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in
Crime*™

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HEART OF TEXAS Chapter
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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

October 14, 2012

A Collision of Forensic Science and Politics

Gerald Hurst was an expert witness in the case of Cameron Todd Willingham. Hurst came into the controversial case long after the original conviction with a new conclusion based on advances in fire investigation. Despite a vigorous defense, Willingham was executed on February 17, 2004 at Huntsville by Lethal Injection.

November 11, 2012

Mental Illness and the Law

Dr. Denae Rickenbacker has a Bachelor of Science from Texas Tech University. Dr. Rickenbacker is Board Certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology in General Psychiatry as well as Forensic Psychiatry having attended medical school and four years of psychiatry residency at the University of Texas Health Sciences Center in San Antonio.

December 9, 2012

Underwater Search, Rescue and Crime Scenes

Greg Pyles is the CEO of TEXSAR a volunteer first responder organization based in Austin, Texas that is able to deploy throughout the entire state.

January 13, 2013

Bob Doerr was an Air Force criminal investigator and counterintelligence officer. During his career, he traveled and worked with a number of different police and security agencies around the world.

The Sisters in Crime Heart of Texas Chapter, meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. at the Westlake Barnes & Noble bookstore, located at the southeast corner of Loop 360 and Bee Cave Road, in The Village at Westlake shopping center.

Kaye George: On Current Publishing Trends

If you don't know who I am, I'll do a little intro. I'm Kaye George. I started out in Los Angeles, but only lived there three months--don't remember it at all. I was raised in Moline, IL, and have lived all over the US since leaving Illinois. For now, I'm in Texas, near Waco, but it's a good bet I won't stay here forever. I used to paint a little and I'm also a musician, classical violin (not fiddle, to the eternal disappointment of my Texas neighbors).

For jobs, I've done waitressing, nurse's aide, bookkeeper, secretary, janitor, nanny, computer programmer, and maybe a couple I've forgotten.



KAYE GEORGE

I've been writing all my life, but have been doing mysteries for a little over ten years. My short stories started getting published in 2005. I ran around the house screaming at the top of my lungs when the first tale was accepted at Web Mystery Magazine. In fact, over the next few days, whenever I thought about it I started screaming again. At that point, I'd been writing and submitting for five years without publication results. What a great feeling that was!

Since then, I've had more short stories published, and some novels. My first mystery, *CHOKER*, was published by Mainly Murder Press. We parted company a year later and I've since published the second in the series, *SMOKE*, by myself. The third is planned for October.

There are a couple of other irons in the fire. A couple of weeks ago, I accepted a publication offer from Barking Rain Press for a musical sleuth mystery AND submitted a cozy proposal through my agent (Kim Lionetti at BookEnds) to Berkley Prime Crime. My submission was accepted and I now have a three-book contract for a series that will be called the

I'm writing an unauthorized
autobiography.

-Steven Wright

Fat Cat Mystery Series, titles and new pen name to be determined.

I'm serving as president of the Guppies chapter of Sisters in Crime until next June. This organization was my life saver when we moved out of Dallas and away from my SinC chapter and the Irving Symphony and my string quartet and...everything else.

OK, that's my writing life, sort of messy and scattered, much like the usual state of my office. (I figure being creative gives me license.)

For my feature here, I decided to go into the types of publishing that I've had experience with. Actually, I think I've had experience with them all.

Small Press publishers are springing up like mushrooms to fill the void left by the NY publishing houses, who are cutting back on anything that is unlike what they know to be successful. That's a good thing! Of course, established midlist authors are self-publishing in droves, but others are using small presses. It's a great way to enter the publishing world for new authors, too. The smaller presses are more ready to take a chance on something that doesn't quite fit an established niche. And, let's face it, that's what writers love to write--something new, fresh, different.

I've been with several small presses, two POD presses, one e-book only, one audio-book only. (POD means Print on Demand and produces a trade paperback sized book, larger and more expensive than the mass market paperbacks seen in bookstores from the NY publishers.)

Frankly, POD makes so much business sense, it would seem the only way to go. But the books do cost more, so that's a tradeoff.

Here are some factors to consider:

If you get an offer from a small press, be sure to read the contract carefully. Even then, some of it might be obscure! Some are very plain, some are couched in legalese. Get help if you don't understand some of it. It's worth it to find an attorney to interpret if you're unsure about some of the clauses.

Some small presses have better terms than others. A 40 percent discount on buying your own books

is common. However, I found it impossible to get my books into one local Austin bookstore that insisted on consignment

and a 60/40 split (60 percent for me, 40 for them). With me already paying 60 percent on the books, plus shipping, that put me behind at the start. That book store also demanded a \$25 fee up front, so that I lost \$1.78 on every book sold there! They only did that for small press books, of course, otherwise they would have nothing to sell.

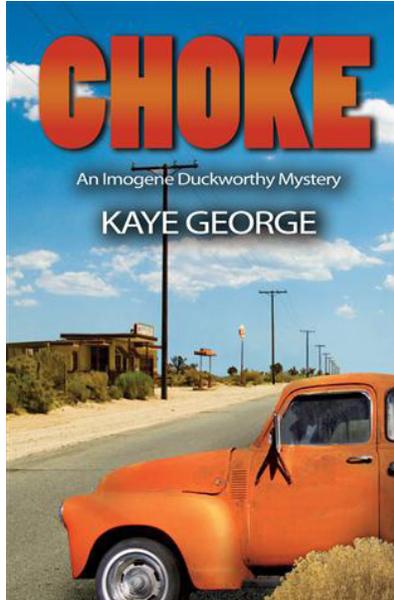
Other independent bookstores have been much, much friendlier. I got a 70/30 split from one, another ordered my books from the publisher.

Some of my small presses pay much higher royalties than others. They don't like the writers to disclose the contract terms, but I'll tell you that they are NOT all the same.

Another area where they differ is cover design. You don't have the final say for any small press, but some give you more input than others. Since so many books are sold online now, I feel that cover design is becoming more and more important. It's hard to catch someone's eye with a thumbnail, but that's what your book

has to do. It also has to fit your genre so you attract the reader who is expecting to find what you've written. I'd advise looking at the covers for the small press you're thinking of going with to see if they do

If you get an offer from a small press, be sure to read the contract carefully.



I've always believed in writing without a collaborator, because where two people are writing the same book, each believes he gets all the worry and only half the royalties.

-Agatha Christie

it for you. Also, plunk down the money to buy at least a couple of their books to check the quality.

I'm so grateful for the small press experiences I've had, and for the chance to have my work validated by publishers who want to take a chance on my books!

Here's what I know about self-publishing today.

When I got my first small press contract, it was for trade paperback rights only, and excluded e-books. This was in 2010, for 2011 publication, not that long ago. The book publishing business has changed so much in such a short period of time! But even then, I had an e-reader and knew e-books were the new hot thing. So I was thrilled that I retained those rights. I had a few months before my book would come out and I knew I would self-publish the e-book, so I did a trial run.

Over the years, seeking publication for a mystery novel, I had had a few short stories accepted in print and online magazines, some of which paid me a bit, most of which didn't. One story garnered an Agatha nomination. The thought had been rattling around in the back of my mind to collect them someday, and the time had come. I got permission where I thought I might need it, although many publications had gone out of business. I especially wanted the illustrations for the stories that had been illustrated, and was able to get permission for some of them.

Looking over my stories, I realized some were light and fluffy, some were rather dark, some were barely mysteries at all. What would I use to unify them? I puzzled over this for awhile, then my eye was caught by photos of a patchwork quilt that a good friend made for my first baby years ago, and which I was giving to my daughter's son. I had taken photos of it before I gave it away. That was it! My stories were a patchwork. I used one of my photos

for the cover and published it as an ebook. Knowing I would do this again for CHOKE, I took careful notes. Then, because I knew others would have to go through all of this, too, I published a short booklet of my notes (The Road to Self-Publishing). The process was trial and error for me that first time. It took a bit of persistence to get the e-books done, but not as much persistence as it had taken to get a novel accepted by a publisher--by a long shot!

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When the time came to do CHOKE, I knew, from my experience, that I would do Smashwords first, then Kindle and Pubit. After I formatted for Smashwords, I had a file almost ready to go for the others. I excluded distribution to Kindle and Pubit on the Smashwords sites. I'd heard that books are

easier to find in those two places if you specifically publish there, rather than just let the Smashwords versions migrate. I think that has worked well.

I've published several other things since then. A short story anthology that three of us from Austin did (ALL THINGS DARK AND DASTARDLY), SMOKE (the sequel to CHOKE), and a few separate short stories.

It's been a few months since I did an ebook, so my booklet is probably out of date and needs additions. I've updated it every time I've published something. But I'll be doing BROKE very soon and will tweak it where it needs it.

Links to all of the above can be found on my website, <http://kayegeorge.com>. While you're there, go ahead and listen to the free short story on the home page. Or sign up for my newsletter--hint, hint. ♦



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For more information on the Heart of Texas Chapter contact- hotxsinc@yahoo.com

My problem is that the audience is more fiction-literate than ever. In Shakespeare's day, you probably expected to see a play once or twice in your life; today you experience four or five different kinds of fiction every day. So staying ahead of the audience is impossible.

-Steven Moffat