

*Sisters  
in  
Crime*™

# HOTSHOTS!

HEART OF TEXAS Chapter  
www.hotxsinc.org



## Killer Nashville's American Authors Around The World Expo Tour

Killer Nashville invites you to participate with us at foreign book expos around the world. Through an arrangement with the U.S. Department of State, Killer Nashville authors can now be represented at foreign book expos around the world at a fraction of the individual price through Killer Nashville.

All genres. Fiction and nonfiction. Self or traditionally published.

No previous affiliation with Killer Nashville required.

Killer Nashville forwards the leads. Authors or their representatives negotiate all interests and requests.

Each author chooses in which book expo he/she wishes to participate including Paris, London, Dubai, Beijing, Singapore, Johannesburg/Cape Town, Berlin, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, and New Delhi, to name a few. Books do NOT have to be in these languages. For example, the Chinese are very interested in English language books.

If your publisher does not offer representation at foreign book expos, this is the perfect opportunity for you. If you actually wish to attend any of the foreign expos at which we participate, assistance with setting up one-on-one meetings with prospective foreign distributors is available for a separate fee. Please contact us if this is your interest. However, authors are not required to attend. Read more and register here:

<http://www.killernashville.com/knbooktour.html> ♥

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

**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.

### Location-

The Lion and the Rose Pub  
Westlake Village  
701 South Capital of Texas Highway  
West Lake Hills, TX 78746  
(512) 335-5466

The Dungeon (private meeting room) is reserved from 1:30-4:30. Lunch and/or drinks will be available.

**December 12, 2012 • 7:30pm**

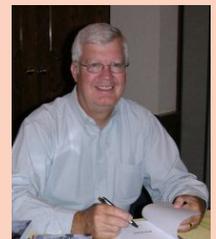
The Mystery Book Discussion Group will discuss 'Death on Tour' by Janice Hamrick (a HoTSinC member and recent guest speaker) at the Barnes & Noble Arboretum on Wednesday, December 12, 7:30 p.m.



The Barnes & Noble Arboretum is located at 10,000 Research Boulevard, Austin, TX 78759. For information on this event, call 512-418-8985.

**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.



### Location-

TBD

**The Sisters in Crime Heart of Texas Chapter, meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month.**

# Writer's Digest Presents- Write Your Novel in 90 Days

The world's desk drawers are stuffed with the first page or two of abandoned novels. Starting a novel isn't the hardest part. The hardest part is seeing the project to its completion, weaving a story that maintains the attention of your reader from start to finish, and finding ways to get over the first interruption to your project, or the second, or third, or, or . . .

Write Your Novel in 90 Days provides a no-nonsense guide to preparing yourself for the arduous, yet exhilarating project of novel-writing in a set period of time. By planning ahead, setting goals, and focusing on simple steps you can take, you can avoid common pitfalls that have stumped novelists of every experience level.

This tutorial is taught by Sarah Domet. Sarah's fiction and nonfiction appears or is forthcoming in Talking Writing, New Delta Review, Cincinnati Review, Beloit Fiction Journal, Potomac Review, Harpur Palate, and Many Mountains Moving . She holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature and fiction from the University of Cincinnati.

Write Your Novel in 90 Days walks you through the process of novel writing from day one to completed draft. The details can be found here:

<http://tutorials.writersdigest.com/p-406-write-your-novel-in-90-days.aspx> ♥

## Business Tips and Taxes for Writers

For tax purposes, the IRS does not allow hobby expenses to exceed hobby income. In other words, losses from a hobby are not permitted on a tax return. A business can have a loss and it can be deducted on a tax return, but not a hobby loss. If John, a hobby writer, attended a writers workshop, and his expenses of \$900 exceeded his hobby income of \$400, he could deduct his expenses (as miscellaneous deductions) up to the amount of his income, but no more. The extra expenses of \$500 are considered personal expenses that John incurred for his love of writing.

*Carol Topp, CPA is an accountant and author of Information in a Nutshell: Business Tips and Taxes for Writers. She may be reached at [Carol@CarolToppCPA.com](mailto:Carol@CarolToppCPA.com)*

## CONFLICTION: A Moral Enigma by George Arnold and Ken Squier

CONFLICTION will be released by Eakin Press mid-December. A limited number of signed, inscribed, first-edition copies will be set aside immediately by Eakin Press as a pre-production, pre-release special offer for mystery fans. George Arnold and Ken Squier gave a presentation to HoTxSinC in June 2011.

Details at:

<http://www.ciacats.com/html/confliction.html>

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Substitute "damn" every time you're inclined to write "very"; your editor will delete it and the writing will be just as it should be.

-Mark Twain

# The Killing Song

## A review by Vallie Fletcher Taylor



There have been moments when I have exited a theater, or finished a book, only to find myself filled with questions, instead of answers, pertaining to plot construction. Becoming immersed in *The Killing Song* provided me with many such moments after I learned that author P.J. Parrish is actually a pair of sisters. How, I wondered, could such a fast moving and entertaining story be handled by two writers?

About ten years ago, I had the opportunity to observe sisters who are friends of mine collaborate on a work of historic non-fiction. To describe their method in the simplest of terms, Judy gathered research materials and Ellen knitted and purled each historic fact into a beautiful quilt that covered their subject in her voice.

I suspect that most of *The Killing Song* research was done via search engine, yet the two writers' voices have blended well in the spinning of this mysterious web. To truly enjoy this literary roller coaster, you must accomplish two things prior to boarding. First, send the practical side of your nature on sabbatical.

As an example, none of the major characters, with the exception of the serial killer, is supposed to be wealthy. Yet, upon impulse and their own dimes, Miami based crime writer Matt Owens and Parisian Police Detective Eve Bellamont constantly travel from country to country as they investigate residents and ruins in major cities and tiny hamlets of Europe. Funds with which to finance their exploits evidently appear magically and are seemingly endless.

Your second chore, in order to keep up with our hero, Matt, is to conquer your claustrophobia. Important portions of this tale take place in the sewers and ancient sealed-off catacombs beneath Paris. Prepare yourself to enter a place of total blackness, squeeze between walls of narrow corridors, crawl on all-fours, or scoot on your belly, under low ceilings and climb through small openings which lead into unknown dark destinations that harbor a twisted serial killer who awaits our arrival. Are we having fun yet?

*The Killing Song* begins with the disappearance and murder of Matt's younger sister, Amanda, who is visiting him in Miami. Her body is found nude and

posed in a grotesque fashion on the dingy edge of Miami Beach's art deco district. Trying to deal with his grief and an urgent need to locate the man who killed her, Matt finds the first lyrical clue left behind on her i-Pod by the murderer.

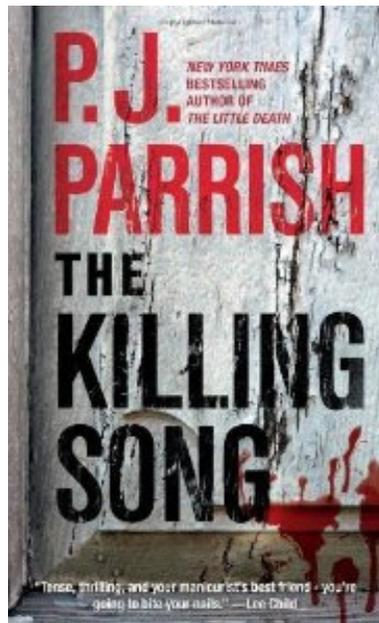
Two female police detectives, Nora in Miami and Eve in Paris, are easily persuaded to work with Matt... both inside the law and by fracturing legal rule books. The bad guys in this story are the Police Captains who insist upon following rules and give these poor women a hard time... up to and including suspensions for deviating from Police policy. Perhaps we should stipulate that these attractive detectives are both single and are potential romantic partners for Matt. This, however, is an action thriller so romance will have to wait for a sequel. A killer must be captured and numerous cold cases linked to him.

Fortunately, Matt has friends who seem willing to put their careers and personal lives on hold in order to furnish him with help in many forms. Whether it is a place to stay, valuable research or providing introductions to Parisian legends of the underworld, these connections never fail him.

It is unlikely that readers have met previous homicidal villains with the background, talents, motivation or weapons of choice that Laurent Demarais exhibits throughout years devoted to selecting women to victimize. When it comes to creating a character who is both highly gifted and fiendishly twisted, the author deserves kudos.

Parrish is also skilled in descriptive arts when it comes to creating background. The European weather is constantly cold, dismal, blanketed by fog or soaking her freezing characters with hard rain. By the time I was really into this story, I felt an urgent need to move across the room and settle down in a rocking chair next to the wood stove. ❤️

*Vallie Fletcher Taylor's novel Eyes in the Alley: Memories of San Antonio and the Great Depression is available in paperback. Val is a member of the Heart of Texas chapter of the Sisters in Crime.*



# Mystery!

The next hatbox I pulled off the top shelf of the closet nearly tipped me off the ladder. It was the weight that surprised me; it was far too heavy for just a hat. As I regained my balance, I wondered why this one weighed more than the others. I set it on the vanity and started untying the strings.

I was curious if it would reveal any secrets about my mother, although I wasn't expecting too much. All the other hatboxes contained... well, actual hats. Women's hats from the 1950s and 60s with velvet, lace, feathers, and fur. It was a bittersweet nostalgia trip as my family inventoried the contents of my mother's house. She had passed away six months earlier.

I lifted the lid and found photographs. Hundreds of black and white photos... some of them dating back to the American Civil War. They were photos I had never seen before. Pictures of people... presumably relatives... but I didn't know that for sure. It was a mystery, and one that I knew I would have to solve.

Looking at those photos one at a time was overwhelming, so one day I took them into my living room. I pushed all the furniture back to the walls, then spread the photos out on the floor. For the next several days I played the match game. Matching faces and places. Luckily, a few of them had inscriptions on the back that revealed names, dates and locations.

Once I had categorized the photos into groups, I met with my one living relative who was old enough to possibly know who some of these people were. The information she gave me added an entire branch to my family tree. I then started searching the internet where the floodgates opened.

Over the next few years, I found myself on a genealogical journey that did more than just place names to faces. It led me to recognize that my family's dysfunction didn't begin with my parents, but had a pattern that had been passed down generation after generation. And, that gave me the insight I needed to work on it (a topic for a future column).

A good mystery is compelling and we are motivated to find the answer. A mystery, however, is just a problem that needs to be solved. And, some of them really need to be solved.

I love the story of how Edward Jenner, a country doctor in England, created the smallpox vaccine. In 1762, when he was 13, Edward overheard a milkmaid say, "I shall never have smallpox for I have had cowpox. I shall never have an ugly pockmarked face." It was a statement that would stay in the back of his mind for decades. He had heard all his life that milkmaids were in some mysterious way protected from smallpox. Perhaps this woman had the answer that would save the millions of people who died of smallpox every year. Thirty-three years later, he would find out.

In 1796, he drained fluid from the cowpox lesions on a milkmaid's hands, then injected it into an eight year old boy. The boy only suffered a mild fever. Two months later, he injected the boy with smallpox. The boy did not get sick - he was protected. Jenner named his new procedure vaccination. 183 years later, smallpox was eradicated from the planet.

It doesn't take a great mind to solve mysteries; average people do it all the time. There is probably a mystery you can solve that will improve your business. If you think about it, every product and service you purchase began as a solution to a problem. Whether it is through necessity or simple desire, people find new ways of doing things through creative thinking that was stimulated by a mystery. What mystery do you want to solve? ❤️

*Robert Evans Wilson, Jr. is a motivational speaker and humorist. He works with companies that want to be more competitive and with people who want to think like innovators. For more information on Robert's programs please visit <http://www.jumpstartyourmeeting.com>*



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