

# THE NOOSE

September 2010



## NEXT MEETING: September 8

### The Man Who Can't Miss: James Patterson

*James Patterson has sold more books in the past three years than any other author. His book sales have totaled an estimated 170 million copies worldwide. One out of every 17 hardcover books of fiction sold since 2006 has been a James Patterson title.*

Come hear the most successful author in our genre! Take this rare opportunity to hear his story and to ask him your questions. Reserve early— we expect a crowd!

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## President's Letter

One of the perks of serving as president of our regional chapter of Mystery Writers of America is spreading the word about the hard work that *others* are doing to benefit this community of writers. Think of me as the cheerleader-in-chief! (All right, scratch that, but I do have plenty of folks to praise.)

In the last *Noose*, I highlighted the accomplishments of our library and programming committees. Now it's Mentor Program time.

MWA-NY's Mentor Program gives our members a unique opportunity for a close read and constructive feedback from an active member of the chapter. Participants in the program may submit the first fifty pages of a book manuscript or one or two short stories up to fifty pages in length. Because we are MWA, submissions must be examples of the crime genre.

All submissions will receive constructive feedback by an active chapter member. Up to two submissions, those determined to be most publication ready, are read by New York agents. Any member of MWA-NY may participate, whether previously published or not.

There is a small cost to participate, but this is a wonderful opportunity for first-hand feedback from a critical but ultimately supportive reader. And to our active members, please consider serving as a mentor. I know you've got a literary Tim Gunn hidden away somewhere.

We owe our thanks to the Mentor Program for all its work: Catherine Maiorisi (chairperson), Peggy Ehrhart, Ken Isaacson, Deborah Pines, and Persia Walker.

Details, along with a call for submissions, will hit your in-boxes soon. Now polish off those pages and get ready to be mentored!

Best,  
Alafair Burke  
Chapter President, MWA-NY

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**FROM THE EDITOR**

Hi all,

In the three years I have been editor of the *Noose* many things have changed in the publishing business. What hasn't changed, however, is the fellowship and optimism that being a member of MWA brings. Our chapter meetings continue to attract varied and accomplished guests, such as this month's James Patterson. Remember, if you can't attend the meeting is available via podcast at [www.mwa-ny.org](http://www.mwa-ny.org).

In addition to our chapter meetings, the Mentor Program goes from strength to strength. Also, sub-chapter meetings are taking place regularly, creating a sense of local community for our members.

We, as a chapter, have much to be proud of! Send comments, suggestions, complaints or requests to me at [mhannanmandel@yahoo.com](mailto:mhannanmandel@yahoo.com).

Marie Hannan-Mandel  
Editor

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## IMPORTANT DATES



**Look out for details of the Mentor Program.**

- Sept. 8** Chapter Meeting: *The Man Who Can't Miss: James Patterson*.  
The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South, in Manhattan, 6: 30 p.m.
- Sept. 21** Library Event: *New York Noir: Life in the Big Apple Can Be Murder*.  
Mid-Manhattan Branch, 455 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 6th Floor, 6: 30 p.m.
- Oct. 6** Chapter Meeting: *Life-and-Death Negotiation with the NYPD: Stories from the Hostage Negotiation Team*. The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South, in Manhattan, 6: 30 p.m.
- Oct. 19** Library Event: *The Art of Distraction: Using Red Herrings in Mysteries*.  
Mid-Manhattan Branch, 455 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 6th Floor, 6: 30 p.m.

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## HOW TO SPOT A SOCIOPATH (Part 2) by Mary Kennedy

When I speak at conferences, my fellow mystery writers often ask me for a quick guide to creating a “realistic” sociopath. I’ve come up with a few red flags, a handful of character traits that novelists can incorporate into their stories.

\* **Red flag.** He’s angry, impatient, hostile, with a low tolerance for frustration. The tiniest thing can set him off and his anger is out of proportion to the situation. This is the kind of guy who may sideswipe a car because of road rage, curse at a waitress because she’s too slow with his order, or kick the dog just for getting in his way.

\* **Red Flag:** He never takes responsibility for his bad behavior, never admits guilt, never apologizes and always blames others. He is incapable of love, empathy, remorse or regret. The only thing he regrets is getting caught. This is why it’s useless to try to “do therapy” with a sociopath. He will try to con you every time and pretend to be “reformed,” hoping to gain your trust.

\* **Red Flag:** He’s convinced he’s smarter than you are. One well-known drug dealer told me he made more in a week than I made in a year. (Sadly, this was probably true.) I reminded him that he was the one sitting in handcuffs in an orange jumpsuit, serving eight-to-ten in a maximum security prison.

\* **Red Flag:** He tries to intimidate by raising his voice, by arguing, by invading your space. He’s on a non-stop power trip. Showing fear merely goads him on. The only response is to remain impassive. (Think Special Agent Aaron Hotchner on *Criminal Minds*. He’s the master of the “never-let-them-see-you-sweat” technique.)

\* **Red Flag:** He has a sense of entitlement. When confronted with his misdeeds, he says “every man would act this way if he had the chance.”

\* **Red Flag:** He is manipulative, always trying to get others to bend to his will. He uses “grooming behaviors” on his victim to convince her to do something she really doesn’t want to do. By getting his victim to agree to small things, he eventually pushes his demands and she finds herself caught up in a situation that is not of her choosing.

Try these techniques in your next manuscript and see if they help you create the perfect sociopath.

*Mary Kennedy is a licensed clinical psychologist and the author of the Talk Radio Mysteries. REEL MURDER is a June, 2010 release. You can visit her website at [www.marykennedy.net](http://www.marykennedy.net).*

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## ASK THE WRITER by Lisa Cotoggio

Over a recent lunch with Danielle Bartlett, senior publicity manager at HarperCollins Publishers, I asked if she could share tips for how authors can get the most out of publicity. Danielle was more than happy to oblige as we discussed several key questions: What is publicity? How do you work with your in-house publicist? What do you do if you're not assigned an in-house publicist? Are outside publicists worth the cost? What can authors do themselves? Here's what she had to say:



**Before I give some tips, it is important to understand what publicity is and what it is NOT.**

- Essentially, the main role of publicity is to pitch your story to media and schedule that media, i.e. book reviews, interviews, etc.
- Publicity creates publicity materials, i.e. press releases, Q&A, bios, etc.
- Publicity schedules book signings/events and coordinates to make sure books are at the event.
- Publicity schedules your travel while you are on tour.
- Publicity does not buy ad space; that is marketing. We don't really BUY anything.
- Publicity does not sell books to bookstores or ask bookstores to order more books.
- Publicity does not work with online accounts (Amazon, Borders, and BN.com) for any reason.

**First, I'll explain how to work with your in-house publicist if your publisher provides one.**

- Have an initial conversation with your publicist, set up through your editor, about four months before the release of your book.
- Ask for a publicity plan so you know exactly what your publicist is planning to do for you.
- Book publicists are realistic about what we can and cannot do for your book.
- Discuss expectations and develop a strategy you both can agree upon.
- Don't overwhelm your publicist with multiple e-mails in a day. Think of everything you'd like to say and write one concise e-mail. If you get a reply, you can certainly reply to that!
- Before approaching media, talk to your publicist. He or she may have already pitched you.
- Help your publicist so your concerns are not overlooked. A friendly reminder goes a long way.

**So what can you do if you don't have a publicist?**

- Get More Bang for Your Buck (Time-Consuming, But Cheap):
  - Create a website! It is essential.
  - Use that website for promotions, informing fans, blogging (I suggest group blogging), etc.
  - Save e-mail addresses so you can keep in contact with fans and send updates.
  - Only use social media if you plan to use social media. You must constantly update your profile to make

it interesting enough for people to pay attention.

- Be transparent. The more people feel like they know you, the more likely they are to buy your book.
- You Are the Story: the Right Way to Pitch Media:
  - Think about what makes you or your book different from everyone else's. That's your hook!
  - Think about why a certain media outlet would care. Media is becoming much more localized. So unless you have a tie to the area or are appearing at a local bookstore, don't pitch someone in Houston if you live in Milwaukee.
  - That being said, don't think that going on tour will help you secure media or book reviews. (More about book signings below)
  - Keep on top of the news and if there is a news story that ties into your own personal story or background or the book's plot, see if you can make some noise.
  - Google books similar to your own and see who is writing about them.
  - Be concise, media gets thousands of e-mails a day. The last thing you want to do is waste their time.
- Network:
  - Tell everyone you meet that you're an author and that your book is coming out soon.
  - Reach out to local book clubs, libraries, alum organizations, your PTA, etc. Big groups of people are great resources to get the word out.
  - Create a business card with your website, ISBN, on-sale date and e-mail address. Try VistaPrint.com.
  - Go to conferences to meet other authors, agents, and readers. Consider not only the big ones, such as Bouchercon, ThrillerFest and Malice Domestic, but also think about the regional ones, like SleuthFest, Left Coast Crime and Mayhem in the Midlands.
  - Create a very good relationship with your local independent bookstore. They can help in more ways than you can ever imagine.
  - If a bookstore doesn't carry your book, just give them a FREE copy and tell them you think they might like it.

### **Is an outside publicist worth it?**

- Some outside publicists are terrific; others are not. If you do decide to hire someone, approach the relationship the same way you would an in-house publicist.
- Request a publicity plan; discuss expectations; develop a strategy.
- Begin the process early if this will be your only source of publicity: six months out is ideal.
- If you have an in-house and outside publicist, make sure there is clear communication between all parties.
- Consider hiring an outside publicist after the in-house push is over.

### **Parting tips**

- Don't schedule a book signing unless you or the store can guarantee that a minimum of 30-50 people will attend. It's not worth either of your time. You are better off working on your website or pitches than sitting alone in a bookstore with your poster.
- Don't schedule events to take place before the on-sale date. Publishers can't guarantee that books will make it to the venue on time. Readers have short attention spans and will forget about a book if it is not right there to buy.

- Don't schedule multiple events in one city. You will end up with several small events instead of one big successful event.
- Consider pairing with other authors. So what if readers buy the other author's book? At least you had more attendees and the next time readers are looking for something to read, they will think about you.

Lisa Cotoggio is chair of the MWA-NY Library Outreach Committee and can be contacted at: [www.lisacotoggio.com](http://www.lisacotoggio.com).

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## NJ SATELLITE MEETING



Wearing his hallmark black t-shirt, jeans and Frye boots, Wallace Stroby is prepared to ride a hog on the turnpike. Why not? He is a pure Jersey product, like sweet corn, and tomatoes. Born and raised in Jersey, calling Rutgers his alma mater, he now resides on the New Jersey shore. Yes, there is literature written west of the Hudson River, and you're invited to experience it.

He was a finalist for the Barry Award for best first novel. He interviewed Stephen King for a 1991 *Writer's Digest* article. The transcript is on his website. The *Newark Star Ledger* stated, "Stroby 49, continues to impress a growing number of readers – with character development, with crisp dialogue, with risky breaks from formula."

A former music editor of the *Ledger*, Stroby has written three character-driven best selling mysteries. His knowledge of music, New Jersey history, and Jersey environs makes his context real. The author of *The Barbed Wire Kiss*, *The Heartbreak Lounge*, and *Gone 'Til November* will have a new novel coming out this winter.

Stroby is the guest of honor for an audience participation Q&A on Wednesday October 20th at Tumulty's Pub, 361 George St., New Brunswick. The topic: the art of writing mysteries. The Pub is a short walk from the Amtrak station in New Brunswick. Ample local parking is available. There will be a selection of entrees, with an open cash bar starting at 6 p.m.. Dinner is called for 7 p.m., and usually the meeting adjourns before 9 p.m.

To register send your \$30 check (made out to MWA) to Sheila York, 49 Morse Ave., Bloomfield, NJ 07003.

Also, send an e-mail to Art Frank [cariagehouse@earthlink.net](mailto:cariagehouse@earthlink.net) for a head count.

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# WHAT'S NOOSE?



## Books

Lisa Bork, *For Richer, For Danger: A Broken Vows Mystery*, Midnight Ink.

E.J. Rand, *Dark Sea: A Reluctant Sleuth Mystery*, Deadly Ink Press.

## Stories

Carole Bugge, "The Curse of Edwin Booth," *Sherlock Holmes: The American Years*, ed. Michael Kurland, St. Martin's.

Elizabeth Zelvin, "The Green Cross," *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, August 2010.

## Other

Carole Bugge, "Ask Mrs. Hudson" [column], *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine*, No. 3, May 2010.

Carole Bugge (writing as C.E. Lawrence): *Silent Screams*, originally published by Kensington Press in 2009, is now available on Audible.com.

Gary Cahill's first published short story, "That Kind of Guy," the Black Mask selection in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* January 2009, will be anthologized in *Pulp Empire Volume II* from Metahuman Press. The e-download went live in July, and the print edition appeared late July/early August.

E.J. Rand's unpublished manuscript, *Labyrinth*, has been chosen as one of ten finalists for the Claymore Award given annually by Killer Nashville.

Send items for "What's Noose?" to Peggy Ehrhart at [pehrhart@sprynet.com](mailto:pehrhart@sprynet.com). Please use the format you see in the entries above. Because of the Noose's new format, we now have limited space (100 to 150 words) and have to give priority to publications.

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