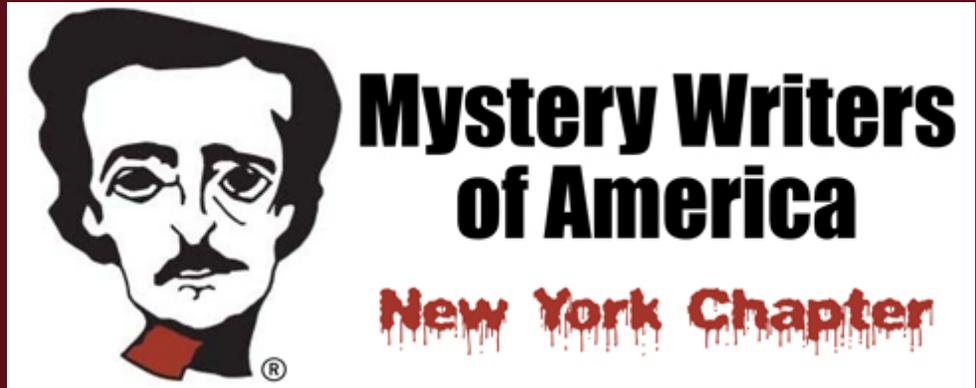


THE NOOSE

May/June 2011



NEXT MEETING: June 1, 2011

The Scoop! - Using TV Techniques to Write a Killer Mystery with Hank Phillippi Ryan.

THE SCOOP! Using TV Techniques to Write A Killer Mystery

June 1, 2011

Developing memorable characters, suspense, and conflict. Telling a compelling story. Creating a satisfying ending. Finding justice. Changing lives. That's exactly what Boston's premier investigative reporter, **Hank Phillippi Ryan**, does in television news. But doesn't a great novel need the same things?



Reporting for Boston's NBC affiliate, Hank Phillippi Ryan has won 26 Emmys and dozens of other honors. She's also an Agatha, Anthony and Macavity Award-winning short story author. Her debut novel, *Prime Time*, won the Agatha Award for Best First Novel, and *Drive Time* is a 2010 Agatha Nominee for Best Mystery. She serves on both the national board of MWA and the New England Sisters in Crime.

Hank will expose the secrets of television reporting while disclosing her top ten questions and news-honed applications. **Let this veteran journalist give your novel the inside scoop!**

THE NATIONAL ARTS CLUB
15 Gramercy Park South
(a.k.a. East 20th Street)
\$42 per person, includes a glass of wine, beer, or soda
6 p.m. Cash Bar
7 p.m. Dinner
8 p.m. Program

RESERVATIONS
Send \$42 check payable to MWA-NY to
Ann-Marie DiGennaro
857 Grand Street, Apt 1L
Brooklyn, New York 11211
Please include your e-mail.
Chicken a problem?
Please contact Ann-Marie at (917) 747-9412

[Click here for more information.](#)

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President's Letter



Hello, MWA-NY Members,

Half the year is gone and the publishing industry has seen many changes and some startling news stories: Who's going E?! Who's going into print?! Some favorite retailers have closed their doors and others have replaced them. By the time you read this message the 2010 Edgars winners will have been announced. Some may be surprises, others may inspire the words, "It's about time!" It's all good. To loosely quote former MWA President Harlan Coben (in a recent interview), "My job is to write. I don't care if readers read it on paper, on a device or on stone tablets."

I love that – and of course, he's right. As someone who came from the video business, I'm used to seeing lots of changes in formats (anyone remember CEDs or Laserdiscs?) and I expect that the publishing business will eventually reconfigure its financial model to embrace all the different modes of delivery for our work.

In the meantime, we need to keep writing and getting better at what we do.

Toward that end, last summer MWA National held its first MWA University, a one-day event designed to help us do just that. And now, MWA University comes to the NY chapter on August 13, 2011. Check your email blasts and the Yahoo Group for more information as details become available. It promises to be a terrific event with award-winning faculty members and the chance to fine tune or jumpstart your writing!

Cheers,

Rosemary Harris

2011 President, MWA-NY Chapter

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FROM THE EDITOR

Hi all,

As I write, the Edgar events are going on in New York. What a great organization we are! I hope you're enjoying yourself wherever you are and that you find the *Noose* a valuable companion.

Please send your comments to mhannanmandel@yahoo.com.

Marie Hannan-Mandel
Editor

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IMPORTANT DATES



- MAY 17 —** **Library Lecture:** *Cause of Death: Choose Your Weapon.* "How done it" can be as important as "who done it." Donald Bain, Hilary Davidson, Rosemary Harris, Jonathan Maberry and Angela Zeman reveal how *they* do it. Moderated by Peggy Ehrhart. At the Mid-Manhattan Library, 455 Fifth Avenue, 6th Floor, NYC, NY, 6:30 p.m. www.mwa-ny.org/meetings.php.
- MAY 18 —** **Library Lecture at White Plains Library:** *Loves, Lies, and Murder.* Michael Balkind, Maggie Barbieri, Evelyn David, Steve Liskow will examine books notable for their examination of deception and betrayal as seen through the distorted lens of romantic attraction. Moderated by Chris Knopf. At the White Plains Library, 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains, 7:00-8:30pm.
- MAY 19 —** **Meeting:** *Interrogation – A Command Performance.* Joint meeting with New York/Tri-State Sisters in Crime. At the Muhlenberg Public Library, 209 W. 23rd Street, (near 7th Ave.) 3rd Floor Community Room, NYC, NY, 6:00 p.m.
- JUNE 1 —** **Meeting:** *The Scoop! With Hank Phillippi Ryan – Using TV Techniques to Write a Killer Mystery.* Chapter meeting held at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South (a.k.a. East 20th Street), NYC, NY, 6:00 p.m. Further details at www.mwa-ny.org/meetings.php.
- JUNE 4 —** **Special Event:** *MWA Gives Members a Shot! Manhattan Rifle Range Visit.* [Details available in this newsletter.](#)

**AUGUST 13 - SAVE
THE DATE! —**

Special Event: *MWA University is coming to the NY chapter! This summer, the MWA Education Committee is holding an all-day event at Fordham University Law School. Workshops and discussions will form an intensive one-day boot camp for writers at all stages of their careers. Faculty includes award-winning writers Hank Phillippi Ryan, Reed Farrel Coleman, Cordelia Frances Biddle and others. Stay tuned for more information through email blasts and the [Yahoo Group](#).*

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MWA-NY GIVES MEMBERS A SHOT!



Saturday, June 4th, 2011- Manhattan Rifle Range Visit

Learn to shoot a Ruger 10/22 semi-automatic .22 caliber rifle without leaving Manhattan!

Who but MWA-NY could offer you three hours to:

- learn to shoot a Ruger 10/22 semi-automatic .22 caliber rifle
- get basic safety training from a certified instructor
- get professional answers to all your gun questions!

All for \$100. No extra charge for ammunition or targets!

But attendance is **limited to fifteen (15)** – first come, first served

Criminal background checks are required for all shooters.

NO LESS than five (5) days before event, **you must submit your information online** to:

<http://www.westsidepistolrange.com/registration.php> and in the last field, GROUP LEADER,
please paste: nratraininginnyc@yahoo.com

Finally, **send your \$100 check payable to:**

Lance Dashefsky
169 West 73rd St. #10
New York NY 10023-2946

Your check must arrive no later than May 14, 2011.

For any other questions, please contact E.W. Count at cop_talk@yahoo.com
Westside Rifle Range is at 20 W. 20th Street

See you at the range!

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Interview with Pamela Callow

by Mary Kennedy

Pamela Callow took a break from her hectic schedule to chat about *Indefensible* and why she writes legal thrillers.

Q. Your first book in the series, *Damaged*, received rave reviews from James Rollins, Linwood Barclay and Rick Mofina. Heady stuff for a debut thriller writer?

PC: I was terrified sending my manuscript, as I am such a fan of each of those authors. To learn that they had enjoyed *Damaged* and were willing to give an endorsement was a literal thrill.

Q. I noticed there are two more books planned for the series, with release dates in 2012. Can you give us some hint about what you have in store for Kate Lange?

PC: In *Tattooed* (June 2012), the third book, Kate Lange will encounter her alter ego, a tattoo artist whom she knew in high school. I'm very excited about this story, as I've been fascinated by the mainstreaming of the tattoo culture. The fourth book is still in development and we'll have to see where Kate's head is at the end of *Tattooed*. Her romantic life is in a bit of a tangle and she's still figuring out what makes her happy.

Q. A recent study reveals that thirty percent of women lawyers abandon the law to work in other fields. What keeps Kate Lange involved with her legal career? She seems to be passionately interested in it.

PC: Kate is a survivor. Her father was convicted of fraud when she was twelve. At the age of sixteen, her sister died in a car accident -- with Kate at the wheel. She worked at minimum wage jobs to put herself through university, and is a "late bloomer" in terms of her legal career. Because none of it came easy for her, she is very passionate about her legal career, although her goals have evolved over the books.

At the opening of *Damaged*, her initial goal with her legal career was to be on a fast-track to a corner office, with a judicial appointment down the road. She believed success equals respect and that she could overcome her past this way -- and thus, would finally be happy. By the end of the book, she realizes that her profession can change people's lives -- for better or for worse. She has to dig deep and face her fears.

Q. How do you manage your time? I always think of lawyers jotting down what they do all day long, in 15-minute increments. It sounds a bit grueling and tedious? Is it a constant juggling act?

PC: I'm used to billing my time. As a lawyer, it was every six minutes. As a consultant, my firm charged

per diems. Knowing that you need to provide value and be productive has carried over into my writing habits. I consider my publisher to be my client, so I try to be disciplined and prioritize my work. It is challenging, though. Being an author means you are running a small company as well as creating the product. With two books released in the space of six months, and two more in the works, it has become quite a juggling act. And sometimes the balls fall.

Q. You're reading from *Indefensible* at the Canadian Bar Association's Law Day. How have your books been received by the legal community?

PC: Publishing a book is like inviting someone into your soul. It is terrifying and exhilarating at the same time. I've been overwhelmed by the support from the legal community.

Readers can visit Pamela online at www.pamelacallow.com

Mary Kennedy is a psychologist and the author of *The Talk Radio Mysteries*. Visit her online at www.marykennedy.net.

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MURDER, THEY WROTE **An Interview with *Murder, She Wrote*** **Authors Donald Bain and Renée Paley-Bain**



by Donna Nowak

This is the second of a multi-part interview with the co-writers of the *Murder, She Wrote* series. The interview will continue in future issues. Many thanks to Donna for allowing us to use it.

Q. As an accomplished jazz musician, Donald, how would you say the two arts relate to one another?

DB: I think there's a definite relationship between music and writing, particularly jazz and writing. All good writing has a certain rhythm, a distinct pulse. The reader, like the listener, is viscerally aware when the rhythm section of a jazz group, or a section of a book lags, or is rushed. Ideally, a reader should know which character is speaking by the rhythm of that character's speech pattern. When the rhythm section of a jazz trio or quartet is totally in-sync, the music "swings." The same is true of writing that swings, writing that just feels right to the reader.

Q. How did your deal "ghosting" the *Murder, She Wrote* books come about, Donald? I understand that you also ghosted TV spin-off books based on the detective show "Toma" (which was later reworked into the series "Baretta" when star Tony Musante backed out). How did working on that spin-off differ from *Murder, She Wrote*? Where did you come up with plot ideas for Toma?

DB: I'd been ghosting a long-running series of successful murder mystery novels for a well-known person. When McGraw-Hill decided to publish a novel based upon the "Murder, She Wrote" (television) series, they approached my agent to see if I was available and might be interested. I was, and am glad I accepted the assignment. That was more than 20 years and 33 *MSW* books ago. McGraw-Hill closed the division that published that first book, *Gin & Daggers*, and I assumed that was the end of it. But Penguin came along and resurrected the series idea, and here we are all these years later. I received a call from my agent just a few minutes ago to announce that a new four-book contract has been successfully negotiated. That means two more years of writing the *MSW* novels, which will bring the total up to 37 books. As for the *Toma* series, I was strictly a writer-for-hire on those books. My cousin, Jack Pearl, a prolific writer, had become ill and I was asked to fulfill his contracts for the *Toma* tie-in series. The plots were handed to me and I executed them.

Q. How has the writing and rhythm of the *MSW* books changed for you from when you first started the series, Donald? Renée, how did you prepare to co-write the series? Was it a difficult transition? What have you brought to the series that is uniquely yours? Do you ever find yourself at odds as a team regarding plot points? I know during a book signing, Donald said you each write chapters and sometimes each take the book in a new direction.

DB: The writing and rhythm of the *MSW* books really hasn't changed very much. The tone and approach of the series had been originated and honed by the folks who worked on the TV series, and by the wonderful Angela Lansbury. I think the most meaningful change occurred when Renée started collaborating with me. She naturally has a different "rhythm" than I do, although we've successfully managed to meld her approach with mine. By working closely together we've established an easy writing rapport that stays true to the series' intent and formula. Renée's involvement has raised the bar, resulting in books that while slightly different never stray from what *Murder, She Wrote* has always been about. Our many readers expect no less.

RPB: The only way I "prepared" to write the series with Don was to watch the show with him. "Murder, She Wrote" was a familiar program, coming as it did after "60 Minutes," another Sunday night institution. But it became even more fun to watch with a specific purpose in mind, that of learning as many details about Jessica Fletcher and her friends as we could—although we did miss a few. And I read all the books Don wrote before I started collaborating with him. I don't think it was a particularly difficult transition, although I still get stuck from time to time. Luckily I have Don to rescue me. What I contribute, I think, is a slightly different point of view coming from a lifetime of experience in the female gender, and perhaps a keener eye for decoration and clothing. We rarely disagree about the direction of the book, and when we do, we'll discuss it and decide together how we think it should proceed. If push comes to shove, Don's direction takes precedence.

You can contact Donna Nowak at writerdonna7@hotmail.com

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ASK THE WRITER by Lisa Cotoggio

*This is the second part of a two-part interview with **Stefanie Pintoff**, winner of the 2010 Edgar Award for Best First Novel, who squeezed in time for coffee and a chat about her new book and writing historical mysteries. The first installment is in the March/April issue.*

Q. The timing of a *Secret of the White Rose's* May release in hardcover is in sync with the paperback release of your second novel, *A Curtain Falls*. Is there a lot of excitement around the two books?

SP: Definitely! The hope is that one book will lead new readers to the other – and vice versa.

Q. As a writer who won the 2008 Best First Crime Novel Award sponsored by the Mystery Writers of America and St. Martin's Minotaur for your first novel, *In the Shadow of Gotham*, a book that when published went on to win the 2010 Edgar Award for Best First Novel along with nominations for the Anthony, Macavity, Agatha and RT Reviewer's Choice Awards, do you feel a sense of pressure to perform?



SP: I definitely feel a sense of pressure, though I'm not sure that the awards and nominations are responsible for it. I hope to become better with each book – and that self-pressure would be there, whether I'd won any awards or not.

Q. What's your writing schedule like?

SP: I write every day, including weekends. But because I have a young daughter, my most productive time is on weekdays: early morning before she wakes, and then between 8 and 3:30 when she's in school.

Q. When you start a new book, how much time do you devote to research the history surrounding your story?

SP: It's been different for each book. For my first, I spent years on the research. But much of that was only for fun, before I had thoughts of writing a book. I'd take architectural tours of the Upper East Side, visit the Tenement Museum, or check out the New York Historical Society's special exhibit on infamous trials of the past. Now that I'm at home in the world of early twentieth-century New York, my process is more organic. I'll spend about three months doing concentrated research on specific topics – and add to that as needed while I write.

Q. What's next on the agenda for Detective Ziele?

SP: When Simon Ziele returns, he will grapple with a series of murders in the subway tunnels, designed to sabotage efforts to expand the subway line. His investigation will be complicated not just by the political corruption and graft that is rampant in the city, but by the brilliant yet untrustworthy criminal scientist who always tries to help him.

Q. Getting back to your Edgar win, do you have any tips for aspiring writers who would like to follow in your footsteps?

SP: Every terrific writer I know seems to be first and foremost a great reader. Good books – and bad ones, too – teach us a great deal about the craft of writing if we pay attention.

Q. Do you see any contemporary novels down the line? If so, do you think you'll keep New York City as the backdrop or do you plan to visit some other locale?

SP: My next project will be a departure from the historicals, as I'm working on a contemporary thriller about a secret FBI unit. But like the Ziele series, it will be heavily forensic – a reflection of my continuing fascination with how technology and science are important to crime-solving. And yes, it will be partly set in New York City.

Q. Some parting words of wisdom?

SP: To keep reading widely and broadly. To believe in yourself and your ideas. And – though these are challenging times for everyone in the industry, with many changes and uncertainties ahead – to always recognize what a great privilege we enjoy as writers. Writing is *fun* – and we need to remember that. Our stories will only be richer for it.

To learn more about Stefanie visit: www.stefaniepintoff.com

Lisa Cotoggio is chair of the MWA-NY Library Outreach Committee and can be contacted at: www.lisacotoggio.com.

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WHAT'S NOOSE?



Books

Jane K. Cleland. *Deadly Threads*, St. Martin's Minotaur.

Rosemary Harris. *Slugfest*, St. Martin's Minotaur.

Short Stories

Nancy Adams. "The Secret of the Red Mullet," in *Fish Tales: The Guppy Anthology*, Wildside Press.

Betsy Bitner. "Amazing Grace," in *Fish Tales: The Guppy Anthology*, Wildside Press.

Richard Ciciarelli. "Bed, Bath and Be Dead," *Woman's World*, 7 April 2011.

Peggy Ehrhart. "Something Fishy," in *Fish Tales: The Guppy Anthology*, Wildside Press.

Gigi Vernon. "Forgotten Man," *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, April 2011

Deals

E. F. Watkins' novel *Dark Music*--about a young woman who develops both her sleuthing and her psychic skills when she buys a haunted house--has been sold to Deadly Ink Press.

Send items for "What's Noose?" to Peggy Ehrhart at pehrhart@sprynet.com. Please use the format you see in the entries above. *Italicize* book and magazine titles and put "quotes" around the titles of short stories and articles.

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ASK THE LAWYER

Dear Bob,

My father was in the army during WWII. He passed away in 2006. He had a hand-written diary along with a scrapbook, documents and original photos taken during his army life.

I would love to publish his diary along with the documents and photos. It would be a fascinating look at the war from the trenches. My question is: If I wish to use photos in which other people are featured, do I need to get a legal release from them or their surviving families before I can use the photos?

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Marie C.

Dear Marie C.:

I will assume that the photographs were taken in the United States, or, alternatively, that the persons depicted are all Americans, and thus that U.S. law applies. I will further assume that your father was the photographer who took all of the snapshots, and thus that no difficult copyright issues are involved in their publication. If either of these assumptions is invalid, you may well have difficulties if you proceed with publication.

Given those two assumptions, I see no reason why the diary cannot be published.

Ditto the photographs of other people, unless those other people are still living, and are depicted in extremely embarrassing circumstances, such as undressed, having sex, kissing a person of the same sex (if they were closeted), etc. Ordinary snapshots of ordinary people in everyday circumstances do not require the permission of the subjects when included in a book.

The other thing to be careful about, is if your father discussed identifiable other people in unflattering terms, or accused them of behaviors they would not want publicized. If any such persons are still living, they could bring suit for defamation or invasion of privacy, without regard to photographs. In some states, even the estates of deceased persons may be able to sue for "revelation of embarrassing private facts" invasion of privacy. You might well want to edit any such statements.

Please keep in mind that when I say, "You can do this," I mean that you should be able to prevail if anyone sues you. The reason publishers want their authors to obtain releases, even when not legally required, is to deter potential plaintiffs from suing. A lawyer who is not aware of the ins and outs of privacy law in his or her state might well decide to take a flyer and bring a lawsuit, but if informed that his client had previously signed a release expressly authorizing the publication, even the greediest, least intelligent attorney is likely to back off.

I do not mean to frighten you when I talk about possible lawsuits. For a book of this nature, if there are no privacy or defamation issues, I would be shocked anyone sued merely because their names or

images were included in the book. And again, even if they were to sue, I am confident you would prevail.

You mentioned "documents." Documents may or may not be protected by copyright, and would have to be considered on a case by case basis. If these were U.S. government documents, then in all likelihood they are public domain, i.e. available for use without permission or payment.

I hope this is helpful.

Good Luck

Bob

Advice given in this column is general, and is not based upon a thorough review of facts and considerations in any given instance. You should consult an attorney in depth if you need legal advice.

Bob Stein counsels and represents people at all levels of the entertainment industry from writers to film producers. He has represented David Baldacci and Janet Evanovich and spent thirteen years in-house at Random House, Simon and Schuster and Warner Books before entering private practice.

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