullet. But it also asks a better one. “How well do you know your mother?”

It’s the story of an unlikely assassin, unlike any other female assassin story ever seen on screen. With themes that couldn’t be more relevant to the moment—when women’s rights face their gravest threats since the Equal Rights Amendment passed the first time. Right as this story begins...[www.GeriSpieler.com](http://www.GeriSpieler.com)

*“Spieler offers a portrait of an erratic, unstable woman with a protean capacity to shift identities, with the 1960s and ’70s as a dramatic backdrop. Fans of true crime accounts or contemporary history will savor this.” —Publishers Weekly*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/special/contributor-content/2023/08/15/geri-spielers-housewife-assassin-spotlight-on-govt-communication/7059689800/>



## Currently on Submission to Publishers

### 13 Perfect Fugitives

On March 18, 1990, the **world's largest art heist** occurred. We're aware there have been a few books written years ago about this robbery, **but most of them got it wrong.** And none has been authored (with written approval by the FBI) by the *FBI's longest-tenured case agent assigned to the Art Crime Division investigation who solved the theft.*

As St. Patrick's Day festivities were winding down in Boston, thirteen pieces of artwork were plucked from the walls of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum by two subjects posing as police officers. They rang the night bell, claiming they were responding to a call of a disturbance. The guard on duty, against protocol, let them in. As the author writes, "not since some Trojan night watchman signed for the big wooden horse has a greater lapse in security led to such dire consequences." After incapacitating the guards with handcuffs and duct

tape, the subjects spent the next eighty-one minutes inside the museum, almost leisurely removing some of the world's most valuable pieces of artwork from the walls, including a rare Vermeer and Rembrandt's only known seascape. The total loss associated with this robbery has been estimated at over **\$1 billion.**

Geoffrey Kelly was the lead investigator, right up until his recent retirement from the FBI. During that time, he traveled the world, running down leads in his sometimes Quixotic effort to find the stolen artwork. He has dined with fine art collectors, appraisers, and museum directors. He has also dined with mobsters, thieves, and killers. It was through his associations with the latter group, those denizens of a seamy and nefarious underworld, where he made the most progress on the case.

In 2009, the author received a break; information which corroborated previously established theories about the heist and the individuals responsible. For the first time since the robbery occurred, the author spoke to witnesses with first-hand knowledge of the crime and, more importantly, witnesses who had actually seen the artwork with their own eyes in the years since it was stolen from the museum. The author followed the trail of the artwork, which eventually led him to an aging used-car salesman from Hartford, Connecticut named Bobby "The Cook" Gentile. In addition to selling cars, the enigmatic Gentile was also a soldier in the Philadelphia mob who trafficked narcotics and built homemade silencers. Relentless investigation by the author determined that Gentile took possession of a number of the stolen paintings in or about 2002 from an associate of Carmello "Mello" Merlino, a Boston mobster referred to by the FBI as a "person of interest" in the heist. Merlino and his crew operated a drug trafficking operation out of an auto parts storefront in Boston. One of his associates, George Reissfelder, drove a Dodge that was identical to the one driven by the robbers to the museum that night. Six weeks later, a family member helped him hang one of the stolen paintings on his bedroom wall. Less than a year later, Reissfelder was found dead under suspicious circumstances. And two weeks later so was Lenny DiMuzio, another Merlino associate whose bullet-riddled body was discovered in the trunk of his car in East Boston. Readers will learn that yet another Merlino associate, Bobby Donati, once tried to sell one of the stolen Gardner items to a Boston jeweler six weeks after the heist; the dealer demurred because the piece was "too hot." That September, Donati also ended up in the trunk of his car, beaten and stabbed to death. And their associate Jimmy Marks, who was bragging months after the heist that he had two of the stolen paintings hidden in his apartment, was gunned down in February on his front porch in a "classic mob-style hit." 1991 was certainly a busy year for the Gardner. These are the kinds of details that have not become well known and keep the suspense of this true crime moving throughout the book.

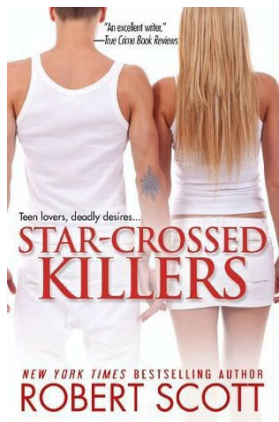
Based on the author's meticulous investigation, conducted to the exacting standards required of an FBI special agent, the Bureau, in conjunction with the Boston U.S. Attorney's Office and the Gardner Museum, announced that the case had finally been solved. Although the paintings have yet to be recovered, the FBI finally knew who had committed the robbery. The story of *13 Perfect Fugitives* is a first-person account, including extensive interviews with mobsters, witnesses, victims, informants, and family members. This book will painstakingly detail the author's twenty-two-year journey to find the world's most valuable stolen artwork, providing insight and hopefully a little humor along the way.

The author has always thought of the missing objects as thirteen perfect fugitives. Instead, they hide, secreted away far from prying eyes and nosy FBI agents, biding their time. *13 Perfect Fugitives* is truly the last word on the Gardner Museum robbery.



# From New York Times Bestselling True Crime Author

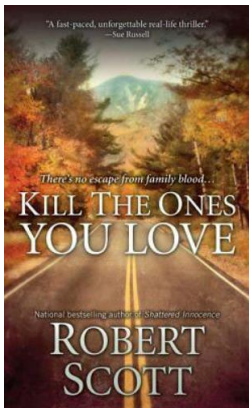
## Robert Scott



When nineteen-year-old Steven "Boston" Colver set eyes on beautiful young Tylar Witt, the sparks between them could not be denied. It didn't matter that she was only fourteen. The two saw their love written in the stars. All they wanted was to spend every moment in each other's arms.

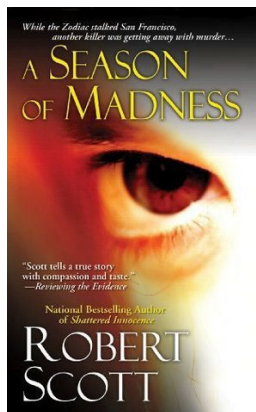
When Tylar's concerned mother, Joanne Witt, tried to come between them, her efforts only fueled the wild passions of two California teens who saw themselves as a modern-day Romeo and Juliet, trapped in a heartless world. Boston and Tylar would prove their love by any means necessary. They would allow no one to stand in their way. And they made a promise to stay together—until death and beyond. . .

**"An excellent writer." —True Crime Book Reviews**



A handsome, married young father and former deputy sheriff, Gabriel Morris looked like the picture of respectability. When his mother and her boyfriend were found brutally murdered in their pleasant Oregon seaside home, authorities were shocked to find a trail leading to him. Soon, police in several states were caught up in a riveting chase as Gabriel, with family in tow, went on a cross-country crime spree. No one knew if his wife, Jessica, was a victim or accomplice; or if his four-year-old daughter was in jeopardy. In a gracious Virginia suburb, a SWAT team swooped down on the renegade family and ended their wild, dangerous ride. What followed was even more shocking, as the story of how Gabriel Morris ended up on the wrong side of the law took investigators on a dark journey into the heart of a killer...

**Vividly described, unsettling... Scott spells out how rage and obsession can become fatally warped." —Publishers Weekly on Kill the Ones You Love**



**California Nightmare.** . . Annette Edwards was a vivacious 19-year-old on her way to watch the Fourth of July fireworks. Eighteen-year-old Pam Moore was a former beauty pageant contestant, hitching a ride on a busy street. Linda Slavik was a young mother enjoying a night out with a friend. Annette Selix was just eleven, an innocent child on her way home from the market. Each of them was attacked without warning, brutally assaulted, and left for dead by a bitter, disfigured man in the grip of a violent the so-called "Hilltop Rapist." But serial predator Darrell Rich didn't stop at just four victims. He couldn't stop. .

**"Scott tells a true story with compassion and taste." --Reviewing the Evidence**

**Robert Scott was the author of eighteen true crime books. He passed away and these three books are handled by Martin Literary Management**



# Life Without

## The True Story of Sandy Shaw

By Sandy Shaw with Dan Gleason  
Rowman & Littlefield/Bloomsbury, 2026

How many fifteen-year-old girls have witnessed **four** murders?

Well, Sandy Shaw wishes she wasn't in that group. In 1987, when Sandy heard the bark of the first pistol shot right next to her ear, he bolted and ran for her life. After ducking behind desert scrub brush in the dim glow of the moonlight, she spotted eighteen-year-old Troy Kell and his buddy Billy Merritt standing over the **dead body of James Cotton Kelly**. Though only fifteen, this was the **fourth murder** Sandy witnessed in two years.

Touted as the **“Show & Tell Killer”** by the media because a crooked prosecutor told the press and jury she took classmates to view the dead body, Sandy was immediately maligned by the press. She was convicted and sentenced to **two life terms without parole** and became the **youngest female ever incarcerated in an adult Nevada prison**. Shaw endured **twenty-one years in prison and fifteen more on “lifetime parole”** for this **wrongful conviction** before being **fully exonerated in June of 2022** by the Nevada Supreme Court. Yet, she lost her entire youth in the process—the best years of her life. She never went to Prom. Never got married. Never had kids. Her dreams were stripped away. And she has **never** told her story. Now—being fully free—the time is right to tell.

**Life Without** is a crisis-driven tale of violence and murder, tragedy and injustice, and ultimately—triumph. This true life story is of a woman with extreme bad luck, a childhood ripped away, generations of dysfunction before and alongside her who endured abuse of all kinds, and who still found her way to freedom and redemption after so many years of being denied.

*Like most of society, I'm fascinated by true crime stories. What happened to Sandy Shaw at the young age of 15 is unbelievable. As a master storyteller, Dan Gleason beautifully conveys Sandy's unfortunate story and her long fight to clear her name. —Kristina Rivera, Producer of American Sniper, Sully, The Mule*

*In this powerful telling of resilience and the persistent quest for justice in LIFE WITHOUT, Sandy Shaw and co-author Dan Gleason relate a compelling story of a young girl, framed for murder and illegally sentenced as an adult, who endures years of injustice. Her personal awareness and moral conviction sustain her on the long journey to find justice. Anthony Flacco - NY Times and International Best Selling Author*

*Few writers with a commitment to a cause can compare to Dan Gleason's efforts on behalf of Sandy Shaw. Imprisoned for 21 years for a crime committed when she was a teenager, Shaw kept the faith and Gleason stayed in her corner. In "Life Without" he tells her story with an insider's insight, deftly recreating the crime, the trial, the bleak times that followed, and the push for the ultimate victory. It's a hell of a story!--William Brashler, Author: The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings; City Dogs; The Don: The Life and Death of Sam Giancana.*

*This is an important story, the kind not often told because it includes revelations that society doesn't want to hear. That Sandy Shaw is both willing and able to tell her story is miraculous. That Dan Gleason recognized its significance and worked for years to make it available is a public service.--Stephen Greenleaf, Author, John Marshall Tanner detective series; The Ditto List; Impact*

*Sandy Shaw's powerful story, in the hands of writer Dan Gleason, is hard to put down. Time would expose the injustice of Shaw's sentence (she was 15 when sentenced to life without parole). Gleason, with empathy and admiration, details how Shaw used her prison time to grow as a compassionate person. This is a story of redemption and reclaimed justice. --David Bonior, US House Majority Whip, 102<sup>nd</sup>. 103<sup>rd</sup> Congresses. Author: When Mercy Season's Justice; WHIP: Eastside Kid.*





# HIDDEN GIRL

## The True Story of a Modern-Day Child Slave

By Shyima Hall with Lisa Wysocky  
Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

When Shyima Hall was eight years old her poverty-stricken Egyptian parents, overwhelmed with close to a dozen children, sold her into slavery. The price? 17 dollars a month. The wealthy Cairo couple who bought Shyima moved to California two years later and brought the little girl into the US illegally.

As a child slave, Shyima Hall had no friends or family, no emotional support whatsoever. She did not speak a word of English and, after moving to the US, was thousands of miles and an ocean away from everything that was familiar to her. On top of that, a terrorized Shyima was forced to toil 16 or more hours a day, seven days a week for her captor's family, which included five children—some of whom were near her age. At night, Shyima slept on a squalid mattress in a windowless garage. A bucket and some water were all she had in which to wash herself and her clothes; and she was forbidden from going to school. Shyima never visited a doctor or dentist, even when she was ill with the flu. Additionally, her captors continually berated her and often slapped her.

While Shyima was rarely allowed outside the home, a neighbor began to suspect something was not quite right. Rumors abounded, with glimpses of a small dark-haired girl during times children her age should have been in bed. In 2002, possibly acting on a tip from a neighbor, child welfare authorities rescued Shyima. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) investigated her case, and her captors were eventually prosecuted and imprisoned.

At the time of her rescue, 13-year-old Shyima decided to stay in the US. She hasn't returned to Egypt or seen her family since. While Shyima may have been isolated during her slavery, she was not alone. From 2010-11, US federal immigration officials launched 651 investigations into human trafficking and arrested roughly 300 people. According to the United States State Department, there are more than 12 million people entrapped in some form of slavery worldwide.

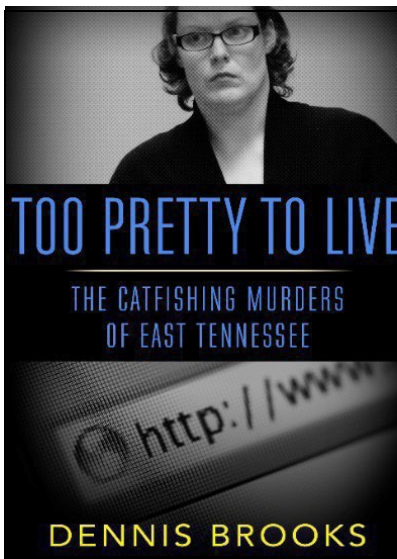
While Shyima could have chosen to fade into obscurity, she has decided on a much different path. Now 26, Shyima speaks to groups across the country about combating human trafficking and has often briefed ICE agents about the emotional and physical trauma that victims endure. Shyima's dream is to become a federal agent for ICE to help crack down on human trafficking and free the enslaved. And, she took a major step toward that goal in December 2011 when she became a citizen of the United States.



*Hidden Girl* empowers readers to step up when they believe a wrong is being committed. If not for a concerned neighbor, Shyima might still be ensnared in the web of slavery. This first-person, 65,000-word narrative details Shyima's difficult Egyptian childhood and her challenging years as a slave. Her assimilation into foster homes, school, eventual adoption, and request for legal emancipation is shown through the rare point of view of a young teen experiencing both freedom and the culture of the United States for the first time.

Shyima's many firsts are also shared. Imagine being 13 and never having seen the inside of a school, been to a movie or a store, eaten at a restaurant, or made a friend. These emotional firsts are told with honest humility and wonder and come with their own unique set of challenges. The story culminates with Shyima triumphantly standing before a federal judge and being sworn in as a naturalized citizen of the United States. *Watch AP story: [AP Video Story](#)*

*Watch interview with Shyima on Tavis Smiley, March 2014 <http://video.pbs.org/video/2365210010/>*



# TOO PRETTY TO LIVE

The True, Strange Story of the Catfishing Murders of East Tennessee

By Dennis Brooks

Diversion Books

Pitch available for Scripted Television

**DENNIS BROOKS** One morning in Mountain City, Tennessee, a young couple were found dead in their home. Shot through their heads. The woman died holding in her arms her baby son, who was still alive. The mother was wearing pajamas. The bullet that killed her lay in the baby's bouncy seat.

The motivation behind these killings is a shocking story. A collection of four people contributed to the crime. A father who fancied himself a pseudo-CIA agent and acted under the belief he was protecting his family. A boyfriend in his late 30s, gullible to the commands of the first female to ever give him attention, entering the victims' home to aid the father. A mother, chronically overprotective and delusional, who domineered and controlled the men. And at the center of it all, a young woman able to manipulate them all despite her limitations.

Jenelle Potter, 30 at the time of the deaths of Bill Payne and Billie Jean Hayworth, had lived her entire life in her parents' home under their watchful eyes. As an adult, she never held a job. Socially awkward, she was drawn to the internet for the opportunity to communicate with the world. Through the type-written word, she was able to be anyone she wanted to be.

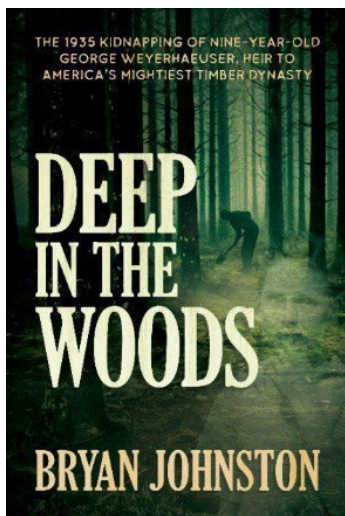
After Bill and Billie Jean began their relationship and started a family, Jenelle began assuming fictitious online identities to influence others to align against the couple and their friends. Presumably, Jenelle had been attracted to Bill. His new love for Billie Jean sent Jenelle into a jealous rage and pattern of harassment against Billie Jean and her friends. Jenelle's main pseudonym was Chris, a purported CIA agent who had gone to school with Jenelle. As Chris, Jenelle wrote often to her mother, Barbara Potter, who soon began to think of Chris as being like a son. Yet Barbara never met Chris, in spite of her yearning to do so. She was "catfished." Chris wrote to Barbara about the surveillance he had conducted on the victims and how the victims were conspiring to harm Jenelle.

Through this correspondence, Jenelle was able to convince her mother that she was in danger and that the danger would only end with the victims' deaths. Barbara thus began encouraging her husband, Buddy Potter, to act. Chris promised CIA backing for the sordid deed. Jenelle also assumed the Chris identity in writing to her secret boyfriend, Jamie Curd, who was also "catfished." As Chris, Jenelle was able to pit Jamie against his cousin, Bill, and manipulate him into assisting Buddy.

**Too Pretty to Live** tells the story of this crime and its ensuing prosecution. Dennis Brooks was a 17-year veteran Assistant District Attorney when the matter came to him with only the men being charged. Through a creative use of forensic linguistics and utilizing the theory of criminal responsibility, Brooks was able to weave together a case that ultimately convicted each of the Potters of two counts of first-degree murder. This story will shock and amaze you.

[www.abc.com/shows/2020/episode-guide/2024-04/05-am-i-next](http://www.abc.com/shows/2020/episode-guide/2024-04/05-am-i-next)

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/convicted-tennessee-woman-denies-wanting-couple-dead-social/story?id=34370841>



# DEEP IN THE WOODS

By Brian Johnston—POST HILL PRESS

Book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TlzPyOvJGTg>

On a sunny Friday afternoon, May 24, 1935, curly haired nine-year-old George Weyerhaeuser was snatched off the streets less than three blocks from his house, while walking home from school. George was not just any boy. He was a Weyerhaeuser, heir to America's mightiest timber dynasty. To this day, his great grandfather, Frederick Weyerhaeuser, is still considered the 12<sup>th</sup> richest man in American history. Bill Gates is 11<sup>th</sup>.

The ransom note contained 21 demands, the first being that the kidnapers wanted \$200,000 – over three million in today's dollars – in small, unmarked bills, and the money had to be paid within five days. Or else. The family was instructed to communicate with the kidnapers through personal ads in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer newspaper, using the code name "Percy Minnie." While the family scrambled to raise the money, the kidnapers kept George sealed in a trunk, locked in a closet, manacled in a dirt pit in the forest, and chained to a tree. When the Weyerhaeusers produced the money hours before the deadline, they received a letter with exact instructions for the drop. The payoff played out like something ripped from a Dashiell Hammett novel with the kidnapers driving off with a king's ransom.

The kidnapers, true to their word, released George. They took him deep into the woods and left him by a timber road in the rain with a blanket and one dollar. After waiting two hours in pitch darkness George took it upon himself to find his way home. He hiked for miles until finally coming upon a farmhouse.

The farmer piled him into his Model-T and headed for Tacoma, stopping in the town of Renton, to call the family. The telephone system the FBI had set up in the Weyerhaeuser home failed miserably: the farmer's call never made it through. Frustrated, the farmer then called the Tacoma police. At that very moment, a Seattle Times reporter was in the police station and he overheard the call between the farmer and the police. He hailed a taxi and instructed the cabbie to race to Renton while keeping a weather eye out for a Model-T. The cabbie and reporter spotted the car and managed to get the farmer to pull over. The reporter insinuated that he was with the police, gave the farmer five dollars for his trouble, and the farmer handed George over, no questions. The reporter then instructed the cabbie to drive back to Tacoma on back roads, while he sat on the backseat floorboards, out of sight, and interviewed the boy. With George home, thus began, as the New York Times called it, *The greatest manhunt in Northwest history*.

The kidnapers were William Mahan, a career criminal bank robber and the mastermind of the caper, and the husband and wife team of Harmon and Margaret Waley. Harmon was a 24-year-old petty thief, and Margaret was a 19-year-old Mormon girl who had never been in trouble and who, according to her faith, did whatever husband told her to do.

The FBI managed to register the serial numbers of all 20,000 ransom bills. It took 4,200 person-hours accomplished within three days. The list was then spread across the land. When Margaret tried to pass a five-dollar ransom bill to purchase a twenty-cent cigarette case for her father at a Woolworth's department store, the FBI swooped in. Harmon was apprehended hours later after he burned several thousand dollars of the money in a potbellied stove.

After the Waleys were busted, William Mahan managed to evade the law. He was almost captured the



following day on a one-in-a-million chance encounter in Butte, Montana. While standing on a street corner, he locked eyes with a police officer who, remarkably, recognized him because he had arrested Mahan years earlier. After a chase on foot, Mahan escaped when a guard dog got between him and the cop, and the cop refused to shoot the dog. As a result, Mahan remained on the lam for another year.

In the meantime, the Waleys went to court. Harmon pled guilty and was sentenced to 45 years at Alcatraz, rubbing elbows with the likes of Al Capone. Margaret tried to plead guilty – even though she never once saw George during the entire duration of the kidnapping – because she couldn’t imagine her husband behind bars while she remained free. The judge refused to allow her to plead guilty, based on the evidence, and she went to trial. And what a trial it was, becoming one of the most sensational and high-profile cases in the region’s history, the courtroom packed to overflowing. While the courtroom drama was playing out, a different drama was taking place on the streets. The Northwest was in the grip of a massive lumber strike, complete

with riots, bayonet-wielding National Guardsmen, smoke grenades, and buildings dynamited.

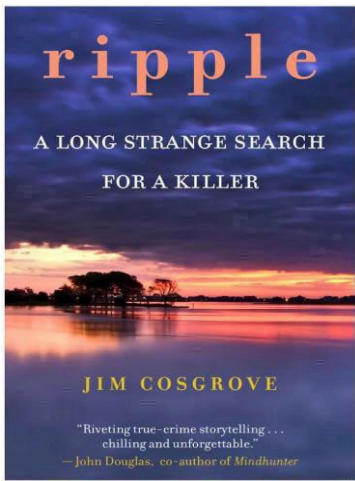
Margaret’s lawyer was the former mayor of Seattle, and as her defense he chose to characterize her as the stupidest woman on the planet. It didn’t work. She was sentenced to 20 years on a Michigan work farm. On the day she was sentenced she vowed she would count the days, the hours, the minutes before she and her beloved Harmon would be reunited. A day later she blamed him for all her misery.

One year after the kidnapping, Bill Mahan’s luck finally ran out. He was captured in San Francisco, pled guilty and was sentenced to 60 years in Alcatraz.

Twenty-eight years after going to prison, Harmon Waley was released. By then, George Weyerhaeuser was a grown man, and one of the top brass in the Weyerhaeuser organization. Waley, now 52-years old, called his former kidnap victim and had the gall to ask George for a job. George Weyerhaeuser, in a breathtaking display of grace and compassion, hired him.

<https://www.king5.com/video/entertainment/television/programs/new-day-northwest/new-book-highlights-an-obscure-part-of-pacific-northwest-history-new-day-nw/281-86219883-723e-47ec-909d-60ed49839b47>

<https://www.king5.com/article/entertainment/television/programs/evening/forgotten-stories-of-the-northwests-most-notorious-kidnapping/281-0c64899c-39dd-4d1f-9b59-ae9d8cb81033>



# RIPPLE

## A Long Strange Search for a Killer

By Jim Cosgrove  
*Steerforth Press*

"An intriguing . . . excavation of an unsolved crime."--*Kirkus Reviews*

"Exquisite details help to make *Ripple* a captivating true crime account of a murder..." --*Foreword Reviews*

"Cosgrove masterfully weaves together the family's fabric and spends enough time with each of them to capture their individual characters, drawing the reader into their search for Frank. His conversational tone makes this an easy read for all, especially true crime lovers." --*Booklist*

"Thoroughly riveting and ultimately redeeming examination of an American mystery. Like a great profiler, Cosgrove reveals both the darkness and light in his subjects."

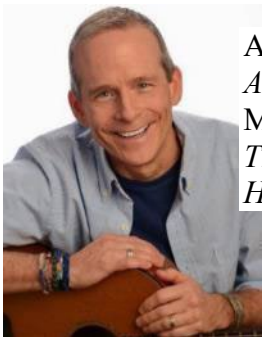
--**John Douglas, FBI profiling pioneer & co-author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Mindhunter***

"Both a true-life murder mystery and a family saga, *Ripple* is, at the same time, a lament for the universal human condition. Through sensitive prose and self-revealing introspection, Jim Cosgrove chronicles his decades-long quest to uncover the truth of a family friend's disappearance and death and, in the process, has produced a moving and revealing chronicle of the challenge in truly knowing what is in another person's heart."

--**Mark Olshaker, documentary filmmaker, novelist and co-author of *Mindhunter* and *The Killer's Shadow***

Follow journalist Jim Cosgrove as he picks up the trail of a decades-old case involving the disappearance of a family friend. In 1982, Frank McGonigle, a hapless Grateful Dead fan, left his Kansas City home and never returned. His large Irish-Catholic family searched nine years for him, only to learn of his murder in a gritty South Carolina fishing village.

With the help of a cast of salty characters, Cosgrove uncovers connections to a ruthless local crime boss and miscues from a threadbare sheriff's department. A chance meeting with a soft-hearted psychic who provided freakishly accurate details about Frank's death put Cosgrove face to face with the alleged killer. After a 25-year investigative journey that has brought the McGonigle family some long-sought closure, it's clear that Cosgrove's story and Frank's have become inextricably intertwined. *Ripple* interweaves themes of familial bonds, guilt, redemption, compassion, and self-discovery with a thread of the esoteric.

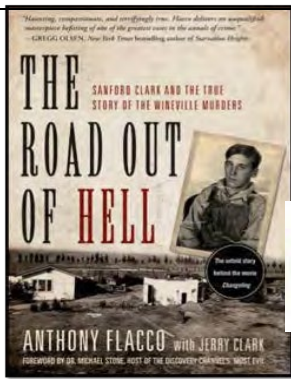


Award-winning entertainer, author, and speaker Jim Cosgrove is a former staff writer for the *Albuquerque Journal* and for Hallmark Cards. His first book, *Everybody Gets Stinky Feet* (Mighty Mo Productions, 2017), is a collection of essays from his time as a parenting columnist for *The Kansas City Star*. His three children's books *Bop Bop Dinosaur*, *Sullen Sally*, and *Hark! It's Harold the Angel* were released in 2020 by Ascend Books.

Young music fans may be more familiar with Cosgrove's persona as beloved kid-rocker "Mr. Stinky Feet." Over the past 23 years, he has performed more than 4,500 high-energy shows throughout North America and Europe and twice at The White House Easter Egg Roll. His nine family albums have earned an impressive collection of national parenting awards. His YouTube channel has more than 2.5 million views. In 2020, his music was streamed more than one million times on Spotify alone.

[https://www.kansascity.com/entertainment/books/article259556284.html?fbclid=IwAR0NTToGhof5AkW\\_5PkZxuv-iVOSDdWDETuMfWTjCq3HdYsix-D\\_RCq9Sqls](https://www.kansascity.com/entertainment/books/article259556284.html?fbclid=IwAR0NTToGhof5AkW_5PkZxuv-iVOSDdWDETuMfWTjCq3HdYsix-D_RCq9Sqls)





# THE ROAD OUT OF HELL

Sanford Clark and the True Story of the Wineville Murders

By Anthony Flacco/Sterling Publishing

*And you wonder: How the hell did this guy go on to be a loving father and how  
! they bury all that crap? That's a story in itself."*

*-Clint Eastwood, Director of THE CHANGELING*

*The film story of young Sanford Clark and his forced participation in the Wineville Murders was covered in Clint Eastwood's movie, THE CHANGELING, but for answers to the questions Eastwood posed after completing the project, turn to the true story of the Wineville murder and Flacco's The Road Out of Hell. The hell part isn't what makes the story important; it's the road out that does.*

*The Road Out Of Hell* travels beyond the murder farm. This story puts us behind young Sanford Clark's POV throughout his capture, then past the trial, conviction, and execution of Gordon Stewart Northcott. It is based on the question, how can any child endure such treatment for two years and somehow go on to build a positive life?

We follow this shattered boy through a stint in the reformatory until age 18 (for being in the States illegally), then his deportation back to his childhood hometown in Canada. There, initial public suspicion remains high, even though the press has made it clear he was never a willing perpetrator. For those first months after returning, every social encounter is a quiet ordeal, either over his treatment by others or because of his own painful shyness.

Soon after he comes home, Canada joins Britain in what will become the Second World War. Sanford enlists and fights heroically in Europe, commanding a cannon crew through heavy artillery battles. His cheerful demeanor while under fire inspires his fellow soldiers; a quick death from an exploding shell doesn't seem to scare him at all. Sanford cracks corny jokes while they load and fire. He earns a number of combat medals.

He returns from war and gets a job as a postal carrier with a route in his old hometown. Courage under fire has burnished his public image a bit, and slowly, his persistently kind and personable demeanor wins people over. He meets June at a party when she rescues him from a solitary corner. They hit it off and she will soon be his wife. When he finally reveals his past to her, she smiles! She already knows his story. Rather than hardening her heart toward him, it has completely opened her up. She sees how much he desires to rebuild his life and she wants to do it with him.

They marry in a simple ceremony, and both work to buy a small house on Sanford's mail route. When they learn June can't have children, they decide to adopt, and take on a three-year-old boy from the local orphanage. The toddler is having a much harder time finding placement than a baby would. Sanford and June want to give the boy a chance. (And this boy is Jerry Clark, who will eventually open up the archives underlying this story).

Sanford makes sure his son Jerry never suffers from a lack of friends by buying the empty lot next door to their house. He grades it flat and after winter sets in, persuades the fire company to bring a truck around. They spray enough water over the lot to form a solid ice coating. Hockey is inevitable.

Jerry is 18 when his father Sanford takes him aside and tells him the entire Wineville story. He knows that despite social acceptance there will always be gossip, and he wants Jerry to hear the story from him. He tells him all about his time at the murder farm and in the burial pits with the roof pressing down on him, never knowing how long his term in the hole would be.

That night, Sanford hears odd noises and walks into Jerry's bedroom to see Jerry walking in his sleep and obviously in the throes of a nightmare. He is standing on his bed and pressing his hands up against the ceiling. Pushing with all his might. Trying in vain to lift the ceiling and somehow escape. Sanford gently wakes him before June is aroused by the sounds. He quietly explains to his son that it mattered to Sanford for his son to get a glimpse of what happened, not to share in his nightmares but to help him stand strong when people try to tear him down.

After twenty-eight years on his postal route, Sanford suffers a heart attack while on his mail route. He barely survives and must retire. With too much free time on his hands, old memories begin to run through his mind. They torment him.

June arranges a job for Sanford at a local car museum, hosting the fancy displays. It is good for Sanford to have the distraction, and he excels at the job as a popular tour host. In his free moments, it is not the scenes of wartime battle which cause him such pain, it is always the murder farm. But he has pulled himself out of that hell and created a life to be proud of. He and June remained married for 58 years.

Listen to the podcast: [▶ THE ROAD OUT OF HELL-Anthony Flacco \(spreaker.com\)](#)

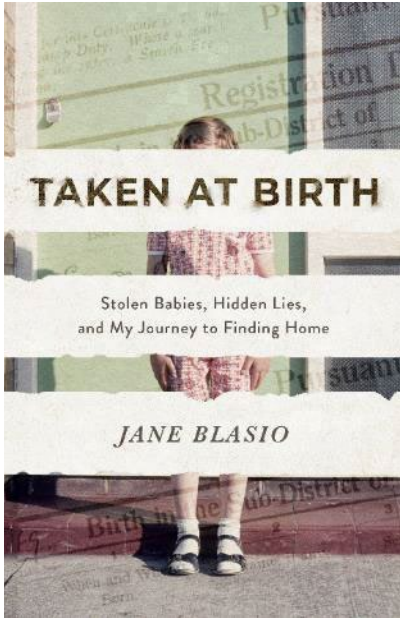
See Book Trailer Here: <http://www.anthonyflacco.com/booktrailer.htm>

# TAKEN AT BIRTH

## Stolen Babies, Hidden Lies, and My Journey to Finding Home

By Jane Blasio Revell/Baker Books

Click link to watch trailer: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESyhEzX7WNo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESyhEzX7WNo)



For years from the 1940's through the 1960s, young pregnant women entered the front door of a clinic in a small North Georgia town. Their babies exited out the back, sold to northern couples desperate to hold a newborn in their arms. But these weren't adoptions—they were transactions. And one unethical doctor was exploiting other people's tragedies.

**Jane Blasio was one of those babies.** At six, she learned she was adopted. At fourteen, she first saw her birth certificate, which led her to begin piecing together details of her past, Jane undertook a decades-long personal investigation to not only discover her own origins, but to identify and reunite other victims of the Hicks Clinic human trafficking scheme. Along the way she became an expert in black market adoption, serving as an investigator and telling her story on every major news network. *Taken at Birth* is the remarkable account of her tireless quest for truth, justice, and resolution.



Jane Blasio is a Hicks Baby, sold at birth and passed through the back door of a clinic in North Georgia. She has served for more than 18 years in federal law enforcement. An expert in illegal adoption, she helped unravel the mystery of the Hicks Clinic, breaking the story in 1997. She has appeared on CNN, ABC *Primetime*, *Good Morning America*, *Fox News*, *Inside Edition*, and *Entertainment Tonight*, as well as in the *New York*

*Times*, *People*, and *Reader's Digest*. She was the investigative lead on the recent TLC docuseries, *Taken at Birth*. Jane currently lives in Akron, Ohio, and spends as much time as she can with family and friends. [www.JaneBlasio.com](http://www.JaneBlasio.com)

[Mark Meets... Jane Blasio, born and sold from the Hicks Clinic in Georgia - YouTube](#) 1-6-2023

<https://people.com/human-interest/woman-searching-for-birth-parents-discovers-she-was-stolen-as-a-baby/>

[TAKEN AT BIRTH: Stolen Babies, Hidden Lies, and My Journey to Finding Home by Jane Blasio - YouTube](#)

*People like to say it takes a lot of courage to do a book like this: I think it takes a site more than that. Jane Blasio lived a story that most could only imagine, from being sold as an infant by a small-town doctor, to years of searching for her birth mother, a gut-wrenching ordeal. But she not only lived it, she wrote the mortal hell out of it, bringing it all to life for the reader as it poured out of her. Sometimes you have to remind yourself that this was a life lived, not one just crafted.* --Rick Bragg, Pulitzer Prize winner for NYT journalism, Prof. of Writing, University of Alabama



# SOLE SURVIVOR

By Holly K. Dunn and Heather Ebert

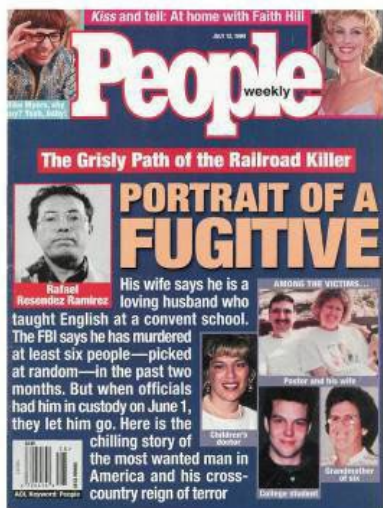
Diversion Publishing

Just as she was starting her junior year of college, Holly Dunn and her boyfriend were attacked while walking along railroad tracks. After her boyfriend is murdered, Holly is stabbed, raped, and beaten nearly to death. Their assailant remained at large for two years before police realized he was a serial killer connected to many more murders in several states. In this memoir of survival and healing from a horrific true crime, Holly recounts how she survived the vicious assault, endured a long journey of healing, and ultimately found meaning and purpose through service to victims of sexual assault and other violent crimes.

**On August 28, 1997, Holly Dunn and her boyfriend, Chris Maier,** were strolling along a set of railroad tracks not far from the University of Kentucky in Lexington where both were students. As they were heading back to a nearby house party, a strange man emerged from the shadows brandishing a sharp, pointed weapon.

Holly and Chris offered him money, credit cards, even their car while begging the man not to hurt them. Disregarding their pleas, the stranger viciously attacked them both, tying their arms and feet and dragging them into a ditch on the side of the tracks. Holly watched helplessly as the assailant bludgeoned Chris to death with a 50-pound rock. The killer then turned to Holly, stabbing her in the neck, raping her, and beating her over the head and face with a board until she was unconscious. Leaving her for dead, the attacker fled the scene.

After a while, Holly regained consciousness and miraculously managed to walk barefoot and coated in blood to a nearby house for help. From there, Holly was rushed to the University of Kentucky Medical Center where she stayed for five days being treated for multiple cuts and gashes, a broken eye socket, and a fractured jaw. Much worse than the physical harm was the emotional and psychological devastation that Holly endured after the attack. Holly's memoir moves from a detailed account of the night she and Chris were attacked by the tracks, through her heartbreaking journey of grief and healing as she comes to terms with what happened.



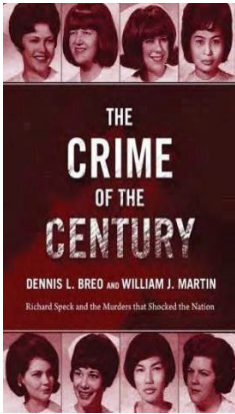
For two years after the attack, Lexington police have no idea who or where Holly's attacker is. **At the story's midpoint, the assailant is revealed to be a serial killer who has murdered multiple people in several states.** Given that his victims are all discovered a short distance from train tracks, the media nicknames him the **Railroad Killer**.

His best-known alias at the time was Rafael Resendez-Ramirez, an illegal immigrant from Mexico with a mile-long rap sheet dating back to when he was 16 years old. At the height of a national manhunt, Resendez-Ramirez is added to the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list, right between Osama Bin Laden and followed shortly after by Whitey Bulger. After he is finally apprehended by a fiercely determined Texas Ranger, the killer's actual name turns out to be **Angel Maturing Resendiz**. Resendiz is brought to justice, and Holly bravely testifies against him during the punishment phase of his trial in Houston, Texas. The jury recommends the death penalty, and the notorious Railroad Killer is finally executed in 2006.

Holly's story doesn't end with Resendiz's death, however. Not long after her attacker's arrest, Holly begins speaking to various groups to tell her story, offer safety tips, train law enforcement, and much more. She also works with a local police detective for several years to establish **Holly's House** in her hometown, Evansville, Indiana. Holly's House offers a safe and nurturing space for forensic interviews, services and support for victims, and community outreach and education programs. Her Christian faith brought her strength throughout the healing process, and she believes she was given a second chance at life for a reason. Since her ordeal, Holly has embraced every opportunity to serve others, especially those who have endured rape and other violent crimes. Holly's story is ultimately inspiring and redemptive as she demonstrates that even in the face of one's worst nightmare come true, life can still be good, meaningful, and joyous.

People Magazine Presents: <https://vimeo.com/932261353/76caa41015?share=copy>

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



# THE CRIME OF THE CENTURY

## Richard Speck and the Murders That Shocked a Nation

By Dennis L. Breo and William J. Martin

Skyhorse

A detective cuts the police tape, and five men enter the scene of the crime, a small, boxy, two-story townhouse on the south side of Chicago. Here, some 13 days earlier, Richard Franklin Speck, a drifter from Dallas, had broken into the townhouse, which served as a dorm for six American nursing students and three Filipino exchange nurses, and savagely stabbed, strangled, and killed eight young women in a violent sexual rampage. One nurse, the tiny Corazon Amurao miraculously survived by hiding under a bed behind a hanging blanket. Cora's eyewitness description and a match of fingerprints left on a bedroom door had identified Speck as the killer.

Now, as the five men step around congealed blood on the floors of the upstairs bedrooms, Speck's killing fields, they vow to bring the killer to justice. Team Speck, as the prosecutors will come to be known, are led by Bill Martin, 29, the father of four, including two young daughters. Earlier this day, Martin had locked in his office safe a priceless piece of evidence—22 pages of handwritten notes and townhouse diagrams provided by a Filipino translator who had interviewed Cora in her native Tagalog. It tells Martin exactly how Speck, who had been whiling away the hours in a seaman's hiring hall across the street from the townhouse, had carried out his barbaric attack.

Martin, charged with prosecuting Chicago's most-famous killer since Al Capone, hardens his heart and steels himself for the hard work ahead. He tells his colleagues: "If we win this case, nobody will ever remember us; if we lose it, nobody will ever forget us." As the 14-hour days blur into months, the young prosecutor has one overriding concern—protecting the emotional and psychological health of his star witness. Only three months removed from a rural hamlet in the Philippines, Cora has survived a night of unimaginable evil and could easily repress her terrifying memories. While Speck was raping his final victim, the horrified Cora was only a few feet away, under a bunk bed, eyes closed and head pressed against the floor, furiously praying. After the killer had disappeared into the night, she slowly loosened the bindings on her ankles and wrists, crawled out of her hiding space, walked over the dead bodies of her friends, pushed open a bedroom window, climbed onto a townhouse ledge, and screamed for 20 minutes: "They are all dead! Oh, my God, they are all dead!"

Martin knows he must protect the fragile Cora, or his case may be lost. Reporters want interviews about her story of survival and major magazines are offering to pay a lot of money for that story, which would prejudice the State's case; the hospital wants her to return to work, but she is afraid she may make mistakes; the Philippine consulate wants to control her actions, but she wants to make her own decisions. Demonstrating remarkable integrity, Cora, who comes from a very poor family, turns down all offers of paid interviews and firmly states that she wants only "to honor the memory of my friends."

In the first of many bold moves, Martin decides he must "kidnap" Cora and her mother and cousin, who have been flown to Chicago from the Philippines by an American magazine and place them in the witness protection program under 24/7 police protection at an undisclosed location. As the months pass, Cora puts her trust in her well-chosen police bodyguards, "Jacques" and "Jeem," as she calls Jack Wallenda and Jim Georgalas, and also in Martin, who brings his young children to splash around in a swimming pool with the Amurao clan.

Four months will pass before Martin begins to prepare Cora to testify. With pen and legal notepad before him, Martin is afraid he may blunder in his questioning and cause Cora to repress her memories. But with a Pepsi-Cola in hand ("I just drink Pepsi," she says), Cora is composed and unflinching as she explains and diagrams how Speck moved the nurses about the townhouse bedrooms. She is determined to help Martin avenge the murder of her friends.

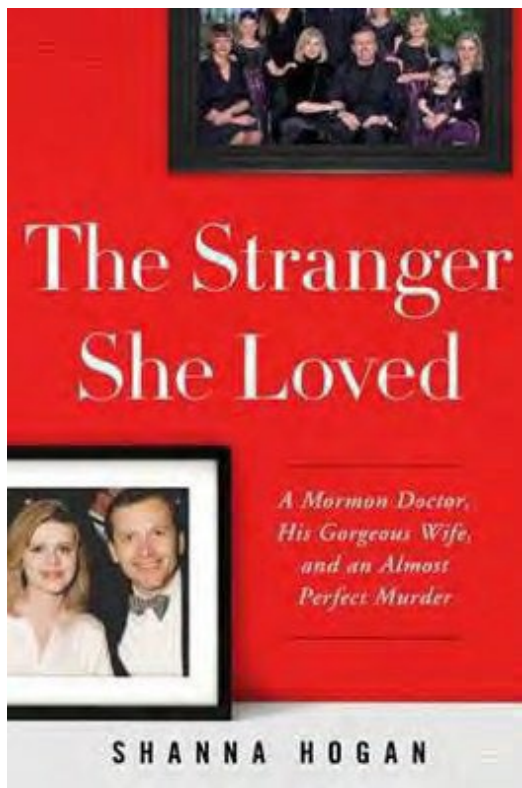
The painstaking preparation will pay off in April 1967, when Cora is reunited with Speck in a court of law. One veteran criminal reporter will describe her as "as a blend of steel and lace" and the "best trial witness I have ever seen." Martin will have little need for his notes as he and Cora settle into a grooved routine in which Martin perfectly pitches a question and Cora perfectly throws back the answer. It is like a game of catch and both are throwing strikes. Before answering, Cora looks at Martin and then speaks directly to the jurors on her right. Using a scale model of the townhouse built by the FBI and figurines to represent the nurses, Cora explains and demonstrates to the astounded jurors precisely how the killer carried out his night of horrors. Asked by Martin if the killer is in the courtroom, Cora steps down from the witness chair, walks to within a foot of Speck, points at his pockmarked face and vacant stare, and declares in an unwavering voice: "This is the man!"

**The jurors require only 49 minutes to return a death sentence.**

# THE STRANGER SHE LOVED

By NYT Bestselling author Shanna Hogan

St. Martin's Press



Michele MacNeill lay slumped, limp and lifeless folded inside the drained bathtub. Her husband Martin—clad in a white lab coat—hovered above the tub, wailing for help.

It was late on the morning of April 11, 2007, and Michelle, a 50-year-old former beauty queen and mother of eight, was dead inside the master bathroom of her Pleasant Grove, Utah home. She had just undergone a full-face lift eight days prior. At the hospital as his wife of 30-years was pronounced dead, Dr. Martin MacNeill—a practicing physician, lawyer, and Mormon bishop—wept dramatically. Michele's death was quickly ruled natural by the medical examiner due to an unknown heart arrhythmia. Dr. MacNeill appeared every bit the grieving widower.

thing about Dr. MacNeill was as it seemed. It would take six long years and the unrelenting dedication of Michele's children to solve the mystery of her death, exposing a complex web of lies, betrayal and murder. Beneath the carefully concocted façade of a family man, Dr. MacNeill was a cunning manipulator with a disturbing double identity. He used his position as a doctor to gain access to other women and used his title as attorney to get around the law.

The unraveling of Dr. MacNeill's lies began soon after Michele's surgery, which he had persuaded his wife to undergo. As she recovered, a disturbingly groggy Michele turned to her older daughter Alexis and said, "In case anything happens to me, make sure it was not your dad. "Michele had suspected her husband of an affair and believed he intended to kill her.

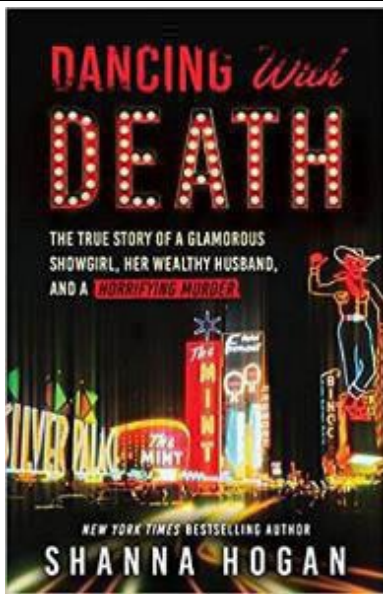


Days after his wife's funeral, Dr. MacNeill hired his mistress, Gypsy Willis, to be the live-in nanny—much to the chagrin of his children. Both Dr. MacNeill and Gypsy neglected the MacNeill children and eventually lost custody. In the summer of 2007, they abandoned his teenage, adopted daughter in her homeland of the Ukraine. He then used the girl's Social Security number to give his mistress a new identity and conceal his own massive debts.

As Dr. MacNeill's children began to suspect their father of murder, they conducted their own investigations, revealing his multiple affairs, a criminal record for forgery and falsified transcripts proving he was never qualified as a doctor.



Toxicology tests later proved Michele was dosed with a combination of drugs that would have left her helpless to defend for her herself. In 2013, Dr. Martin MacNeill was convicted of murdering his wife by pressing her to get plastic surgery, drugging her and drowning her in the bathtub. As the prosecutor would say in court, "it was an almost perfect murder." He later committed suicide in prison. See: [www.ShannaHogan.com](http://www.ShannaHogan.com)



# DANCING WITH DEATH

The True Story of a Glamorous Showgirl, Her Wealthy Husband,  
and a Horrifying Murder

By Shanna Hogan St. Martin's Press/Diversion

October 23, 2004. The crime scene is gruesome. On the outskirts of the Phoenix desert detectives discover a headless, limbless torso entombed inside a large plastic box, stewing in blood and grim. Matching a set of car keys found with the victim, detectives quickly identify the torso in the box as Jay Michael Orbin.

Flash back to 20 years prior where a young Jay Orbin is sipping a beer at a strip club. Jay is a budding art dealer who travels two weeks a month on business trips. He is also a playboy with an affinity for strippers. When a beguiling blonde stripper named Marjorie Marqui sensually cavorts on stage, Jay falls head over heels. After weeks of seducing her with money and gifts they begin dating and Marjorie even moves to his house. After one embarrassing sexual encounter, Marjorie

leaves Jay and returns to her home state of Florida.

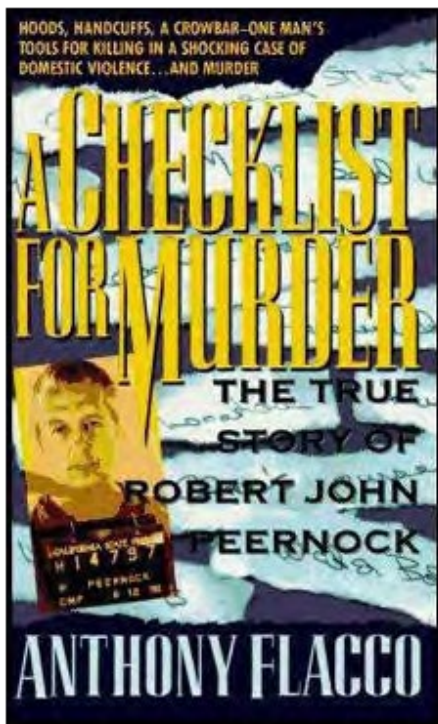
Eight years later, Jay has not forgotten about Marjorie and still refers to her as the “love of his life.” Then, in 1995, on a business trip to Las Vegas, Jay sees Marjorie’s face on a billboard advertising a topless dance show. Jay is in awe. He had been searching for her for years. He finds her number in the phone book and calls her. They meet for drinks where Marjorie tells Jay about her life over the past 10 years. After leaving Phoenix, Marjorie returned to her home state of Florida and hooked up with a multi-millionaire playboy named Michael J. Peter, who is known throughout Florida as the “strip club king.” While with Michael, Marjorie starred in his burlesque-style dance troupe called the “Platinum Dolls.” Michael and Marjorie had a romantic relationship, and she was involved in many of his endeavors, starring in his movies and music videos including a cameo in the Motley Cru video “Girls, Girls, Girls.” Marjorie was even featured with Michael in an episode of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, about his life of opulence. When speaking with Jay, Marjorie does leave out many mysterious details about her past, which would be revealed later in the story.

Jay and Marjorie rekindle their relationship and he quickly proposes marriage. Marjorie, however, turns him down. But when Marjorie tells him of her one regret—that she is infertile and can never be a mom—they make a deal. If Marjorie marries him, Jay promised to pay for fertility treatments. The couple agrees to an arrangement where if Marjorie is not pregnant in two years she will leave. They elope in Vegas and Marjorie moves with him to Phoenix, soon giving birth to a son named Noah. While Jay’s family and friends have mixed opinions about Marjorie, their relationship seems to work and over the next eight years they live together as a seemingly happy family. Then, on September 8, 2004, Jay’s 45th birthday, he fails to return home from a business trip. Over the next few weeks, the family becomes increasingly concerned. Jay’s older brother Jake comes down from San Diego to search for his brother. The family, in particular Jake, will be instrumental in uncovering Marjorie’s mysterious past. While Marjorie tells the family that Jay is expected any day, Jake convinces Marjorie to report him missing. With missing persons detectives Marjorie seems unconcerned and evasive. It’s clear to them that she’s hiding something.

During one phone call with Detective Jan Butcher, Marjorie refuses to take a lie detector test. In the background a male voice pipes up in the background telling Marjorie not to cooperate. Suspicious, Detective Butcher orders a search warrant on the house and discovers that Marjorie has been having an affair with a 60-year-old body builder named Larry Weisberg, who attacks SWAT officers and is Tasered inside Marjorie’s house. That night Jay’s brother Jake goes to the house to check on Noah and hears Marjorie tells detectives a shocking secret—she and Jay are not actually married. They had divorced eight years prior because Marjorie had a tax lien in her name. No one, not even Jay’s parents, knew of the divorce. Because Marjorie was not Jay’s wife, she would not be entitled to his assets in a divorce. She is, however, the main beneficiary on his millionaire dollar life insurance payouts.

Over the next month, Jake hires a private detective to learn more about Marjorie. He soon discovers that Marjorie is not who she has claimed to be. Marjorie had been married and divorced seven times and has a petty criminal record and links to mob ties through her ex, Michael J. Peter. The family later learns that Marjorie had been suspected of egregious acts at her son’s karate studio, including harassing other parents. She had even been dyeing her eight-year-old son’s hair blonde to match hers since he was just a few months old. Then, on October 23, 2004, more than a month after he went missing, a dismembered chunk of Jay’s torso is discovered in the Phoenix desert. Homicide detectives quickly put together a case against Marjorie and her boyfriend Larry Weisberg. After discovering video of Marjorie buying the Rubbermaid tub the torso was discovered in, an arrest is made. No evidence is ever found on Larry Weisberg and he is later offered immunity. On September 21, 2009, Marjorie is convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole.

For more about Shanna, see [www.ShannaHogan.com](http://www.ShannaHogan.com)



# A CHECKLIST FOR MURDER

By Anthony Flacco

Penguin Random House/Diversion Books

*Screenplay available*

Stark reality and rampant paranoia blend and blur in this deep psychological thriller. The story opens as 18-year-old Natasha Peernock is found lying half dead in the wreckage of a burning car, only a few feet from her mother's body. Both women have been severely beaten with a tire iron, the only difference being that Natasha barely survives. In the hospital, we see from her POV while she tells a tale of being kidnapped by her own father, Robert Peernock, who blindfolded, bound, and tortured her for nearly 11 hours while Daddy waited for Mommy to come home. Natasha says that he then beat her mother to death and loaded both of them into the car and rigged it to crash.

Robert Peernock produces an alibi *and* a compelling alternate theory of this crime—he is a computer programmer working for the State of California, who claims to have discovered government corruption in the awarding of state contracts. He has been a victim of constant harassment because of his whistle-blowing activities. As a point of proven fact, Peernock has already won numerous lawsuits against the organizations he has targeted, and he claims to be on the verge of releasing a detailed book that traces government corruption from office to office, all the way up to the Governor of State of California.

He protests that he is being framed. His daughter was drugged and brainwashed, and then the murderer was set up to implicate him—all in order to destroy his credibility. His opponents would then be safe from the effects of his book, even if he ever got it published.

Police reject Robert Peernock's alibi. They want him to come in for another interview. He flees town. Even so, he continues to communicate with police, via his attorney. He reveals that he is afraid to return, because the police work for the same forces that Peernock is trying to expose. He is sure that he will become a "jailhouse suicide" if he surrenders. So, in a desperate effort to hide from them, he gets plastic surgery in Las Vegas and returns to L.A. in secret, where his girlfriend helps him avoid capture for months. He fails to assist in his daughter's recovery or attend his wife's funeral.

Eventually, Detective Steve Fisk puts in enough overtime to track him down and Assistant District Attorney Craig Richman begins to look for holes in Peernock's alibi. But... when civil attorney Victoria Doom enters the case *pro bono* to help shattered Natasha get put her life back together, she discovers a host of contrasting details and helps to prove that Peernock has committed a near-perfect murder. The question regards motive. Before the crimes, he had already been granted his wife's permission for a divorce—and even after splitting their estate, they would both be very well off. So why would he attack his own daughter? Natasha herself talked about how she used to be the apple of her father's eye. Young Natasha suffers violent recurring nightmares about the crime—at the same time, her jailed father suffers from nightmares about being set up and convicted for murder. It is only because of Victoria Doom's after-hours passion for this case that the truth finally comes out: Robert Peernock indeed would have committed the perfect murder if only he had not been so obsessive about keeping his detailed checklist for murder.

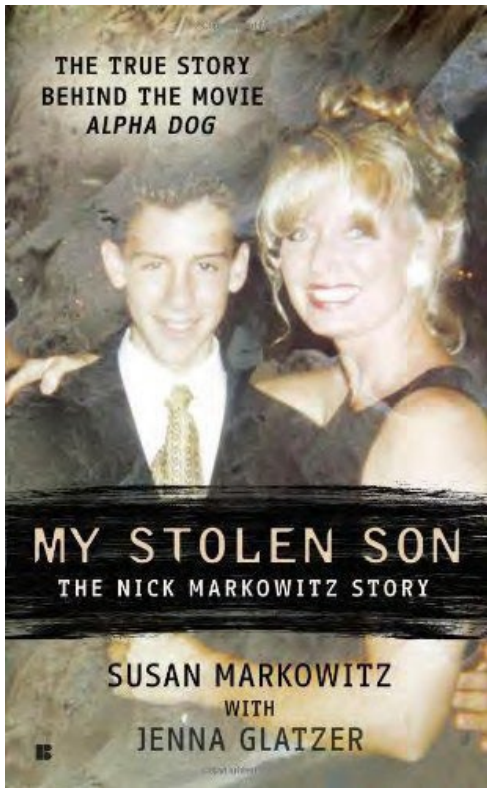
Victoria Doom reveals that Peernock's fight against the state drove his paranoia out of control, until he became convinced that both his ex-wife and his daughter had been enlisted in the state's clandestine struggle to silence him. After a fierce murder trial filled with screaming outbursts—and a bound and gagged defendant in the courtroom—Robert Peernock's jury finds him guilty of 1st Degree Murder along with a host of accompanying crimes.

Later, while Doom helps Natasha to quietly get on with her life in an out-of-state location, word comes from the police that Peernock is in jail trying to hire a killer to go after his daughter and finish the job on her. He is working at this task with the relentless patience of an obsessive madman. The story ends with Peernock in his solitary cell, hand drawing the new home page for his website: It shows a picture of him bound and gagged in court during his trial. The caption cries: "Innocent whistle-blower!" For the text underneath, he writes: "This is the story of an innocent man..." and smiles as he reads back over his handiwork. **UPDATE: ROBERT PEERNOCK DIED IN PRISON FROM COVID IN APRIL, 2021**

For more about Anthony, see [www.AnthonyFlacco.com](http://www.AnthonyFlacco.com)

Watch 1/14/2023 <https://www.oxygen.com/accident-suicide-or-murder/season-4/videos/robert-peernock-reveals-a-twist-in-his-wifes-case>

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/a-checklist-for-murder-anthony-flacco-16522989>



# MY STOLEN SON

## The Nick Markowitz Story

By Susan Markowitz

Penguin Random House

\* Starred Review from Publishers Weekly

This poignant memoir tells the painful story of a brutal slaying that captured national attention when it became the basis of the 2007 drama *Alpha Dog*. In the summer of 2000, Susan Markowitz's 15-year-old son, Nicholas, was kidnapped and murdered by a local drug dealer in revenge for his brother's debts. Nicholas's death, the ensuing trials of his killers, and the international manhunt for a fourth suspect nearly tore his family apart and sent his mother on a decade-long quest for justice and sanity. Markowitz writes with candor about her grief-induced alcoholism and suicide attempts as well as the troubles that shook her family's foundation long before Nicholas's death. Her unflinching honesty makes this a deeply powerful story that will move fans of the film and anyone grieving a loved one's death by homicide or suicide.

On the morning of August 6, 2000, fifteen-year-old Nicholas Markowitz - knowing he was in trouble with his parents - snuck out of the house. He never came home. One week later, authorities arrived on Susan's doorstep with devastating news: her son had been found dead. Days earlier, a 20-year-old drug dealer, Jesse James Hollywood, and 3 of his accomplices, had kidnapped the teenager in broad daylight as revenge for a drug-related debt owed by Nick's half-brother. They later murdered the innocent boy in cold blood and buried him in a shallow grave. Hollywood fled to Brazil as a fugitive and became the youngest man ever on the FBI's top ten "Most Wanted" list. It would be nearly a decade before he was brought to justice.

Initially, Susan had thought only about getting justice for her son. But along the way, she rediscovered her own will to live, and promised to honor her beloved son's memory by making sure something positive came from the pain he had to endure. *MY STOLEN SON* is the gripping account of one mother's relentless 9-year fight to bring her son's killer to justice, and to rebuild a family shattered by an unconscionable crime.



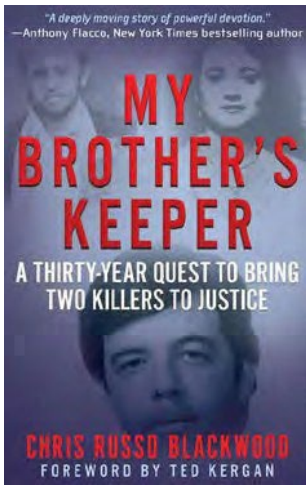
For more see: [www.NicholasMarkowitz.com](http://www.NicholasMarkowitz.com) or [www.MyStolenSon.com](http://www.MyStolenSon.com)



# MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

By Chris Blackwood

Wild Blue Press



On the night of Gary Kergan's murder, he was a confidant, charismatic 40-year-old on the verge of a break-through business deal for himself and younger brother Ted. He had called Ted with the news that the funding they sought for their franchise partnership was granted; the brothers were soon going to own dozens of franchise locations. This was the level of success they had chased together for years. On the phone call, Gary told Ted he was on his way over, so the elated pair could celebrate this great news together. Ted settled on his sofa and waited for the sounds of his brother's steps on the front porch. For so many years, the brothers had functioned as a duo in business ventures, beginning with mutual paper routes as teenagers. Ted was four years younger and looked up to his brother, while Gary, a big man at six feet, five inches tall, had always been Ted's protector. Everyone who knew the Kergan brothers realized they had a special closeness, even if people were unaware it was built on escaping the poverty of their childhoods together. When they spoke on the phone, they used a special kind of coded language that often-made sense only to them. Ted fell asleep waiting. Gary never arrived.

It would later be learned the celebratory mood had caused Gary's good judgment to fail him. He drove to a North Baton Rouge strip bar to meet up with Leila Mulla, a young dancer there. They later left the bar together and were seen entering her apartment just blocks away. But Leila already had a boyfriend. He was hiding inside the apartment with a heavy blunt instrument in his hand, waiting for her to bring home a victim with a fat wallet. And with that, Gary disappeared into the memories of those who loved him.

The following day, his late model Eldorado turned up in suburban New Orleans, an hour's drive east of the dancer's apartment. When police popped open the trunk, they found it soaked with a large pool of blood, evidence of such great blood loss that the victim's survival was unlikely. As evidence in a murder case, that much blood legally served as a stand-in for the body itself as proof of death. The authorities called it a "body of blood."

Ted mobilized a search for his brother and quickly came across the name of Leila Mulla, a 19-year-old Kent, Ohio high school honor student and daughter of a prominent Syrian physician. Leila had run away from drug rehab and ended up homeless in New Orleans. There she had met Ronald Dunnagan, a magician and drifter in his thirties.

Police investigated her and her boyfriend, but no solid evidence was found. And yet Ted did not doubt their guilt.

Leila chronicled her sex trade tricks and her earnings in several diaries, and one of them included this damning entry: "Hit Gary next time," and a reference to the fact that Gary owned a chain of South Louisiana Sonic restaurants. Ted didn't doubt their guilt. The question was one of proof.

After being extradited to Baton Rouge, Leila and Ron spent several months in East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. When the investigation failed to turn up Gary's body, the grifter pair was released and went their separate ways.

But Ted Kergan remains convinced the couple was guilty and refused to hold a memorial service for his brother until he found the truth. This began his decades-long investigation and pursuit of his brother's killers. After years of private detective work, DNA science finally caught up with the paltry evidence in Gary's death. The Baton Rouge police department re-opened the case and established new DNA evidence which triggered Leila's and Ron's arrest in December of 2012. It was only brother Ted's persistence that brought about their conviction. The killers would have done the perfect murder, if not for the bond between the Kergan brothers. Ted Kergan was never going to walk away from this.

The twists and turns of Ted Kergan's investigation read like a crime novel but reflect one man's quiet determination to bring justice for a brother who had always been his protector in life. He repeatedly comes oh-so-close to bringing Leila and Ron to justice, only to see their experienced criminal attitudes allow them to bluff their way past the law. Sometimes it seems as if the stars are lined up to help them – and the years tick by. This real-life drama is a compelling tale driven by the victim's brother who obsessively seeks the truth, spending a fortune in the process. Even though Gary's body was never recovered, the body of blood in his car was enough for the conviction. Ted lived to see the killers face the consequences of their murderous acts, and to know they were both aware of his role in chasing them down after a manhunt spanning three decades. [www.mybrotherskeeperbook.com](http://www.mybrotherskeeperbook.com)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp6dNpk\\_xjQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp6dNpk_xjQ)

<https://crimewatchdaily.com/2018/02/09/sonic-garys-brother-keeps-cold-case-alive-long-enough-to-help-solve-it-after-30-years/>



# DADDY'S LITTLE SECRET

By Denise Wallace

WildBlue Press

**Screenplay Available**

Denise Wallace had spent years hiding deadly secrets about her enigmatic father, Wesley Wallace. Wes was a trusted security guard at the Ritz Carlton Palm Beach, who was supposed to protect those who found themselves in his care. But a closer look into his brutal murder revealed a split personality -- one that his daughter may have seen.

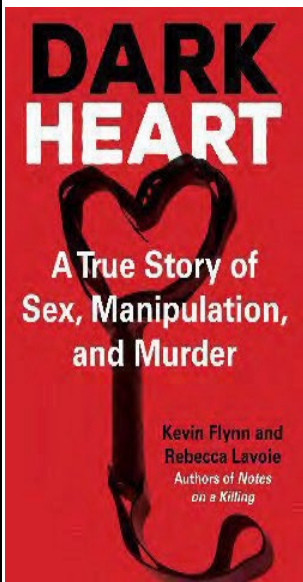
The detectives persuaded Denise to assist them in the capture of her father's killer by taking them on a series of outings that would be far from away from the glitz of Palm Beach. The trail would lead them to the murky streets of Dixie Highway, where it was discovered that Wes spent much of his free time. It was there that Wes picked up Travis Jones, an eighteen-year-old homeless man who was possibly addicted to crack cocaine. Wes had lured Travis into his car that night with the promise of money in exchange for homosexual favors, but never planned to make good on the deal.

Instead, he had tried to force Travis to be a participant in a violent sex game where Daddy was going to get what he wanted -- even if it killed him. A terrorized Travis had then engaged in a frenzied attempt to cover up the crime. The detectives would find an overflowing bathtub filled with bleach-smelling water, bloody sheets, and a gold lamp base along with items missing from Wes' apartment.

But where was the killer? Travis had gotten on a bus and left town until the one friend he talked about the murder decided to turn on him. The details of the crime would be recanted by Travis himself on the stand, which would cause Denise to remember something that had happened long ago. Her father had a history of collecting sex slaves. Would telling his secret to the prosecutor be enough to save Travis from the death penalty? Even from the grave Wes' ominous weight could still be felt by his daughter and the killer.

For more about Denise see [www.DeniseWallaceAuthor.com](http://www.DeniseWallaceAuthor.com)

<http://truecrimepage.com/denise-wallace-confronts-her-slain-fathers-double-life-in-daddys-little-secret/>



# DARK HEART

**A True Story of Sex, Manipulation, and Murder**

**By Kevin Flynn & Rebecca Lavoie**

**Penguin Random House**

In this tale of *The Loft* meets *Fifty Shades of Grey*, a beautiful co-ed goes missing after being lured to the apartment of a couple seeking a partner for a kinky threesome. Was it a sex act gone wrong or something more sinister?

Though 19-year-old **Lizzi Marriott** said she'd be home before midnight, the marine biology student never arrived. She'd said she was on her way to visit her new friends, Kat and Seth. What she didn't know was the real reason the couple invited her over.

To the outside world, 18-year-old **Kat McDonough** and 30-year-old **Seth Mazzaglia** were a normal couple who enjoyed acting, video games, and Dungeons and Dragons. Seth convinced the impressionable Kat their role-playing alter egos were real, spirits from their "past lives" who could control their present. Seth cautioned that he was pursued by an otherworldly "Darkness," a power that would overtake him unless Kat did what he said. From there, Seth led the much-younger woman into the world of extreme bondage, knife play, masochism, threesomes, and erotic asphyxiation.

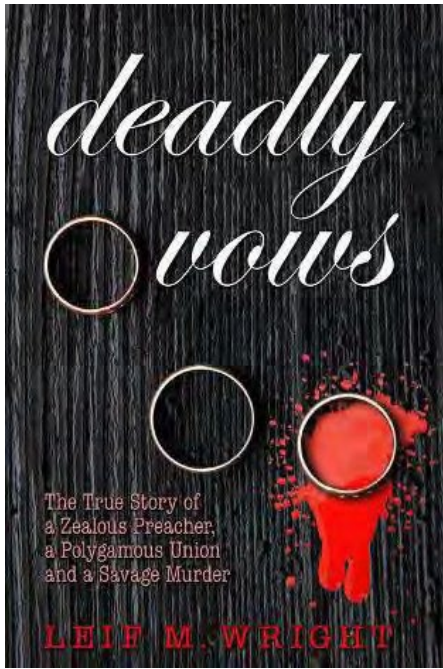


Seth turned Kat literally into his sexual slave, demanding all her master's needs be unquestionably met. When Kat left for two weeks to work as a summer camp counselor, he demanded she find him a "replacement" to satisfy his pleasures. When she failed, the master inflicted punishment on his slave: days of bondage and rough sex. He said the punishment would continue until she found him a friend who would "die by orgasm" in front of her.

When Lizzi Marriott vanished, police traced her last known location to Seth and Kat's apartment. After hours of interrogation, Seth confessed Lizzi died during a BDSM session in which he accidentally choked her with a rope. He disposed of her naked body in a swift river which dumped into the Atlantic Ocean. Later, in an effort to free her arrested boyfriend, Kat told defense lawyers the girl accidentally died of smothering when she sat on Lizzi's face. Authorities were never able to recover Lizzi's body, losing the most important piece of evidence in the case. Prosecutors desperately needed Kat's eyewitness account to convict Seth. After Kat was arrested on witness tampering charges, they cut a deal for her testimony.

In court, Kat told what really happened that night. After playing a flirty game of strip poker, Lizzi rebuffed Seth's advances and an invitation to join the couple in bed. The master, unaccustomed to hearing "no" in his own bedroom, strangled Lizzi from behind with a rope used for bondage. Under cover of darkness, both Seth and Kat dumped Lizzi's body into the river and abandoned her car. Kat, however, was a troublesome witness. She had lied many times to protect Seth – lies the defense used against her. At trial, they confronted her with her beliefs in spirits and dragons and her own kinky predilections. Defense attorneys accused Kat of killing Lizzi and setting Seth up to take the fall. It would be up to a jury to decide whom they believed most.

See: [www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com](http://www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com)



## **DEADLY VOWS:** **The True Story of a Zealous Preacher, a Polygamous Union and a Savage Murder**

**By Leif M. Wright**  
**New Horizon Press**

A lone Palo Verde tree stands out defiantly against the Arizona desert, miles from anything else. Well, except for the strange pile of volcanic stones under it. What a jogger discovers underneath those stones—the violently desecrated corpse of a woman who had been brutally stabbed, then dismembered and disfigured—leads to one of the strangest cases detectives and medical examiners have ever seen.

In beautiful San Diego, handsome, engaging and popular preacher Sean Goff is telling everyone who will listen that his second wife, Joy—the one who had been living with him, his first wife and the trio’s three kids—simply tired of domestic life and pulled up roots to wander around Europe with an old flame, leaving her children and everything else behind.

Joy’s friends keep pushing Sean for answers, until they start receiving emails from Joy telling them to chill out and leave her alone. Except the emails don’t really sound like the Joy they knew. And leaving her kids behind definitely doesn’t sound like her. So, they call police, who send a missing persons detective to talk to Sean.

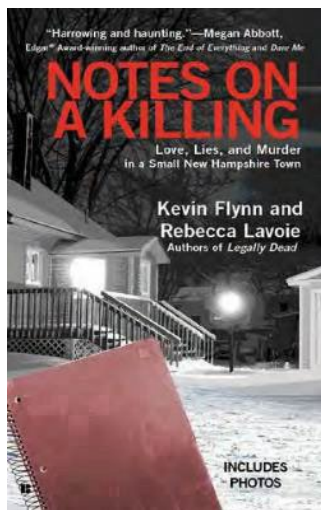
Back in Arizona, medical examiners unravel the horrific crime that had been perpetrated on the woman found underneath the tree: she had been stabbed at least a dozen times in the chest—at some point so violently that her bones reveal injuries they’ve never seen before. Her fingertips have been sawed off and disposed of somewhere else. Her teeth have been sawed completely from her head. Her face has been bashed in. Some killer knew exactly what police would be looking for and had gone out of his way to make sure they wouldn’t find it.

*Deadly Vows* follows Sean Goff’s transformation from wunderkind preacher to cold-blooded manipulator and killer from the perspective of the man who saw it all, his best friend.

*Deadly Vows* is visceral, visually oriented and captivating for both readers and would be for viewers on film — from the cinematic opening page

to the gripping courtroom drama that closes it. Its themes of fringe religion, polygamy and the transformation of a man and his wives demand to be displayed on-screen as both a spectacle and a cautionary tale.

For more about Leif, see [www.leifwright.com](http://www.leifwright.com)



# NOTES ON A KILLING

By Kevin Flynn & Rebecca Lavoie

Penguin Random House

Sandra Merritt was surprised to get a phone call at work from Edith “Pen” Meyer, her AA confidant. Pen urged Sandy to resume her affair with a married man, reversing the advice she’d given for months. After the call, Pen vanished. Investigators found Pen’s lakefront home empty except for her beloved dog, Fluff.

Sandy and Pen’s boyfriend suspected Ken Carpenter in the disappearance. When Sandy had called off the yearlong affair with the married man - filing a restraining order against him - Carpenter openly blamed her supportive friend Pen for coming between them. During the search, an anonymous caller told police Pen had flown to the islands with a secret lover. Investigators recognized the voice on the phone as Carpenter’s. The caller also suggested detectives check out the pay phone at the local country store. There, investigators discovered a key to Pen’s safe deposit box fastened to the phone with a piece of range duct tape.

Already suspicious of Carpenter, police asked Sandy to record phone calls with her ex-lover. On the tape, Carpenter told Sandy he had “spoken to God” and what happened to Pen would be revealed in a few days.

When police searched Carpenter’s home, they came across a fire pit smoldering in the backyard. Inside the ashes was a pair of eyeglasses missing from Pen’s home, keys to her house and PO Box, and more than a dozen human bone fragments. They also found a roll of orange duct tape, a garrote, and a .22 rifle wrapped in a raincoat. Under a chair, police discovered a notebook with plans for a murder and scripts for Pen to read over the phone to Sandy. After his arrest, Sandy received a contract in the mail turning over all of Pen’s property to her. Pen’s signature had been forged on the paper.

Pen Meyer’s murder was hardly an open-and-shut case for prosecutor Kirsten Wilson. With no usable DNA and a handful of bone fragments, they couldn’t even get a death certificate, let alone a forensic cause of death. Investigators monitored Carpenter’s jailhouse calls with his wife, Cynthia “Harv” Harvey, for clues.

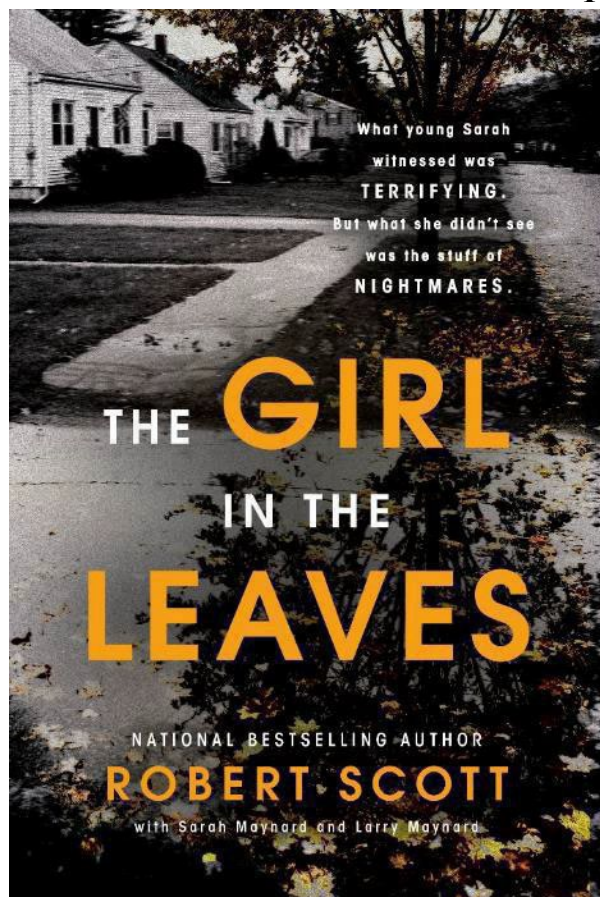
Carpenter consistently maintained his innocence. A nurse herself, Harv grilled him on why so few bones were in the fire pit. Carpenter eventually drew a map to a hollowed stump in their yard. There, Harv found burnt pieces of skull and Pen’s distinctive jewelry. Loyalties torn, Harv called the police. Carpenter doubled down. He claimed a stranger named “Phil Waters” had approached him after the restraining order and said he could take care of his “problem.” Carpenter said he left Pen alone with Phil at his house, and when he returned, the woman was gone, and the fire was burning in his backyard. To prove his claim, he led Harv to more hidden evidence: a letter in Pen’s handwriting talking about the wonderful day they’d spent together – the day Pen disappeared. Police believed Carpenter forced Pen to write it at gunpoint.

Meanwhile, a yearlong effort to reconstruct the skeleton from the various pieces was underway in a forensic pathologist’s lab in neighboring Maine.

When Carpenter’s public defender withdrew because of a conflict, famed defense attorney Mark Sisti took the case. Sisti, whose reputation had stemmed from his defense of Pamela Smart, excelled at raising doubt about how and where the killing could have happened, or whether the charred remains were even Pen Meyer’s. In the courtroom climax, the forensic anthropologist testified she had discovered a bullet hole in the reconstructed skull, answering once and for all how Pen was murdered. After a rousing closing argument re-written from scratch on the penultimate night of the trial, the jury convicted Ken Carpenter in just two hours. For more see: [www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com](http://www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com)

# THE GIRL IN THE LEAVES

By Robert Scott with the cooperation of Sarah & Larry Maynard  
Penguin Random House



Sarah and Kody Maynard were just typical kids growing up in idyllic Apple Valley, Ohio. Kody, at the age of 11, was already a superb baseball pitcher, and Sarah was a pretty, happy-go-lucky cheerleader at the age of 13. On November 10, 2010, however, their whole world was overturned in an instant.

As soon as Sarah and Kody walked home from school and entered the front door of their home, they noticed blood on the living room carpet. Suddenly a man came running down the hallway to grab them. Sarah managed to slip by him and dashed to her bedroom, while Kody turned to run out the front door. Before Sarah could call the police, the knife-wielding man grabbed her and tied her up.

Taken to the man's residence, Sarah was forced into his basement and tied upon a bed of leaves in a dark corner. In fact, her assailant was absolutely fixated with trees and leaves. Every room in his house was stuffed with dry leaves.

Meanwhile, Sarah's father, Larry Maynard, was beside himself with worry, not knowing what had happened to his daughter, son Kody or ex-wife Tina. Many law enforcement agencies became involved, including the FBI, but more than any other,

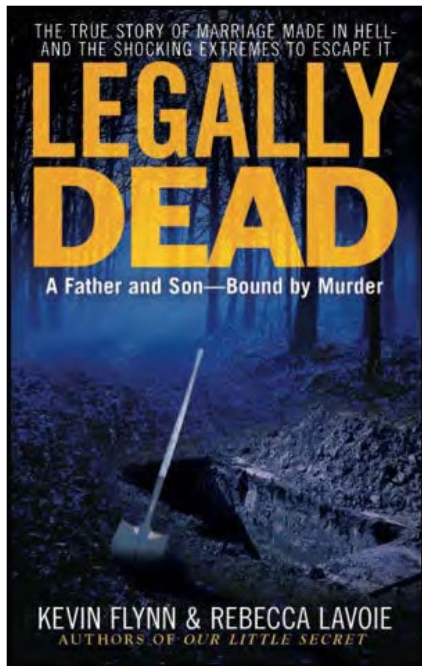
Sarah's fate now depended upon Knox County Sheriff David Barber.

In a race against time, Knox County Sheriff's Office detectives uncovered one vital clue after another about the crime and who might have kidnapped Sarah. And all the while, shackled to a bed of leaves, Sarah survived on one bowl of cold cereal, playing a cat and mouse game of wills with her captor. By now she was certain that her assailant had killed Kody and her mother, and she also believed that she would be next once he tired of her.

Suddenly on November 14, 2010, a SWAT team burst into the man's house and arrested him. Then to their astonishment, they found Sarah alive in a dark corner of the basement, tied to a bed of leaves.

Unfortunately for Tina, Kody and Tina's friend, Stephanie Sprang, Sarah was right about their demise. The perpetrator, 30-year-old Matthew Hoffman of Mount Vernon, Ohio, had killed them and stuffed their bodies into the trunk of a hollow tree. On the one-year anniversary memorial service for Kody, Tina and Stephanie, Sarah spotted Sheriff Barber in the crowd. She well knew who had saved her, and in an exuberance of gratitude, Sarah ran up and gave him a huge hug. This a story of Sarah's courage, Larry Maynard's anguish and the tireless work by the detectives of Knox County in saving Sarah. Both Sarah and Larry Maynard have been on the TODAY show.

For more about the story, see [www.tinakodyandsarah.org](http://www.tinakodyandsarah.org)



# LEGALLY DEAD

## A Father and Son Bound by Murder

By Kevin Flynn & Rebecca Lavoie  
Penguin Random House

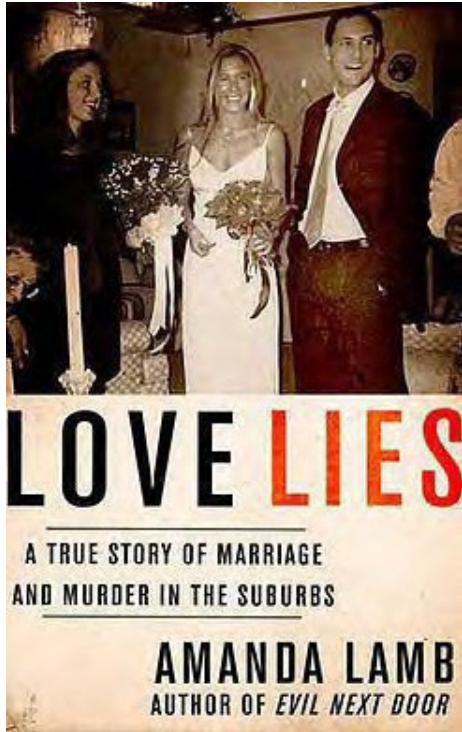
On March 11, 1996, Vicki Bader found an unpleasant delivery in her mailbox - a pipe bomb. It was the latest in a series of threats against the New Hampshire woman and mother of three. Vicki's tires had been slashed, she'd received harassing phone calls, and someone had killed her pet birds by roasting them alive in her oven. Police focused on Vicki's relationship with her ex-husband, a narcissistic attorney named Seth Bader. As the custody battle over their three sons dragged on, Bader enjoyed putting the screws to Vicki. His intimidation was so overwhelming, a psychologically weakened Vicki repeatedly attempted suicide.

Each time she recovered, Bader would push her harder, unmercifully, driving her to the brink. Bader was living in a mansion, using all his legal tricks to keep the children away from their mother. Their oldest boy, 13-year-old Joey, lived like a virtual slave in his house— cooking, cleaning, and caring for his brothers while Bader romanced his sexy new girlfriend, Mary Jean Martin. He lavished Mary Jean with expensive gifts, but it was never enough to secure her love. The money owed to his ex-wife became a wedge in their tumultuous relationship.

In August 1996, Vicki Bader vanished. Seth Bader said their last meeting was an uneventful drop off of their three- year-old son at his house. No one knew where she went afterward. Nearly a year later, police would be led to a body in the deep woods of Maine. Investigators would discover Vicki was murdered by a motley group of thugs organized by Seth Bader. The conspiracy included a pool shark, a wannabe gangster, a gold-digging siren, and— most disturbing of all— the Bader's own son.

Did Seth Bader try to drive Vicki to suicide, then scheme to kill her himself? Or was the lawyer a patsy for a hungry group of con-artists who smelled a big payday? The answers are revealed in *Legally Dead*, the latest compelling true crime story from authors Kevin Flynn and Rebecca Lavoie. This tale of depravity and selfish scheming is one that you will not soon forget.

For more see: [www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com](http://www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com)



# LOVE LIES

By Amanda Lamb

Penguin Random House

*Love Lies* would translate perfectly from the page to the screen. It has all the elements of a real-life thriller. Nancy and Brad Cooper were Canadians who had discovered the American dream in North Carolina. It was a place where they would raise their two daughters, make new friends and spend their time jogging on picturesque trails. That is *until Nancy disappeared*.

Hundreds searched for her. Finally, a man walking his dog found Nancy facedown, partially clothed in an undeveloped subdivision three miles from her home. Her handsome husband, Brad, said she went jogging and never returned. But in the days and weeks following the discovery of Nancy's body came startling discoveries about the couple's crumbling marriage.

Despite Nancy's reputation as a saucy, strong-willed, gutsy woman, friends and family said Brad had been controlling Nancy's life—cutting her off from money, friends and relatives. It was obvious they were headed for divorce, but the couple had many dark secrets, as did their friends, which were yet to be uncovered—infidelities, alcohol-infused arguments, and betrayals.

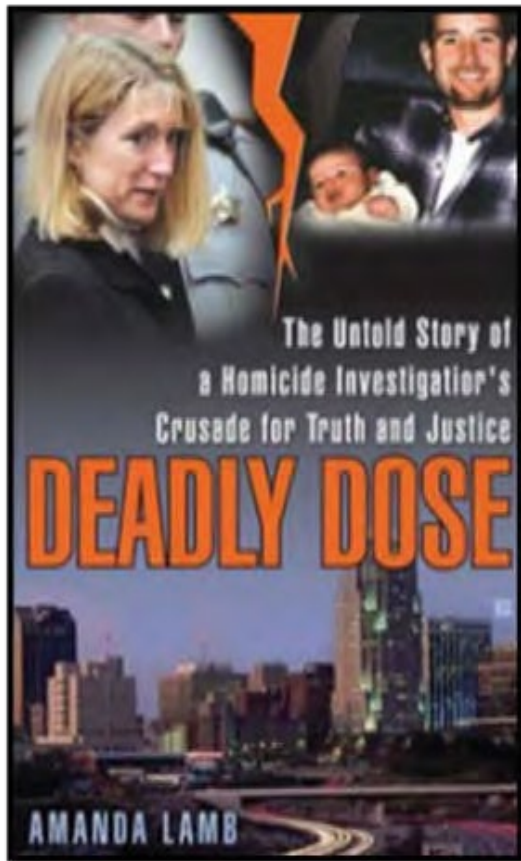
Brad Cooper was arrested for his wife's murder—but the investigation didn't end there. Police continued to search for the smoking gun, the one piece of incontrovertible evidence that would seal his fate. They found it in the form of a Google Map search of the site where Nancy's body was dumped. Prosecutors say Brad performed the search on his computer at work 12 hours before his wife disappeared.

After a contentious 10-week trial, Brad Cooper was convicted of killing Nancy. But the controversy over his guilt still lingered. Some believed that he was railroaded by overzealous police and prosecutors in what was a largely circumstantial case. Ultimately, the North Carolina Court of Appeals overturned his conviction ruling the trial court judge had made several mistakes. But there would not be another trial—Brad cut a deal with the state. He admitted to second degree murder in return for a shorter sentence. He is scheduled to be released from prison in 2020.

*Love Lies* would be a perfect vehicle for film because it exposes the subtleties of domestic abuse that we can't see against the backdrop of an alleged suburban paradise that turns out to be anything but heavenly.

For more about Amanda, see [www.ALambAuthor.com](http://www.ALambAuthor.com)





# DEADLY DOSE

The Untold Story of a Homicide Investigator's  
Crusade for Truth and Justice

By Amanda Lamb  
*Penguin Random House*

Ann Miller wasn't the kind of woman anyone would suspect of being a killer, anyone *except* veteran homicide detective Chris Morgan.

When pediatric AIDS researcher Eric Miller died of an unknown illness at the hospital in Raleigh, North Carolina, his grieving wife came to the police station to give a statement. But almost immediately, Morgan saw something unnerving in the mousy, demure woman who appeared to everyone else to be a victim.

*Deadly Dose* is an excellent vehicle for film because it documents the investigation of one of the few sociopathic female killers of our times. Ann was a scientist, a mother, a churchgoing woman, not someone who schemed and plotted the demise of her kind and brilliant husband. In the tradition of some of the most famous female killers in history, she used arsenic to take her husband's life.

The main character for the film would be Chris Morgan, the larger-than-life tough-talking cop who refuses to rest until he sees Ann behind bars. For four years, he pursues her as she leaves Raleigh and continues on with her life. He soon discovers that behind the façade, she isn't at all who she pretended to be.

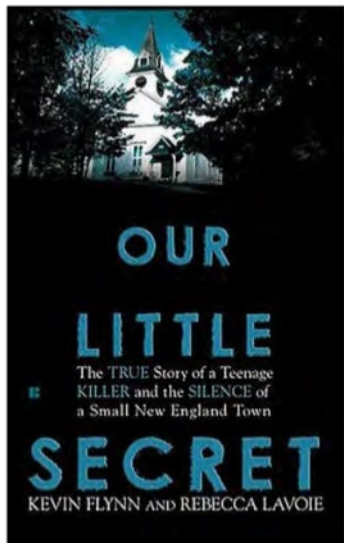
Ann had a series of lovers. One man in particular she called upon to help with her husband's murder. When he fell down on the job, she decided to finish it herself. But the lover couldn't take the heat of the police moving in on him, trying to get him to talk and ended his own life.

A film version of *Deadly Dose* as told through the eyes of investigator Morgan would have viewers on the edge of their seats, and husbands constantly looking over their shoulders...

For more about Amanda, see [www.ALambAuthor.com](http://www.ALambAuthor.com)

# OUR LITTLE SECRET

The True Story of a Teenage Killer and the Silence of a Small New England Town



By Kevin Flynn and Rebecca Lavoie  
Penguin Random House

Just as “Gone Baby Gone” made audiences question the difference between the law and the right thing to do, so will **Our Little Secret**. This true story will have everyone asking himself or herself, “What would I do?” If you knew your friend killed somebody, would you keep it a secret? What if you thought the victim deserved to die?

**Our Little Secret** explores a 20-year-old New Hampshire cold case. In 1985, Danny Paquette is shot square in the heart by a stray bullet from the woods 300 yards away. Although Danny’s sexual conquests have made him the enemy of many husbands, police rule his death an accident. They don’t believe anyone could make that precise of a shot.

Danny’s in-laws are not sad to see him die. His ex-wife had fled to Alaska to get away from him. His adopted daughter Melanie, whom he had sexually abused, is secretly living with relatives in another town. Her aunt is a homicide prosecutor. Danny’s brother, Victor, is a profane biker who lives outside the law. Ironically, he’s the one who pushes police to keep the case alive. Victor thinks the bullet that killed Danny might have been meant for him. Steve Agrafiotis was a rookie cop on the murder case, doing grunt work for investigators. In 2004, he is now the police chief and re-opens the case. He hires an 80-year-old civilian retiree to dive into the file. They focus on a then- 17-year-old boy named Eric Windhurst, who had been Melanie Paquette’s alibi. The kid was a crackerjack shot. An anonymous letter in the 90s accused Windhurst, but no one in his hometown would talk to cops.

Detectives fly across country to confront Melanie. She tells police Windhurst shot her father because Danny was about to learn where she was living. She feared he would come and rape her again. Windhurst agrees to kill Danny in order to protect Melanie.

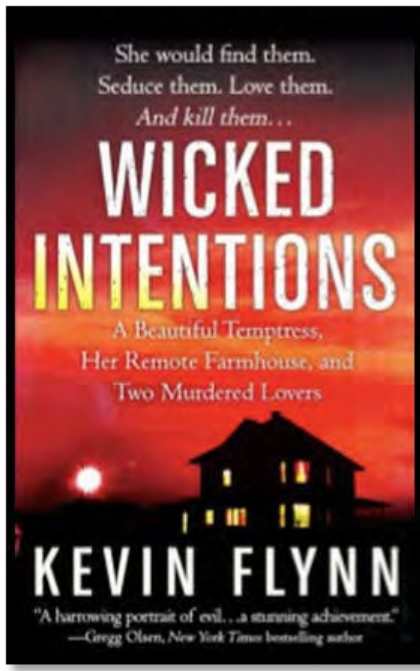
Windhurst’s actions are an open secret in town. Everyone knows; no one turns him in. They believe it was a justified killing. Authorities however find that grown-up Windhurst is a decent man haunted by his deadly action. As the case heads to trial, attorneys think no jury in the world will convict a man who killed a child molester. But then, one final twist. Prosecutors learn that Windhurst’s reasons for killing Danny Paquette have nothing to do with Melanie...

Our Little Secret is an unforgettable true morality play. There are no white hats/black hats. The victim is unsympathetic; the killer is righteous; the damsel in distress is manipulative.

For more see: [www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com](http://www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com)



To see book trailer: [Video Book Trailer](#)



# WICKED INTENTIONS

The Sheila LaBarre Murders

By Kevin Flynn

New Horizon Press; St. Martin's Press

In the vein of “Monster” and “Zodiac” comes **Wicked Intentions**, the true story of a beautiful seductress who lured men to her secluded farm, then murdered them and incinerated their bodies. As **Wicked Intentions** opens, two police officers arrive at a farmhouse in the woods at dusk. They’re doing a well-being check on Kenny Countie, a man whose last known address was this farm. The home is deserted but they discover two fires actively burning in barrels. When they approach, they discover a human bone covered in burnt flesh.

**Wicked Intentions** follows the exploits of Sheila LaBarre, who spent years using her sexuality to allure men, and her anger to battle anyone who crossed her. Her home is filled with her “children,” hundreds of free-range rabbits. As police search her blood-splattered home and the 115 acres of pasture surrounding it, LaBarre eludes detectives. While

on the run (with three rabbits in tow), she charms and manipulates people into doing her bidding, giving her shelter, and proclaiming her innocence to the police and media.

**Wicked Intentions** is also the tale of a reporter obsessed by a story that should catapult him into the national spotlight. As in “Capote,” the reporter transforms from a mild-mannered, disinterested writer to an aggressive, take-no-prisoners journalist who is willing to cross lines in order to get the story, even do a killer’s bidding. As police and the media uncover the details of LaBarre’s past, they learn that many men had cycled through the farm in the past few years; none of them are accounted for. Flashbacks illustrate how Sheila conned the farm out of an elderly widow chiropractor, and about the many men who lived on the farm with her. Sheila would troll homeless shelters and telephone chat lines looking for men who were meek and easily led.

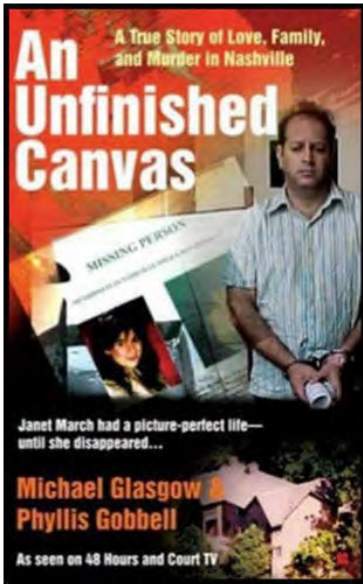
They were all beaten and battered by Sheila; virtual captives on the isolated farm. LaBarre is eventually captured and her attorneys mount an insanity defense. To the horror of all, it seems Kenny Countie isn’t the only man she killed, dismembered, and incinerated on her farm. To this day, authorities cannot say just how many are out there.

**Wicked Intentions** is a gripping true crime story that transcends the genre. Part murder mystery, part psychological study, its protagonist, a female serial killer, offers an actress an eat-the-furniture role that also has real pathos. Equally suitable as a MOW or a feature film, **Wicked Intentions** stands apart from other black widow tales.

For more about Kevin, see [www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com](http://www.AuthorKevinFlynn.com)



To See Book Trailer: [Video Book Trailer](#)



# AN UNFINISHED CANVAS

## A True Story of Love, Family, and Murder in Nashville

By Michael Glasgow and Phyllis Gobbell  
Penguin Random House

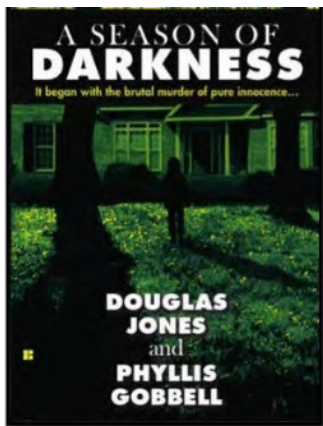
The electrifying true-crime thriller, *An Unfinished Canvas*, brilliantly captures a unique cast of characters. Janet March, the attractive young wife of corporate lawyer Perry March, had it all: two children she adored, a flourishing career as an artist, and a dream house she had designed. What no one knew was that her husband, attorney to the rich and powerful, led a destructive double life of secrets and lies. The night before she was scheduled to meet with a divorce lawyer, Janet simply vanished. Perry maintained that they argued, and Janet drove away, promising to return for their son's sixth birthday. But no one ever saw or heard from Janet March again.

Janet and Perry March are rising stars in Nashville, a city in the New South that is rising, as well. Larry Levine, an intimidating attorney, and his wife Carolyn will stop at nothing – even a secret mission in Mexico to retrieve their grandchildren– in the quest to find justice for their daughter. Perry's father, Arthur March, lures Perry to Mexico to begin a new life, but in the tradition of the best Shakespearean dramas, father turns against son, exposing their conspiracy to murder Janet's parents. Inmate Nathaniel Farris is a street-smart kid who cons the arrogant Perry March, working with police and the D.A. to expose a plot against Larry and Carolyn Levine.

The book chronicles the bizarre events on the night Janet March was last seen and during the disturbing two weeks before she was reported missing; Perry March's flight with his children to Mexico; the international custody battle over the two March children, Sammy and Tzipora. A decade after Janet's disappearance, Nashville's Cold Case Unit develops a case against Perry, and a secret grand jury is empaneled. Following his murder indictment, and with the involvement of the FBI and the office of Mexican President, Perry is arrested and extradited back to Tennessee. Excellent detective work uncovers a scheme by Perry March from behind bars, while he is awaiting trial, to hire a hitman to murder his former in-laws. Perry goes to trial almost 10 years to the day from the date his young wife vanished. Assistant D.A. Tom Thurman has his work cut out for him– no body, no cause of death, no physical evidence– but in the third of a series of trials, Perry March is found guilty. The “smartest guy in the room” goes to prison for 56 years.

The March case received national attention over the decade from 1996 to 2006, during which time CBS's *48 Hours* aired four episodes. Leslie Stahl stated, “This is as good a mystery as you will ever see—in fiction or in real life.”

For more about Phyllis, see [www.phyllisgobbell.com](http://www.phyllisgobbell.com)



# SEASON OF DARKNESS

## Marcia Trimble and the Coldest Cold Case Solved

By Doug Jones and Phyllis Gobbell  
Penguin Random House

### Radio personality Teddy Bart, on the Marcia Trimble case:

*“It had all the elements: a beautiful little girl, a murder, a bungled police operation, fundamentalist religion, and a neighborhood where things like this aren’t supposed to happen.”*

It is a spring-like February afternoon in 1975. Nine-year-old Marcia Trimble, who lives in a quiet, attractive neighborhood, goes across the street to deliver Girl Scout cookies. She never comes home. Her disappearance prompts a massive search, unlike anything known in Nashville, Tennessee. Turf wars develop among the various police units, each with its own command structure. Volunteers trek through the neighborhood leaving millions of fingerprints and footprints before FBI agents arrive. Police set up a command post in a bedroom of the Trimble house. Detectives question Jeffrey Womack, who lives on Marcia’s street. The 15-year-old has a condom in his pocket, and “Fuck You” written on his shoes. He is targeted as a suspect, and police will pursue him for more than 30 years.

Young detective Diane Vaughn has been working on a series of rapes and the murder of a college coed named Sarah Des Prez, all within a five-mile radius of the Trimbles’ neighborhood. She is close to connecting those vicious crimes. But she is drawn away into the search for Marcia Trimble, which has consumed police, the media, and the entire city.

Marcia’s mother, Virginia Trimble, is a devoutly religious woman, one whose stoic demeanor in front of the TV cameras fuels nasty rumors and innuendos. On Good Friday, Virginia tells reporters, “It is a time of miracles. Who knows what may happen?” On Easter morning, 33 days after Marcia’s disappearance, the child’s body is discovered in a deteriorated garage less than 200 yards from the Trimbles’ front door. The family is grief-stricken. The city is in shock. One statement will come to define the Marcia Trimble murder: “In that moment, Nashville lost its innocence.”

The police are under even more pressure to solve what is now a homicide. They focus their investigation on the boys in the neighborhood, with Jeffrey Womack as the prime suspect. In the wake of bizarre stories involving the children, many of the families move away. The Trimble murder and investigation take a brutal toll on Marcia’s family, her neighborhood, and the police department. The Marcia Trimble story becomes part of the fabric of Nashville.

What follows is a trail of twists, turns, frustrating dead ends, lives forever damaged, and a city forever changed. The mystery evolved over three decades. Investigators are criticized for their “tactics of intimidation” in obtaining DNA samples from more than 100 young men, most of whom were “boys in the neighborhood” in 1975. Though no evidence ever implicates Jeffrey Womack, he remains under a cloud of suspicion. It seems the case will never be solved.

But in 2007, the reopening of another 1975 case plunges Cold Case detective Bill Pridemore into the heart of the Marcia Trimble case again. He takes a fresh look at all the evidence. The good police work by Detective Diane Vaughn, deceased since the 1980s, leads Pridemore to an astonishing revelation about the Des Prez murderer—paving the way for a shocking, long-awaited conclusion to the coldest of cold cases: the Marcia Trimble murder.

For more about Phyllis, see [www.phyllisgobbell.com](http://www.phyllisgobbell.com)

# Who Killed Kenzo

By Griffin Dix

Woodhall Press | October 2023

In 1994, fifteen-year-old Kenzo Dix visited a friend's house. His friend retrieved an unlocked handgun from beside his father's bed, removed the clip that had bullets in it, walked back into the room where Kenzo was, and pulled the trigger to play a joke. He expected only a click and a punchline. But a bullet was hidden in the chamber. That hidden bullet, which pulled trigger, which unlocked gun, that friend— killed Kenzo.

A brilliant young lawyer at the Brady Center helped file a lawsuit to force Beretta USA to sell safer handguns. As Griffin and his

wife grieved, the *Dix v. Beretta USA* courtroom battle followed. Three trials brought face-to-face lawyers from the nation's largest gun-violence prevention organization and the gun industry to argue over the causes of Kenzo's death.

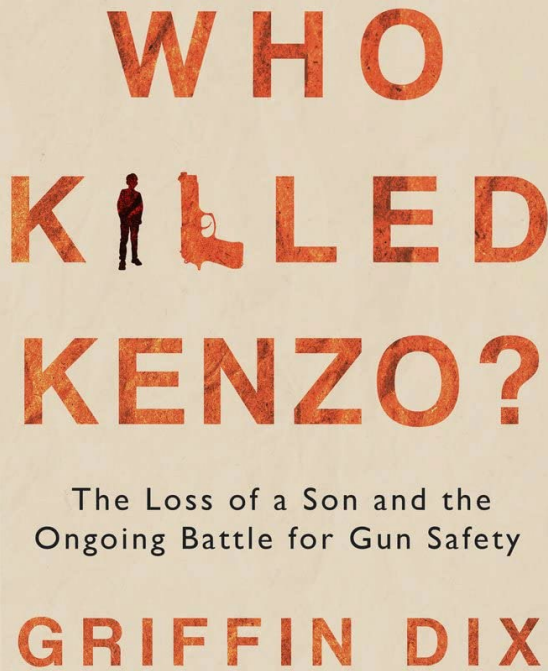
Following the courtroom loss, Dix threw himself into gun safety advocacy and he worked to change state legislation. These California laws helped reduce the state's rate of unintentional gun death by two-thirds. When the safer handguns were sold nationwide, they helped bring down the rate of unintentional gun death in the rest of the country as well.

But the work isn't done.

Dix has led the Oakland, California Brady chapter for many years, and was elected nationally by the chapters to represent them on the Brady Board for a term from 2006 to 2008. A Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, Dix has been featured and written in the *New York Times*, *The Hill*, *The Daily News* and more. Dix is one of the leading research experts and gun safety activists of our time and his story, experience, and legal strategy continue to be relevant today.

"Griffin Dix's book is highly readable, heart-rending, engrossing and suspenseful. It is not a novel, or a fictionalized version of a true story. It is the true story."

—David Hemenway, Ph.D., Professor of Health Policy, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and Co-Director of the Harvard Injury Control Research Center



**ADULT NON FICTION**

crushed

life  
why is it that the boy you like,  
never likes you back?

by  
Kiersten Lyons

# CRUSHED

By Kiersten Lyons  
Regalo Press

While tying the bows on her wedding invitations, Kiersten's fiancé walked in and told her he didn't think he loved her and maybe he never had... Oh and that he cheated. At the Magic Castle. Because what's hotter than watching Neil Patrick Harris perform magic in a fake castle in the Hollywood Hills? But don't worry because six months later, while Kiersten was struggling to pay rent, he won \$100,000 on a reality show. Yup, 100K!!

From a broken engagement, to failed dreams, to infertility, Kiersten Lyons is an expert at heartbreak. In this nostalgic memoir, cut through with equal parts anguish and humor, Lyons shows readers that they can get through even the worst moments in life just like she did.

With a big sister-like quality and on-the-nose empathy (“Why is it the minute you get your heart broken, you look around to see everyone else is doing amazing?!!”) Lyons shares her own survival stories. Her unique voice and distaste for conventional wisdom (“Why are they always telling you, *“Everything happens for a reason?!”*”) Lyons tells her story knowing it is filled with hope and in the end, she learned to live in awe with her own life's pivots. “What if,” she says, “knowing you aren't alone is the first step to one day knowing you'll be in awe too?”



Kiersten Lyons is a writer and actress from Germantown, Maryland. She is the second of five kids and like every comedian, a late bloomer. She spent thirteen years in LA acting, writing, and getting rejected. Her most notable roles include being attacked by her pet lion on Grey's Anatomy, being accused of murdering the husband she shared with her sister wives on Bones, and the real-life role of having her wedding called off two months before which resulted in the award-winning one-woman show, “Crushed: Why is it That the Boys you Like, Never Like You Back?” Upon seeing it, writer/producer Dan Fogelman (Only Murders in the Building, This is Us, Crazy Stupid Love) said this about: *“I loved everything about this show. I loved it so much, I cast Kiersten in a TV show immediately after seeing it. You will be happy if you braved the LA traffic. It's worth it. Go!”* Today Lyons hosts a [Crushed the Podcast](#) on Spotify with a devoted following.

Kiersten is not only a mother, but a Big Sister through Big Brothers, Big Sisters and has spent decades mentoring teens and young women from all walks of life. Her [TikTok account](#) sharing real stories and hilarious observations has amassed millions of views. Her unique voice speaks to those with and without faith, creating a tight-knit community of young women eager to laugh, cry and heal.

***See chapter titles on next page!***



# chapter titles

## **Part One: THE HEARTBREAK**

*White Horse (Taylor Swift)*

### **Chapter 1: Dear Future Husband**

A letter written on Feb 2, 1996 in the hopes that someday, somewhere, someone would like me. The exact date would become one of the best days of my life, I just didn't know it yet...

### **Chapter 2: Dear You**

A letter to the readers of this book.

### **Chapter 3: The Moment Everything Changed**

The beginning of the end of the engagement, and a confession.

### **Chapter 4: God is Rude**

Those two weeks where Ben called the wedding off and on again... TWICE and the absolute rudeness of God not giving us what we want, but what we need.

### **Chapter 5: Those First Two Months**

The first 60 days are always the worst. Waking up and realizing it's all real and really hurts, but somehow also having the first few glimmers of hope.

### **Chapter 6: Oh Sh\*t, It's Real**

Reality sets in, as I set up back in LA, and try for the last time to get him back.

## **Part Two: THE HOW DID I GET HERE?**

*Mean (Taylor Swift)*

### **Chapter 7: "I Love you." "I Know."**

The origins of love. You never forget your first bad boy, even if he is an action figure of Han Solo.

### **Chapter 8: Criss Cross Applesauce**

Changing myself, so he'd love me - at the tender age of 5 ¾.

### **Chapter 9: He's Mean Because He Likes You**

The myth of mean boys: chasing Mike during recess, asking Travis out 7 times until he finally said yes, and vowing to become famous to prove ALL of them wrong.

### **Chapter 10: Middle School Blues**

The heartbreak of being the last to bloom, and the moment we break someone else's heart. Plus a Mormon boy told me, "You have good birthing hips."

### **Chapter 11: Firsts**

First period, first kiss, and first revenge.

### **Chapter 12: "Big Ole City"**

Moving to Hollywood and proving them wrong. Over and over.

### **Chapter 13: Waiting Until Marriage**

My identity was everything, until it wasn't... the heartbreak of not knowing who I was.

### **Chapter 14: Making Taylor Swift Cry**

The first steps in falling in love with myself, becoming a Big Sister and ghosting the nice guy.

### **Chapter 15: Growing Up**

Growing up enough to notice the nice guy. Literally. He drove right past me.

## **Part Three: THE BREAKTHROUGH**

*Lose You, To Love Me (Selena Gomez)*

### **Chapter 16: Falling In Love**

Learning to forgive and allowing myself to be loved. The box of truths and the redemption of the broken engagement.

### **Chapter 17: Dear John**

When the town that held my dreams, held back. And I get crushed all over again.

### **Chapter 18: Left In Awe**

Realizing the redemption of so much heartbreak, and somehow the hope that comes with it.

### **Chapter 19: My Fight with Taylor Swift**

When trying to prove myself finally catches up to me and how we learn to let go.

### **Chapter 20: It's You I Like**

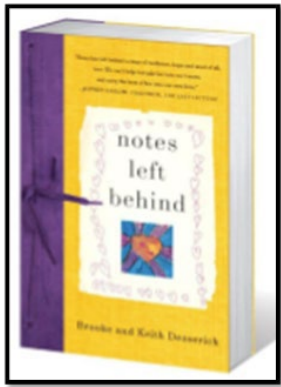
Letting go, forgiving, and allowing myself to be loved (but this time by me).

### **Chapter 21: Dear 14 Year Old Kiersten**

Writing a letter to the girl who wrote THAT letter. Letting her know how loved she truly is.

### **Chapter 22: Dear 14 Year Old Me**

A space with prompts to allow the reader to writer to their own little girl self and words to cut out for their own box of truths.



## NOTES LEFT BEHIND

*By Keith and Brooke Desserich*

*William Morrow/HarperCollins*



*Translated in 24 languages*

It started with just one girl and became a movement among millions that will change the way the world fights cancer. **Notes Left Behind** is a story that Elena's parents never wanted to tell; the story of love, compassion and six-year-old Elena's heroic fight against cancer. From cereal kisses in the morning to trying on wedding dresses far too early, and to the simplest action of holding hands with their daughters on the way to school, the Desserich's book has been called "The Last Lecture for parents."

It began with a series of notes left by Elena for her younger sister Gracie as a form of remembrance, and was soon followed by thousands of mothers and fathers who heard the story on the internet and were each inspired to appreciate and love their own children in more clear and present ways. Learning to value the smaller moments in life over the milestones, the Desserich family passed on the lessons of their children in touching journal entries that captured the joy and passion of a family who discovers the true value of life in drinking deeply of the day.

But it was after Elena's passing and the completion of the journal, that the Desserich's soon discovered the most important lesson their daughter was to leave behind. Finishing a remodeling project that began prior to her diagnosis, they soon started to find hundreds of notes hidden throughout the house from Elena – each with a simple message of love and compassion. And in doing so, Elena would leave her own notes and memories that would endure today. Within days of its initial release in the US, **Notes Left Behind** immediately became a New York Times Bestseller, receiving the attention of The Today Show, CNN, Good Morning America, People Magazine, AOL.com, Yahoo.com, Air America, Inside Edition and beyond. Soon it developed a worldwide following with over 24 different foreign language translations.



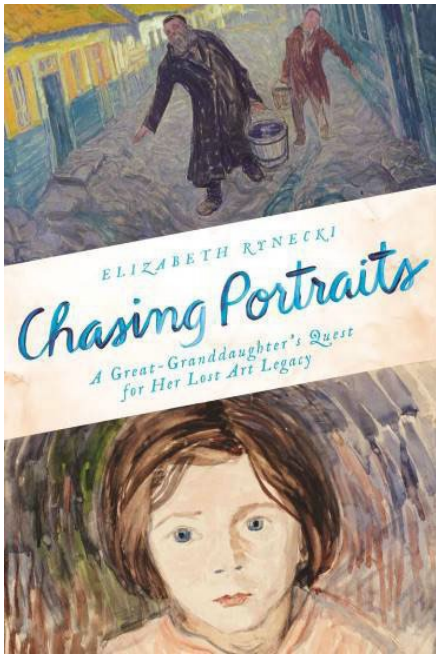
Written as a celebration of Elena's life, the inspirational **Notes Left Behind** today now accomplishes the impossible through the charity created in her honor, The Cure Starts Now. Developed as a calling to fight those cancers that experts believe will offer us a cure for all cancers, it represents a revolutionary cancer strategy that has never before been proposed. And today this "homerun" cure strategy sweeps the world with over 20 chapters and thousands of sponsors. All US and Canadian author proceeds benefit [www.TheCureStartsNow.org](http://www.TheCureStartsNow.org)

*"This is a stunning story that teaches us how precious children, family and life are, and that the sacrifices we make are worth it. I won't forget the Desserich family, and neither will you."* —James Patterson, Renowned Author

For more on the story, see [www.NotesLeftBehind.com](http://www.NotesLeftBehind.com)



View the book trailer: [Notes Left Behind Book Trailer](#)



# Chasing Portraits

## A Great-Granddaughter's Quest for Her Lost Art Legacy

By Elizabeth Rynecki

Penguin Random House

Moshe Rynecki's body of work reached close to eight hundred paintings and sculptures before his life came to a tragic end. It was his great-granddaughter Elizabeth who sought to rediscover his legacy, setting upon a journey to seek out what had been lost but never forgotten...

The everyday lives of the Polish-Jewish community depicted in Moshe Rynecki's paintings simply blended into the background of Elizabeth Rynecki's life when she was growing up. But the art transformed from familiar to extraordinary in her eyes after her grandfather, Moshe's son

George, left behind journals detailing the loss her ancestors had endured during World War II, including Moshe's art. Knowing that her family had only found a small portion of Moshe's art, and that many more pieces remained to be found, Elizabeth set out to find them.

Before Moshe was deported to the ghetto, he entrusted his work to friends who would keep it safe. After he was killed in the Majdanek concentration camp, the art was dispersed all over the world. With the help of historians, curators, and admirers of Moshe's work, Elizabeth began the incredible and difficult task of rebuilding his collection.

Spanning three decades of Elizabeth's life and three generations of her family, this touching memoir is a compelling narrative of the richness of one man's art, the devastation of war, and one woman's unexpected path to healing.

## KIRKUS REVIEW

*A page-turning personal history of Rynecki's search for her great-grandfather's legacy.*

Moshe Rynecki (1881-1943) was a Polish artist whose work "detailed the everyday lives of Polish Jews in the 1920s and 1930s." His singular *oeuvre* shows the culture and quotidian activities of his people, and his very identity was intimately tied to his Jewish heritage, even to the point of following them into the Warsaw ghetto. He was an ethnographically inspired painter and thought abstract styles would detract from the world he was portraying. He and his wife, Perla, operated an art supply store—or she did while he painted. By the time of the Nazi invasion in 1939, he had 800 works that needed to be protected. With his son George's help, he took paintings out of frames, rolled them up, and put them into piles. Moshe also made a list of which pieces went into each pile, but, unfortunately, the list was lost. The works were entrusted to friends to be retrieved after the war. When the Nazis moved the Jews into the ghetto, George refused to take his family, hiding their Jewishness with new identities. Because Moshe would not deny his heritage, he and Perla entered the ghetto. In 1942, George got his mother out, but his father felt that he had to go "where brothers and sisters go. And if it's death, so be it." The last they heard was that he was on his way to a death camp. After the war, Perla found a bundle of more than 100 paintings and gave them to her son, who moved to the U.S with his wife. That much of the story is fascinating, but it's only the beginning, as the author discovers her grandfather's memoir and begins her search for his paintings. *A wonderful story beautifully told. Rynecki's yearslong search, successes, frustrations, and failures are a study in perseverance.*



# VINEYARD MELODY

**A Memoir of One Woman's Incredible Journey from India to France to Pursue her Passion for Wine**

**By Namratha Prashanth**

***(On Submission)***

At a sixteenth-century chateau in the middle of the French countryside, Namratha Prashanth's new life in the vineyards takes root. After escaping an abusive marriage and her society's strict gender roles, Namratha left Bangalore, India behind to create a new business, a new wine label, and a new life in Bordeaux, France.

***\*A part of the proceeds will go toward the education of girls in India.***

Namratha's incredible story has been featured in:

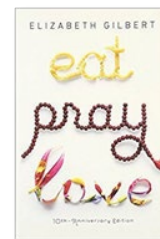
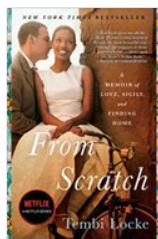
[Forbes](#), [Economic Times](#), [Decanter](#)



Namratha Prashanth arrived in France in early 2017. She made a life-changing decision of moving to Bordeaux, France to study wine after eleven years of personal turmoil. She has pushed boundaries and dared to break free from the patriarchal society in India. Today she successfully runs a wine merchant company in Bordeaux and has launched her own brand of wines called Solicantus, that she distributes internationally.

**Genre:** Memoir, Food & Wine, Traveler & Explorer

## Comparable Titles



## Film Deck link

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nWV\\_Z3vilorOCX2B5h5mp4IQjQr\\_NpTJ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nWV_Z3vilorOCX2B5h5mp4IQjQr_NpTJ/view)



Brecksville-Broadview Heights' Ella Shaheen dismounts off the vault during a meet in January. John Kuntz, cleveland.com

# Fraction Of A Point

By Nina Mandell

Kent State University Press | 2025

Visitors driving into Brecksville, Ohio, a leafy suburb west of Cleveland are greeted with a sign that they have to squint to read the details of. “Brecksville, Ohio,” it reads. “Home to the 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 OHSAA gymnastics champions.” The public high school’s gymnastics team, the Brecksville-Broadview Heights Bees have won - going into the 2023-2024 season - 20 state championships in a row.

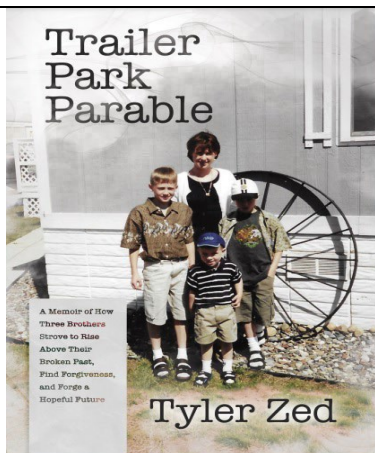
Each year, the stakes get higher. And the gymnasts, all of whom have to live in the school district to compete for the team, are left with the responsibility of continuing a streak that began before they were even born. And if that wasn’t enough motivation, the streak is often viewed as an homage to the family that started it: The Ganims, an influential local family who has been like a second family to hundreds of gymnasts through the years.

The reason for the streak is a local private gymnastics club, Gymnastics World. It was started by Joan and Ron Ganim in the 1970s after Joan was forced out of her teaching job after giving birth to her third child. Ron, who died in 2017, and Joan quickly decided a few things about their gym: It wasn’t going to coach gymnasts who are aiming for the Olympic level. And they wanted nothing to do with coaches who are mentally or physically abusive to their gymnasts, like so many they saw at early meetings. They focused early on the mental health of gymnasts and coaching them to be happy and supportive - an atmosphere so welcoming that Olympian Dominique Moceanu once walked in and was taken so aback she asked for a job there.

Through a combination of business and coaching savvy, the gym now has three locations (one is a cheerleading gym) and feeds what the brother of Brecksville assistant coach (and former star) Leah Miko once called “a gymnastics factory” that is the Brecksville team.

“A Fraction of A Point” follows the team through its 2022-23 season as the gymnasts compete for the 20th consecutive state title - and all of the interpersonal relationships, mental challenges and drama that comes with trying to make the state lineup and trying to keep the streak alive. The story is filled with characters impossible not to root for and a legacy that often times feels impossible to live up to.

**About the author:** Nina Mandell is a Cleveland-based journalist who is a graduate of Northwestern University. Her work has appeared in USA Today, ESPN, Sports Illustrated and more.



*Publishers Weekly Best Seller List!*

# Trailer Park Parable

A Memoir of How Three Brothers Strove to Rise Above

Their Broken Past, Find Forgiveness, and Forge a Hopeful Future

By Tyler Zed

January, 2024

Tyler Zed (1+ million subscribers on [YouTube](#)) delves into growing up with his two brothers amid addiction and chaos in a Minnesota trailer park, culminating in his father's arrest for the attempted murder of their mother on Christmas Eve 2007.

**“Attempted murder victim told the *Brainerd Dispatch* she believes her sixteen-year-old son saved her.”**  
This is the news article detailing the event that would drastically change Tyler Zed’s life and that of his family forever.

Growing up in a small town in Minnesota, Tyler and his two brothers filled their days with chaotic fun, from playing hockey to building forts to making their own home movies. The household was also full of addiction and abuse that ultimately led to their father attempting to murder their mother on Christmas Eve 2007.

*Trailer Park Parable* follows Tyler and his family before Christmas Eve 2007, the events leading to that night, and the years afterward. It trails the boys as they deal with varying degrees of PTSD and their own battles with addiction, before they eventually turned their creative coping mechanisms, like their YouTube channels, into million-subscriber successes.

From living in a trailer park to running a multi-million-dollar business, *Trailer Park Parable* highlights a true, American-dream story, countering a popular narrative that tells us you may as well not even try, the system is rigged against you.

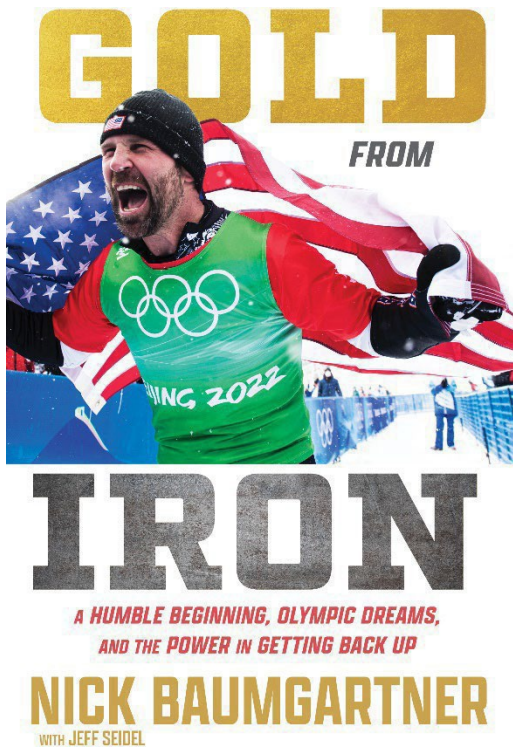
## From Library Journal!

In his candid debut memoir, Zed (an alias for Desmond Janousek), host of the popular YouTube channel Zeducation, opens up about his tumultuous upbringing, juxtaposing moments of idyllic childhood with the chaos wrought by a parent’s substance-use disorder. The constant struggle to evade violence culminates in a harrowing incident where Zed and his brothers intervene to prevent their father from killing their mother, leaving them with undiagnosed PTSD in the aftermath. Through poignant storytelling, he paints a vivid picture of both the good and the bad memories, acknowledging his father as a flawed individual consumed by inherited demons he could not control. His capable delivery unveils the depths of his emotions regarding his father and the profound impact of his upbringing. As a narrator, he demonstrates a remarkable range, channeling life’s pain and pleasures with an authenticity that goes beyond that seen in Zeducation.

**VERDICT:** *A tale of perseverance and resilience, Zed’s memoir will resonate deeply with fans of his other work, offering a compelling glimpse into the human spirit’s capacity for growth and redemption amid adversity.*



Online personality Tyler Zed (real name Desmond Janousek) was born in Minnesota in 1990. He served in the United States Air Force as a medical technician from 2011 to 2015. After getting out of the military, he attended the University of Minnesota where he began creating YouTube videos as a hobby under the alias “Tyler Zed.” Years later, his channel, [Zeducation](#), has garnered over a million subscribers and receives millions of views a week. He offers commentary on memes, pop culture, current events, and politics, with his trademark good-natured humor and libertarian bent.



# GOLD FROM IRON: The Nick Baumgartner Story

By Nick Baumgartner with Jeff Seidel  
*Triumph Books | 2024*

Nick Baumgartner won his gold, not just for himself, not just for Michigan. Not even for Team USA. He did it for everyone chasing a dream after they thought they'd run out of chances.

The oldest athlete to compete for Team USA at the Beijing Olympics, forty-year-old Nick Baumgartner missed out on competing in the men's final for Snowboard Cross, his specialty. Crying in the way only [a post-loss interview](#) can elicit, Nick spoke openly about the heartbreak – and went viral.

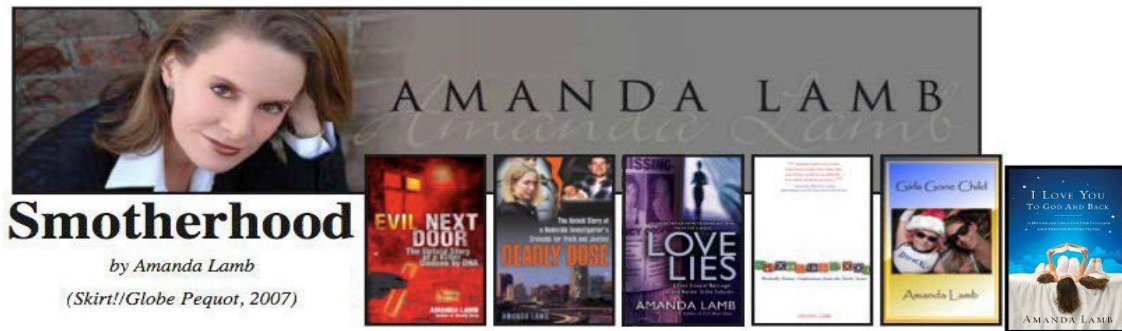
It was his fourth Olympics, he'd trained for years, he was “running out of chances,” and he didn't want to end in a disappointment like this. Little did he know his Olympic dream wasn't over, as two days later he was chosen to compete in the inaugural mixed snowboard cross event at the Olympics, pairing up with Lindsay Jacobellis. Nick had one chance left.

Growing up in Iron River, Michigan, part of the Upper Peninsula (the U.P., home to the self-proclaimed Yoopers), Nick lived the kind of story Disney underdog films are made of. **GOLD FROM IRON: The Nick Baumgartner Story** takes you from Beijing to Iron River, and back again. A union man who pours concrete and works construction in the offseason to fund his Olympic dreams, a single dad of a seventeen year-old, and guy too stubborn and too driven to ever give up. From early days in a town of less than 3,000 people, this blue-collar Olympian chased his need for speed and created opportunities – whether playing football, competing in the X-games, or supporting his foster-siblings. Then he found snowboard cross.

Appropriately, the mixed snowboard cross is a team event, and Nick is the first to tell you he couldn't chase his dream without the support of his team – his family and entire community. Perhaps that's why his earlier solo loss made him feel like he let people down. This time, in the mixed snowboard cross, he and his teammate would have to lean on each other. The men race first, and their performances determine the women's starting positions. Then the men must [wait and watch from the bottom of the hill](#).

This is Nick's story, **GOLD FROM IRON**, told with the help and guidance of award-winning Detroit Free Press journalist Jeff Seidel, who has followed Nick's career. Jeff has been nominated for a Pulitzer Prize more than ten times and in 2022, he won the Triple Crown in the Associated Press Sports Editors writing contest, which is considered one of the highest honors for sports writing.

The full mixed snowboard cross final here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zL1OvGEf5W8&t=4s>



When the gritty world of a television crime reporter invades the daily life of a mother raising two little girls, there is an endless amount of humorous and dramatic material for a television sitcom.

**Smotherhood™** is a collection of laugh-out-loud, tender, unfiltered anecdotes about balancing work and parenting. For hard-charging local television reporter Amanda Lamb, **Smotherhood™** is a way of life. She reads autopsy reports while her daughters sing Taylor Swift songs on their karaoke machine in the next room. She listens to her daughter's story of losing a tooth on her cell phone while waiting in the jail for a homicide suspect to be booked. She ducks out of a murder trial to see her daughter play a cirrus cloud in the school play.

**Smotherhood™**, a name which Lamb has registered as a federal trademark, is an ongoing balancing act as Lamb juggles the pressures of her high-profile stressful job with the mundane moments of parenting. The result for readers and would-be viewers of a sitcom is the hilarious melding of two disparate worlds. From talking to the district attorney on her phone in a bathroom stall while her daughter poops, to listening to her editor curse like a sailor on her Blue Tooth in the car with a carload of kids, parents everywhere will relate to Lamb's unlikely predicament as her two worlds continually collide. And the **Smotherhood™** journey continues...Lamb has also penned a follow-up, **Girls Gone Child**, with plenty of new humorous material. In addition, she writes the weekly blog: [Go Ask Mom](#).

### **Smotherhood One Hour:**

Nothing is more poignant than the extremes of the two worlds colliding—one that focuses on death, the other that revolves around the living. **Smotherhood™** is a collection of tender, humorous essays that chronicle the disparate worlds of hard-charging local television crime reporter Amanda Lamb as she navigates between her job covering murder cases and her job at home as a mother to two little girls. In her high-stress, intense professional life Lamb covers grizzly murder cases with a competitive spirit and passion that often lead her down dangerous paths both literally and figuratively. But her role as a mother to two precious daughters is the anchor which grounds her in reality.

With the help of her good old boy husband, Grif, she somehow maintains her sanity amidst the daily chaos of her life. **Smotherhood™** is the perfect material to use as the background for a one-hour television drama.

It contains just the right blend of heartwarming, humorous moments juxtaposed against the gritty backdrop of the darkness witnessed by a television crime reporter. Viewers will relate to the challenges of balancing work and family, but at the same time be intrigued with how Lamb's world at work is so contradictory to her life at home. And there's plenty of material. Lamb has also written a follow-up to **Smotherhood™** titled **Girls Gone Child and** continues to keep a diary of her most memorable moments in television news, and there are *many*.

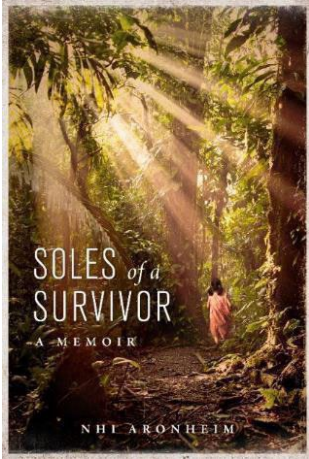
For more about Amanda, see [www.alambauthor.com](http://www.alambauthor.com)



# Soles of a Survivor

The Unbelievable True Story of a Vietnamese Refugee Who Not Only Made the United States Her Home, But Learned the True Value of Hope, Love, and Religion Along the Way

by Nhi Aronheim, Skyhorse



*"Nhi Aronheim has lived many lives: the privileged daughter of a physician in Vietnam, frightened child who escapes barefoot through the jungles of Cambodia, refugee in Thailand with only two pieces of clothing to her name, adopted daughter of an American family in the South, and now wife, mother, and writer. In Soles of a Survivor, she writes beautifully about war and its aftermath, adversities and misfortunes to be overcome, the vicissitudes of religion and fate, and, ultimately, resilience, endurance, and gratitude. Her life and her words are inspiration."*— Lisa See, New York Times bestselling author of *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, *Peony in Love*, *Shanghai Girls*, *Dreams of Joy*, and *China Dolls*

*From one corner of the world to another, the global community is experiencing the worst refugee crisis in history. For too many of us, the reality refugees face seems far away and hard to imagine. That's one reason Nhi Aronheim's compelling new book is so helpful right now. By sharing her own story, she makes the refugee crisis real, personal and understandable for the rest of us. Her resilience and path to new life should give us hope that the same path is possible for others. We need Nhi's message now because millions of refugees need our help now more than ever."* – Michael J. Nyenhuis, President and CEO, UNICEF USA

The soles of Nhi Aronheim's feet still bear the scars of her escape from Vietnam—trudging through the jungles of Cambodia as a twelve-year-old with a group of strangers seeking the land of opportunity: America.

Her quest for survival through the Cambodian jungle eventually led her to a boat that took her to Thailand and an orphanage where Nhi lived for two years until she qualified for refugee status in the U.S. Years later, she returned to Vietnam to reunite with the family she never thought she'd see again. A second trip to Vietnam brought her two mothers, birth and adopted, face to face.

Yet *Soles of a Survivor* isn't just another inspirational survival story. It's about the lessons Nhi learned about humanity, diversity, and unconditional love since arriving in the United States. She now has a deeper appreciation for the parallels between the Jewish and Vietnamese cultures, and others. After she met her Jewish beau, they got married. She eventually converted to Judaism, though the process was challenging for an Asian woman adopted into a Christian household. Her story shows it matters less what religion we're part of as long as we radiate goodness to those we meet. Now she relishes being a Vietnamese Jew.

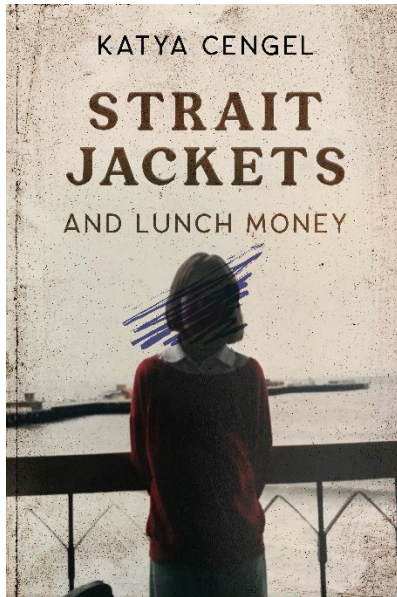
Having come full circle from prosperity to poverty and back, Nhi hopes to encourage others to believe that in spite of overwhelming odds, all things are possible if one has an intense desire, focused energy, and the audacity to grasp presented opportunities.



Several anthologies including *Kentucky Women: Two Centuries of Indomitable Spirit and Vision*, Colorado Public Radio (CPR), Harvey Brownstone Interviews (Canadian Show), and Lotus Network have profiled her harrowing journey as a child refugee who escaped war-torn Vietnam in search of the American Dream.

Wanting to make a positive difference in people's lives, Nhi has been a mediator and interpreter since her retirement from the mortgage industry.

For more about Nhi, see [www.NhiAronheim.com](http://www.NhiAronheim.com)



# STRAIGHT JACKETS AND LUNCH MONEY

By Katya Cengel, Woodhall Press 2023

A psychologist described the pandemic as having thrown gasoline on embers that were already glowing. The fire in question – a mental health crisis for children under 13. Between the same six-month period in 2019 and 2020 the proportion of children ages 5 to 11 seeking mental health treatment in emergency rooms around the country versus other treatments saw a 24 percent increase.

Providers and parents cite the same concerns author Katya Cengel experienced as a young child and reports on as an adult: lack of treatment and options for younger patients, smaller insurance reimbursement for mental health care compared to other medical services, and lack of screening for young children.

Katya was ten years old when she was institutionalized in 1986. Her young age set her apart from the other – mostly teenage – children on the psychosomatic unit: anorexic girls became her babysitters, non-compliant diabetic boys her big brothers. Instead of learning her multiplication tables, Cengel learned how to throw up. The bulimic teens taught her that. Visitors from other units showed her how to be ashamed. Hospital staff put her in a straitjacket – and on anti-psychotic medication. Her young age, the length of her stay – almost three months – and her lack of diagnosis inspired a rare intimacy in staff and patients, allowing Katya to penetrate a hidden world more deeply than most.

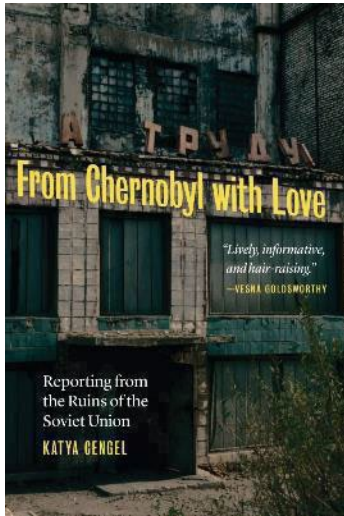
Thirty years later Cengel, now a journalist, returns looking for answers and discovers her young age was not the only thing that made her stay unusual. The idea of psychosomatic units themselves, where patients have dual medical and psychological diagnoses, was a revolutionary one. Treating the medical alongside the psychological has since largely fallen out of favor. Cengel finds this out when she tracks down the doctors, psychologists and counselors who once cared for her. She tells that part of the story as a journalist.

The account of what happened to her as a child is told in the voice of a ten-year-old girl. The two narratives unfold simultaneously. The result is a gut-wrenching account of childhood mental illness told from the inside interspersed with updates from experts in the field on everything from Munchausen syndrome by proxy to psychological disorders in which a patient's physical symptoms cannot be fully explained by a medical or neurological condition.

With the news sense of a seasoned journalist whose bylines have appeared in *New York Times Magazine*, *Smithsonian* magazine, and *Marie Claire* magazine – and the spirit of a former patient – Cengel investigates her biggest story yet, her own.



**Katya Cengel** became patient number 090 71 51 at the Roth Psychosomatic Unit at Children's Hospital at Stanford in 1986. She was ten years old. Today she is the author of three traditionally published non-fiction books and reports from around the world for *New York Times Magazine*, *Marie Claire* and *Smithsonian* among others. She has been awarded grants from the International Reporting Project, the International Women's Media Foundation and the International Center for Journalists. [www.KatyaCengel.com](http://www.KatyaCengel.com)



# From Chernobyl With Love

By Katya Cengel

In 1986 an explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic helped trigger the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Three and a half decades later, in 2022, the plant's capture by Russian forces reminded Ukraine – and the world – that, for Russia, it isn't over.

In between an American reporter and a Ukrainian photographer fell in love. At Chernobyl. Site of world's worst nuclear disaster.

They met on a press bus after witnessing the plant's last working reactor being switched off in December 2000. Another journalist – Georgiy Gongadze – had already gone missing. Later the discovery of Gongadze's headless corpse and secret audiotapes that seem to implicate the government in his murder spark a movement that topples the government, setting off revolutions that ultimately end in war.

Before that though, there was something else – hope.

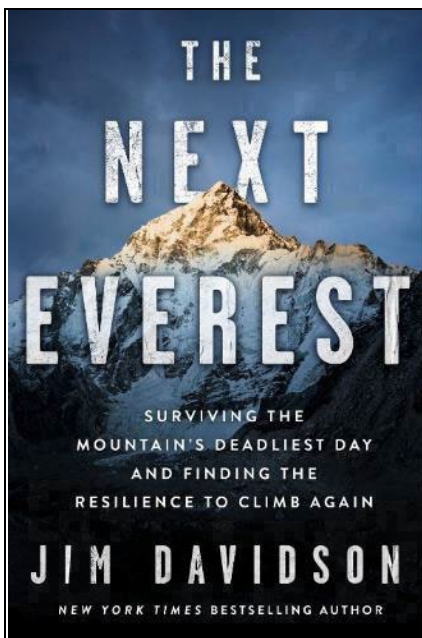
In the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the late twentieth century was a time of unprecedented optimism. The collapse of the Soviet Union left behind a number of independent countries where the Scorpions' 1990 pop ballad "Wind of Change" became a rallying cry.

Young writers, journalists, and adventurers flocked from the West eastward to cities like Prague and Budapest. Katya Cengel landed in Riga, Latvia. She took her first job at the *Baltic Times* just seven years after Latvia regained its independence and less than a week after she graduated from college. Two years later she was in Kyiv, Ukraine. In the three years she reported from Ukraine she made several trips to Chernobyl, where she met her fiancé. But as she fell in love, Ukraine collapsed, bringing it to the brink of political disintegration and civil war. Ultimately, this fall of idealism in the East underscores Cengel's own loss of innocence.

*From Chernobyl with Love* is an equal parts heartbreaking and humorous true coming of age story of a girl and a country made all the more poignant because of current events.

**Katya Cengel** lived and reported from the former Soviet Union for half a decade and continues to cover the region, most recently for *Smithsonian Magazine*. She is the author of three traditionally published non-fiction books and reports from around the world for *New York Times Magazine*, *Marie Claire* and *Smithsonian* among [others](#). She has been awarded grants from the International Reporting Project, the International Women's Media Foundation and the International Center for Journalists.

"Not too many young journalists would ditch the beaches of California for the cold, corruption, and chaos of Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. But Katya Cengel is no ordinary scribe. In her witty, insightful, and heartfelt memoir, *From Chernobyl with Love*, Cengel uncovers it all, from Latvian Nazis to Ukrainian uprisings to finding love in the land of nuclear disaster. *From Chernobyl with Love* is a rewarding blend of candid experiences and expert reporting from an important yet enigmatic part of the world." — **Franz Wisner**, *New York Times* best-selling author of *Honeymoon with My Brother*



# THE NEXT EVEREST

*Surviving the Mountain's Deadliest Day and Finding the Resilience to Climb Again*

By Jim Davidson, NYT Bestselling Author

St. Martin's Press

## 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Everest Expedition

"[Davidson] follows in the literary trail blazed by Krakauer . . . a gripping account." —*The New Yorker*

"There's more to this book than a disaster survival story...authentic, illuminating." —*Outside*

"Deft and honest....Davidson exorcises the demons of a tragedy decades in his past."

—David Roberts, author of *The Mountain of My Fear*

Harrowing." —*Forbes*

On April 25, 2015, Jim Davidson was climbing Mount Everest when a 7.8-magnitude earthquake released avalanches all around him and his team, destroying their only escape route and trapping them at nearly 20,000 feet. It was the largest earthquake in Nepal in eighty-one years and killed nearly 8,900 people. That day also became the deadliest in the history of Everest, with eighteen people losing their lives on the mountain.

After spending two unsettling days stranded on Everest, Davidson's team was rescued by helicopter. The experience left him shaken, and despite his thirty-three years of climbing and serving as an expedition leader, he wasn't sure that he would ever go back. But in the face of risk and uncertainty, he returned in 2017 and finally achieved his dream of reaching the summit.

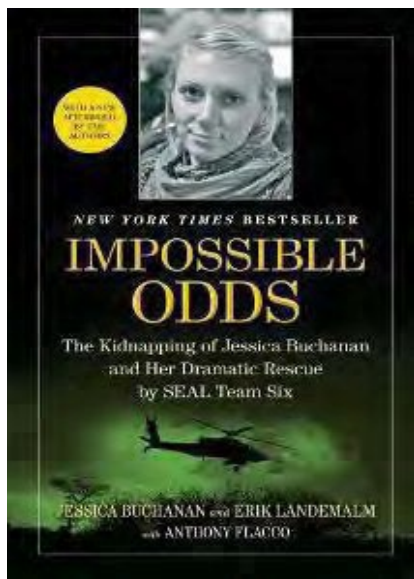
Suspenseful and engrossing, *The Next Everest* portrays the experience of living through the biggest disaster to ever hit the mountain. Davidson's background in geology and environmental science makes him uniquely qualified to explain why the seismic threats lurking beneath Nepal are even greater today. But this story is not only about "conquering" the world's highest peak. Instead, it reveals how embracing change, challenge, and uncertainty prepares anyone to face their next "Everest" in life.

JIM DAVIDSON is an accomplished high-altitude climber, photographer, motivational speaker, and coauthor of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Ledge*. Along with his teammates, he has been commended twice by the U.S. National Park Service for volunteering on risky and remote mountain rescues. He has inspired audiences across the U.S. and overseas through his professional business, **Speaking of Adventure**. Davidson has two adventurous children and lives in Colorado with his very tolerant wife.

See [speakingofadventure.com](http://speakingofadventure.com) Video: [https://youtu.be/BCe2VitI\\_K4](https://youtu.be/BCe2VitI_K4)

<https://coloradosun.com/2022/06/19/sunlit-jim-davidson-the-next-everest/>

NPR Radio: [Surviving Everest's deadliest day: A conversation with Jim Davidson | KUNC](#)



# IMPOSSIBLE ODDS:

The Kidnapping of Jessica Buchanan and Her  
Dramatic Rescue by SEAL Team Six

By Jessica Buchanan, Erik Landemalm with Anthony Flacco  
Atria/Simon & Schuster

\*Screenplay available

**Formerly under option with Clint Eastwood, Warner Bros.**

On October 25, 2011, 32-year-old **Jessica Buchanan** is an attractive American teacher working for a humanitarian NGO in Somalia. She trains local communities on how to avoid the landmines and unexploded munitions that litter the region. But on this day, she and an older male colleague are kidnapped at gunpoint and held for ransom by an organization of Somali pirates who have moved their operations on land. Their number includes traumatized child soldiers who are hooked on drugs supplied by their masters.

An FBI asset sees the attack and within two hours the White House and FBI are already monitoring. They quickly locate the captors out in the desert, but fear that an attack will only result in the captives' deaths. Jessica's sole source of hope among her captors is a Somali man of goodwill, who has only joined the captors because they were going to force his son into their child army. He saved the boy by going in his place. He hates what is happening there but can only give limited support.

For the next three months, Jessica is terrorized by more than two dozen terrorists, some adult and some very young, who carry assault rifles at all times and work themselves into near delirium by chewing addictive khat leaves. She is held outdoors in filthy conditions and kept on a starvation diet while her health and that of her 60-year-old Danish counterpart steadily deteriorates. Negotiations drag. Strangely, her worst tormentor is the youngest, a child soldier of about 12, who appears determined to inflict all the sadism upon others that the world has shown to him. Only Jessica's "friendship" with her one reluctant captor named "Helper," plus her understanding of their culture, allows her to manipulate the men just enough to remain alive. She repeatedly staves off rape and mock execution. But while tied to trees in the Somali wilderness, she slowly succumbs to malnutrition and kidney failure, and only keeps her sanity by visualizing long visits to familiar places.

As the ordeal stretches into its third month, the captors grow increasingly nervous. They worry about turncoats within their own ranks. Nobody can be trusted. The khat leaves fuel paranoia. The aura of the camp shifts to desperation laced with heightened suspicion. The kidnapers become even more agitated when a faint but constant droning sound begins to drift down from somewhere high overhead. It is nearly too soft to hear and never quite identifiable. Nobody can see anything up there, but the noises continue. Their paranoia is correct here; the SEALs are watching everything these men do.

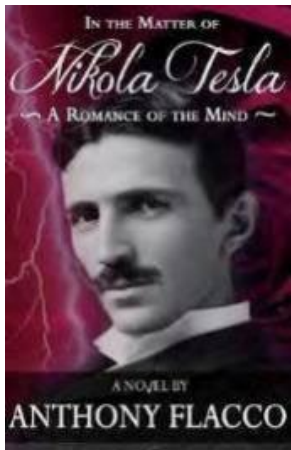
Throughout the ordeal, every moment Jessica Buchanan spends suffering in captivity is matched by that of her adoring husband of less than three years, **Erik Landemalm (35)**, a humanitarian aid worker who manipulates tribal chiefs to circulate false gossip and confuse the kidnapers. While SEAL Team Six rehearses their potential raid, Erik bolsters the hunt for her by acting as liaison between their two families, the FBI, professional hostage negotiators, and the United States Government.

During those torturous months, they are teased by rare chances to communicate for a display of "Proof of Life," and tormented by the kidnapers' unexplained silences and psychotic outbursts. Their long midnight of the soul tests their individual resolve as well as their faith in one another. Finally, after 93 days of fruitless negotiations, Jessica's rapidly failing health raises her medical state to a life and death issue. President Obama secretly orders Seal Team Six to raid the location. The violent rescue by 24 SEALs is played out in detail, from their rehearsals to the parachute drop, to the attack itself. It is January 25, 2012, and while the President delivers his State of the Union speech to a national television audience, the rescue team parachutes from a C-130 under cover of darkness, hikes two miles to the location, and attacks the heavily armed hostiles on duty that night. All are killed with no harm to the hostages, who are quickly airlifted out on a military rescue helicopter.

Today Jessica is a young mother of a son and daughter, a motivational speaker and serves as Goodwill Ambassador for the Navy Seal Foundation. For more about Jessica, see [www.JessBuchanan.com](http://www.JessBuchanan.com)



Watch 60 Minutes: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-rescue-of-jessica-buchanan/>



# NIKOLA TESLA

## 6 Part Limited Dramatic Series

*Adapted from the Novel by Anthony Flacco, wga/w*

**\* Full Treatment Available \***

This proposed **six part limited dramatic historical** series with potential for ongoing series is told through the POV of mega-rich financier, **J.P. MORGAN** in following the life of the brilliant inventor Nikola Tesla. It is told through the eyes of those who work with him, work against him, spy on him, believe in him, and betray him. The story follows a five-year timeline from 1899 to 1904. For Morgan, the Great Question is simple: what drives this revolutionary scientific genius -- and does the answer threaten Morgan's empire?

### WHY J.P. MORGAN?

These six episodes are told principally from Morgan's POV because he is the reason for the failure of Tesla's plan for Universal Free Energy. Morgan is the source of the blackball put on Tesla by Wall St. investors. Plainly put, J.P. Morgan single-handedly destroyed the career of Nikola Tesla.

But as the story will show, he had no other choice, given the information he possessed. Tesla wasn't dangerous because he was wrong; he was dangerous because he was right. If Morgan hadn't stopped Tesla, then for better or worse, there is no doubt the world would be much different today. And in Morgan's view that meant disaster, either from Tesla himself or from the people given his machines and tearing up the planet with their carelessness.

J.P. Morgan's museum-quality office is the lair of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Alpha Male, with oversized Victorian furniture calculated to impress, intimidate. There he pulls in other people (Mark Twain, George Westinghouse, Tesla assistant George Scherff) to ask about Tesla and get their perception of the man. Morgan has massive investments at stake, perhaps entire industries, and he has to know whether or not to continue backing Tesla's experiments or cut him off and leave him dry. The stories these men tell are played out in Morgan's visionary imagination, while *none of them agree* on who this strange man is.

Each time one of them begins talking about Tesla, the narrative begins as seen from their POV, however the POV quickly switches to that of J.P. Morgan, while he visualizes what he is being told. HIS version never makes the speaker or the subject look very good. Everybody in Morgan's POV is always noticeably more unkempt in appearance and slow of speech.

### HERE'S HOW THE POV CHANGES ARE USED:

Author Mark Twain looks at Tesla and sees a beautiful genius doomed to be derailed by human stupidity. Tesla plays out exactly that way in Twain's POV.

But while Morgan listens to the famous author, the narrative switches to his POV and shows a decadent writer of trivial popular novels who is speaking up for a dangerously eccentric inventor.

George Westinghouse tells Morgan about his associations with Tesla. In financing the Niagara Falls power system for Tesla, using Morgan's money, he has come to see Tesla as an inventive man. But he sees Tesla's naivety as proving his genius to be overrated.

Of course, while Morgan listens, the narrative shifts to his POV and reveals that he regards Westinghouse as an uncultured “lucky winner” in business. In Morgan’s POV, Westinghouse is a rather unintelligent bore who can barely keep Tesla listening to him when he speaks. Morgan dismisses the worth of his responses, lights a cigar, and begins to sing an idle tune under his breath while Westinghouse drones on.

As for George Scherff, Tesla’s longtime assistant is so kind in his version of Tesla that Morgan accuses him of covering up for his boss. But Scherff persists in telling of a solitary genius who lives most of his life inside his head, where he entertains a “muse” who may be invisible, but who is real to him.

Scherff insists Tesla’s motives are pure. His POV shows Tesla as a passionate romantic with a vivid personal imagination. Scherff tells how he sometimes watches Tesla’s revels from the shadows, a guilty voyeur filled with admiration.

But while Morgan listens, his POV overlaps Scherff’s, and now both Scherff and Tesla come across as “a fool and his servant,” sloppily attired and slower of speech. Morgan sees what the genius cannot: the proposed World Power System would concentrate all broadcasting of electrical power as well as all forms of information to a handful of Tesla Towers around the globe. The commercial and military challenges to seize control of them would never end.

In this way we come to understand why the great J. Pierpont Morgan, more financially powerful than the United States government, will see to it that this man must be stopped. The fact that Nikola Tesla has already conceived, designed, and installed the first electrical generators at Niagara Falls doesn’t speak in his favor-- it proves he must be stopped.

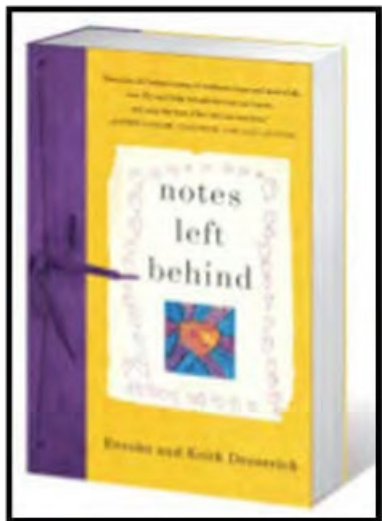
And so, although the Niagara Falls power station is a model for the world’s emerging power grid, Tesla will die in 1943 too poor to pay his own light bill.

According to J.P. Morgan, civilization dodged a bullet.

# NOTES LEFT BEHIND

By Keith and Brooke Desserich

William Morrow/HarperCollins Translated in 24 languages.



It started with just one girl and became a movement among millions that will change the way the world fights cancer. **Notes Left Behind** is a story that Elena's parents never wanted to tell; the story of love, compassion and six-year-old Elena's heroic fight against cancer. From cereal kisses in the morning to trying on wedding dresses far too early, and to the simplest action of holding hands with their daughters on the way to school, the Desserich's book has been called "The Last Lecture for parents."

It began with a series of notes left by Elena for her younger sister Gracie as a form of remembrance and was soon followed by thousands of mothers and fathers who heard the story on the internet and were each inspired to appreciate and love their own children in more clear and present ways. Learning to value the smaller moments in life over the milestones, the Desserich family passed on the lessons of their children in touching journal entries that captured the joy and passion of a family who discovers the true value of life in drinking deeply of the day.

But it was after Elena's passing and the completion of the journal, that the Desserich's soon discovered the most important lesson their daughter was to leave behind. Finishing a remodeling project that began prior to her diagnosis, they began to find hundreds of notes hidden throughout the house from Elena – each with a simple message of love and compassion. And in doing so, Elena would leave her own notes and memories that would endure today. Within days of its initial release in the US, **Notes Left Behind** immediately became a New York Times Bestseller, receiving the attention of The Today Show, CNN, Good Morning America, People Magazine, AOL.com, Yahoo.com, Air America, Inside Edition and beyond. Soon it developed a worldwide following with over 25 different foreign language translations continuing into 2010.

Written as a celebration of Elena's life, the inspirational **Notes Left Behind** accomplishes the impossible through the charity created in her honor, The Cure Starts Now. Developed as a call to fight those cancers that experts believe will offer us a cure for all cancers, it represents a revolutionary cancer strategy that has never before been proposed. And today this "homerun" cure strategy sweeps the world with over 20 chapters and thousands of sponsors. All US and Canadian author proceeds benefit [www.TheCureStartsNow.org](http://www.TheCureStartsNow.org)

*"This is a stunning story that teaches us how precious children, family and life are, and that the sacrifices we make are worth it. I won't forget the Desserich family, and neither will you."* —**James Patterson, Renowned Author**

For more on the story, see [www.NotesLeftBehind.com](http://www.NotesLeftBehind.com)



View the book trailer: [Notes Left Behind Book Trailer](#)



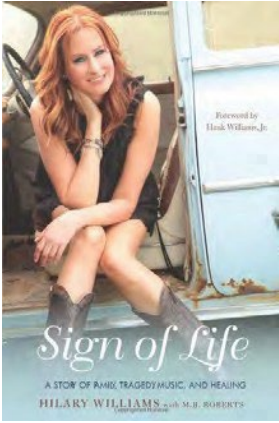


# SIGN OF LIFE

## A Story of Family, Tragedy, Music and Healing

By Hilary Williams, Daughter of Hank Williams Jr. , With M.B.Roberts

DaCapo Press/Perseus Books



From the time she was eight years old, singer-songwriter Hilary Williams lived with an empty place in her heart. It was the year her parents divorced, and it hurt – still hurts. She felt as though she lost her father, country music superstar Hank Williams, Jr., even though he wasn't around much anyway.

Hilary never knew her famous grandfather, country music icon Hank Williams, who died tragically nearly thirty years before she was born. Another piece of the empty place in her heart. Warren White, her maternal grandfather was different. She knew him well and loved him dearly. He died in the early spring of 2006. Hilary would strive to fill part of the empty space with his memory.

It's a sunny March day. Hilary, 26, and her sister Holly, 24, are driving down a rural stretch of Mississippi road en route from Nashville to Louisiana for their grandfather Warren's funeral. Back in Tennessee, their father, Hank Williams, Jr., sits in a barber's chair while his pilot readies his private plane to fly him to the service. Hilary and Holly's mother, Becky, along with their grandmother, aunts and many cousins are in Louisiana preparing for the funeral.

The girls are riding along when Hilary reaches for her iPod. In an instant, the car hits a series of ruts in the road, flips violently four times and lands mangled on its side. Holly's arm is trapped under the car. Hilary is dangling upside down with crushing injuries to her collarbone, hips and legs. Hilary's blood loss is massive and just as a Life flight helicopter lands and EMT's rush to her aid, she dies.

Hilary is transported during a vivid Near-Death experience. She sees a glittering vision of heaven and is comforted by her deceased grandparents, Hank and Audrey Williams, as well as her Godparents, Johnny and June Carter Cash. Then, she is brought back as EMT's heroically revive her using an experimental blood substitute. Holly, whose injuries are less severe, is flown to the hospital in Memphis followed by a helicopter carrying Hilary, who is barely grasping onto life.

Becky, who received a chilling phone call from the accident scene where she could hear Holly's screams, leaves her father's wake and heads to Memphis. Hank Jr. diverts his plane from Louisiana to Memphis, arriving just in time to see Hilary, cold and pale, being wheeled into surgery. Hours later, Hilary wakes to find her father holding her hand and weeping softly at her bedside. Later, he recounts details of his own near-fatal accident when he fell off a mountain twenty years ago. The revelation that Hank Jr. and Hilary were the exact same age when both nearly died – and memories of Hank Sr. dying at the height of his fame in the backseat of a car—begs the question: Is there a Williams curse?

Back-to-back surgeries – eventually she will endure 23-- fill the first few days in Memphis, where Hilary stays for a month. A National Enquirer reporter dressed as a plumber tries to get into Hilary's room. Hank Jr.'s close friend Kid Rock visits. Doctors warn Becky that they may have to take her leg in order to save her life.

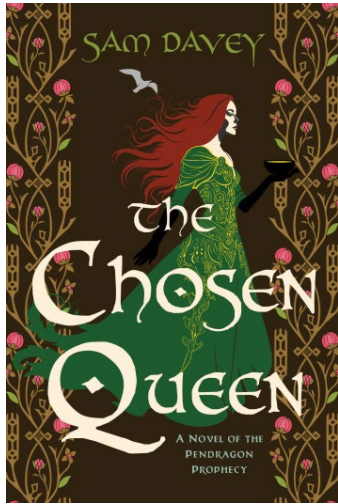
Hilary's diabetes causes complications during surgery after surgery performed to repair her shattered body. During one particularly excruciating physical therapy session, her doctor tells her that "Pain is a sign of life." This is a mantra she won't forget.

Six weeks after the accident, Hilary comes home to her mother's house in Nashville. She stays in a hospital bed in the living room for six months. Becky and Holly dress her, bathe her, and help her go to the bathroom. Humbling to say the least. Often alone with her thoughts, Hilary remembers childhood traumas (her mother crying in the arms of her best friend Jessie Colter after her parents' split, being diagnosed with juvenile diabetes), as well as happy memories (a poolside party at Waylon Jennings' house, Johnny Cash singing happy birthday to her over the phone). She has bizarre recollections (fans shooting off guns in the driveway in tribute to Hank Jr., house sitting for half-brother Shelton, a.k.a. Hank III, at his haunted house). She also thinks of her grandfather, who endured back surgery and became hooked on painkillers similar to those she is taking.

Karen Pryor, a therapist who is part-drill sergeant, part-sweet preschool teacher, pushes Hilary to learn to walk as she struggles with severe pain and frustration. After a follow-up surgery, Hilary begins the entire process from scratch. Then, unexpectedly, the "permanent" rod in her leg breaks. Disheartened, she struggles to learn to walk yet again. Depression sets in. She is cheered by visits from her half-brother Sam, and half-sister Katie, who she loves dearly despite her dislike of their mother.

Fear of permanent damage to her vocal cords (due to intubation while she was hospitalized) and her waning confidence prevent Hilary from singing at first. She is afraid to try. She also fights feelings of jealousy towards Holly, whose singing career is taking off. Nonetheless, Hilary starts voice lessons and despite being wheelchair-bound, also begins to date. Three years after the accident, Hilary performs a concert at a small venue in Nashville. The place is packed, and she meets her goal of walking onto the stage unassisted. She brings down the house when she sings "Sign of Life," the inspirational song she wrote about her life-changing experience. The moment onstage is more than a happy ending. It's the beginning of a young woman's life. Still to be seen is how Hilary Williams, who found deep layers of determination during her recovery, will fit into the legacy of her famous family. <http://www.soundlikenashville.com/news/hilary-williams-debut-album-lucky-scars/>

# ADULT NOVELS



# THE CHOSEN QUEEN

By Sam Davey

Diversion Books, June 2025

**Genre:** Historical Fantasy, Arthurian Fantasy, Historical Fiction

Comparable to *The Mists of Avalon* for a new generation, *The Chosen Queen* is the origin story of Igraine, mother of King Arthur.

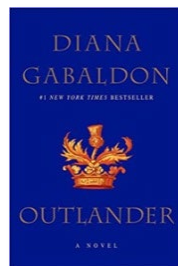
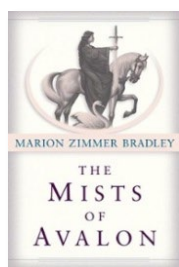
The story of King Arthur does not begin with the sword in the stone—but with a twisted chain of lust, murder, magic, and deceit...

In the spirit of *The Mists of Avalon*, as well as the rich, sweeping styles of Diana Gabaldon and Philippa Gregory, *The Chosen Queen* is the imagined origin story of Igraine, mother of King Arthur. It focuses on Igraine's **first marriage**, to Gorlois, Duke of Cornwall, before her eventual prophesied marriage to Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, King of Britain.

When Gorlois declares war on Uther, Igraine becomes the de facto leader of her people, encouraging and inspiring the women left behind. She is a woman deceived and controlled, who then comes into her own as queen. It is also the story of a mother who has her children taken from her by circumstance, force, and prophecy (in the case of her youngest—Arthur—by Merlin, when Arthur is but a few days old).

Initially, she's chosen by the Goddess, by Merlin, by the Lady of the Lake, by Uther—but in the end, she must choose her own fate.

## Comparable Titles



Sam Davey lives near the beach in Sussex, England. She is very well-connected as the **founder and former director** of the [Hastings Literary Festival](#), the brightest and buzziest Literary festival on England's South coast. Sir David Hare, two-time Oscar-nominated screenwriter (for *The Hours* and *The Reader*), has been involved as patron. The Fest has provided a platform for many bestselling authors, and in 2019 hosted a rare appearance by George Orwell's son, discussing his father's legacy and dystopian times. Sam now works as Head of Transformation at the Royal Opera House.

# A MURDER MOST FOWL

The first in the deliciously charming “Food Truck Cozy Mysteries” series.

**By Carmela Dutra**  
**Crooked Lane, Fall 2025**

Set against the backdrop of a cooking reality TV competition,  
A Murder Most Fowl is full of sparkling humor, entertaining characters, tasty  
recipes...

and a side of murder...

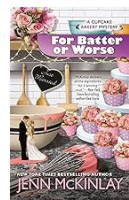
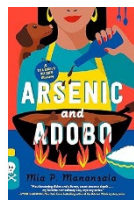
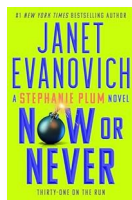
Owning your own food truck is killer work...

When twins Beth and Seth Lloyd inherited a food truck from their late-aunt Dolly, Beth knew being her own boss would be challenging. But it wasn't until she signed up their truck, Kluckin' Good, to compete on the Cooking Channel's top show, The Food Truck Showdown, that she learned just how many speed bumps they would face.

Unfortunately, the Lloyd twins get more than they bargained for when the competition goes from heated to lethal as the elimination round takes on a literal meaning, and a contestant is found dead. Beth, Seth, and their friend Rylie, follow the bread crumbs and become entangled in a twisted case that could put one of them next on the chopping block.

Genre: Cozy Mystery, Amateur Sleuth, Humorous Fiction

## Comparable Titles



Hailing from the Bay Area, Carmela Dutra cherishes her family, rainy days, and making others laugh. After years of working on her award-winning indie children's picture books, she transitioned to crafting cozy mysteries filled with emotion, humor, and heart. She's very active on her [website](#), [X/Twitter](#), (3.9K followers), and [Instagram](#) (9.4K followers).

**See next page for an outline of Books 2-4 of this cozy mystery series!**

## ON GOING BOOK SERIES FOR

# “FOOD TRUCK COZY MYSTERIES”

### **Book Two: Deep-Fried Death**

Things are really heating up for Beth Lloyd in more ways than one. While her love life remains as chilly as a frozen desert, her professional life in her Kluckin' Good food truck is sizzling hot. Customers are obsessed with her delicious finger-lickin' wings and sliders, and Beth just snagged a prime spot at Flavors of the Bay Food Festival. The annual event has food enthusiasts flock from across the Bay Area for three days of farm-fresh family fun, complete with live tunes, cook-offs, and gourmet food trucks.

But when famous food critic Brad Dawson—Beth's ex and a real thorn in her side—is found dead in a bush holding a Kluckin' Good tumbler mug, Beth's sweet smell of success turns bitter. Suspicion naturally falls on Beth and her twin brother, Seth, especially after witnesses report having seen Seth deliver a punch to Brad's stomach.

Caught between a rock and a hot wing, Beth's on a mission to clear her brother's name and keep Kluckin' Good's reputation from being tarnished, ignoring pleas from handsome Detective Kane to stay out of it. But as she digs into Brad's demise, she discovers a coop full of secrets, simmering rivalries, and a recipe for murder that could leave her family's business cooked.

### **Book Three: Plucked and Feathered**

Beth's life is finally on the up and up! With her food truck flourishing and Seth tackling more cases at work, she's enlisted the help of Wyatt Caddel, a college student to help her and Rylie during larger events. Sure, he's awkward, but his charm adds a sprinkle of quirk to the mix. And romance? Say goodbye to those cringe-worthy first dates and meddling setups from her mom—Spencer Owens has brought a budding romance into her life. Much to the apparent chagrin of Detective Kane.

But when Kluckin' Good rolls into Quest Masters Studios to cater an '80s movie-themed team-building event, the scene turns from Hollywood glitz to murder mystery mayhem! Someone discovers Valerie Cadena, the office bully, dead, and catches Rylie in a compromising situation.

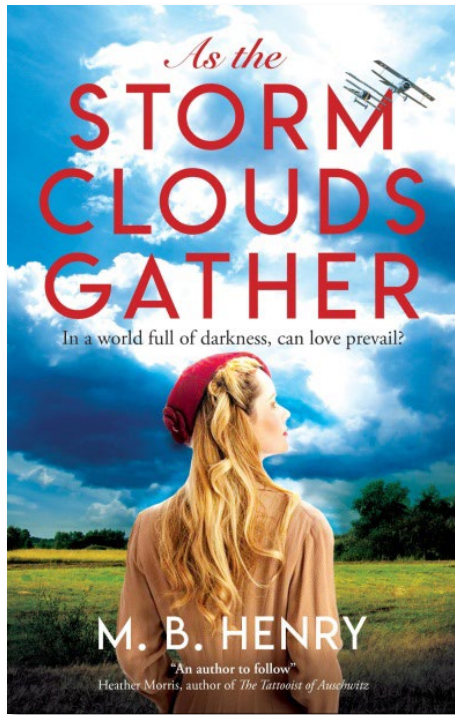
Suddenly, Beth's biggest challenge isn't perfecting her chicken and slider recipes—it's solving a murder. With Rylie in the hot seat, Beth and Seth must sift through an office full of suspects. But could it be a disgruntled employee? After all, Valerie's bullying had feathers ruffled left and right.

Now, it's up to the Lloyd twins to find the culprit—before another victim gets plucked from the flock. With a wing and a prayer, Beth chases down clues, leaving no feather unturned in her quest for justice.

### **Book Four: A Feathered Fatality**

As her twin brother, Seth, and best friend, Rylie, prepare to tie the knot, Beth's own love life crumbles, leaving her with nothing but her loyal emotional support chicken, Teriyaki. Determined to focus on something positive, she aims to help Rylie find the perfect wedding dress. But things take a fowl turn when another bride-to-be keels over during a fitting, only to be declared dead at the hospital, poisoned by the complimentary bubbly. When the bridal shop owner—a long-time friend of Beth's mother—finds herself in hot water, Beth hatches a plan to clear her name. And what better way to get to the bottom of things than by pecking around as a food truck vendor at the town's big bridal expo?

With the help of her mother, Rylie, and a few well-timed clucks from Teriyaki, Beth starts to scratch up a list of suspects, much to the disapproval of the handsome Detective Kane. But will she be able to crack the case before the actual killer flies the coop? Or will this investigation leave her cooked?



# As the Storm Clouds Gather

By M.B. Henry  
Severn House, March 2025

“An author to follow.”—Heather Morris,  
#1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*

An emotionally gripping and heartbreaking WW1 novel.  
Perfect for fans of:  
*The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, *The Nightingale*, and *The Midwife of Berlin*.

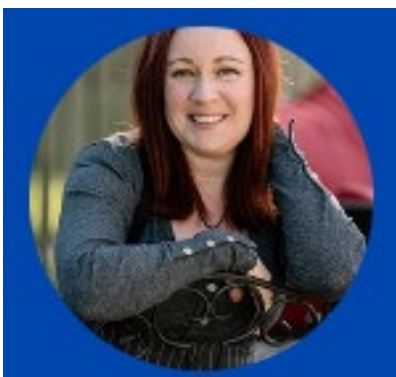
## In a world full of darkness, can love prevail?

*May 1915.* Nineteen-year-old German American Ilse Stahl experiences the tragedy of war firsthand when the RMS *Lusitania* is attacked by a German U-boat off the coast of Ireland, killing more than a

thousand passengers, including her parents. Somehow, she survives and conceals her German heritage to become a nurse on the front line in Ypres, Belgium.

In New York City, young Roland Hawkins loses his father in the notorious Black Tom explosion. Impatient and full of anger, he journeys to England to enlist and is soon in the trenches in Ypres, seeking revenge.

As the world is torn apart by war, Ilse and Roland are tested in unexpected and harrowing ways. But when their worlds collide, they are also transformed by the unlikely bond they find with each other. Is the love that blossoms between them strong enough to survive the darkest days that lie ahead?



M.B. Henry is a lifelong student of history, especially military history, having visited battlefields and historical sites all over the world. She has a degree in Cinema and Comparative Literature and has served as a historical consultant and researcher on films and television in Los Angeles. She also gets involved in comedic community theater. She lives with her husband and three cats in Indiana. For more on her published works or history blog, you may visit her website at

[www.mb-henry.com](http://www.mb-henry.com) .

# SAFE HARBOR

By Kristen Terrette  
Elk Lake Publishing

**2024 Romance Novel of the Year**  
(AWSA Golden Scroll)

**2024 Christian Indie Award, 1<sup>st</sup> Place**  
(CIPA)

**2023 Emerging Leader**  
(ECPA)

**Eva Elliott** is left with a jaded heart after the death of her boyfriend while she was pregnant. She pushed away the idea of God and love, focusing solely on her daughter, Willow.

She accepts an offer from her mom to move her and Willow to Moanna Island, off the coast of Georgia. She hopes the move will help her tuck away the guilt for her role in her boyfriend's death.

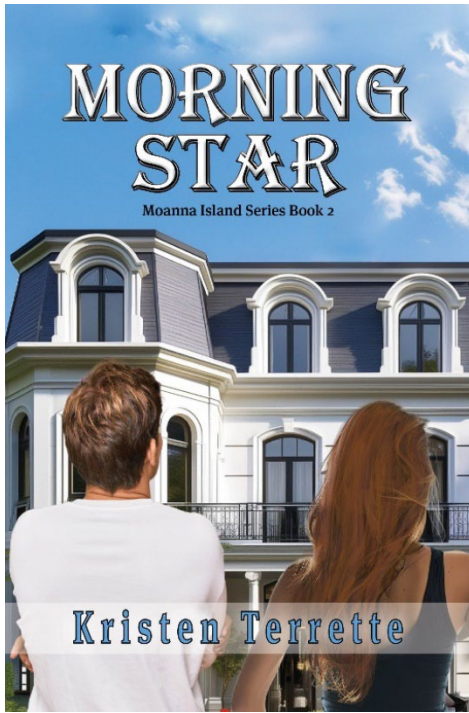
**Thad Smith's** Pro-Football career came to a crashing and embarrassing halt, sending him running to Moanna Island. He now enjoys living under the radar and finds a new purpose, but he feels guilty for the sting of loneliness that's crept into his seemingly full life.

When he saves Willow from drowning in the ocean the first day Eva arrives on the island, he can't deny the electricity between them. Eva stubbornly fights the stirring in her heart the moment Thad smiles, but since Thad coaches the football team where Eva teaches and lives down the street, God continues to intertwine their lives. When he tells Eva he's not only falling for her, but Willow as well, she thinks maybe...just maybe, it would work between them.

But shame, secrets on both sides, ex-lovers, and a killer hurricane all threaten the love and life they seek to share—and one of them may not survive.



**Kristen** holds a Master's degree in Theological Studies and served as a Children's Ministry Director and Women's Leader for many years before returning to her first love—stories. After managing an international blog and a publishing house's social media feed, she found herself as an intern at the esteemed literary agency, Writers House, in the summer of 2022. This landed her a job with Martin Literary Management where she now represents author clients of her own. Stories are her thing and authors are her people. She's had five novels published in both the romance and young adult genres with more on the way and has clients across many genres (she has a hard time staying in one lane). When not on her computer editing, pitching books, or with her nose in one, you may find her getting a little too loud on the sidelines of a kids' basketball game. Check her out at: [www.kristenterrette.com](http://www.kristenterrette.com)



# MORNING STAR

(Moanna Island Series, Book Two)

By

Kristen Terrette

Elk Lake Publishing, Oct. 2024

**Addie McHenry, restoration home builder extraordinaire**, catches

her big break when the House to Home Network contracts her to film a **reality TV** show focusing on how she brings home back to life. She sets her sights on one of the oldest on Moanna's beach and must risk everything just to get it.

**Shane Armstrong** moved from Savannah to his grandmother's Moanna

Oceanside house when his world shattered five months before. He went on leave from his job as a **Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmer**, hopeful his grandmother's peaceful street will heal him. The reality TV show's arrival threatens this serenity.

With each encounter, Shane's walls start to crumble as Addie brings more than just the historical home back to life. And Addie tries desperately not to enjoy spending time with the irritable and scowling boy next door. Both being only temporary Moanna residents, their thin ice relationship crashes to a halt. Can Shane return to his risky job with the Coast Guard? And can Addie let him go and follow her dreams even when tragedy strikes?

**Safe Harbor**, Book One of the Moanna Island Series won the 2024 Romance Novel of the Year (an AWSA Golden Scroll) & 2024 Christian Indie Award, 1<sup>st</sup> Place (CIPA)



**Kristen Terrette** holds a master's degree in theological studies and served as a Children's Ministry Director and Women's Leader for many years before returning to her first love—stories. After managing an international blog and a publishing house's social media feed, she found herself as an intern at the esteemed literary agency, Writers House, in the summer of 2022. This landed her a job with Martin Literary Management where she now takes on author clients of her own. Stories are her thing and authors are her people.

She's a multi-award-winning, multi-published author in both the romance and young adult genres, with more on the way and has clients across many genres (she has a hard time staying in one lane).

Check her out at: [www.KristenTerrette.com](http://www.KristenTerrette.com)



# PROJECT 35

By Michael Nayak

Genre: Thriller, Espionage Thriller, Political Thriller  
On Submission

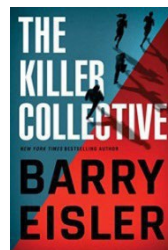
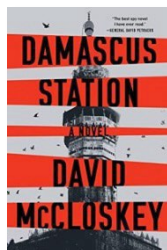
**In this pulse-pounding thriller by a POC Air Force Major at DARPA, an intelligence officer working the government's most secret black ops program learns the only woman he's ever loved has been targeted for assassination. He will do anything—and risk everything—to protect her.**

Captain Devan Rao is one of only three-dozen people on Project 35, a DARPA-NSA black program so secret that anyone with knowledge of it is forbidden from leaving US soil. Military officer, genius, and trusted with top-secret backdoors into classified Chinese networks... he's above suspicion. Until he boards a plane with a one-way ticket to China.

But Devan is no traitor. Through Project 35, he has learned that in 72 hours, the Chinese government will declare martial law in Nanjing City and assassinate key dissidents. The kill list includes Sylvia Chiang, the only woman Devan has ever loved. Forced to make a choice between keeping his country's trust and saving her life, he heads to China to get to Sylvia first.

The clock is ticking down to martial law: Devan has 72 hours to outsmart the Chinese, survive the Americans, and win back Sylvia's love. But even if he can, is there a future for two fugitives on the run from their governments?

## Comparable Titles

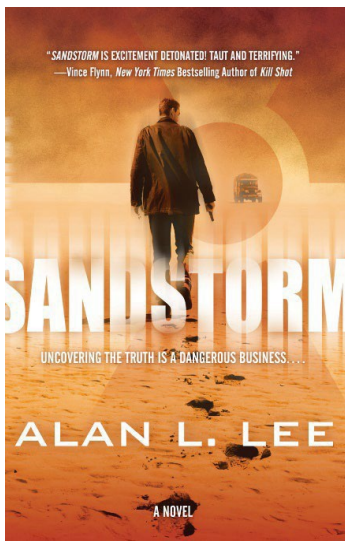


Michael Nayak works for DARPA, [bio here](#), the government organization dedicated to advancing the capabilities and technical superiority of the U.S. military, including through its [work in quantum computing](#) (which plays a pivotal role in the story). Like many thriller authors, Mikey has prior real- world espionage and intelligence experience, adding authentic details and a touch of hyper-realism to his work. His debut, SYMBIOTE, a sci-fi thriller set in Antarctica, is publishing in Spring 2025. Visit him at his [website](#) or on [Twitter](#)

# Sandstorm: A Novel

*By Alan Lee*

**Tor/St. Martin's Press**



Lurking in the shadows, away from any government oversight, a secret partnership has been formed between an exclusive billionaire boys club, rogue elements of Israel's famed Mossad intelligence unit and a prominent U.S. senator. They aim to change the world order by toppling the Iranian regime, bringing a halt to its nuclear program in the process by any means necessary.

Success means lining their pockets with vast wealth and increased power.

CIA operative Nora Mossa is trained to kill when the situation calls for it. She's also capable of disappearing into thin air. Being efficient, deadly and beautiful however, won't be enough to stay alive after her mentor Erica Janway is assassinated at her Annapolis, Maryland home.

Warned by Janway that an unsanctioned covert operation was underway, Nora is forced to run after an attempt is made on her life in Rome. Unsure whether she can trust anyone at the Agency, Nora turns to the only person she feels is capable of keeping her alive while uncovering the truth behind Janway's demise. The problem is, her former lover Alex Koves made it clear years ago that he never wanted to see or have contact with her again.

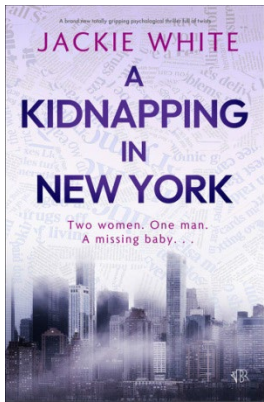
Once considered a golden boy at the CIA, Alex is living a comfortable life in sunny St. Thomas. Rugged, charming and lethal when need be, Alex seems content in maintaining his quiet existence by the ocean. When Nora shows up to ask for his help, he has no intention of lending a hand. Feeling he couldn't live with himself if something happened to her, Alex has a change of heart and joins Nora in her quest to discover who is responsible for Janway's death. Their investigation takes them across the globe where they piece together clues that reveal a deadly plot capable of killing thousands in a Chernobyl-like mishap.

Rushing from the U.S. through Europe to the Middle East, *Sandstorm* is a fast-paced, complex thriller in the style of Brad Thor and Vince Flynn. With a well-drawn female character and her larger-than life partner, author Alan Lee has crafted a captivating, contemporary tale of international intrigue.

**About the author:** First time novelist Alan Lee is the Morning Anchor at Detroit's Fox station, *WJBK-TV*. Alan has helped build Fox 2 News Morning into a ratings juggernaut by combining his signature blend of seasoned journalism with an uncanny knack for making every guest, from politicians to entertainers, feel welcome and at ease. Alan has particularly enjoyed interviewing the best-selling authors who make it a point to visit Fox 2 during the Detroit legs of their book tours, and several have promised blurbs.

Prior to Detroit, Alan accepted a newly created co-anchor position on the morning show of Washington, D.C's NBC station, WRC-TV. In addition to sharing the hallways with journalism legends like Robert Hager, Andrea Mitchell and Tim Russert, Alan had the privilege of covering the storied Washington newsbeats of the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA. It was here Alan's burning lifelong interest in espionage truly caught fire, and where the first seeds of *Sandstorm* began to germinate. Alan is also an experienced blogger, regularly creating posts on his other passion in life, sports, and on his writing blog. Both [The Sporting Life](#) and [The Day of the Writer](#) will be yet additional vehicles to help market *Sandstorm*. Alan resides in Southern California with his wife, their two sons and their two dogs.

For more about Alan, see [www.AlanLee.com](http://www.AlanLee.com)



# A KIDNAPPING IN NEW YORK

By Jackie White

Bloodhound Books, 2024

**Genre:** Domestic Suspense, Psychological Thriller, Crime Thriller

## Praise for *A Kidnapping in New York*

“A crackling mystery...White’s engrossing novel works well...[and] leads to an explosive but appropriate

conclusion.”—*Kirkus*

“A must read for those interested in suspenseful novels with considerable psychological depth.”

—Book Life (Editor’s Pick)

**A mother with everything to lose. A secret she can’t afford to reveal. A lie that could destroy it all . . . and every parent’s worst nightmare.**

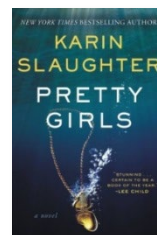
When Public Defender Gwendolyn Black’s infant daughter is kidnapped in broad daylight, her world shatters. As the story grips the nation, two relentless detectives begin to suspect that she’s hiding something. The deeper they dig, the more it becomes clear—Gwen knows more than she’s letting on.

Meanwhile, when a woman loses a pregnancy and sinks into despair, her boyfriend takes a desperate risk to save her. He offers a gift she never expected. A gift that could cost them both everything.

As the detectives close in on the truth, the lines between guilt and innocence blur. And soon Gwen realizes, the answer may be to take justice into her own hands . . .

**In this taut, twist-filled thriller nothing is as it seems. Perfect for fans of Freida McFadden.**

## Comparable Titles



Having lived and worked in New York City, Jackie White now enjoys more relaxing times residing in a charming village along the Hudson River and hiking in the Green Mountains of Vermont. Once a corporate lawyer, Jackie replaced her treatises for storytelling. The idea for *A Kidnapping in Central Park* was born while jogging in the park with her first baby as she listened to engineering checks for a concert to be performed later that evening. In addition to being a novelist, Jackie writes on topical issues for her local newspaper.

# The Spirit Collection of Thorne Hall

By Jamie Thomas

Alcove Press, Feb. 2025

*Audio Rights sold to Dreamscape in auction!*

**A chilling gothic romance for fans of Mike Flannigan's many Netflix hits such as *The Haunting of Bly Manor***

An isolated young woman lives a life 100 years out of step with the world outside her family's haunted New England mansion in this contemporary gothic tale of chilling ghosts and swoon-worthy romance.

For more than a hundred years, the Thorne family has lived in splendor and isolation in their New England manor, devoting their lives to pacifying the fourteen spirits cursed to dwell there. Now, with her father on his deathbed, 25-year-old Elegy Thorne is about to inherit the Spirit Collection despite her terrifying inability to control them.

Timid but headstrong, Elegy lives, speaks, and dresses one hundred years behind the world around her. She must keep the house and everything inside as near as possible to America's Gilded Age when the spirits were summoned, lest they erupt in violence. She is resigned to live this nightmarish existence forever until—for the first time in her life—she falls in love with a young man who is helping restore a damaged part of the mansion.

As Elegy's secret romance blossoms, she slowly comes to recognize her own strength and agency despite a traumatic upbringing amid the literal ghosts of the past, until at last she confronts and breaks free of the grief that has held her family hostage for generations.

Moments of charming fish-out-of-water humor are woven into this gripping and occasionally terrifying haunted house story of the transformative power of romantic love.



Jamie's debut novel *ASPERFELL* (Uproar Books, 2020) earned the gold medal for Fantasy at the INDIES Awards and was named among *Booklist's* top ten debut speculative fiction novels of the year, among other accolades. A certified Language Arts teacher in the state of Washington, Jamie holds a master's degree in English education and did her graduate research in the area of gender equality in high school literary curriculum. She's also a classically trained opera singer and lives in Spokane with her

husband, daughter, two enormous dogs, and two mischievous cats.

# THE DEVIL'S TRANSIT

By Ian Sandusky  
Rogue River, Summer 2025

Everyone knows the story. The great, unsinkable ship, **Titanic**—the largest ocean liner at the time and the pinnacle of luxury—set out on its maiden voyage across the Atlantic on April 10, 1912 with over 2,200 people aboard. It struck an iceberg five days later, sinking on April 15, 1912.

But what if that's not the real story? What if something much worse, much more sinister was the cause?

What if the devil is real?

In 1910, a team of British scientists in Egypt find it—a creature, a beast—something dead as far as they can tell, in which great lengths were taken to bury it far beneath the sand. When the American government gets wind of the discovery, they fund its **secret** travel across the Atlantic to the United States in the only ship large enough to do so—the Titanic.

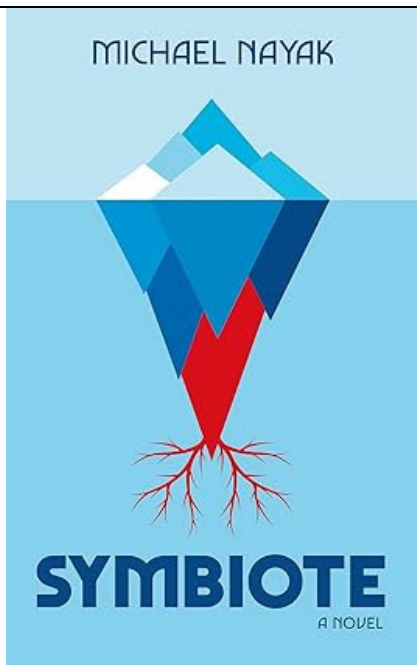
A small team of US soldiers is sent to protect the infernal cargo. As unimaginable chaos ensues on board, they must face a choice: to fulfill their duty or save themselves—if they even can.

Ian Sandusky's ominous and psychological Horror story, **THE DEVIL'S TRANSIT** is **TITANIC** meets **EVENT HORIZON**, with a dash of **CONTAGION** and Netflix's **1899**.



Ian grew up in the small town of Holland Landing, Ontario. He was an avid reader and writer but leaned more towards combat sports – earning a 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt in Karate, becoming an instructor at 14, and later a club bouncer and bar manager during college.

Before even graduating, Canadian Ian Sandusky had four published horror novels to add to his resume. His short stories have been featured in numerous anthologies, literary journals, and magazines. He stepped away from writing for a time to run his family business where he accumulated quite a following across many social media outlets. Though, as with most creatives, he couldn't stay away from getting his stories out. **THE DEVIL'S TRANSIT** is his first novel since being back in the game. He contracted with Roan & Weatherford's Rogue River imprint in a multi-book deal which includes **THE DEVIL'S TRANSIT** sequel. He has also adapted this novel to a screenplay which can be requested as well.



# SYMBIOTE

By Michael Nayak

Angry Robot, Spring 2025

**Publishers Weekly Pic of the Week 1/22/2024**

**Library Journal** ★ *DEBUT* The 40-odd American scientists, engineers, and support staff overwintering at the South Pole are happy to be away from the potential World War III that seems to be heating up between the U.S. and China in this near-future sci-fi thriller—until they find their base invaded by a crew of desperate Chinese scientists and one seething corpse. Scientist Rajan Chariya, the only military officer at the U.S. station, fears that the situation is related to his own top-secret assignment, turning his crew into collateral damage in a clandestine operation that was designed to leave no survivors.

*Bioterrorism is just one of the terrors in this compulsively readable and utterly chilling SF thriller by DARPA Researcher and polar scientist Nayak. The tension increases on every page, as the threat shifts from a distant war to a murderous man on the ice and gets both larger and paradoxically smaller as the polar scientists determine that it's not the extreme conditions affecting the crew's sanity: it's an engineered microbe with a mind of its own—and out for theirs.*

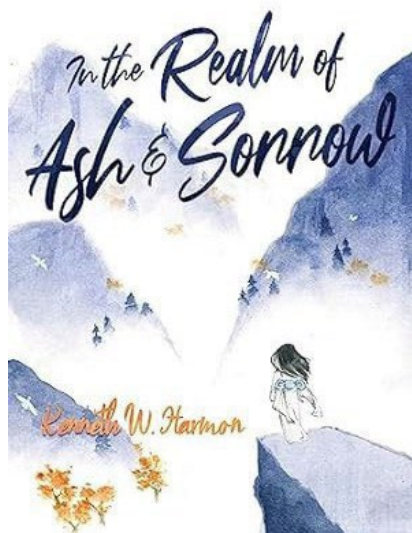
**VERDICT** **Highly recommended** for readers of sci-fi thrillers, cli-fi, and bioterrorism thrillers, and Tom Clancy fans who enjoy a bit of SF in their political thrillers.



By day, Michael (or Mikey, as everyone calls him) is Doctor/Major Nayak, an award-winning scientist, engineer, pilot, and military officer who deployed to the South Pole as a National Science Foundation Principal Investigator in November 2018. He now lives in Washington, DC and works for DARPA. Like many thriller authors, Michael has prior real-world espionage and intelligence experience, adding authentic details and a touch of hyper-realism to his work.

Visit him online at [www.MichaelNayak.com](http://www.MichaelNayak.com)

A NOVEL



## In the Realm of Ash and Sorrow

By Kenneth W. Harmon

Regalo Press, February 2024

Originally self-published and named a [Kirkus Best Book of 2020](#)



*All the Light We Cannot See* meets *Ghost* in this gorgeous World War II novel about an American bombardier downed over Japan whose spirit remains trapped as a *yūrei* ghost and the war widow he comes to love.

“A striking tour de force.”—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

“Thoroughly engrossing.”—Midwest Book Review

“Graceful ... original.”—Publishers Weekly

“Deeply affecting.”—Book Pleasures

“Powerful.”—Indie Reader

“Enthralling.”—Book Viral Reviews

“Breathtaking.”—Indies Today

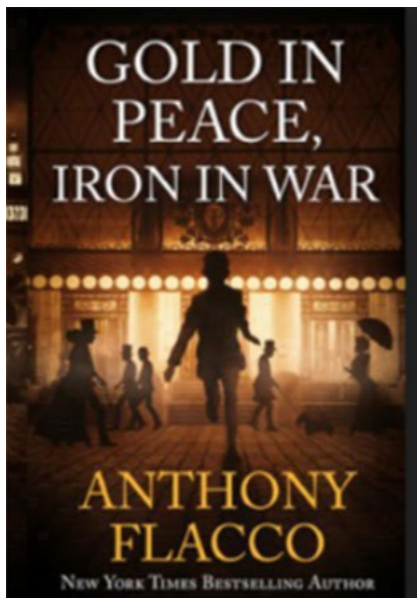
“Riveting.”—the US Review of Books

“To say it is a remarkable story is a complete understatement.”—Reader Views

When WW II bombardier Micah Lund dies on a mission over Japan, his spirit remains trapped as a *yūrei* ghost. Dazed, he ends up following Kiyomi Oshiro, a war widow, and her young daughter, Ai. Watching them together, Micah reconsiders his intolerance for the people he'd considered the enemy. He then discovers he can interact with Kiyomi and Ai when they dream. While his feelings for them deepen, destruction looms—Hiroshima is about to be bombed, and Micah must warn Kiyomi and her daughter. In a place where dreams are real, Micah races against time to save the ones he's come to love the most.



Kenneth W. Harmon calls Fort Collins, Colorado home, where he lives with his wife and three daughters. When he's not writing, Kenneth enjoys working in the garden, reading, watching movies, sports, and *Mysteries at the Museum*, taking walks along the Poudre River, and trying to stay ahead of three teenage girls. Originally a horror writer (his debut *The Amazing Mr. Howard* was a semifinalist for the prestigious Bram Stoker Award), he now focuses on his first loves, literary and historical fiction.



# Gold in Peace, Iron in War

Part of a four book series

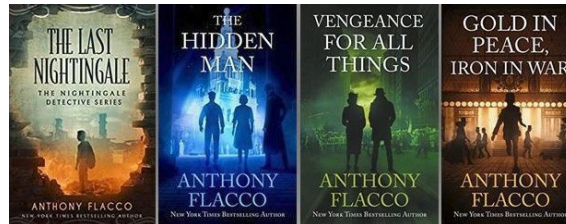
By NYT & International Bestselling Author

Anthony Flacco

Severn River Publishing 2023

*This story is fast-paced and action packed, somewhat in the style of old fashioned weekly radio detective dramas or Saturday morning trips to the local cinema. There are a whole series of heart stopping and cliff hanging moments.* – **The Historical Fiction Company**

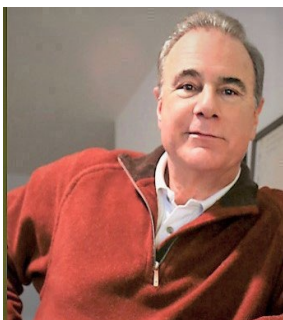
**This exhilarating historical crime series features real-life figures and events. Perfect for fans of The Devil in the White City!**



The year is 1920, and following the end of WWI, a horrifying child trafficking ring known as the “Baltic Pipeline” is running out of eastern Europe. In the U.S., the perpetrators have infiltrated America’s Orphan Trains, which were designed to bring war orphans to new families, and are instead using them to supply de facto slaves to the most corrupt members of our financial elite.

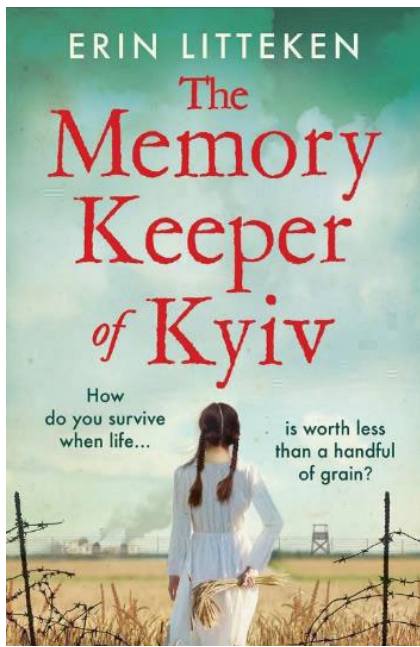
Vignette Nightingale (24) and her adoptive father Randall Blackburn (49) are the private investigators hired to combat the smuggling ring, but quickly find themselves plunged into a sinister investigation with roots far deeper than they could have imagined. They are aided by NYC’s first all-female police squad, operated by led by Deputy Commissioner Ellen O’Grady, NYC’s first female Police Commissioner, and by Detective Isabella Goodwin, a master of disguises who heads the squad. Her fellow female officers battle the smugglers, even as the police patriarchy takes credit for their work, and corrupted officials throw obstacles designed to stop them. Their biggest problem is that the smugglers have bribed or blackmailed so many high government officials and police officers, nobody knows who can be trusted. Betrayal is everywhere.

Beneath the story of intrigue runs the character arc of nine-year-old Dante, an orphan who refuses to discuss his past but who was brought to the U.S. by the traffickers. Vignette meets him on the street and takes him under her wing. He soon comes to idolize Randall and Vignette, and the information he knows about the smuggling ring helps identify and disrupt the murderous human traffickers and their shady allies in the upper echelons of power.



Author Anthony Flacco, a New York Times and International Bestselling author who draws upon his experience as an award-winning screenwriter, AFI Screenwriting MFA graduate, and Disney Screenwriting Fellowship winner. He is the author of a dozen books, all with major publishers, and was optioned for the screen by Malpasio Productions for the book he wrote, *Impossible Odds: The Kidnapping of Jessica Buchanan and Her Dramatic Rescue by SEAL Team Six*. [www.AnthonyFlacco.com](http://www.AnthonyFlacco.com)





**2022 Winner for Best Historical Fiction of the Year**

Translation rights sold in 15 major foreign territories in auctions/pre-empt

# The Memory Keeper of Kyiv

By Erin Litteken

Boldwood, UK- May 2022

**Over 100,000 copies sold to date!**

*Share of proceeds will be donated to DEC's Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal*

**\* Bookbub Featured New Release**

**\* Fortune Magazine Top 10 Page-Turning Novel for Summer 2022**

**\*The UN's Better World Campaign has selected THE MEMORY KEEPER OF KYIV for its Summer 2023 reading list!**

**Perfect for fans of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*.**

In the 1930s, Stalin's activists marched through the Soviet Union, espousing the greatness of collective farming. It was the first step in creating a man-made famine that, in Ukraine, stole almost 4 million lives. Inspired by the history the world forgot, and the Russian government denies, Erin Litteken reimagines their story.

In 1929, Katya is 16 years old, surrounded by family and in love with the boy next door. When Stalin's activists arrive in her village, it's just a few, a little pressure to join the collective. But soon neighbors disappear, those who speak out are never seen again and every new day is uncertain. Resistance has a price, and as desperate hunger grips the countryside, survival seems more a dream than a possibility. But, even in the darkest times, love beckons. Seventy years later, a young widow discovers her grandmother's journal, one that will reveal the long-buried secrets of her family's haunted past.



**This is a story of the resilience of the human spirit, the love that sees us through our darkest hours and the true horror of what happened during the Holodomor.**

Erin Litteken is a debut novelist with a degree in history and a passion for research. At a young age, she was enthralled by stories of her family's harrowing experiences in Ukraine before, during and after World War II. She lives in Illinois with her husband and children.

*I was utterly gripped by this beautiful novel from the very first page! Litteken has weaved a compelling and intimate story of love and survival. It is harrowing, haunting and chilling in its portrayal of history, illuminating the horrors of the Holodomor in a way which brings us to the heart of the people and families who suffered. And yet, at the same time, it is sensitive, beautiful and inspiring. Everybody should read this story especially now. The Memory Keeper of Kyiv is written by an author who understands the depths of both loss and love. I cannot recommend it highly enough.* – Christy Lefteri, #1 international bestselling author of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*

*"A powerfully moving debut. . . on every page the Ukrainian spirit shines out, unbowed, unbent, and unbroken. This is a compelling, timely read."* - Kate Quinn, international bestselling author of *The Alice Network*

*"A stunning portrait of Ukraine and its people, of strength, of endurance, of the fight for survival during the forced famine, the Holodomor, but also a tender story of Katya, a grandmother whose hidden history holds the power to guide her granddaughter through the darkness of loss and grief, toward life and a limitless future. A remarkable read not to be missed."* – Lisa Wingate #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Before We Were Yours*

**Women's Fiction Writers Association [Star Award!](#)**



# The Lost Daughters of Ukraine

By Erin Litteken, April 2023

**The brand new historical novel from Erin Litteken, bestselling author of *The Memory Keeper of Kyiv*, is based on her family's heart-wrenching escape from war-torn Europe.**

A story of the strength of the human spirit, the personal cost of conflict and how love can be found even in the darkest times.

Summer 1941. War rages in Europe. The Germans march towards Ukraine. Halya, Liliya and Vika are no strangers to sorrow. They lost family during the Holodomor, loved ones in Stalin's purges, and war looms once more on the horizon.

Vika lives in fear for her children. She and her sister survived the terror famine by leaving their whole family behind. Now, years later, many believe the Germans will free them from the Soviets, but she's not so sure. Should they stay in Volhynia or flee the approaching Eastern front?

Liliya has lost too much in her 17 years. As those around her join the resistance, Liliya wonders how she can fight for her friends, family, and country. When the choice is made for her, can she find the will to survive and protect those still with her?

Twelve-year-old Halya is struggling to discover who she is. But as the war escalates, can her mother Katya's tactics keep her safe from the Nazi soldiers rounding up slave laborers? How can a child survive the horrors of war on her own?

These daughters of Ukraine will face devastation and loss as they fight to survive and protect the ones they love.



# The Abominations

By Simi Lichtman

*ON SUBMISSION CURRENTLY TO PUBLISHERS*

For fans of the Emmy-winning series *Unorthodox*.

A powerful story inspired by a [real-life rabbi matchmaker](#) who matched gay men with lesbian women within the Orthodox Jewish community.

All Temimah Silverman has ever wanted is to live the life expected of her. As an Orthodox Jewish woman, that means getting married and having babies. So when Temimah realizes that she is gay—an abomination to God—she must do whatever it takes to protect her secret and stay in the community.

Fortunately, Temimah stumbles upon a clandestine Orthodox matchmaking system that pairs lesbian women with gay men, where she meets Yehuda, her perfect—if sexually repellant—soulmate. Temimah settles into marriage, never questioning that she has done what is right. Even meeting Aliza, the first woman Temimah might truly love, is not enough to break Temimah’s faith.

But when she and her husband are confronted with infertility, after years of unenjoyable sex, Temimah is finally forced to choose between communal acceptance and the yearnings of her heart.



Simi Lichtman spent a year as a columnist at the historic *Jewish Daily Forward*, where she published a [weekly column](#). In addition, she is the author of numerous articles and blog posts published in The Tablet, The Huffington Post, and Medium, among others. She herself is an Orthodox Jew who identifies along the LGBTQ+ spectrum. This is her first novel.



# One Tough Cookie

By Delise Torres, Alcove Press, July 17, 2023

Available for pitch by **Writer/Director /Producer**

**Gabby Revilla Lugo**

Humorous and heartfelt foodie women’s fiction set at a cookie company—A Puerto Rican *Fleabag* committed to her carefree single life meets the sexy new mechanic determined to break through her defenses.

*“Sharp and voicey, One Tough Cookie is a fast read, making you crave cookies as it delves into Karina’s world at a cookie plant. Karina is snarky and sassy, a unique heroine searching for what she really wants. A charming debut!”*—Lyn Liao Butler, author of *The Tiger Mom’s Tale*

**At Singular Cookies, Inc., cookies are like people, each with their own personality.**

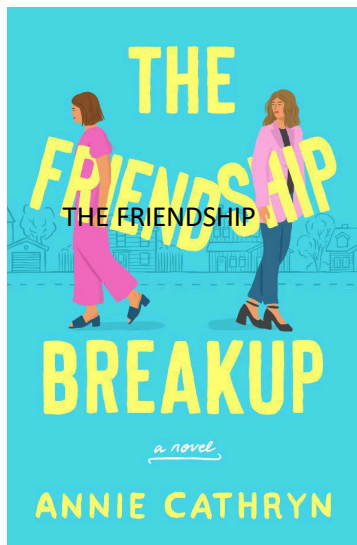
Twenty-seven-year-old Karina Cortés works as a production floor supervisor at a small family-owned cookie manufacturing plant in Fort Pierce, Florida. It’s a well-paying job for a high-school dropout whose only achievement is passing the GED exam.

Work and play collide when she meets the company’s hot new mechanic, Ian Feliciano, who stirs up feelings she tends to avoid. Karina knows she shouldn’t date him, but she’s strong; she’ll never turn pathetic like her friends or, especially, her mom. And with a looming plant inspection and two managers butting heads over how to prepare, Karina has enough to distract herself.

As the inspection draws near and Karina battles her heart, she’ll have to decide whether to continue holding on to deeply ingrained beliefs that keep everyone at bay, or learn that love is not as dangerous as she fears; that it is our history—our singular recipe—that shapes how we want to live.



Delise Torres grew up in Puerto Rico. Her [website](#) claims she’s a “daydreamer of messy love stories.” She has a PhD in Food Science and experience as a quality assurance manager. An active member of the Women’s Fiction Writers Association, she serves as manager of their Pinterest page. She currently lives in Germany with her daughter and German husband.



# The Friendship Breakup

By Annie Cathryn, Alcove Press

*“Cathryn’s charming and thought-provoking debut may be billed as a ‘mom-com,’ but one need not be a mom to appreciate it. A sure bet for fans of Jennifer Weiner.”*  
—*Library Journal*

*“This novel will be popular with readers who find themselves navigating life in a way no one prepared them for. Funny, endearing, and sincere.”* —

**Booklist**

*“In this warm and witty story, Annie Cathryn paints a portrait of a woman who must let go of her preconceived notions of what her life should be like in order to find out who she really is—and become her own best friend.”*

—*Camille Pagán, national bestselling author of I’m Fine and Neither Are You*

**On the eve of turning forty, aren’t you supposed to have it all figured out?**

Fallon Monroe, premenopausal mama bear of one, self-help book junkie, and budding chocolatier, has always relied on her neighborhood mom friends to get her through the trials of motherhood, because failing together is what makes failing tolerable. So, when her bestie, Beatrice, inexplicably begins ghosting her and takes all their mutual friends with her, Fallon’s left wondering how everything went so wrong. Pushing down a lifetime of insecurities, Fallon doubles down on her can-do attitude and decides to win them back.

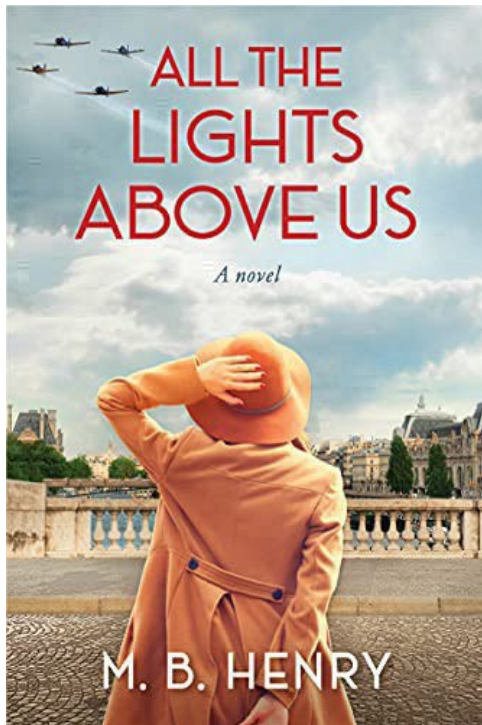
She hosts an epic Cinco de Mayo party that goes swimmingly, and she’s on her way back into her friends’ good graces ... until a stripper—who no one fesses up to ordering—literally crashes the party, sending several guests to the hospital and straight out of Fallon’s life. Suddenly she’s more alone than ever.

After failing in her attempts to win back her friends, she joins a friendship app to prove to everyone, especially herself, that she *is* a good friend. When she discovers one of her new friends is in a relationship with Beatrice’s soon-to-be ex-husband, Fallon must decide where her loyalties lie.

And just when she’s about to throw in the dirty towel on the whole friendship mess, she reads a recently-unearthed letter that she had stubbornly refused to open decades earlier. Reading it forces her to finally face the deep-seated fears that she’s desperately tried—and failed—to bury. Now looking at her friendships with fresh eyes, she must decide between hanging on or letting go.



Annie Cathryn is an avid reader, blogger, marketer, and [Bookstagrammer](#), with 12.9K+ followers on Instagram. She is the host of IGTV’s [Soulful Series Video Chats](#), featuring award-winning and bestselling authors. The series won a 2021 [Dotcom](#) For more than two decades, Annie has worked in marketing communications; first for a Fortune 500 company, before starting a [marketing consulting agency](#) where she provides marketing and PR for new and established brands. Annie has a degree in journalism and Masters in communications from Marquette University. She is an active contributor to the [Revision Division](#) newsletter, has written for Zibby Owens’s blog *Moms Don’t Have Time to Write*, and is a member of the Women’s Fiction Writers Association and the Chicago Writers Association. She lives with her husband and daughter outside of Chicago.



# All The Lights Above Us

Inspired by the Women of D-Day

by **M.B. Henry**

Alcove Press May 2022

*"The talent and skills M.B. Henry has shown in her debut novel rate her as an author to follow. Her ability to express different voices of women, under different circumstances, at the same period in history is extraordinary. Telling the story of D-Day through the lives of five women, genius. History will be remembered - inclusive of the military and civilians, as it should be. Embrace these five amazing women who represent the millions of unknown. Do not judge them. This novel should be required reading for young students to remember that day – D-Day. I highly recommend it to readers of all ages and genders."*

**-Heather Morris, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Tattooist of Auschwitz***

*"Everyone's going to read **All the Lights Above Us**. People are going to fall in love with it exactly the way I did. Character by character. I mean there's such emotion in this book. And it's WWII like you've never thought of it before. And D-Day like you've never thought of it before. And I think M.B. chose one of the most haunting days in American history to write about. But she did it with these five women. Each one different. Different facets of this whole conflict."*  
**-Adriana Trigiani, New York Times Bestselling Author**

Female-led World War II fiction, in the spirit of *Dunkirk* and *1917*, that follows the lives of five very different women as D-Day unfolds. There are forbidden romances, treasonous alliances, painful losses, and mother/daughter conflicts, all against the backdrop of one of history's most critical days.

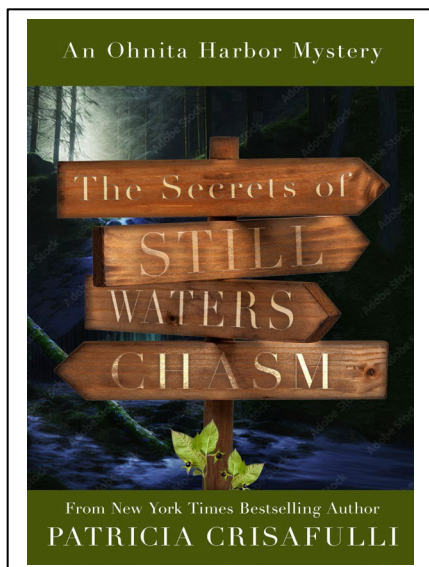
The story interweaves between:

- MILDRED**, an American radio star living in Berlin (based on the historical figure "Axis Sally," the first woman in the US convicted of treason)
- FLORA**, a member of the French Resistance
- THEDA**, a British medical volunteer in Portsmouth, a town just off the English Channel
- ADELAIDE**, a woman desperate to reach her daughter in the French countryside
- EMILIA**, a worker at the Caen Gestapo headquarters.

As the clock strikes midnight on June 6, each woman's life shifts on its axis. When the world's largest military invasion arrives on the French coast, they face difficult (and deadly) choices about duty, sacrifice, and identity. In the most intense twenty-four hours of their lives, all five women summon unknown strength and make impossible decisions.



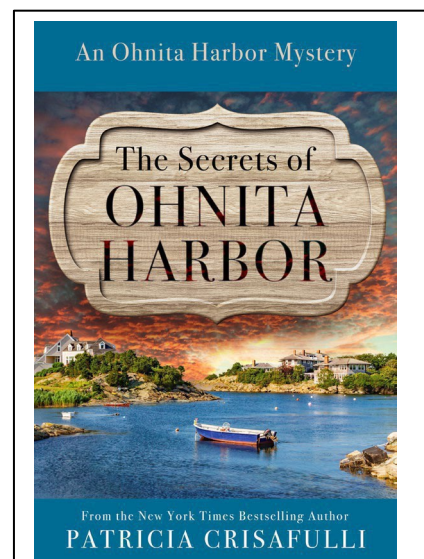
The author, M.B. Henry, has served as a historical consultant and researcher on films and TV, including 2 seasons on [The Originals](#), and she's working hard to build her platform. She maintains an [active website and blog](#) and on [Twitter](#).



# Ohnita Harbor Mystery Series

**4 Book Series from  
NY Times  
Bestselling  
Author**

**Patricia Crisafulli  
(Woodhall Press)**



## ***Praise for Ohnita Harbor...***

*If Crisafulli keeps setting her mystery thrillers in Ohnita Harbor (and I hope she will), that fictional little Upstate New York town will not only have as many bodies to bury as Midsomer County but will be as famous as Louise Penny's Three Pines or even Agatha Christie's St. Mary Mead - and justifiably so.*

*-Jean Zorn, Publisher, Persimmon Tree*

Fans of TV's *Murder, She Wrote* and who fondly remember the Nancy Drew mysteries will find a new home in Ohnita Harbor, New York. The Ohnita Harbor Mystery Series bring to life a Great Lakes port city with three centuries of historic people, quirky modern-day characters, and an engaging protagonist—librarian and authenticator Gabriela Domenici.

The latest book, *The Secrets of Still Waters Chasm* (Sept. 2023), opens with Gabriela's discovery of two bodies on the beach of a secluded lake—which suddenly disappear after she goes for help. From a string of poisoning deaths to a nefarious development that threatens to destroy the chasm, Gabriela is caught in a web of deception and danger, as she tries to authenticate a 19<sup>th</sup> century drawing that just might be the most significant nautical discovery of the past two centuries—all while trying to salvage a romantic relationship.

In *The Secrets of Ohnita Harbor* (Sept. 2022), the first book in the series, Gabriela must uncover the origins of an unusual antique cross that turns up at the library—while staying one step ahead of a someone who wants this rare medieval artifact enough to kill for it.

The third book in the series, *The Secrets of the Old Post Cemetery*, brings to life the Traitor's Map—a Revolutionary War-era artifact that just might hold the clues to a modern-day mystery of murder and smuggling along the Great Lakes shoreline.

Also in development is the fourth book, *The Secrets Wrapped in Snow—a Christmas Mystery*.

Interview with author <https://tinyurl.com/3wafsw3c>

<https://faithhopeandfiction.com/>

**MIDDLE GRADE  
and  
Y/A NOVELS**





## *AGAIN, BEHOLD THE STARS* (Young Adult)

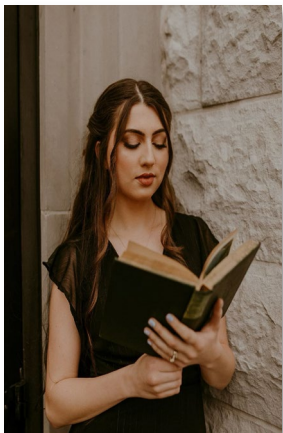
By Jessie Latimer,  
Quill & Flame Publishing, Fall 2026

**Rigby Rhymes** wants one thing out of life: a grand adventure, just like the ones in her favorite books. Preferably one involving secret passageways, magic spells, and cute long-haired guys with swords. Unfortunately, she lives in the real world. No wizards have stopped by to tell her she's the Chosen One™.

So when she dies before even learning to drive, her dreams of adventure die with her. But then, en route to the afterlife, her eccentric guardian angel offers her a deal: If she agrees to enter the story-world of her favorite novel and change the plot enough to keep the brooding antagonist, **Wick**, from dying at the end, she'll get a second chance at life.

But when snoopy Jasper, aka Wick, discovers he's a fictional character (big *oops*) and tears Rigby's copy of the book in half, he inadvertently stops time in the story-world and attracts the attention of the interdimensional **Vices**, a book-burning motorcycle gang of Deadly Sins obsessed with eradicating happy endings. With the unlikely help of Wick (and her goody-two-shoes fictional crush, **Chance Golden**), Rigby must return to the real world, seek a mysterious librarian called the **Bookbinder**, and repair the book before the Vices destroy the story-world—and Rigby's last chance at a grand adventure—forever.

Jessie's debut is narrated by the self-aware voice of the book itself (similar to the narration style of *The Book Thief* and *A Series of Unfortunate Events*). It's A NEVERENDING STORY for this generation.



Jessie Fanczi Latimer is a writer and freelance editor living with her husband & young son in metro-Atlanta. She is a lover of books and killer of houseplants. As a child, she was constantly getting into trouble for reading when she was supposed to be doing other things.

Jessie holds a BFA and MFA in Creative Writing from Reinhardt University in Waleska, Georgia, where she edited an edition of *The James Dickey Review*. She once lived in a bedroom with a bookshelf that opened to a secret passageway, and she loves sharing book reviews on her Bookstagram and Book Tok pages.

# WORDS SPOKEN TRUE

By Anne Broyles

Middle Grade – Scholastic, Fall 2026 release

Inspired by a true story found in a letter from 1838 and put together from over 30 years of archival research, **WORDS SPOKEN TRUE** tells the story of a young girl, Jane Bushyhead, and her family. Jane's true story tells the history of The Indian Removal Act and The Trail of Tears from a new perspective for a younger audience—an audience with few resources to learn about this critical part of Native American History.

Fourteen-year-old Jane Bushyhead works hard to be first in her class and dreams of becoming a teacher. Those dreams are shattered when the Indian Removal Act brings soldiers to her family's door, and they are forced to relocate at gunpoint. The Bushyhead family and other Cherokee are imprisoned in Camp Hetzel, while they wait to be taken across the wilderness to the "Indian Territory." Jane becomes a beloved storyteller to the young Cherokee children in the prison camp. Storytelling builds her confidence and makes her feel one step closer to her dream of being a teacher. Eventually, Jane establishes an informal school to teach the young ones about their tribal history. Through all this, she continues to write poems, falls in love with an older Cherokee boy, Muskrat, and uses her diary to document their struggles. Through all this, her Baptist minister father is distant and does not offer her the support that she so desperately craves from him.

When the day comes for the Cherokee camp residents to leave, they are forced to walk 800 miles toward "Indian Territory" (present day Oklahoma) in the worst winter of the 19th century. Jane finds her purpose in caring for her siblings and helping her mother and grandmother nurse the sick and dying. The detachment faces discrimination and the worst of humanity in many of the villages on their route. But they also find hope when they encounter some of the most loving people. A group of Christians offers them food, shelter, and a place to rest. The Christians tell Jane that they believe owning slaves is unacceptable, which motivates her to challenge her father, a slaveowner, to change his stance on slavery. But the father and daughter continue to not see eye to eye on issues of slavery or their faith.

Along the arduous journey, young Jane must make decisions and face hardships that would challenge even mature adults. Jane must watch her people die from disease and injury at the hands of an abusive government. She is also forced to choose between her love for Muskrat and keeping her family together when he decides to desert the detachment. Jane perseveres through strength, grit, and community with her family and the Cherokee people.

During a river crossing, Jane rescues a drowning child, but loses her diary, which for her represents her tribe's past and her own dreams for the future. She grieves this loss until she realizes that the stories remain written inside her. By the time the Cherokees reach Indian Territory, Jane realizes she can make a difference through her role as a teacher, storyteller, and keeper of tribal memories.

In **WORDS SPOKEN TRUE**, Broyles has created an invaluable source of historical literature for young readers that will inspire hope and strength for Native and non-native Americans alike.

**About the Author:** Anne Broyles, an enrolled citizen of the Oklahoma Cherokee Nation, long wanted to tell the tragic story of the Trail of Tears. When she discovered a letter written in March of 1838 by Jane Bushyhead to a white school friend, she felt an immediate connection to the young Cherokee girl.

Anne grew up in the Arizona-Sonoran Desert, but now lives in a multi-generational household in Portland, Oregon. Her journey led her to Chicago for seminary, Los Angeles to be a minister, Philadelphia to live with Quakers, Cuba to re-roof a church, and traveling to make meaningful connections and experiences in more than 45 countries. Anne shares a distant grandmother with **WORDS SPOKEN TRUE**'s protagonist, Jane Bushyhead and like her, possesses a passion for justice. If they had lived at the same time, they might have had some animated conversations about their world.



# ONCE FOR YES

By Allie Millington

Middle Grade – Feiwel & Friends

Winter 2025 release

The Odenburgh, an old apartment building made of brick and blunt opinions, is the last of its kind in a swiftly changing neighborhood. After years of putting up with people and their many problems, the Odenburgh knows there's no point in getting attached. They all just leave eventually. A truth that comes all too soon when the building is sold and slated for demolition, giving tenants a month to move out.

No one is more troubled by the news than eleven-year-old Prue, who refuses to leave her family's apartment. Not when it was the last place she lived with her sister Lina, before she lost Lina forever. When Prue launches a plan to save their home, the Odenburgh joins in—flickering lights, jamming elevators, triggering fire alarms—all to try and bring a building full of bickering residents together. In the process, Prue meets Lewis, an eccentric boy who lives across the street—and the only one who can help her discover the missing elements of her sister's story.

Heartfelt and bursting with a community of unique characters, *Once For Yes* is a testament to the endurance of love and the people we carry with us, wherever we go. Told from the unique vantage points of an ornery apartment building and a cast of quirky humans, ONCE FOR YES is a story about falling in love, the grief of goodbyes, and the people we carry with us, wherever we go.

Foreign Translation Rights sold to France.

## About the Author:

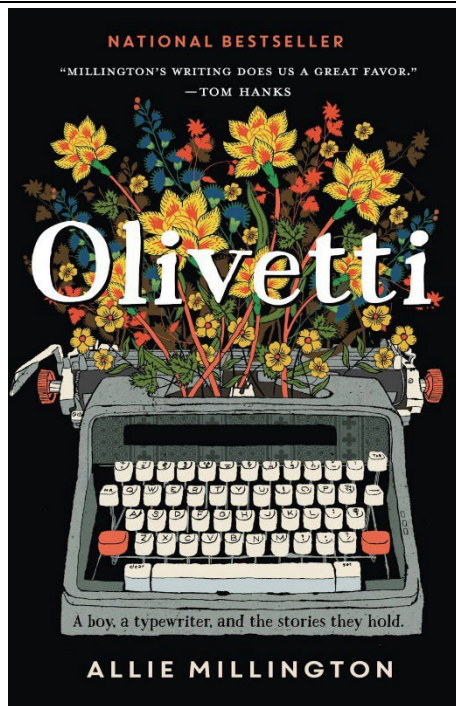


**Allie Millington** is an author, artist, and entrepreneur. She enjoys telling stories from unique, unexplored points of view and strives to share relatable truths through a quirky lens, all while bringing a balance of humor and heart.

Her debut middle grade, *Olivetti*, now represented by UTA, was released on March 26th, 2024 as an instant national bestseller. *Once For Yes* is her second middle grade novel (Macmillan, 2025).

Her two picture books, *When You Find A Hope* and *When You Find A Question* (Hachette Book Group) will be released in 2025/26.

Allie lives near Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband and a collection of clacking machines. You can find her on Instagram here: [@allieinink](https://www.instagram.com/allieinink) or on her website: <https://www.alliemillingtonbooks.com>



# OLIVETTI

By Allie Millington

Middle Grade - Feiwel & Friends,  
March 2024

*Review by Tom Hanks in NYT 3-24-2024*

An Instant USA Today Bestseller!

An Instant Indies Bestseller!

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, April 2024

Being a **typewriter** is not as easy as it looks. Surrounded by books recently replaced by a computer, OLIVETTI has been forgotten by the world and lived with for years. The Brindles have become busy creatures: Felix and Ernest put the *extra* in extra-curriculars, and Ernest, their reclusive, guarded twelve-year-old, goes off alone to read his collection of Oxford English Dictionaries. The least they could do was remember OLIVETTI once in a while, since he remembers every single word they've typed on him. It's a thankless job, keeping memories alive. OLIVETTI gets a rare glimpse of action from Beatrice, his used-to-be most frequent visitor—only for her to drop him off at Heartland Pawn Shop and leave him helplessly behind. It isn't until Ernest spots him in the shop window that OLIVETTI learns **Beatrice has mysteriously gone missing**. OLIVETTI believes he can help find her *and* prove he's more than just some pawn. He breaks the only rule of his 'kind' and **types back to Ernest, divulging Beatrice's memories stored inside him**.

Their search takes them across **San Francisco—typing on toilet seats, dodging a dumpster-diving girl, and sure, committing a few minor felonies**. As OLIVETTI spills out the past, Ernest is forced to face what **he and his family have been running from *The Everything That Happened***. Only by working together will they **find Beatrice, friendship, and the parts of themselves they've lost**.

This Middle Grade magical realism story is told from the unique vantage points of a witty **typewriter** and a lonely, introverted boy—both of whom **discover their voice and belonging**. It's full of humor, heart, and the magic of memories.

## About the Author:



Allie is an author, artist, and has been known to be spotted foraging in the woods. Growing up, every day after school she'd throw a ball against a wall for hours on end speaking stories into existence. (Much later she discovered she shared this childhood quirk with Judy Bloom, which made her feel Less crazy). At eighteen, Allie moved from Atlanta to England, where she worked in a secondary school, and eventually met her husband. In their first three years of marriage, they moved to Brazil to serve in classrooms and soccer fields, then became house parents for young adults in Foster Care back in Atlanta. She can never get enough of middle schoolers, though, so she also works part time as the program coordinator for a non-profit that mentors under-resourced students. Olivetti is Allie's debut novel.

You can find her on Instagram [@allieinink](https://www.instagram.com/allieinink) or on her website: <https://www.alliemillingtonbooks.com>

# OLIVETTI

By Allie Millington

An Instant Indies Bestseller!

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, April 2024

**SJL Best Books of 2024, Booklist Best Books of 2024, Bookshops Best Books of 2024, Audio File's 6 Best Audiobooks for Family & Children in 2024, The Children's Book Review's Best Middle Grade Books of 2024, Amazon's Best Books and Amazon Editor's Pick, NPR 10 Best Book Ideas for Kids in 2024, Boston Globe's 75 Best Books of 2024 Chinese and French Rights Bought!**

Her Olivetti is neither an automaton nor a pushover — there is a painful and problematic crisis in the house he has called home and his voice drives the action with compassion. Ernest speaks with a confusion and simmering panic recognizable to anyone who was once 12, loved their mother deeply and feared for her life... **The Brindles will go on confronting 'Everything,' with hope, gusto and all the unity they can muster. They will set the family table for seven, with a place for Olivetti; put paper in his carriage, and wait.** —Tom Hanks in the *New York Times Book Review*

"★ An introverted boy and his missing mother's cherished typewriter plumb forgotten family stories while journeying toward acceptance in this touching middle-grade mystery. The Brindle family swarms distractedly around seventh-grader Ernest, everyone fixed in their ways until the morning Beatrice, his mom, vanishes. This isn't the family's first trauma, but, after "Everything That Happened," Ernest finds an unexpected ally: Olivetti, Beatrice's classic typewriter, who explains, "We [typewriters] hold thousands of stories. Worlds full of words." ...As inanimate narrators go, Olivetti is especially well suited to the task and takes turns with Ernest in lending his perspective to the short chapters. **And, as stories about stories go, Olivetti's and Ernest's insights about the power of memories, both held and shared, speak volumes.** Offering a Where'd You Go, Bernadette vibe, with its unspooling of a youth perspective on the adult world, this melancholic yet hopeful pick will appeal to fans of books with nonhuman protagonists and readers who enjoy emotional stories with alternating perspectives, such as *A Rover's Story* and *The Lost Library*." —Booklist Magazine, **starred** review

"★ Debut author Millington skillfully delivers a complex storyline that deals with heavy topics. **With plenty of quotable wisdom, richly textured language, and dry humor, this work reads like a classic.**" —*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred** review

"An ideal pick for readers looking for both honesty and hope." —BCCB

"A lively and tender story about language, archive, and family history, Millington's debut will keep young readers on their toes ...Formatted in alternating chapters between Ernest and Olivetti's points of view, readers will be - delighted by the book's playfulness, as well as its bittersweet look at the power of memory, and how a family can be broken and then healed. A quirky, heartfelt novel." —*School Library Journal*

"[A] **unique debut.** Despite the recent appearance of a laptop ("the glossy show-off"), Olivetti has accumulated "an endless number of memories" working with owner Beatrice. His patient existence is upended when he's abruptly sold to a pawn shop and Beatrice goes missing... Olivetti's snarky observations entertain, and the human protagonists' endearing **support for each other's endeavors paints a worthwhile portrait of community.**" —*Publishers Weekly*

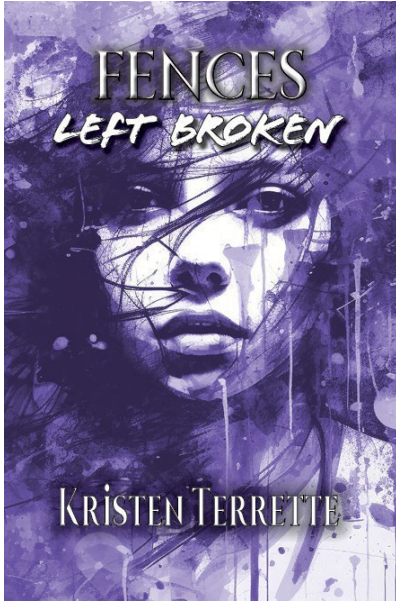
"A lovable introvert, a typewriter with a lot to say, and an irresistible mystery come together to create a one-of-a-kind reading experience." —Molly Olivo, bookseller at Child's Play, Washington, D.C.

"This inventive, clever, well-paced middle-grade novel will type its way right into your heart!" —Paul Swydan, The Silver Unicorn Bookstore, Acton,

# FENCES LEFT BROKEN

By Kristen Terrette

Young Adult - Elk Lake Publishing - 2023



*Finding out she's the granddaughter of neighboring families—torn apart by racism, war, death, and murder—is only the beginning of the story.*

Mia's father is dead. Now she's dumped in the rural Mississippi Delta town of Marigold the summer before her senior year with family she's never known.

The strange catch? Her maternal and paternal grandparents are next-door neighbors. But so much more than a fence and their skin colors separate these rivaling families, *her* families, the Montagues and Capulets of Marigold.

When she learns their hatred toward one another has something to do with murder, she and her new friends—who are longing for adventure in the last three weeks of a boring summer—set out to uncover the buried secrets and tragedies from as far back as the Great Depression, World War II, and the Freedom Summer Movement of '64.

Mia hopes to reconcile her grandparents by finding the truth. But can broken family fences be truly mended in the face of decades of unforgiving hate?

## About the Author:

With a background in early childhood education and a master's in theology, Kristen served as a children's ministry director and women's leader for many years before returning to her first love—writing stories. She dove into the publishing world eleven years ago writing numerous articles and devotionals for ministries like Crosswalk, iBelieve, and Wholly Loved, as well as having five novels traditionally published in the Romance and Young Adult genres. After managing an international ministry's blog and a Christian publishing house's social media, she found herself as an intern at the esteemed literary agency, Writers House, in the summer of 2022.

This landed her a job with Martin Literary Management where she now takes on author clients of her own. Stories are her thing and authors are her people. She's a recent transplant to rural Georgia where she thrives on jogging her forty acres terribly, drinking coffee while birdwatching, and daydreaming of new book characters, plotlines, and making her client's dreams come true (which are her dreams as well). You can check her out at:

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

“Written with belief that every side of a story deserves to be told, *Fences Left Broken* beautifully blends the hard truths of history with the healing power of hope. Through the lives of a compelling cast, Terrette takes us on a stirring journey across generations—one that will leave you thinking long after the last page.”  
-Allie Millington, author of *Olivetti*



# **Mostly Their Fault:** **Elva and Chester Shred History**

**Y/A Science Fantasy**

**By**

**Adrian Archangelo**

**(pen name for NYT/International Bestselling author)**

*On Submission*

Elva and Chester are space aliens who appear to be human 17 year old teenagers but have been here on Earth since the year 1100 with the goal of helping humanity develop more empathy and compassion. (The rest of the beings in the galaxy don't want us flying around out there until we do!) The duo have no human habits to contend with, but they are extraordinarily responsive to chocolate and hold it in special regard. However, Elva and Chester find human behavior baffling, and continually see their plans twisted by human responses. Consequently nearly every wrong on planet Earth over the past thousand years was caused by one of their historic debacles that include, but are not limited to, why the Leaning Tower of Pisa leans, the spread of the Black Plague, both World Wars and unsuccessfully battling the Salem Witch Trials..

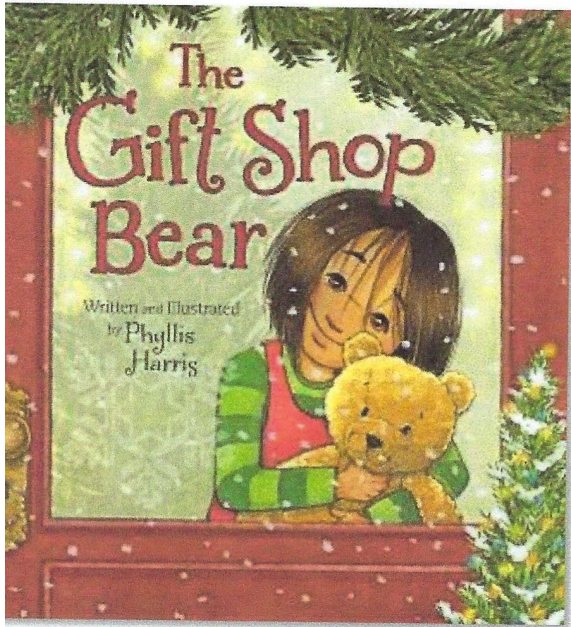
When the story opens, their bosses have shown up on Earth to express their outrage because the human race is so far behind the goal. The Overlords intend to deflect another of those big asteroids into Earth's path, just as they did to get rid of those pesky dinosaurs, and wipe out humanity once and for all. Elva and Chester demand an appeal, but will they be able to save the planet and its human inhabitants?

See the original song composed and sung by the author, to accompany the theme of this book, here:

<https://youtu.be/dURI-0SS3Ys>

# **PICTURE BOOKS**





## THE GIFT SHOP BEAR

by author/illustrator Phyllis Harris

Picture Book –WorthyKids, 2021

**Discover the power of friendship in this nostalgic Christmastale of a young girl and her furry friend—perfect for fans of *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *Corduroy*, and *The Polar Express*.**

All year long, Bear watches from his spot in the attic as the seasons change, waiting for the first snowflakes that signify Christmas is coming. You see, at Christmastime, Bear gets to join his special friend, Annie, in the festivities in her grandma's gift shop. But this year is different--the gift shop is closing and Bear's future seems uncertain.

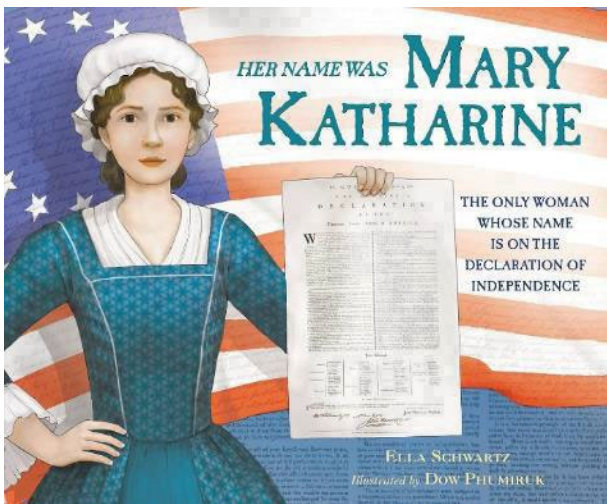
Will Bear see Annie and Nana again? The heartwarming conclusion will make this story a family favorite at Christmastime each year.

Author-illustrator Phyllis Harris brings a warmth and coziness to her art and storytelling that give the book the timeless feel of a Christmas classic.

**Granddaughter finds old teddy bear in Kansas City area attic — and inspires new book:** [www.kansascity.com/entertainment/books/article256044297.html](http://www.kansascity.com/entertainment/books/article256044297.html)

Watch book trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AaRKWlsPik>

<https://www.phyllisharris.com>



## **HER NAME WAS MARY KATHERINE:**

### **The Only Woman Whose Name Appears on the Declaration of Independence**

Text by Ella Schwartz

Illustrations by Dow

Phumirok

Christy Ottaviano Books/Macmillan

**George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock.** These are the names most people associate with the American Revolution. Rarely do people think of influential women who impacted the founding of America. That's because their contributions have been largely ignored.

One such brave woman was Mary Katharine Goddard. Her name is the only woman's name that appears on an official copy of the Declaration of Independence. While she wasn't a signer of the Declaration, her role in the fight for our nation's freedom is equally important to our nation's history—yet Mary Katharine Goddard is barely recognized in history. This fierce patriot should be celebrated as one of our nation's Founding Mothers, but her legacy has faded into obscurity.

Mary Katharine Goddard defied societal norms of her time. While most colonial women barely learned how to read and write, Mary Katharine operated a successful printing business. She went on to run several colonial newspapers, including the influential Maryland Journal, which printed news of the Revolutionary War. She fought for the freedom of the press before the First Amendment was drafted. She campaigned fiercely for liberty and was as staunch a patriot as any of the Founding Fathers. When she was bestowed the honor of printing an official version of the Declaration of Independence, she boldly added her name to the document, announcing to the world that she was ready to sacrifice her life for the vision of America she so strongly cherished. It's time the world learned about Mary Katharine Goddard. Businesswoman, Journalist, Revolutionary, Patriot.

Ella Schwartz is the author of four upcoming middle grade books including **CAN YOU CRACK THE CODE? A FASCINATING HISTORY OF CIPHERS AND CRYPTOGRAPHY** (Bloomsbury, 2019). Ella is a cybersecurity specialist interfacing with the U.S. federal government on strategic technology initiatives. Read more about Ella at [www.ellasbooks.com](http://www.ellasbooks.com). Dow Phumirok is an award-winning illustrator.

# Soaring in Style

By Jennifer Lane Wilson  
Illustrated by Lissy Marlin  
Capstone, February 2022



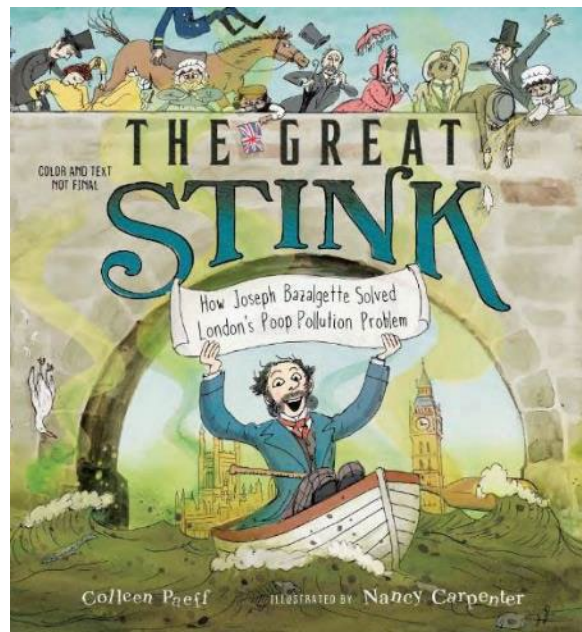
Long before Amelia Earhart became a superstar, she was a girl who longed to touch the stars. But the dresses women had to wear at the time made those dreams seem almost impossible. Amelia didn't let that stop her. As a young aviator breaking records and expectations, she learned to fly her plane with flair. Later, she dared to create a trendsetting fashion line for active women like herself. Soaring in Style tells the groundbreaking story of how Amelia Earhart defied expectations in the air and on the ground to become America's first celebrity fashion designer.

# THE GREAT STINK

## HOW JOSEPH BAZALGETTE SOLVED LONDON'S POOP POLLUTION PROBLEM

By Colleen Paeff, Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter  
Margaret K. McElderry Books (Simon & Schuster)  
March 2021

**2022 SCBWI Golden Kite Award for Best Nonfiction Children's Book for The Great Stink!**



In the summer of 1858, London's River Thames STANK. What created such a revolting smell? No matter what you called it, the answer was gross: the river was full of poop. This funny and informative picture book tells the story of Joseph Bazalgette, a 19th century engineer who designed London's first comprehensive sewage system. In doing so, he saved thousands of lives from cholera outbreaks that regularly plagued the city. This STEM-focused story provides a window into the past and shows how one invention went on to affect generations to come-and teaches kids how they can prevent pollution in their own neighborhoods today.

★ "This informative exploration of London's sanitation history will delight nonfiction fans interested in history, ecology, biography, and more...Far from stinky." - Kirkus, STARRED review

★ "Colleen Paeff's debut is quite pleasant, despite the fact that she's writing about something best described as noxious...Together author and illustrator make a revolting topic utterly enticing." - Shelf Awareness, STARRED review

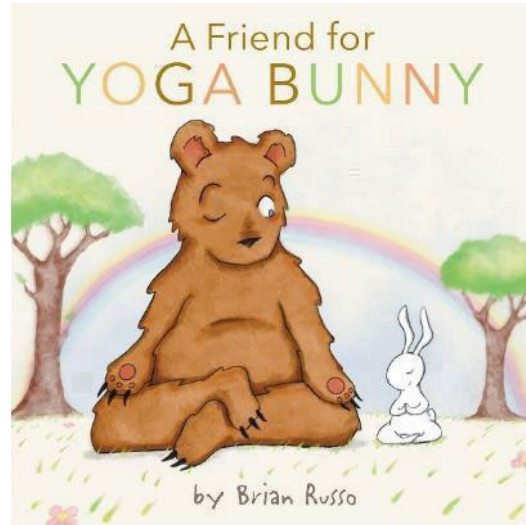
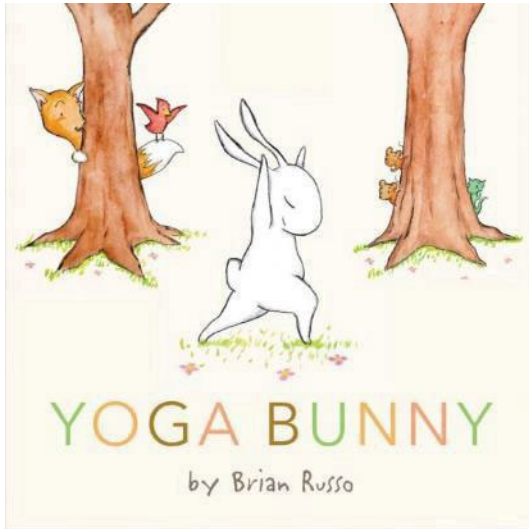
## YOGABUNNY

and

## A FRIEND FOR YOGABUNNY

By Brian Russo

HARPER COLLINS BOOKS



**Yoga Bunny is Amazon Editors' pick for the top 20 best children's books of 2021!**

It's a perfect day for yoga, and Bunny is practicing his poses when suddenly he bumps into bear. Bear is anxious because it's her birthday. Birthdays mean parties with big crowds, and big crowds make Bear nervous. To cheer her up, Bunny offers Bear a paw of friendship and shows her some yoga poses. But will it be enough for her special day?

Yoga poses, mindful practices, and new friends await in the tale filled with surprises at every turn!

Brian Russo, author/illustrator of *Yoga Bunny* and *A Friend for Yoga Bunny*, has been drawing since he can remember. He grew up in Short Hills, New Jersey, then moved to New York, where he earned a degree from NYU. Afterwards, he discovered something he loves just as much as drawing: doing yoga. He earned a teaching certificate from Yoga to the People in 2010, during which time he developed the Yoga Bunny illustrations. He now lives in Lehi, Utah (the setting of the film *Footloose*), with his beautiful wife, Emily, adorable son, Quill, and loyal dog, Spike. His favorite film is *Spirited Away*, and the celebrity he'd most like to meet is "Weird Al" Yankovic.

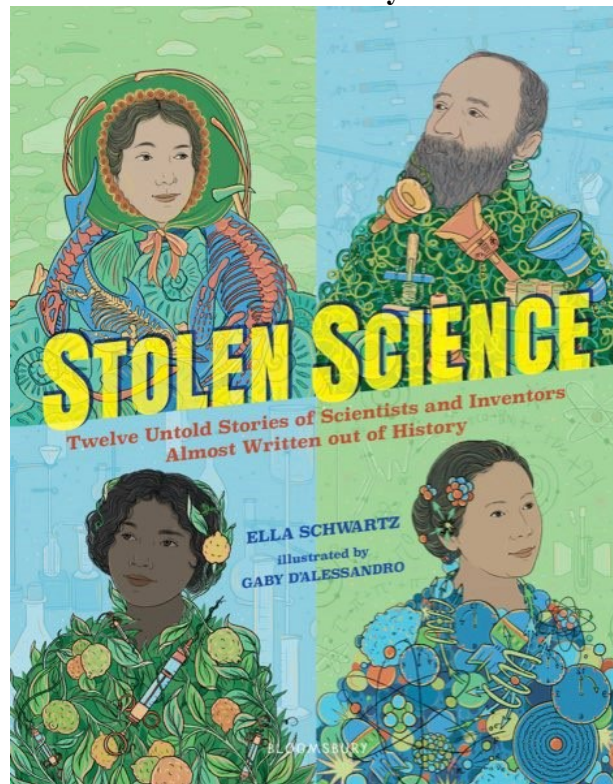
See more at [RussoDraw.com](http://RussoDraw.com)

**STOLEN SCIENCE HAS BEEN NAMED A FINALIST IN 2023 SUBARU AWARD FOR MG SCIENCE BOOKS!**

# STOLEN SCIENCE

The Untold Stories of the Scientists and Inventors Almost Written out of History

By Ella Schwartz  
Bloomsbury Kids



**Sometimes history is a big lie.** Over the centuries, certain scientists and inventors have been overlooked time and again, not because their work wasn't brilliant, but because of who they were. For much of history, discriminated groups including women, minorities, and immigrants often had to claw their way past biases, only to have the credit for their discoveries stolen by their white, male colleagues. The goal of this book is to set the record straight and finally give credit where credit is due!

*STOLEN SCIENCE: The Untold Stories of the Scientists and Inventors Almost Written out of History* tells the stories of scientists not recognized for their work due to their race, gender, or ethnicity. *STOLEN SCIENCE* will celebrate the achievements of pioneering scientists who have paved the way for the next generation.

Written by established middle grade nonfiction author, Ella Schwartz, the creative mind behind *CAN YOU CRACK THE CODE? A FASCINATING HISTORY OF CIPHERS AND CRYPTOGRAPHY* (Bloomsbury 2019) and *MAKE THIS!* (Nat Geo 2019).

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

See book trailer here: <https://youtu.be/yNCIYZA2yUE>

# CAN YOU CRACK THE CODE?

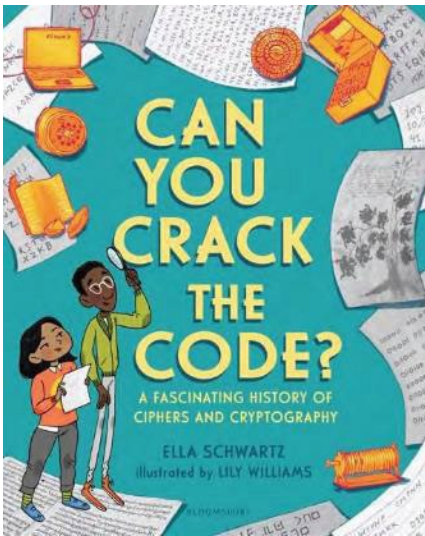
## A Fascinating History of Ciphers and Cryptography

By Ella Schwartz  
Bloomsbury Kids

*Selected for the Scholastic Summer Reading List 2019*

*Selected as a New York Public Library Book of the Month*

*Winner of the AAAS/Subaru Prize for Excellence in Science Books*

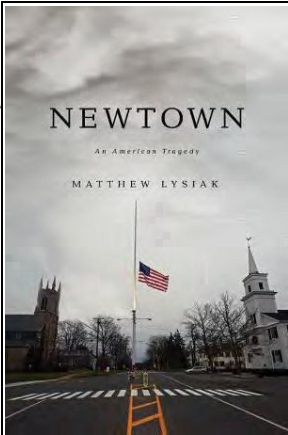


Codes can carry big secrets! Throughout history, lots of good guys and lots of bad guys have used codes to keep their messages under wraps. This fun and flippable nonfiction features stories of hidden treasures, war-time maneuverings, and contemporary hacking as well as explaining the mechanics behind the codes in accessible and kid friendly forms. Sidebars call out activities that invite the reader to try their own hand at cracking and crafting their own secret messages. This is the launch of an exciting new series that invites readers into a STEM topic through compelling historical anecdotes, scientific backup, and DIY projects.

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**UNSCRIPTED**





# The NEWTOWN Manifesto

## An American Tragedy

By Matthew Lysiak

Gallery Books/Simon & Schuster

**DOCRIGHTSAVAIL**

**WITH OVER FIVE HOURS OF VERIFIED AUDIO RECORDINGS BY SHOOTER**

In the vein of Dave Cullen's *Columbine*, the first comprehensive account of the Sandy Hook tragedy—with exclusive new information that chronicles the horrific events of December 14, 2012, including new insight into the dark mind of gunman Adam Lanza via discovered recordings by author.

26 people dead; 20 of them schoolchildren between the ages of six and seven. The world mourned the devastating shooting at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut in December 2012. Now, here is the startling, comprehensive look at this tragedy, and into the mind of the unstable killer, Adam Lanza. Drawing on hundreds of interviews and a decade's worth of emails from Lanza's mother to close friends that chronicled his slow slide into mental illness, *Newtown* pieces together the perfect storm that led to this unspeakable act of violence that shattered so many lives.

*Newtown* explores the two central theories that have permeated the media since the attack: some claim Lanza suffered from severe mental illness, while others insist that, far from being a random act of insanity, this was a meticulously thought out, premeditated attack at least two years in the making by a violent video-gamer so obsessed with “glory kills” that he was willing to go to any length to attain the top score. Lanza's dark descent from a young boy with adjustment disorders to a calculating killer is interwoven with the Newtown tragedy as it unfolded at the time, told from the points of view of eyewitnesses, survivors, parents of victims, first responders, and Adam's relatives. A definitive account of a tragedy that shook a nation, *Newtown* features exclusive material including initial misinformation reported by the media and commentary on how this American tragedy became a lightning rod for political agendas, much like *Columbine* did more than a decade ago.



Matthew Lysiak was a staff writer for *The Daily News* (New York) who has received national recognition for his exclusive reporting on the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary and the Newtown killer Adam Lanza, the Aurora gunman James Holmes, the Tucson shooter Jared Loughner, the Fort Hood army psychiatrist Nidal Malik Hasan, and more. Lysiak currently lives in Arizona with his wife and four daughters. The Apple TV+ series, *Home Before Dark*, is inspired by his work and his family.

# THE GREEN REAPER:

## Life in a One-Woman Mortuary in Boring, Oregon

By Elizabeth Fournier

\* All cast rights secured. Deck and Sizzle Reel available.



Elizabeth spent a lot of time in funeral homes as a kid, not because her family was in the business, but because they were so frequently found in caskets. Her mother died when she was young; so did her grandparents. Elizabeth began to read about different cultures' death rituals in *National Geographic* magazine. She held a mock cemetery on her dresser, and when friends' pets died, she would perform the funeral.

Elizabeth stood out at her tiny suburban Catholic school and knew it. After her mother's death and the loss of her fond attentions, Elizabeth performed dance routines for anyone she could press into watching. Her family's garage was the scene of many an elaborate recital. The dancing put joy back in her life but did nothing to assuage her sense of wrongness. Grief had hurt Elizabeth in ways she couldn't put into words. Elizabeth felt starved for reassurance, and without it, an inner voice began to chant that she was pathetic. She wanted to crawl into a tire swing and die.

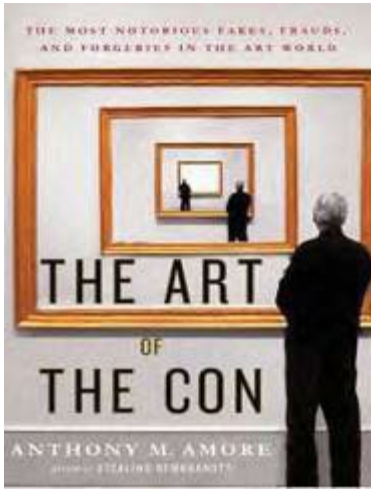
Elizabeth realized her life calling when she was offered the chance to be a live-in night keeper at a funeral home on a big hill. For Elizabeth, it was a casting call from Hollywood. She took the job and slept in a trailer on the spooky edge of the cemetery, with a shotgun under her bed. It was the scariest summer of her life, but it set things in motion. Elizabeth continued learning the ropes in the funeral world while living in the San Francisco Bay area, but her biological clock was ticking louder by the month while her dating life stalled at Dysfunction Junction. A move back to Oregon proved fruitful; in a mortuary version of romance, she found her husband after descending into the bowels of the corporate funeral home where they both were employed. (He worked there as a cremator). They soon married and together broke free from the corporate funeral home world and headed off to tiny Boring, Oregon, to make a fledging country funeral home their own. Daughter, Sofia (named after the Catholic Patron Saint of Widows) arrived the following year and Elizabeth brought her to the parlor every day. Sofia soon taught her that by lying in a grief-stricken widow's arms for a moment, and she could help the tension ease a bit. The baby held a natural gift of comforting the bereaved.

At the start of Elizabeth's career, it was truly an anomaly to walk into a funeral home and be greeted by a woman. Now Elizabeth runs a one-woman funeral service in the small town of Boring, a semi-rural community just outside of Portland. Elizabeth is the owner and operator of Cornerstone Funeral Services, the first green funeral home in the Portland Metropolitan area. She works as a green mortician and eco-educator and is affectionately known as the Green Reaper because of her passion of home funerals and natural burials. Elizabeth is always ready to lend a hand (or a shovel) and she is renowned for burying her townsfolk in their backyards.

Her story weaves anecdotes linked by her "Green Reaper" philosophy of eschewing big profits and instead returning to old-school burial practices that are far kinder to humans and the Earth. Elizabeth is inherently led toward helping others relate to death through taking care of their dead, and to preparing more meaningful burials. Through these experiences, she continues to reach more of her own healing and to reestablish inner connections. Some of us work for a better life; Elizabeth works for a better death.

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

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



# THE ART OF THE CON

By *Anthony M. Amore*

*St. Martin's Press*

*\* 12-part Limited Series Proposal Available*

Art collectors simply want to believe. *They want to believe very badly.*

Hermann Goering's eyes opened wide when he saw Johannes Vermeer's *The Woman Taken in Adultery*. With only 35 or 36 known paintings attributed to the great Dutch master (scholars will probably argue over the actual number forever), a "new" Vermeer would be a crowning addition to his growing, awe-inspiring, and completely ill-gotten art collection. Even that failed artist Adolph Hitler himself, who at the time was building his *Fuhrermuseum* in which he would display the greatest art collection he could steal and loot, hadn't scored such a coup as a heretofore unknown Vermeer. Never mind the fact that *The Woman Taken in Adultery* didn't look at all like the work of Vermeer.

Goering had to have it and traded 200 looted paintings to the person in possession of this "missing Vermeer," mediocre artist Han van Meegeren. Later, with the war over and facing execution, van Meegeren admitted that he had forged the alleged Vermeer and proved so by painting another in the courtroom. Goering, facing his own trial in Nuremberg, was informed of the forgery, but steadfastly refused to believe it. Art fraud has been a consistent scam used by con artists throughout the decades.

And even today, armed with the advances in methods used to unmask fakes and the knowledge of the widespread problem of art forgery, dupes continue to line up to buy bogus "masterpieces." The news continues in the headlines with the breaking news recently that Glafira Rosales had sold 63 Modernist fakes for an estimated \$80 million, with her own personal take a cool \$33 million. All that for paintings put on canvas by a Chinese immigrant who, having failed at his own attempt at art superstardom in the United States, worked for Rosales out of the garage of his home in Queens, often putting his forgeries out in the driveway to dry out in the sun. And just last year, authorities in Germany broke up a Russian forgery gang they say sold more than 400 forgeries by artists including Kandinsky, Goncharova, and von Jawlensky.

Art scams are today so numerous that the specter of a lawsuit arising from a mistaken attribution has scared a number of experts away from the business of authentication, and with good reason. Art scams are increasingly convincing and involve incredible sums of money. The cons perpetrated by unscrupulous art dealers and their accomplices are proportionately elaborate. From these stories comes the reality show, *The Art of the Con*.

*The Art of the Con* will tell the stories of some of history's most notorious yet untold cons. They involve stolen art hidden for decades; elaborate ruses that involve the Nazis and allegedly plundered art; the theft of a conceptual prototype from a well-known artist by his assistant to be used later to create copies; the use of online and television auction sites to scam buyers out of millions; and other confidence scams incredible not only for their boldness but more so because they actually worked. *The Art of the Con* will also take the viewer into the investigations that led to the capture of the con men, who oftentimes return back to the world of fakes, frauds, and forgeries in the art world.

For some, it's an irresistible urge because their innocent dupes all share something in common: They want to believe.

For more about Anthony, see [www.AnthonyAmore.com](http://www.AnthonyAmore.com)