

Morning Has Broken

August 31, 2021



Big Cat Stevens fan from back when he was Cat Stevens. He is a troubadour. For example, what sensible male can contest his advice on selecting a mate: *Hard Headed Woman*.

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=hard%20headed%20woman&qs=n&form=QBRE&sp=-1&pq=hard%20headed%20woman&sc=8-17&sk=&cvid=F73D57A1D5CE4006B1CE435A7AF97107>

Even if the guy does follow CT's advice, it does not mean the chosen mate always has an easy time of it:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Sad+Lisa&&view=detail&mid=915F41A56FD940A0D2B3915F41A56FD940A0D2B3&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DSad%2520Lisa%26qs%3Dn%26form%3DQBVDMH%26sp%3D-1%26pq%3Dsad%2520lisa%26sc%3D8-8%26sk%3D%26cvid%3D3F1153937A874E7C9571594469A12026>

Although, in the end, when it is all said and done, you hope your scorecard tallies on the plus side.

But I digress. CT's song of choice this morning is the one whose title appears above.

<https://www.bing.com/search?FORM=SLBRDF&pc=SL17&q=morning%20has%20broken>

It was evoked by the above photo I snapped the other morning from my back deck, during the beginning of the Blue Hour, just before my morning walk, as the new day was peaking over the eastern horizon.

Sometimes, during my walks, if the sun hangs back a little longer than I would like, I will bolster my confidence by softly singing a few bars of CT's songs to scare away any wild creatures that may be lurking in the remaining darkness. My singing voice is just that frightening. Really, it drives Bigfoot right back over the western foothills. Claire forbids me to sing within a hundred yards of my property. She says I would give William Hung a run for his money.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=worst+singer+ever+on+American+Idol+asian+kid&docid=608024067662101262&mid=8463116CCB3CDD0D25098463116CCB3CDD0D2509&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

Again, I digress.

I guess the point to today's blog, if, indeed, there is one, is that every morning brings with it another chance to get

things right. So all five of you out there, let's make today a great one!

My Murder of Crows

August 30, 2021



I love crows. Since I have arrived in Berthoud, there is a flock of five crows (which is referred to as a "murder" - <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/a-murder-of-crows-crow-facts/5965/>) that I regularly engage with during the fall through spring seasons. I think they head north during the summer months. Smart birds.

Every morning they come out of the foothills to the west and fly over me, usually when I have reached the farthest end of my morning stroll - on County Road 6. As they pass they always make sure to do a few loops over my head and caw. I take this as their way of saying "Good morning." I always respond with a wave and a "Good morning brothers!" Then they fly off in the general direction of my house where I usually find them hanging in the trees on Beverly and sometimes in the trees in my back yard.

They are omnivores, and will happily eat the peanuts I leave out or scavenge road kill. I feel better over the latter process, as its better than seeing a poor dead creature on the road pulverized by passing cars.

I have chosen Crows as my spirit animal. <https://www.spiritanimal.info/crow-spirit-animal/>

Or maybe they have chosen me.

And why not? Crows are extremely intelligent creatures. And I'm a mystical catch!

Some make tools:

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/new-caledonian-crows-plan-ahead-with-tools>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EryZPmOxwC0>

<https://www.sciencealert.com/crows-are-so-smart-they-can-make-compound-tools-out-of-multiple-parts>

They recognize faces and voices, and share this information amongst their members and pass it down to their offspring:

<https://www.zmescience.com/ecology/animals-ecology/crows-social-skills-recognize-human-faces-0423532/>

[#:~:text=Again%2C%20crows%20prove%20they're,died%2C%20and%20so%20much%20more.](https://www.zmescience.com/ecology/animals-ecology/crows-social-skills-recognize-human-faces-0423532/#:~:text=Again%2C%20crows%20prove%20they're,died%2C%20and%20so%20much%20more.)

And like the Irish, they enjoy a good wake and funeral:

<https://baynature.org/2020/10/29/flying-in-for-the-crow-funeral/>

And they mate for life (though they occasionally stray): <https://corvidresearch.blog/tag/are-crows-monogamous/>

So I am quite comfortable in my assessment that my crows and I have a relationship, and that they recognize me.

Yesterday morning My Murder of Crows flew over my head. There is always a good distance between each member. And each one caws as they approach my path. Sometimes a couple of the leaders will stop in a nearby tree or on top of a power line and wait for the others to catch up.

Yesterday, I caught a shot of the two lead crows waiting for their siblings on the roof of a nearby house immediately to my right. The one to the left is mid-caw, letting the followers know they are waiting, so its beak, extended skyward, looks like horns above its head. The one on the right is obviously tuning into the latest news coming in through the television dish it is perched on. As I said, they are intelligent creatures.

When I arrived at home, I received my own news in the form of a text from my friend Colin Broderick, who informed me that he has successfully and completely recovered the rights to his collection of Essays by notable Irish and Irish American writers, "The Writing Irish of New York." He intends to update it with a new cover and another pass at editing and introduction. But the real news for me was that he asked me to submit an essay for his addition to the latest edition of his book. The great imposter in me immediately counseled that I do not deserve to be in the same room with these other Celtic authors, never mind appear along side them in this notable book. But the old fucker in me

counseled that at my age, you never look a gift horse in the mouth, so you grab every opportunity that the Universe provides, especially when it comes to writing. I completed the essay yesterday afternoon and sent it off to Colin. Speaking of writing, my friend Joe Serrano completed his read of AAA, but not before he caught a second typo (hopefully the last), which, like the first, has now been corrected before AAA's audible version is recorded, and before its printed version drops in December. The devil is in the details.

Anyway, speaking of the devil, its Monday, so this intelligent creature has to put his lawyer hat on and earn a living.

Caw, caw, caw . . . That means, have a great day!

Grandparenting Is Cool!

August 29, 2021



I was blessed growing up to experience both paternal (the Northern Irish Posie & Spaghetti McCaffrey) and maternal (the Western Irish Nana & Pappa Burke) grandparents during my formative years. The first set lived with us in our multigenerational household, the latter were frequent visitors and ultimately lived in the Maclean Avenue section of the

Bronx (Little Ireland) which was just a stone's throw away.

They each played a major role in my development.

Spaghetti taught me how to work with my hands and be a man, I still have a few of his scars. I think of him everytime I

work around my property. Pappa taught me to love literature, I still have his book collection. I think of him

everytime I read a book. I still remember Papa Burke shouting during a heated political discussion about Ted

Kennedy, "I'd vote the devil himself if he were an Irishman!" Posie was the iron willed, nurturing matriarch of my Clan.

She worked as a cook for the WASPS on 5th Avenue. She cooked all the major family meals at home. She was around as the only sensible adult while my parents were out

working, so she kept all of the children's secrets from our parents. I learned my respect for the Clan concept from

Posie. Nana was the eccentric, independent woman who divided her own time - after a lifetime of working as a super -

between her beautiful home in Ireland and the other, she lived with the Frawleys, in the Bronx. She would blow into

our lives and tell us the most amazing stories in the most over the top fashion. I got all of my eccentricities from

Nana.

So when I get any chance to do so, I try to bring a little bit of all four of my grandparents into my own relationship with my

grandkids. To each of them, I am the "Silly Dude." (I refused to be called "grand" anything!!) I tell them stories, I chase

them around like a monster, I say outrageous things just to get a laugh or other inappropriate reaction, and I let them

know that I would protect them to my death if need be. If you are ever blessed with that opportunity, don't squander

it.

Yesterday, Lisa and I got to take Scarlett & Savanna (yep - the basis for their characters - same with their sister Stella

and cousin Lucian) to a local park and enjoy some fun time.

It was exhausting, lol. And precious.

Like to mention that I am looking forward to reading the first couple of chapters of Christy Cooper-Burnett's work in progress, a thriller. Stay tuned.

Also like to mention that my dear friend, Joe Serrano, was reading final version of AAA and caught a typo. Make that two typos. Thank you Joe. Better you than the grammar police in a review.

Anyway, I have a lot on my plate this morning, so I have to cut this short. Have a great Sunday.

THIRTEEN MILITARY HEROES

August 28, 2021



"Tyler Scott Parker, the manager of the St. Matthews Texas Roadhouse in Louisville, Ky., poured out 13 pints and set aside a table for the American service members who were killed in a terrorist bombing outside Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai International Airport." (Photo by Tyler Scott Parker).

Source of above photo and description - <https://www.foxnews.com/us/kentucky-texas-roadhouse-honors-13-us-service-members-slain-in-kabul>

Reprinted here because the tragedy and Mr. Parker's poignant response thereto, are both newsworthy. Rest

in peace, the Roadhouse's CEO Kent Taylor. To read the full story, see above website.

If you are ever in Louisville, Kentucky, stop in the St. Matthews Texas Roadhouse, thank Tyler Scott Parker for this moving memorial and raise a glass for the Fallen Thirteen, to all fallen soldiers, and to Kent Taylor.

I would be morally remiss in ignoring this recent tragedy. My prayers are with the families, friends and military comrades of the thirteen soldiers recently killed in action in Afghanistan, and all of the non-combatants killed and wounded that day. There will be a time for military and political repercussions and recriminations, but right now we, as a nation, must come together for these families and mourn the passing of these thirteen heroes that were basically carrying out what had evolved from being a defensive military exercise to handling a humanitarian crisis. God bless them all and may the Devil snatch all of those responsible for this horrific and barbaric act.

HONEY SOLD OUT

August 28, 2021

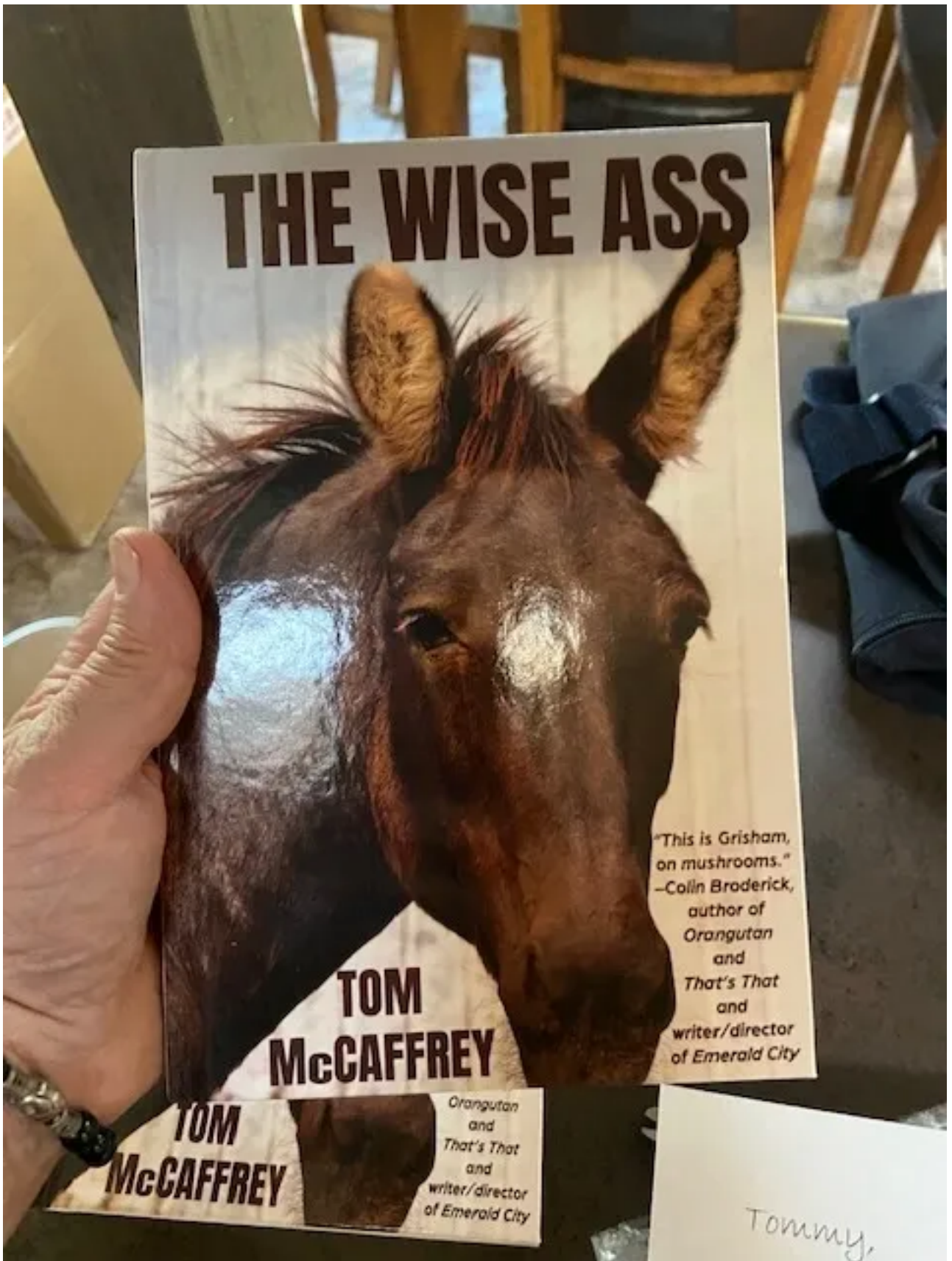


Yes, I was as shocked to see this placard as anyone. There I was, exiting County Road 6 onto the Condom Curve of 23S, when I spotted this sign. I never suspected that animal radicals would have the audacity to cast such aspersions on Claire's devoted friend and Production Assistant, my sweet mini-mule, Honey. Yes, it is true, that by leaving her arduous life as a pack animal in Arizona behind to come live at Casa Claire, Honey is living the life of Riley and hob knobbing with the literary glitterati. But to call her a "sell-out"?!!! A bit harsh.

Claire immediately retained my legal services to investigate the matter further and bring whatever legal recourse was available against the miscreants. Stay tuned.

Hardcover TWA - Claire's Pears

August 27, 2021



Finally got to see what a hardcover version of TWA looks like. I love the fact that it isn't printed on a one of those dust

jackets that can be torn or lost. This cover should stand the test of time. These two were sent to me by my dear friends Jimmy and Kathy Fronsdaahl. Jimmy edited both TWA and AAA and Kathy shot that iconic photo of Claire for the cover. I inscribed them and sent them back on their way to Idaho. I am forever in their debt.

Yesterday, Reagan Rothe sent me his approved version of Rick Lamb's cover for KMAG. It looks really cool. Just waiting now to finalize the publisher's manuscript and it should be good to go. Hopefully it will appear for pre-sale in the early fall. Voila.

Speaking of Claire, her new crack of choice are the small and very ripe pears that I collect each morning from beneath Pam Ervin's pear trees. Must be careful when collecting from the ground because they are also the favorite for the local wasp population. No pipers spotted.

Speaking of Pam, the young lady who helps around the barn during Pam's bionic recovery, Sydney, has fallen under the weather. Daughter Amy has stepped into the breach. Here's hope for Sydney's speedy recovery.

I've taken to burying Honey's daily pill in the belly of a small pear and she gladly gobbles it up - from a distance - I have to roll it to her between Claire's legs and across the cement patio, where Honey stations herself out of my reach. I would be one hell of a bocce player.

Speaking of fruit, my dear friend, the author Christy Cooper Burnett, has a beagle, Gertie (I miss my beagle Shorty, RIP) who likes banana's.

Received a gift package from Helen during her stop in Key West. Very cool Sloppy Joe's - Hemingway hat and T-shirt, plus a very cool magnet that says "Pagans do it in the woods." My Druid ancestors are smiling. Love ya, sweetie!

Glad that I have returned to donning facial hair. There is a very cool new clothing company - Lions Not Sheep - that has a woman's T-Shirt with the logo - No Beard, No Booty. Anyway, happy Friday to one and all (five of my readers). You have a great day!

An Alien Appeal Audible - The Writing Irish of New York

August 26, 2021



Learned yesterday morning that Tantor Audio is scheduling its release of the Audible version of AAA on November 16,

2021, over a month before the book and kindle format drops. And they have retained Joe Barrett to reprise his role as Jimmy Moran. It doesn't get any better than this. The full moon has been working overtime on my behalf. AAA is presently charting on Amazon's Best Sellers in Humorous Dark Comedy at #36, along with TWA, which sits at #4. Speaking of full moons, saw this interesting juxtaposition of natural, man-made and atmospheric elements during my morning walk the other day. . . Screw Freud, sometimes a photo is just a photo.

Speaking of interesting, I was chatting with my Irish literary brother Colin Broderick earlier this week. He shared his intention to recover the ownership of his book of Essays entitled "The Writing Irish of New York." The first edition includes brilliant essays from the literary pantheon of Irish and Irish-American writers, including, without limitation, Malachy McCourt, Billy Collins, Peter Quinn, Colum McCann and, of course, Colin himself. I have an inscribed copy right here on my desk. It is a work of art. *Go n-éirí leat, Colin!* Stay tuned.

Last week, I read Colin's most recent draft of his script about the Irish writer Brendan Behan (2/9/23-3/20/64). I know something works for me if I read it through without feeling the urge to tinker with it. Colin's script is brilliant. I so envy those writers who can actually write for a living, as opposed to treating it as your part-time, second gig. Sigh, maybe someday, if I live long enough (closing scene. . . cue the milk truck. . . cut to close up of BC behind the wheel. . . cue Dexys Midnight Runners' *Come on Eileen*. . . . Fade to Black).

Speaking of writers of whom I am jealous, rumor has it that Christy Cooper-Burnett is working on her new novel, a thriller. Cannot wait to read it.

Anyway, I have to get to my morning constitutional, water the trees (not a euphemism, there is a brilliant documentary, "Intelligent Trees" on trees on Amazon) and flowers and then put on my Lawyer's wig and earn a living. So jealous of my retired friends in the OFC.
The rest of you have a great day!

Whirligigs, Audible & Joe Barrett

August 25, 2021



TWA mentions the whirligigs on the front of Jimmy Moran's property. Its impossible to capture all of them in one shot but this was an interesting photo of three of them captured in the last of the full Sturgeon Blue Moon. Again, whirligigs were part of the overall quirkiness that drew me to this property. The whole property interacts with nature, and I like that. On a windy day these are all spinning a mile a minute. Its a visual carnival.

Speaking of interactive, yesterday the Audible version of TWA dropped. I listened to the first three chapters in the morning, then would pick up sections throughout the day as Lisa listened to it, and then I caught the last half of the book in the evening after work.

I had never listened to an Audible book before. It was like having someone read you a 7 plus hour bedtime story. I loved it. Got the whole narrative experience and my eyes were not tired. I went and ordered a bunch of other Audible books and will order AAA and KMAG when they become available. I'm hooked.

The experience brought the reality of the novel to a whole new level. It was comparable to seeing my play, *Revelations*, performed for the first time. Although this time my work was performed as a one man show. And that brought it back to how I would describe what it was like growing up around my dinner table. When someone told their story, they had to play all of the characters.

Joe Barrett is a legitimate actor with a great voice who is an in demand narrator for books:

<https://www.penguinrandomhouseaudio.com/narrator/59336/joe-barrett>

<https://www.audiofilemagazine.com/audiobookindustry/joe-barrett>

<https://www.audible.com/search?searchNarrator=Joe+Barrett>

While Joe does not have a true Bronx accent, he did an admirable job at creating one for Jimmy. And let's face it, a true Bronx accent risked making some of the reading unintelligible. Joe actually captured Jimmy's understated vulnerability, and the tone and timber of his voice was perfect for conveying the situational and observational humor, that I never set out to include and yet appeared all

on its own, organically, in the way I told the story. I actually laughed out loud at some of his deliveries. I finally understood what all the reviewers were talking about. What was most interesting was the voices he gave the other characters. Most matched the voices in my head. Some were different, but worked just as well. And some were clearly the better choice. And all of this fascinated me as a writer, because you never know just how your reader is experiencing your characters.

It takes me back to my almost four decades of legal experience. Litigation involves telling a story of a communal experience of an event and then applying the law to it. For example, let's take the negotiation and signing of a contract, and the performance of that contract as observed by all of the parties. One set of objective facts all subjectively shared. Each party brings his/her own reality and lifetime of experiences to the event. There are idiosyncratic sensitivities and biases that color that observation. Their respective levels of education, institutional or experiential all come into play. Their experience of their own reality at the moment of that observation. Have they just gotten engaged, or divorced. Are they healthy or ill. Do they drink or take drugs, prescription or otherwise. Did they just give birth to a new baby, or bury a loved one. All that personal baggage is factored into every individual's experience of their reality.

Hence the subjectivity prism to their observations. The same holds true for a novel. The writer sets down what he/she considers an objective reality, which is then subjectively shared with the reader. The objective words are all filtered through that same personal prism. It's bound to bring about different levels of enjoyment of the experience.

So I really enjoyed what Joe brought to my party. I hope he narrates the next two books. I'll be interested to see what others think.

Jack The Spruce, Smokey Cuddle Time & Audible TWA

August 24, 2021



Sometimes I wake up even earlier than I usually do and get all of my early morning chores done - feed the dogs, feed the Mules, blog, and, if I'm working on a novel, write a chapter. If, during warmer months, after all of this is done, the clock has not yet struck 4 am, I'll go out front, replenish Smokey the Cat's food tray (dry & wet), sit on my front porch and enjoy listening to the sounds of the night, cuddling Smokey the feral cat and admiring all of Jack the Spruce's

bling. Jack has really gone Hollywood and now sports more bling than some of the music artists I have had the pleasure of representing. Even the dragons are commenting, and they like their bling. And on those windy days Jack is a one tree orchestra that serenades us with his magical, tinkling tunes. Tree grottos are the safe space for manly men and magi. And feral cats.

Cuddling Smokey is two way therapy. I know, as a feral cat, the very independent Smokey does not abide too much human contact, and yet he immediately hops up in my lap and allows me to cuddle him. The sound of his loud purring is relaxing to me. Smokey is also a great listener. He will put up with listening to anything that happens to be on my mind at the moment. We have solved some to the world's most perplexing problems during these therapy sessions. He even laughs at my jokes. All the while Jack the Spruce looks on, with a -- don't worry guys, relax, I've got your back - expression. And all is right with the world.

Speaking of the world, today is another milestone in my publishing career. TWA's Audible version drops. I've just listened to the prologue and I have to admit, while its not a perfect Bronx accent (which, as I think of it now, may be at times incomprehensible to the untrained ear), it is close enough to be a perfect voice for the narrator of TWA and the rest of The Claire Trilogy, Jimmy Moran (actually sounds close to the real Jimmy "Bensonhurst" Moran's voice, who is my son Mark's FIL and a close friend - Go Blue!). Joe B has picked up on all of the inflexions and nuances Hats off to him for being the new voice in my head. I have to say that listening to someone else read my words is equal parts surreal and wonderful. Thank you BRW, Tantor Media and Audible for making this part of my dreams come true. I hope now all of my family members who have an aversion to the

printed word, will at least engage in the return to the oral tradition we spent our childhood experiencing around the family table. No more excuses!

Speaking of family, I had a great time texting my nephew, John-Michael (Hi, Joyce), who I know loves to read and discuss literature - but who I will never forgive for suggesting I read the brilliantly written but completely traumatizing *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy. I lost a piece of my soul on that book (spoiler alert) when they shot the dancing bear. Anyway, J-M and I discussed whether there was any cross-over possibilities for TWA (and TCT) with the Star Trek "Trekkie" demographic. I would kill to crack that market. J-M is going to reach out to one of the family's master trekkies, retired NYPD officer Brendan Sullivan (who once broke my balls in a master way - I still owe that bastard) to see what he can do.

Speaking of Irishmen, I had a brief chin wag with my literary brother Colin Broderick yesterday. That man is a whirlwind of creativity. So talented. And that perfect brogue and Leprechaun laugh. It's an absolute delight chatting with him.

Speaking of friends, Helen L sent me her latest advertising videos concerning her ***Simply Sacred*** essential oil, gemstone and crystal infused products:

<https://www.simplysacredoils.com>.

I use them exclusively in my home in our diffusers, anointings, and underneath our pillows, etc. Otherworldly. I highly recommend Helen's products to anyone who has ever purchased an essential oil. There is pure magic in those bottles and products. This is not mass produced in some factory. Helen makes everything herself. Its great to see Helen's face in those videos instead of just listening to her

disembodied voice on the cell phone. Love ya sweetie.
Good luck with the Ya-Ya product roll out.
Anyway, its still early enough for a cat cuddle (stop it Lenny,
I can't take you anywhere). The rest of you have a great
day!

Aliens Anyone?

August 23, 2021



The above photo was snapped and shared by my youngest SIL Dina (Wallen Witch-Fairy) Eck. She is the most mystical of the Wallen Witches. She took this photo friday early morning standing on the Navarre Florida shore overlooking the pier. She spotted this craft just hovering over the horizon. It just hung there, motionless in one spot, so she snapped a photo, and then it moved in a blink closer to shore, and she snapped this photo. She took this with her very expensive and cool camera, not her iPhone. If you look carefully, may need to expand the photo with a reverse

pinch, you can see that there appears to be some form of energy field around its exterior. She got two great shots of it before it just took off and disappeared. Blink of an eye. Well done Dina.

Anyone who has been following the news over the past twelve months has seen the navy released ET videos, including one that appeared to rise out of the ocean and then evade our best fighter jets. Those crafts made our finest navy war crafts look like wind-up toys. Those government videos only confirmed what other amateur videos have been showing for decades. If those tic-tacs are not from space - in other words, if they are from another nation - we should just throw our hands in the air and surrender. If, as I believe, they are from space, and had they had hostile intentions, we would have been toast long ago. "To Serve Mankind" would indeed, have been the title of their cookbook: <https://dorchesterimes.blogspot.com/2015/10/tonights-scary-show-twilight-zone-to.html>.

I, for one, have believed that this world has been visited by ETs for centuries: <https://www.walksinsideflorence.it/the-mystery-of-the-madonna-and-the-ufo.html>; <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tech/9446848/famous-artworks-alien-and-ufos>.

I also believe that present day humans are the results of their genetic manipulations. We are made in their image. This doesn't bar me from my other beliefs in an all loving universal creator, because something caused the big bang -- especially given the universally held beliefs that the God of most of the major religions is infinite, all-knowing, and omnipotent, so why couldn't that God have created extra-terrestrials as well and said, let's see what you can do -- and there have been too many other events in my life that have affirmed that our energy -- which changes form but cannot

be destroyed -- goes to another dimension, call it heaven, when this far more finite and disposable body gives up the ghost. And the barriers between dimensions can be traversed by our energy. The dead can contact us and there is magic in this world. In the end, everything will ultimately be explained by quantum physics. My friends and family have always known of my beliefs, but I'm not sure I would have posted it in my blurb this morning, had this ET information not been so widely circulated and verified by people in the government.

Those long-held beliefs led me to the creation of my characters Everett and Michelle, who are in fact neighbors of mine, and who I met in the way that I described Jimmy met them in TWA. I will neither confirm or deny anything else about them, except that E is frighteningly brilliant and M is the ultimate character who never fails to make me laugh.

E&M have remained close friends despite the post TWA occasional strange slow drive past their property by the intellectually curious. I have been blessed by their intercession in my life.

Anyway, everything happens for a reason, and so my introduction to E&M and then Claire (equally every bit as real and magical as I describe her), as well as a very interesting offer I received as a young lawyer by a big and scary dude with the initials DP became the genesis of the stories that evolved into The Claire Trilogy. I have a creative imagination, but you just can't make this shit up.

Speaking of the heavens, this weekend's (Sturgeon) Blue moon was not a Supermoon. The last Supermoon for this year was the Strawberry Moon in June. There, promises kept. The work-week awaits. You all have a wonderful Monday. Keep smiling!

Blue Moon

August 22, 2021



Blue Moons are just cool. They are the fourth moon in any three month seasonal cycle. They most often appear as the

second moon in any given 30 day cycle. They are the origin of the phrase "once in a Blue Moon." Sometimes, you get a double whammy when the Blue Moon is also a Supermoon, which means that its trajectory has brought the moon to its closest point to the earth, making it appear larger than normal. Not sure if last night's fit the bill. It certainly looks the part.

Will check and let you know.

Supermoon or not. last night's Blue Moon was a real winner.

The sky lit up like it was daylight, blanketing my property in an eerie soft glow. It is magical. A time to complete and submit projects, bring things you've worked so hard on to fruition. There is one project that is not mine that I hope reaps the full benefit of this Blue Moon. I'll keep you posted. Fingers crossed.

Lisa and her sisters all returned safely to their homes yesterday (Raechel and Gary are driving, and after staying overnight in an Ohio hotel's Honeymoon suite, may be getting up a little late for their last leg of their journey home to just outside Jamestown, NY. ;)). This year's Convocation of the Wallen Witches was particularly memorable, as they were finally able to have a funeral service for their mother, Mary, and also clear out her personal possessions, every daughter taking her share. Another project completed. Lisa and I celebrated her return to the Hinterlands with a dinner at O'Shay's in Longmont. The food and service were delightful (although they did forget my pickle - not a euphemism).

Hopefully today will be a day of pure skiving off. I'm off to have a coffee with my wife (again, not a euphemism, sigh). The rest of you, have a great day!

Joe Serrano - Luke's Novel - Lebanon Red - Old Folk

August 21, 2021



I've mentioned Joe Serrano in past blogs concerning Carl LaFong and the Swing Incident. I mentioned his brilliant

oldest daughter who shares a birthday with my oldest son.

She would make any parent proud. Joe was in my wedding party and I was in his first wedding party. We lived together at Aunt Violet's flophouse. Joe can say the word "putty" in a way that would make a Saint blush. He is an old, dear friend. We've shared many a laugh, tears, fights and adventures. Joe appears as a bad guy in KMAG, along with Stein and BC. Given our histories, they were not hard characters to write. I love Joe.

Joe sent me this photo yesterday. It was taken by Joe from a spot in the shadows, somewhere in Georgetown, N.Y. It invoked many a night from our youth, of spontaneous road and camping trips. It actually reminds me of a scene from AAA. I'm glad Joe is still keeping it real. Thanks for the photo, Joe.

Speaking of children, my oldest, Luke, is also a fine writer. A far more serious writer than I am. He finally let me read his latest, Lebanon Road. Since I am not allowed to divulge anything, let me just quote from **Matthew 3:17** from the Bible: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Lisa returns from the Navarre Convocation of the Wallen Witches today. I hope she had a marvelous time with her sisters. They are a great bunch. But now I have to give the house a quick cleaning, as it looks like an old Irish bachelor has been living here.

Speaking of old Irishmen, I read a review yesterday that describes Jimmy Moran as a "late middle aged attorney." It was the first review that mentions that fact. I am thrilled. To me, I wanted to buck the literary trend of youthful characters and make Jimmy an older man. One who has lived and experienced a lot of good and bad in his life, and who refuses to accept that his life is over. If TWA has an

underlying theme, it is that you are never too old for an adventure. That theme carries through the rest of The Claire Trilogy. I think that is why I have such a strong following in the Baby Boomer demographic. They know I am right. The good news is -- they actually like to read and have the money to buy my books.

Hell, my latest incarnation as an author in my mid-sixties attests to that truth. You are never too old to reinvent yourself.

But I want to get that message out to all the generations that follow. The older members of my Clan were never relegated to the trash heap. My grandfather, Spaghetti, could whip all of our asses until he took his last breath. My grandmother, Posie, was the Clan matriarch until pancreatic cancer took her quickly a year later. Dylan Thomas had it right when he wrote: "Do not go gently into that good night."

I still defer to my older sister, who now leads our Clan.

There is power in attaining wisdom over a lifetime. To reach our age in the world we live in speaks to our strength and resilience. Joe Serrano is a poster boy for our generation. So is Lenny, Stein and BC. We are survivors. So you youngsters out there, don't sleep on the old folk. We still have a few surprises left in us. Have a great day!

Honey is Wicked Smart

August 20, 2021



As you all know, Claire is absolutely magical. And as you all know, after the tragic and unexpected passing of Mr. Rogers (I miss him so much), we adopted Honey from Arizona (Thank you Silja and Cammie). Luckily, Claire has adopted Honey as a little sister (and personal assistant). They are inseparable - rarely more than ten feet apart at any given time. Sometimes, Honey will lead the two of them across the property to their favorite dustbowl area, where they both have a good roll. Claire will follow after her charge just to make sure she stays out of trouble. A lot of times, Honey

likes to go into the barn and raid my open bag of Timothy Alfalfa pellets. Claire will stand watch at the door while her charge munches down. But when it gets to be dusk (and throughout the night), or a storm is brewing, or our amazing wind kicks in, or the guard dogs on the other properties sound their alarm, Honey stays right on Claire's flank. She knows that Claire will never let anything happen to her.

Indeed, when they arrive at my door each morning to collect their carrot tithe, Honey stands back on Claire's left hip, and I have to toss the carrots between Claire's legs to Honey while Claire either knocks or pokes her head through the open back door, and takes her continuous feed of carrots from my hand. Honey is smart. She knows that Claire's insertion into the doorway blocks me from leaping out and grabbing her. Claire reminds me of a fat man exiting a NYC subway car during rush hour. Just enough mass and gravity to prevent you from getting past before the bell chimes and the door closes. Honey does not eat her first carrot until she sees Claire eating hers.

From the getgo, Honey has been wary of me (and I believe all men in general). Whenever I am in eye shot, Honey turns and stares at me like you see in the above photo. (I think she was one of the Children of the Corn in a past life.)

As soon as I get within ten yards of her, she starts to move and our game of Ringolivio begins. Luckily, when Lisa is with me, it usually ends with me blocking her final escape route, and with Lisa getting a harness on her. That usually happens because Honey has narrowed her avoidance technique from scampering around the open property, kicking up her heels and leaping over Blue, to continuous close circles around Claire, while Claire shouts Ole! We slowly get Claire to stand closer to a fence, with carrot bribes, and then trap Honey between Claire and the fence.

Then there is the five minutes of slipping the piece of apple with her pill inside into Honey's mouth, picking it up and reinserting it the fifteen time she spits it out, and finally forcing the now disgusting saliva and dust covered piece of apple with my thumb up against Honey's clamped back teeth with enough pressure that it forces her to chew the apple, while I quickly withdraw my thumb before it becomes part of the bargain. She nailed me once, and it was not fun. Then I pull out my syringe full of synthroid-like monkey juice and squirt it down the back of Honey's throat. Then Lisa releases her and Honey scampers off. Tomorrow's another day!

Well this process does not work in a one-man show, so I had to come up with a working alternative until Lisa returns this Saturday. After a morning or two of unsuccessful one man Ringolivio, I realized that Honey does still show up for her carrot tithe. So I located a small corkscrew and drilled a hole in the thickest end of the first carrot I tossed to Honey, and inserted the pill. Then I tossed the carrot on the concrete patio in front of Honey and then gave Claire her carrot while Honey watched carefully. I was thrilled when she finally leaned over and scooped up that first medically adulterated carrot. I had to watch this carefully out of my peripheral vision, because sometimes Honey will take her carrot in her front teeth and scrape it along the ground to snap off half while she munches the other half. I had to keep the dosed half of the carrot in sight to make sure Honey finally ate it. All the while I had to keep feeding Claire her carrots so Honey didn't get suspicious. Needless to say, I was holding my breath until I finally saw Honey take the last piece of special carrot in her mouth and start to munch. Of course, I haven't figured out how to get the monkey juice down her throat, but that will have to wait until

Lisa returns. In the meantime, Honey cannot be doing too bad, given that she can still easily win at one-man Ringolivio.

Anyway, I have a legal motion to draft so I have to cut this short. Everyone, have a wonderful friday.

First Public Appearance of All Three Books of The Claire Trilogy

August 19, 2021

From the Publisher



Tom McCaffrey

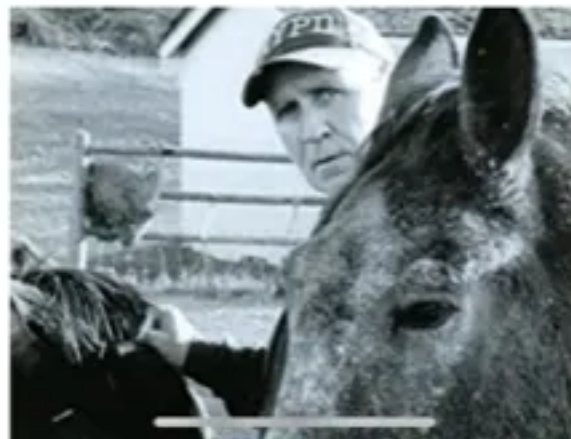


The Claire Trilogy so far:

"McCaffrey does it again! A delightfully wild ride full of unforgettable characters..." –Christy Cooper-Burnett, author of *No Way Home*

"Witty, gritty, and full of heart." –Dr. Nick Atlas, author of *The Light Travelers*

"*The Wise A'ss* takes you on a journey that would leave most U.S. Marshalls spinning in circles..." –Ricky Ginsberg, author of *The Blue Macaw*



Yesterday afternoon, I received an email from Reagan Rothe with a link to the above Publisher's Advertisement that BRW took out for The Claire Trilogy.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08V9GR7FZ>

The ad appears on the Amazon pages for both TWA and AAA. I have to admit, the experience was surreal. It was the first time I (or anyone else) had seen all three novels together in one public place at one time. I cannot help but just stare at the advertisement and pinch myself. Thank you Reagan for this amazing opportunity. I have been truly blessed. Thank you to all of the readers and friends that have supported me, by buying the books, posting reviews, and spreading the word to your friends, because I would not be here without that support. I am forever in your individual and collective debt.

To steal a line from Sylvester Stallone's Rocky: "Hey Lisa, we made it."

Thanks also to all of the other writers who were kind enough to put their own reputations on the line by reading the books and providing me cover blurbs for the three novels: Colin Broderick, Dr. Nick Atlas, Ricky Ginsberg, Margaret Reyes Dempsey, Christy Cooper-Burnett (the female side of my split personality - this woman is hilarious), Sharon K. Middleton, Brian Fitzpatrick, Nancy Ashmead, and Chris Monteagle. Their collective books cover a broad literary spectrum. Each one of these authors have their own unique, talented writing styles and all tell wonderful stories. I highly recommend that my readers at least sample their work. You will not be disappointed. Variety is the spice of life.

Thank you Kathy Fronsahl for that iconic photograph of Claire (yes, she is indeed very real and magical) that graces the cover of TWA, and is incorporated brilliantly by Richard Lamb in the covers of AAA and KMAG.

Thank you to my inner circle of readers - Lisa, Jimmy F (Kathy F's husband), Mark L, Eileen C, Cathy & Beau B, Dina E, Dianne R, Mikey A, Pat F and Tina P. You have each invaluable contributed to the process and have supported me during this journey. I love you all.

Speaking of reviews, I cannot tell you how much I have appreciate that readers have taken the time to not only read my novel(s) but to formulate and post reviews. Taking the time just to just post stars is great. Posting an actual review is amazing. As I said, I read them all, good and bad (to be honest, I hate the bad, and carry those psychological scars forever ;)). And I know for sure that reviews can make or break a novel.

If I can generalize for a moment, based solely on my subjective observations, the readers who have posted 5 star reviews have been those that have connected with the story on an emotional level. They overlook the flaws (I own them), put aside their own analytical incredulity and just respond as to how the story made them feel. They like my characters, especially Claire (every one of them are based on a real person). They like the Irish black humor (I highly recommend all my readers attend at least one Irish wake -- preferably someone else's -- for black humor at its best). They often admit to laughing out loud. Some even like my writing. But they all suspend their disbelief and go along for the ride. That is all this writer will ever ask of them.

But what is even more moving for me is when I read a review where the reader shares that TWA came along at a time in their own lives when they themselves are going through a tough period and that the story and characters in TWA have made them feel a little better, even if its only a temporary relief. If TWA accomplishes nothing more than that, I could die right now a very happy man (in which case,

you are all invited to my wake for a good laugh. Eileen, please make sure BC's milk truck stays parked.) Writing fiction exposes the heart and soul of a writer. We all know that going in. These reviewers honor me by offering a glimpse of their own lives and souls to the world, and that takes a lot of guts. Thanks for that. Please know how much I appreciate it.

Anyway, time to get up and about. You all have a great day!

Fred the Sink Spider

August 18, 2021



In high fly season in Horse Country, you pretty much cannot get away from flies. You open the door to let them out and

you are almost guaranteed to let in one more fly than the number that exits. Their constant buzzing competes with my Tinnitus. Some, the ones that hang in my office, can grow so large that they sound like the WWII fighter planes that love to do aerial loops over my property on nice days. I know this sounds crazy (tell me about it - that ship has sailed) but I cannot intentionally kill bugs, even flies. All life is precious. Unless, of course, they are horse flies that bite me, then it is considered self defense and all bets are off.

But I do let mother nature take its course, so I do allow spiders to co-exist in my basement dwelling area as well. Anyway, I was excited to learn that a large spider, who I named Fred, had taken up residence in the overflow hole in my bathroom sink. Admittedly, I was not thrilled when he first leapt out while I was distracted during my daily self waterboarding session with my waterpick, and almost drowned myself, and almost lost an eye, while spraying the entire wall mirror when I dropped the still pumping water pick, like a live, loose firehose.

Anyway, once I recovered from my initial introduction to Fred, I realized that I hadn't seen any fly carcasses around the basement bathroom (they usually die of old age in about 28 days). I sweep them up every other week, along with the fine dust that seems ubiquitous in this area, as part of my bimonthly basement cleaning. This last bathroom cleansing round saw a major drop in the average number of dead flies, so Fred must have been hard at work harvesting those flies when they landed in my bathroom sink to get a sip of water.

So I just shifted my oral hygiene paraphernalia to the kitchen sink and relinquished the bathroom sink to Fred. Yesterday, I spotted Fred outside of his sink hole. Usually my proximity and movement causes him to immediately withdraw into his lair. So after watching him for a few

moments, I approached him with the end of the pen I was carrying and gave him a soft prodding. Nothing. Fred was dead.

As I sit here typing and listening to the taunting drone of one particularly large housefly, I realize just how much I will miss Fred.

I will move my dental hygiene kit back into the bathroom this morning and give the sink a good scrubbing. *Lugemus mortuos.*

On a lighter note, yesterday, when I stopped into A&W for my dinner meal, after saying hello to all of the regulars, Jordan, Brooke, and Tae, I was informed, without prompting, by sweet Brittany that her sister Rachel, who is on vacation, had confirmed that she had indeed finished TWA, and Rachel's quoted commentary to her sister was that TWA was "fucking magical!" High praise indeed! Made my day.

Thank you Brittany, thank you Rachel. Please tell your friends. I am trying desperately to crack your demographic. I also spoke with Brooke, who is training to be a tattoo artist, to see if she would be willing to tattoo the words "*Sapere Aude*" ("Dare to Know" or more colloquially translated as "Dare to be Wise") on my right inner forearm in the same style as the existing tattoo lettering "I AM" on my left inner forearm. It would help advance Brooke's training and give me a cool tattoo I've been wanting for a while, and another story to tell. Stay tuned.

Behind Every Good Woman

August 17, 2021



The above photo is of three of my six brothers-in-law. Going left to right are Gary Evans (married to Raechel Wallen

Witch), Seth "Beau" Beauseigneur (married to Cathy Wallen Witch) and Terry Sacca (married to Michele Wallen Witch). Missing from the photo are Lori Buccola (married to Amy Wallen Witch) and Randy Eck (married to Dina Wallen Witch-Fairy). I would be remiss if I didn't mention the now passed Octavio "Tavo" Narvaez (NYPD), who married the oldest daughter, Lane. He was truly a saint.

There is also a sister-in-law, Madge, who is married to Leslie (Lisa's twin) and is a sweetie. High Madge. But she doesn't fit in with the theme of this blog, so I will leave her for another time.

I believe Dina may have snapped this photo, which was taken yesterday during the week long convocation of the Wallen Witches.

I have been blessed by having these characters in my life for about four decades. I hate them all because they are all far better looking than me. There is no way I would have put on that shirt to pose for that photo, and my wife bought the shirts (The Witches must have cast a spell to get them to put them on). But these guys confidently rock it. Gary is a Kevin Costnerish personality, always calm and in control, with a subtle but sharp sense of humor. Terry is a Southern Charmer, his Kentucky drawl alone could sell snow to the eskimos. If I could get my Alexa to speak in his voice, I would. I am pretty certain I am younger than them all, and look like their father.

Of course, if I had to pick the biggest ball buster of the group, it would be Beau. Hands down. Not even close. Since the moment I met him he has been breaking my chops about one thing or the other. He was that Uncle to my children that would walk into the room, get the kids as riled up as possible, and then disappear, leaving you to deal with their manic fall out. The drudgeries of life never seem

to affect Beau. He always lands on his feet. He was a teacher who had the greatest teaching schedule each year his entire professional life, and loved to point that out whenever life in the legal mines was about to drive me over the edge. He openly embraced his vices and always kept them under control. He is a Vegas frequent flyer. Nothing touched him. If he were a Shakespearian character, he would be Puck from *Midsummer Night's Dream*. And I would not have it any other way.

While I was writing the second book (and later the third) of *The Claire Trilogy*, I reached out to Cathy, who is a fine writer, to read them over and give me her feedback. (Dina has read all three as they were being written and has given me valuable feedback on a mystical level - and sprinkled them with Fairy Dust. Thank you Dina). Cathy has a critical writer's eye, and provided two invaluable narrative structural insights that led to the mountain scene in *AAA* and another major scene in *KMAG* that I cannot yet share. Brilliant.

Thank you Cathy. I am forever in your debt.

When Beau stepped up to the plate and asked to read book 2 while I was writing it, I was shocked and wary, expecting him to torment me in his usual fashion. Against my better judgment, I relented, because it is harder to get people to read your work before you have proven yourself. Each time I sent him a chapter I waited for the "pull the football away from Charlie Brown punch-line," and it never came.

Instead, Beau not only read each chapter as quickly as I wrote it, usually within 24 hours, but he provided me with invaluable insights and feedback from his demographic view point. And he kept pushing me to get him the next chapter. I knew if I could keep the Beaus of the world interested in the story, I had something. So once I finished *AAA* I asked Beau if he wanted to be a character in Book 3. Even after I told

him he would have to be a bad guy and meet his proper comeuppance, he was all in. Given that I was toying with the idea of evil twins, the fact that Beau has an identical twin named Victor, worked perfectly. And Victor is the most identical twin I have ever met, right down to his proclivity for ball breaking. They never would have survived childhood in my neighborhood. They were perfect models for the techno-twins, although I made them much younger in the novel. I didn't want them dying of old age (there, fuck you Beau). So behind every successful woman, especially the Wallen Witches, there are men like my brothers-in-law. I am thankful for that. Although I think its high time we unionize!

Manual Labor

August 16, 2021



Never have been a big fan of manual labor. Given my natural predilections, I will take being bone idle every time. However, my grandfather, Spaghetti, would never put up with that. He taught us from the earliest of ages that it is a cardinal sin to pay someone to perform work that you are able to perform. Then he taught us how to use tools and build shit. We did not volunteer for those lessons. We were conscripted. That made it easy for the four brothers to all go into the construction industry a half century ago when we were in our teens. The one thing I never had to build back

in New York were fences. However, that changed once I moved to Colorado.

When I first arrived on Beverly Drive, Luke and I had to install a 12 post fence on the western side of the house so that we could let our pets run free and keep the animals on the property. We dug each of those post holes by hand. I actually used a kitchen ladle to clear the bottom of a hole of the loose dirt when the post hole got too deep to reach with my hand. That's when I learned that this NoCo earth is like concrete. It took us a couple of weekends. I swore I'd never do it again.

In 2019, I had to replace the entire front fence line on the eastern side of the property before Honey arrived. Since Luke was then off at his own place and working for the DFD, I smartened up and bought a gas powered auger. That's it leaning against a stump in the back left of the photo. It was during that project that my right middle finger got wedged between a tool and a recalcitrant fence post and is now 10% wider than my left middle finger. Of course there is an upside (don't go there Lenny) because I am right handed and can now flip anyone the bird with added authority. But the auger only made things a little better. You could drill down about a foot before you hit the shale that runs wide and deep on this land and then your drilling becomes something like what was experienced by Bruce Willis and his wildcat drilling team on the asteroid Dottie in Amageddon. What happens is that you have to lean all of your weight on a very hot engine to get the auger corkscrew blade to advance at all, and when the blade hits that stone, it is you, the human, and not the earth, that gets taken for a rotational joy ride while you try to will your hands to release the power lever and keep your legs away from that blade. At some point, when you are about two feet in, you need to

step back and fill the hole with water and let it soak into the bottom. Does not make it a whole lot easier, and it does make it a whole lot messier, because now you are drilling through water that is like cake batter, which flies up the corkscrew blade and paints your legs. That may get you another inch or two. Then its more water, more waiting and more clay cake batter on your legs. Of course, it would be nice if the original fence posts would cooperate and allow you to wiggle them free so you have an existing hole, but they are so rotten at ground level that all you can do is tear them free at the ground line. The part of the wood below the ground has calcifide so you can't even dig it out of the hole. You need to place a new hole right beside the old one.

Anyway, Claire has made it a habit over the past years to seek my attention by patrolling the fence line that separates the large back open property and the area we refer to as the back yard. There is a particular stretch of fence line that sits directly opposite my office window, right next to the back gate that connects the two. Claire knows that by standing there and mouthing all kinds of mule curse words, it will ultimately get me to look up from my computer and see her, and then come outside and open the gate for her. Claire used to do open the gate on her own but then, after a few midnight concrete stomping sessions outside the basement door to get our attention, it really sounds like a sledge hammer, Lisa started using carabiner clips to lock the gates. Claire will also use this stretch of fence as scratching posts for all parts of her body from chin to ass. The continuous onslaught of a wiggling thousand pounds of mule ultimately took its toll on these three posts. I had been ignoring the inevitable for most of the summer, and just tilting the ever further leaning posts back into place with a small prayer.

Yesterday, I got an early start to my tree root related projects, and once they were completed, still had a little gas left in the tank. I drove to Murdocks -- closest thing to a country general store around here -- and picked up the three new posts and tossed them into the back of the Toyota.

Then I had to remove the chicken wire fencing that ran along the inside of that stretch of fence line, pulling out each of the many double point tacks with a pliers, and busted out the posts, saving the rails for reuse. And once that happened there was no going back.

Of course, the auger then did not want to cooperate. It took me a half hour of fiddling, praying and threatening it before it would kick over. And then the fun began. Four hours later, I felt like I had just done 12 rounds with Mike Tyson. My hands were so cramped from trying to control the auger that they were experiencing a temporary version of Dupuytren's contracture. I had to keep manually bending my fingers of one hand from a fist into an open hand using the opposite hand. My forearms were popping like an electric current was running through them. I couldn't even put the chicken wire back in place. That will have to wait for my recuperation. I could barely carry the tools back to the shed.

I only bothered moving them because I didn't want the mules to step on them. But the fence was back up. What do you think, Spaghetti?

A long hot shower, two Aleve, lots of water and six hours in a recliner, binge watching the BBC shows, was all I could muster for the remainder of the day. The few times I tried to text someone, my thumbs cramped in agony. Luckily, the battery on my phone died, and I could not will myself upright to find a charger, cutting me off from further social responsibility. Anyway, I am happy to report that my hands,

while still sore, have recovered enough to two finger type
this blog this morning.

So Monday has returned, time to turn back into an attorney.

Have a great day.

Discount Tire, Pam, Art, Dragons & Losing at Ringolevio

August 15, 2021



Got back from dropping Lisa at the airport and made my morning rounds to see the animals. Was pleasantly surprised to see Pam holding court in her back yard with her brother Gary and her two grown daughters Amy & Jill. Pam looks great and reports that her bionic knee is coming along just fine. I would have hopped the fence and gone over to

shake Gary's hand but Pam's older dog, Briggs, was patrolling the yard and since I have known him for these past 5 years, has maintained that biting me on the calf is the top (and last) item on his bucket list. Since I do not want to hasten Brigg's demise by leaving him nothing else to live for, I shall do all I can to frustrate his endeavors at reaching that goal. So we all chatted safely from afar. Also said hello to Sydney toiling away in the barn on my way out. And of course gave Tique her daily tithe of chopped apples.

Tossed some some dog scoobie treats over the fence to the far more lovable and bribable Wicker before I left.

After returning home and watering the flowers, plants, shrubs and trees around the house, I figured I would kill some more time before my scheduled appointment at Loveland Discount Tire (I was having my Toyota's tires rotated and air pressure checked - no that's not a euphemism) by first stopping along the way at Loveland Garden Center & Nursery and purchasing something that would give all of my trees a steriodal boost before the fall.

I'm telling you, the soil is crap. Normally I head South from Berthoud to do my weekend errands but somehow when I booked the tire maintenance the Internet Gremlins switched me from my original Longmont location to their Loveland location 10 minutes North of my home. Luckily I checked their text reminder at the last second that morning.

Of course, when I arrived at LGC&N, I had a few minutes to kill before it opened, and so I perused the stone statuary in front of it, and voila, fell in love with another dragon for the front of my house. This has really become another obsession for my addictive personality. Well, knowing my wife was by then on a plane to Florida for the week, my impulsiveness got the better of me so I ended up with the sought after tree root monkey juice and a cute new dragon

to boot. I have now surpassed the dragon count from LOTR, Harry Potter and GOT. I must seek professional help.

Anyway, I still had too much time to kill before my appointment so I checked out things to do in Loveland on my iphone and was reminded that the Benson Sculpture Garden (an open park) was close by, so I stopped there for a walk around its lovely perimeter -- there are some amazing Bronze and stone sculptures there. I'm pretty sure Lisa and I took our grandson to these gardens during his last visit. For the life of me, I could not get the above sweetie (whose title, given its location, is appropriately named "Amore") to turn towards the camera (boy, am I getting grizzly looking). Ms. Frog is obviously just tired of strangers coming up to her for that selfie. I don't blame her!

For some strange reason, despite its close proximity, I actually never go to Loveland unless its to visit my accountant, Bob Kunish (A brilliant, patient and wonderful man whom I mention in my novel). He kind of resembles My Pillow Mike. Loveland is a quaint little place whose old town section has an artsy feel to it. I do remember checking out its museum, with its own lovely sculptures, and there is an Italian restaurant close to the museum where Lisa and I have enjoyed having lunch once or twice. I will make more of an effort in the future to explore Loveland so I will know it as well as I now know Berthoud and Longmont. But you have to love that name.

When I finally arrived, Bryce at Loveland Discount Tire took the Toyota about a half hour earlier than my scheduled appointment -- its like time yesterday morning had stood still and did everything it could to avoid me speeding it up by side trips. By the time I did a walk through of a nearby Jax

store - this place has everything, like a smaller version of Cabellas (I picked up a pair of Rebar jeans, supposed to be indestructible) - my Toyota's tires were rotated and their air pressure checked (something I've never mastered) and ready for the fall. Bryce even squeezed in an appointment for my wife's Acura -- which may have a tire sensor problem - for this Monday afternoon at 4 pm. I'm trying to take care of any car issues before winter. I rewarded Bryce's attentive service and hospitality with an inscribed copy of TWA (I always keep one handy in the car).

Honey won yesterday's game of Ringolevio by avoiding my hour long attempt in very hot weather to get her into a harness, during which time the huge water trough I had first cleaned and was refilling was then overflowing, turning the lowest point of the side paddock into a muddy Mosh Pit. I swore that if I slipped in the mud - I was wearing my Berks -- I was going to get my gun. It's definitely a two person job to corner Honey, as she is the artful dodger. Blue tried to help me but Honey just leapt over her. Honey has mastered using Claire as pulling lineman in her avoidance technique.

I will have to be more tactical when I try again this morning. I am wondering if the Las Vegas bookies have posted odds on my possibilities of success. Don't bet against the house. There is nothing more humiliating than listening to the mules laugh as you walk away, defeated.

Anyway, exhausted, I drove into Berthoud and picked up my usual A&W order of beyond burger, fries and shake. There, I said hello to Brittany, Brooke and Erin and had a great chat with the rascally Rachel, who, without any prompting on my part, assured me she is almost finished with TWA and since she is on vacation for the next week, expects to wrap it up.

She confessed to really enjoying it. Hope springs eternal.

Got a chance to catch up with my dear friend Helen L (yep, that one) who is also in Florida for a few weeks taking care of some business. I asked her to pick up a T-Shirt for me from Sloppy Joes when she makes it to Key West.

Hemingway mojo is the best!

Finished binge watching the French mystical/environmental television series *The Last Wave*. Its on Britbox. Enjoyed it immensely. If you can handle subtitles, I highly recommend it. Its like a fun (but futile) French lesson.

This morning I intend to prepare and distribute the tree root monkey juice to my apple, faux pear and maple trees before it gets too hot. Which means punching holes in the concrete soil with my pitchfork so the mixture reaches the root systems. Then its an hour collecting a few wheel barrows of mule biscuits from around the property and another round of Ringolevio with Honey. Fun, fun, fun and then a dose of Aleve. Green Acres is the place to be

Anyway, enough of my blathering. You all have a great day.

Proxima b & Book Clubs & Longmont Colorado

August 14, 2021



Funny how truth can mimic fiction. Due to the west coast forest fires, there is a smokey haze in our Colorado atmosphere that has reddened our sunrises (thank God I'm not a sailor). But given that all the present research dictates that Proxima Centauri is more of a red dwarf sun, I imagine mornings for the Centauri on Proxima b would look something like the above photo, which I have been told depicts a reddish hue. So if a writer is handed lemons, he makes lemonade.

Speaking of Proxima b, I completed the dedication and acknowledgements for KMAG and sent them into BRW, so all that is left now is to go over the cover one more time with all its visual bells and whistles set imaginatively in place by

the talented Richard Lamb, and then review and edit the publisher's manuscript using that damn excel spreadsheet. I know that I am going to start work on the prequel later this fall, and then hopefully the sequel series next year - this world needs to sort itself a bit before I can write that -- but I would be lying through omission if I didn't share that completing The Claire Trilogy is a bitter sweet experience. It has been so much fun putting this story on paper and there is a melancholy to finishing this part of the saga. I love each of my characters, especially Claire. I can tell from the reviews that the readers are also fond of them. Indeed, many have said that they would love to hang, eat, laugh and drink with them. Luckily for me, every one of my characters are based upon real people or creatures, who share those same names, characteristics and personalities, so I have been blessed by the opportunity to do just that over the many years of my existence. That has helped add the feel of authenticity to my fiction. Write what you know.

I received word from a local reader named Debi that TWA has been selected by her equally local -- but very organized and impressive, they actually have "minutes" from their meetings -- book club to be their October book of the month. I am truly honored. I will be attending their October 12th meeting to observe their discussion of TWA (be gentle ladies) and maybe read selections from the other two books if they would like to hear them. Thank you Debi.

Had dinner with Lisa at one of our favorite (almost) local establishments, O'Shay's on Main Street in Longmont. I highly recommend the vegetarian Caprese sandwich and their crispy fries. The service and food is top shelf.

Afterwards, we strolled along Main Street and peeked in at the Little Street Library - the donated copy of TWA was absent, so hopefully someone is enjoying it - and also

stopped in at the Used Book Emporium and saw that TWA is still situated on the top shelf on the Local Authors rotating end cap. Old Town Longmont has a great energy to it.

Actually stumbled upon a Wicca themed store and daringly investigated its wares on Friday the 13th no less. Loved their sign - Shoplifters will be Hexed. We are anxiously waiting for the totally old school Longmont theater on Main Street to reopen so we can attend some live plays by the local theater troops. Hey, maybe I can get them to stage *Revelations*. Maybe I can get Pat Francis to come to town to direct it. He knows the play better than I do.

Anyway, busy day. Speaking of hexes, Lisa heads off to Florida this morning for the week long annual convocation of the Wallen Witches in Navarre, Florida. I will be filling her absence with hanging with Claire, Honey, Blue and Jeter and binge watching BBC shows. Gotta roll . . . Have a great day!

Billy The Bull

August 13, 2021



Bullies suck. Plain and simple. It's been my experience that bullies are not born that way, they are often created while they themselves are still children at the hands of other bullies. Bullies rarely prey upon the strong - either the strong individual or one protected by a strong social group. They like to prey upon the weak and marginalized. That is one of the reasons the Celts have clans, to protect their individual members from that kind of thing. So luckily, I have never had to fully experience bullying and any attempts were quickly dealt with by me or one or more of my kin, blood or adopted. Turns out, most bullies are bleeders and pussies. Many of the evolved would consider my last statement horrific and this next statement debateable: not everyone was lucky enough to grow up the way I did. In today's PC world, I'm not sure one can still get away with it. So let me suggest a more palatable alternative.

One of the many different hats worn by my dear (BFF) friend Helen LaLousis is the one she dons as the creator of the anti-bullying project and its mascot, Billy the Bull: <https://www.facebook.com/BillyTheBullAntiBullyingMascot>.

Helen grew up as a card carrying Lesbian. She has seen and experienced what it feels like to be bullied (not any more, she's part of the clan). So, a few years back, in an effort to contribute to the eradication of bullying where it often starts, Helen wanted to create a program that addresses the subject with young children. So she invested her time and capital coming up with a character and a storyline that would be easily accessible to that demographic. The result was the activity and coloring book that can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/thestoryofbillythebull>. See also <http://billythebull.org/wp-content/themes/snc-mono/images/AboutTheFounder.pdf>. The book has a great little storyline and fun activities that engage young children while teaching them a valuable lesson.

So, if any of my readers are interested in starting an anti-bullying program in their area, or adding to one that may already be established, reach out to Helen on her FB website and she will be glad to offer her experience and assistance: <https://www.facebook.com/faceoffproductions>. I can say without reservation that Claire, who does not suffer bullies, is a major fan of Billy the Bull.

Speaking of Helen and her many hats, here's what led me to think about Billy the Bull this morning. Yesterday, while I was watering the trees along the western side of my property, I noticed a kaki colored Billy the Bull hat with its colorful logo that Helen had given me, hanging deep within the core of branches of one of the wild trees that grow literally like weeds in the harsh soil on my property. Seems

like I had removed the cap one hot afternoon a few years back and hung it to dry on the extended branch of what was then a much smaller shrub, and then forgot about it. Since, as a proudly bald man, I have almost as many hats as T shirts, I just grabbed the next dry one off the hook and started wearing it. Well that tree obviously coveted the Billy the Bull hat, and has protected it from the elements, including the tornadic level winds that sometimes pass through our area, for the past few years. So I left the hat where it hung. It seemed very happy there.

Caught the last of the Perseid meteor showers after blogging yesterday morning. Sat there (with Blue and Jeter) on my back deck between 3 and 4 am (MT) with a warm cup of coffee and stared up at the heavens in a reclining chaise lounge. What a wonderous light show. Nailed 12 wishes. Hollywood, watch out!

For those of you that missed it, you can read about it (and see some photos) here: <https://www.space.com/perseid-meteor-shower-2021-thrills-skywatchers>.

The rest of you, it's Friday, so have a great day.

GFM & ABBEY ROAD REDUX

August 12, 2021



The above photo, moving left to right, was Mark Diller, Robert Mulvey, my now favorite ghost, me and Howard Weller. I loved these guys. That's Madison Square Park in the background. We were four of the associates at GF&M, who often played pool together at lunchtime. One of GF&M most important clients at the time were the remaining members of a particularly famous band. On this particularly cold day, at the turn of the century, one of the other

associates decided we should commemorate the iconic Beatles' Abbey Road Photo. I was the only one crazy enough to go barefoot (it really was cold - just look at the coats on the people in the background), in honor of Sir Paul.

Of course we got the order mixed up, PM (me) was third in line in the original photo, and we got the direction wrong, I flipped the photo in the editing suite to correct it. Bob looked more pythonesque than the rest of us, I believe to evoke John Cleese - who had studied law at Cambridge - and the "Ministry of Silly Walk" skit by his famous British Comedy group. Bob listened to a different drummer. But it's the thought that counts.

When I left GF&M, just before their merger with that larger firm, the other associates presented me with this photo in a beautiful frame. It still hangs on my office wall here in Berthoud. I do not regret one moment of my dozen years at that firm. It introduced me into the practice of law in the entertainment field. I got to meet a number of very important celebrities, whom I remember much more than they would ever remember me. But more importantly, it introduced me to a wonderful group of lawyers who I admire to this day. Each and every one of them was brilliant. Just being in their regular company raised my IQ twenty points. One of them, Mark Lafayette, appears as a character in TWA.

One major life lesson that working at GF&M taught me, was that in an entertainment world of fleas and dogs, it's much better to be the dog, even if you had to scratch yourself now and then. Indeed, one of the firm's clients was a very tall ex-flea turned dog. I remember seeing him in the GF&M hallway once, and thinking *damn, I want to be you!* I now find TWA in extremely close proximity jousting for position with his latest works on the Amazon Legal Thrillers lists.

Somebody pinch me. The lesson, if there can be one, is never give up your dreams.

I'm cutting this short because I want to go outside and watch the Perseid meteor show adorning our clear night sky.

Hopefully I can make a few more wishes. The rest of you have a great day.

Mychael Burnett & Claire the Dancing Queen & Chris Monteagle

August 11, 2021



My dear friend and fellow talented BRW writer, Christy Cooper-Burnett has a son, Mychael Burnett, who not only

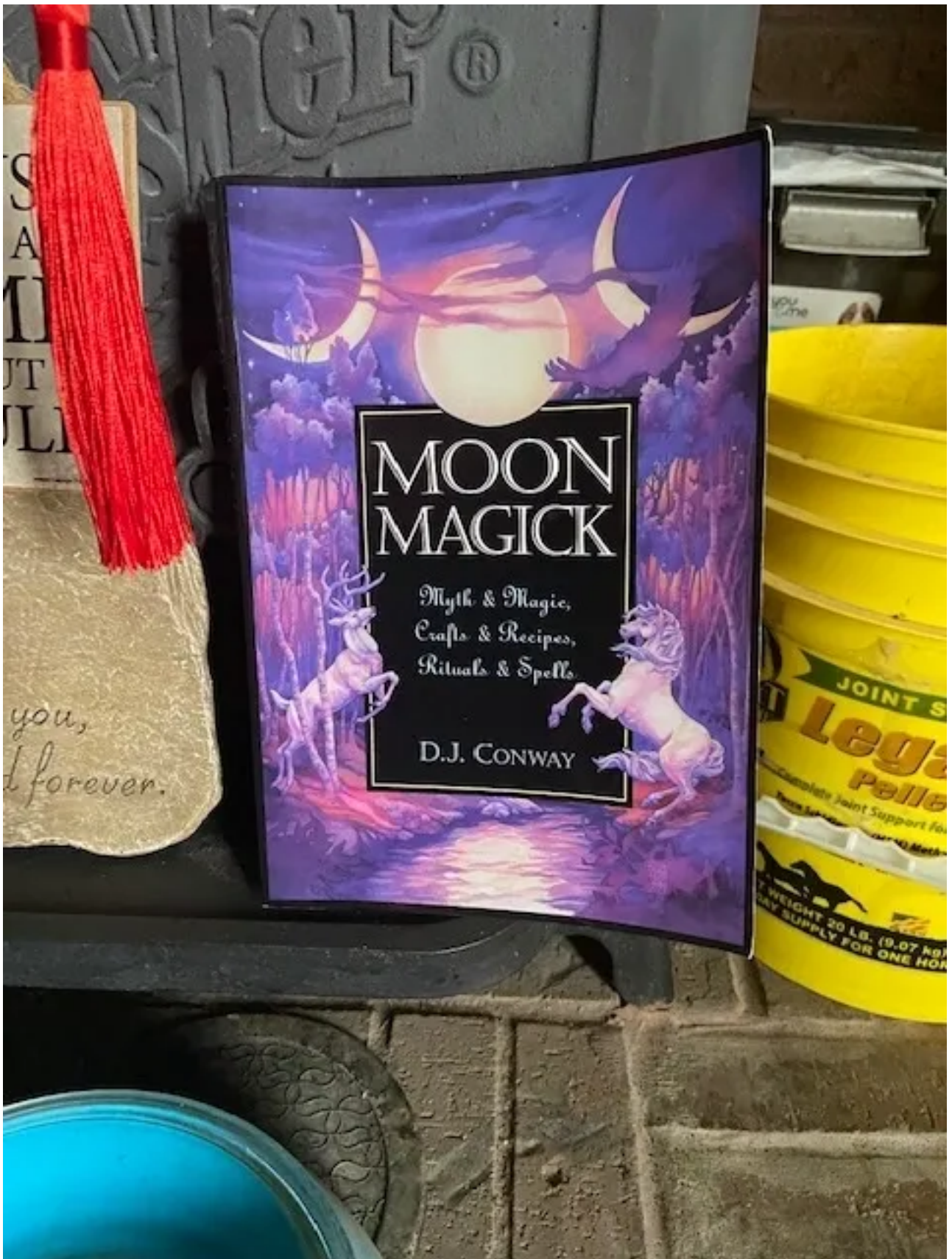
inspired Christy to sit down and write the time traveling Christine Stewart Trilogy (No Way Home, Finding Home and Escaping Home) but also served as the basis for the Michael Stewart character in those novels. That's Mychael, above, at Christy's recent book signing at B&N in California. Authentic feeling fiction draws creatively upon reality. From all reports Mychael is a great kid. Among his many talents is music production. When I mentioned to CCB yesterday that I would love to put Claire's dancing videos up on the Amazon Website, but refrained because I didn't want to raise the ire of the creating musicians, who I have the greatest respect for, even though its clearly "fair use" transformative, Christy generously spoke to Mychael who equally generously offered to create **Ode to Claire**, a soundtrack Claire can dance to on a free license. Thank you Mychael. Thank you Christy. Of course I'm now going to have to figure out how to play MB's song on my Alexa so I can capture the dancing mule on my iPhone, but I'm sure one of my more technically savvy friends or family members will talk me through it. Then its just a matter of opening the sliding door and playing the music. If I play it she will come. And hopefully dance. I'm thinking of replacing the overhead fan on the patio with a huge spinning disco ball for effect. Once captured, I will post it in the Amazon web page for KMAG (which will hopefully be live before October), which will be perfect for the third and final (?) book of The Claire Trilogy. I presently have videos posted of Claire knocking and nibbling on the Amazon pages for TWA and AAA, respectively. As anyone who has witnessed Claire's dancing videos can attest, they are worth sharing with my readers. Claire is truly a magical creature. I wonder if I can get her to speak on camera? Up until now, its been a hard "no!"

In closing, I'm thrilled to report that I have received the final cover blurb from Chris Monteagle, the Australian author of the *The Godless Trilogy*, whose second installment, *The Union of Lies*, drops on August 19th. If you want to use this next week wisely, I recommend you pick up his first installment, *In the Wake of Gods*, so you are properly up to speed. Thanks Chris. Good on you!

Anyway, reality awaits, so its off for my morning constitutional and then a work day of lawyering. Have a great day!

Dee's Legacy - First Royalty Check

August 10, 2021



As I mentioned in an earlier blog, Dee, the tiny psychic-medium, crossed the veil a few weeks back. Our mutual

dear friend Helen was offered a chance to take a few things from Dee's home as a handing down of her legacy and Helen took Dee's copy of the above book on Moon Magic.

Helen, knowing how interested I have been in the subject for many years -- on a quantum physics level -- energy is energy -- packed it off to me as a keeper of its knowledge and all of the energy Dee herself placed in the volume.

More powerful than the ruby red slippers. I will take good care of it. Thank you Dee. Thank you Helen. Much love to you both.

As yesterday was a day where the universe chose to provide me with gifts, I was also thrilled to receive my very first BRW royalties check for the first four months of sales of TWA since late February of this year. Nothing to retire on but that is not the point. What the check represents is a validation that I am indeed a professional, published author. And that validation was worth so much more than the money itself. My books are out there. I am truly thankful for the life I have been given.

Speaking of books, I was happy to learn that Luke was back at the final edits of his novel. Cannot wait to see his name on the McCaffrey Shelf.

Love the foxes in my neighborhood. They are cool and beautiful. Saw one crossing Beverly this morning.

Unfortunatley, they have a tendency of scattng on my front porch after they come by in the middle of the night to eat Smokey's catfood. Twice! They are welcome to the catfood as long as they leave Smokey alone. That is my line in the sand. The good news is that they must have gobbled up the half rabbit carcass Smokey left me late yesterday afternoon. I hate cleaning those things up. Smokey always leaves it right in front of the little dragon Tolkien. Unless its not Smokey at all

Got to chat with Pam's lovely daughter Amy, who is staying with Pam while she familiarizes herself with her bionic knee. Pam is blessed by her family. And by the company of Tique, Briggs and Wicker. Speedy recovery Pam! Amy mentioned that she truly enjoyed TWA. I told her to tell her friends because, while I have built a loyal following in my age demographic, I would like The Claire Trilogy to continue to sell after my generation moves onto the next energy level (although I intend to stick around in cyborg form but I didn't want to muddy those waters). Who knows, by then Amazon might have figured out to deliver Kindle to Heaven. I have a ready market just waiting up there. The OFC can handle the direct sales in the lower region. Have a great day.

Life's Little Mysteries & Princess Parties & CCB Book Signing

August 9, 2021



During the first leg of my walk yesterday morning, what do I find lying on the road, in the interior of Berthoud Estates just

where Beverly connects to Maureen, but a golfball. I thought that unusual enough, given that we are at least ten miles away from the nearest golf course, and in four years I had never found one discarded along the roadway.

However, I was later doubly surprised, as I exited Foothills Estates, over two miles away, when I came upon a second golf ball right there where county road 6 meets CR23S.

Condoms and golf balls, could there be a connection? It will remain a mystery that I will just have to continue pondering.

Yesterday was my granddaughter's friends' birthday party. It was hosted at my son & d-i-l's home and was quite the success. There were about a dozen children and another dozen adults (including my sisters, the fairy godmothers v&b) milling around their backyard where the giant enclosed trampoline, swing set and rock climbing wall was put to good use by the urchins until two Disney Princesses, Elsa and Anna made their appearance and led the children off to makebelieve land with stories, songs and dance. There was delicious finger food and drinks and Georgie (d-i-l) baked two gorgeous princess cakes, one chocolate, one vanilla, so everyone enjoyed themselves. Scarlett cleaned up in the gift-department and all of the attending children left with a swag bag of goodies. A good time was had by all.

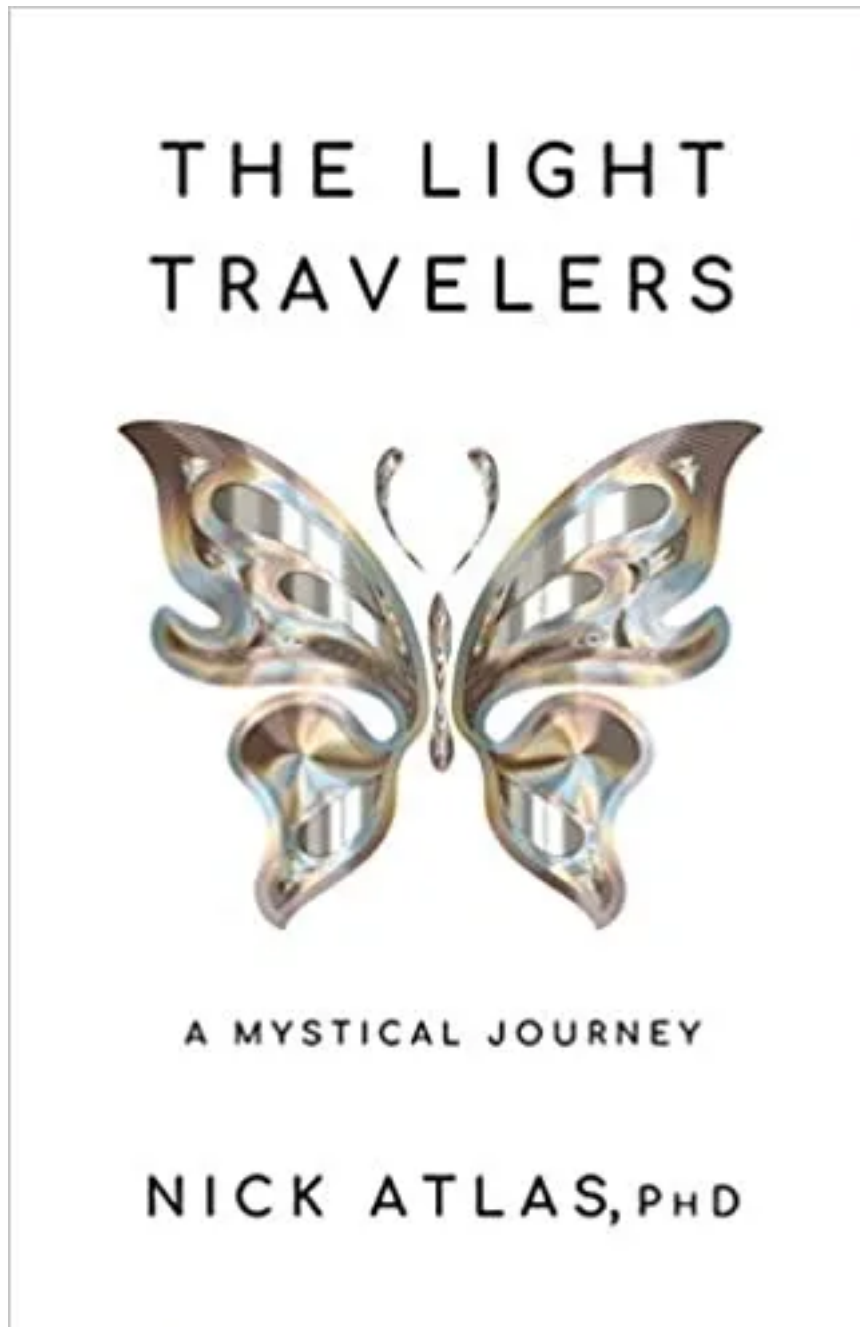
My dear friend, Christy Cooper-Burnett had a book signing at B&N in some town in California over the weekend. Stay tuned for details in future blogs.

In closing, I should note that the reviewer, "IHeath" went to the trouble of actually correcting their review, by replacing Nick Atlas with my name. That is a first time I have ever seen a review corrected. Nonetheless, the connection between Nick & I remains.

Have a great day!

Dr. Nick Atlas - The Light Travelers

August 8, 2021



Back at the beginning of this century, I had the pleasure of working in a shared office space (rented from a larger firm,

Beldock Levine & Hoffman, who were wonderful group of attorneys). Dan Brecher, another amazing attorney, also rented space there. He had two brilliant associates and this fantastic assistant Susan Fox. He would on occasion hire college students for summer work as paralegals. As my office was literally right next to Dan's, I became friendly with and was adopted into his crew.

One summer, a young man named Nick Atlas joined Dan B's stable. He had the best education and was an all around cool kid. He was just a bit older than my own eldest, Luke, and shared the same adventurous spirit. I am pretty sure Nick pitched for Horace Mann, so he was more than just a smart kid. But he was the ultimate free spirit. Most college grads who spend any time working as a paralegal are usually testing the waters to see if they really want to go to law school. Nick was just saving up his money so he could go on an adventure, and he did, often.

Nick had a natural photographer's eye, and used to return with these amazing photos of his exploits from all over the world. Those photos evoked the wanderlust I used to feel as a child thumbing through my parents' National Geographic subscription. Those photos were as close as I would ever get to surrendering to that wanderlust, but they were all incorporated into my growing collection of material for my writing.

Anyway, as a result of Nick's world-wide wanderings, he also evolved into a mystical maven. It was like witnessing Siddhartha transform into Buddha. He is now a famous Yogi with operations based in Massachusetts:

evolutionaryeducation.org

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-nick-atlas-7496a78a/>

I've stayed in touch with Nick over the years. In 2019, Nick sent me a copy of his book, *The Light Travelers*. I knew he

had been working on it for about a year, and indeed, it was observing his creative act from afar that helped spur me on to write TWA earlier that year.

When Nick sent me his memoir the summer of 2019, I devoured it. It was an experience that widened my horizons. I then posted this review on Amazon:



Tom McCaffrey

5.0 out of 5 stars **A Young Life Well Lived**

Reviewed in the United States on September 6, 2019

I received the book *The Light Travelers* in the mail on August 19, 2019. Not knowing what to expect, I made the mistake of opening it to just take a quick look at it before my workday started on August 20th. Four hours later, emotionally exhausted, I turned the last page. I really did not have a choice, I was locked in. What a ride.

If you were engaged by the most remarkable aspects of Kerouac's *Dharma Bums*, Castenada's *A Separate Reality*, Redfield's *Celestine Prophecy* and Roberts' *Shantaram*, you will enjoy and appreciate the true-life mystical adventures of this promising young author. For those of us that feel too old to chase their dreams, this book offers a vicarious delight.

For those still young enough to do so, this book is an inspiration.

2 people found this helpful

Turn about being fair play, once Black Rose Writing signed me, I contacted Nick and asked him to read TWA with hopes of giving me a blurb for its cover. He not only offered valuable insights, he also provided a great blurb for the top of the back cover:

"Witty, gritty and full of heart." -- Dr. Nick Atlas, author of *The Light Travelers*

This morning, I felt a little closer to Nirvana, the idea, not the band, although they are probably in the same location, when I opened up the TWA Amazon website and read the following review:

lheath

5.0 out of 5 stars Surprisingly delightful

Reviewed in the United States on August 6, 2021

I wasn't going to get this book until I read the reviews. Still skeptical, but what was there to lose? Have to say, I really enjoyed reading this book. So completely unexpected in so many ways! The juxtaposition of the classic mafia accountant and expected crime/suspense genre and the universe of absurdity, which I won't spoil -- yes there is more than the talking mule -- is remarkably successful. I've pre-ordered the next in the series. Delightfully written. I had fun stepping into the world Nick Atlas created. Thanks for that, Nick!

I am honored by the confusion, with that bit of truth woven into the backstory. And yes, thanks Nick. You da man! So if you want to enjoy your own mystical experience, pick up *The Light Travelers*. Who knows where it will lead you.

Replacement Parts -- The Singularity -- Other Novels & Children

August 7, 2021



Myself and my contemporaries have reached the age where some of our body parts are beginning to wear out. Luckily,

we live during a time when modern medicine provides humanity with a means to replace those parts with nice, aftermarket, titanium counterfeits that will function almost as well as the original. Three of my siblings and a number of my close friends have been in for knee or hip joint upgrades. My dear friend (and a fringe character in The Claire Trilogy) Pam Ervin had a titanium upgrade this week (wishes for a speedy recovery Pam). Word has it that the infamous Col. Joe Dzikas (KMAG) is an inch taller now that he had matching titanium knees put in. Will wonders ever cease? Me, I'm holding out for the entire Tin Man experience. I have transhumanistic aspirations. I'm keeping this body and soul together, as is, long enough for technology to present me with the perfect cyborg that looks something like Chris Hemsworth (Thor) into which I can download this brilliant mind and amazing personality -- along with its existing ability to tap into "the field" pretty much at will -- with all of the physical enhancements that will allow me to survive anywhere in the universe and live forever. I also want the full Artificial Intelligence upgrade, so I can google in my head and share Wi-Fi telepathy. If it's not too much to ask. But the trick is to survive long enough for this to happen. Present prognosticators suggest that this could occur by 2045. That's doable if I play my cards just right. People who know me understand that I am one stubborn prick so that it will take a serpentine milk truck coming out of nowhere as I step off a curb to take me out before I put my plan into action. Isn't that right, Eileen? So I will definitely be looking both ways when I cross anything for the next twenty five years. Stay tuned. I read my son Luke's novel yesterday evening pretty much in one sitting. As I expected, it is great, I am jealous. The confidentiality agreement he made me sign before

presenting me with the draft novel, that provides for emergent remedies including "the rack," being "drawn and quartered" and "beaten like a pinata," prevents me from saying anything more. I only hope he stops fiddling with it so he can get it out there for the world to appreciate. Before I reach singularity. Enough said.

Speaking of children, let me give a final shout out to BC, who spent the last few days getting his daughter, the wonderful Bethany, situated in her new, mid-atlantic, digs.

Beth is going to be a pharmacist and this world will be a better place as a result. The good news is - rumor has it -- that she is making BC's wallet weep in the process, and for those of us who have never actually seen his mythical wallet - Corey must be a Scottish name -- that is quite an accomplishment. You go girl!

Waste of a Perfectly Good Trojan

August 6, 2021



This may indeed be one of my most often read postings, based on the title and photograph alone. I will try not to disappoint you.

During my morning constitutional (my 4 mile walk around the local two estates) I often see strange and amazing things. There is this one stretch in the tale end of that walk, a winding curve right along County Road 23S, where it seems people in automobiles like to expel their detritus as they pass. Oftentimes I will come upon empty beer cans, liquor bottles, soda cans, and even discarded cigarette packages, which, if they appear on the side of the roadway close to my path, I will pick up and stuff into my now empty cloth sack, to be relegated to my recycling bin upon my return home. My tiny contribution to the maintenance of civilization.

Most the time, these emptied relics of temporary pleasure do not trigger any meaningful thoughts, beyond the wonder of what kind of person is so thoughtless that they cannot take their garbage home with them. I have also concluded that curves in the road are the perfect place for the tossing of refuse from a moving car to occur because the automobile has the combination of roadway speed and centrifical force to propel the garbage beyond the roadside barriers and out of sight, whereupon, if you toss your garbage while speeding along a straightaway, it is usually carried into the wake of the moving car and appears in the path of the next car that comes along. Simple physics.

This past Flag Day, which is also my father's and father-in-law's shared birthday, when I was thinking a lot both both men (Norb Wallen was one of my Surrogate fathers), and their respective impact on my life, I came upon an empty pack of Marlboro Red, my father's brand. It was also the brand that I used to sample during my very young and

always rebellious years. (Of course, I would never have partaken if I did not have even more rebellious friends like Joe & Lenny, both historically bad influences on this once upon a time altar boy during the Latin Mass era - "confiteor deo omnipotenti. . . ." By the time BC came along, I was already permanently corrupted by the other two). I cannot recall a moment in my memory of my father where the gnarly weather beaten cowboy cigarette pack or one of its soldiers were not also in the picture. However, I could also not recall a time since my arrival in Colorado, where I had seen that particular packaging, anywhere. I took its appearance in my path as a sign that my father was thinking about me as well. There is comfort in that.

Speaking of fatherhood, every once in a great while, I come upon something that does trigger some thought about the backstory that led the item to the roadside.

About a month ago, while I walking along this home stretch curve, I came upon a perfectly good condom. It's brightly colored pastel packaging (these color-blind eyes are not sure where in the spectrum of purple, blue or pink it actually falls) made it hard to miss.

The Trojan brand of rubber condoms has been around forever, having been introduced to young men everywhere by a man named Merle Lelan Youngs in the second decade of the twentieth century after his arrival in NYC (go figure). Condoms in general had been around in one form or another - with varying efficacy - until Julius Schmid took the concept seriously and began manufacturing condoms from animal intestines beginning in the 1880s. Any port in a storm.

I am not going to go into how I became familiar with this product or brand on these pages, as I intend to weave that kind of story into the *fictional* accounts of Jimmy McCarthy

that will appear in The Riverdale Chronicles, the prequel to the completed (The) Claire Trilogy, so I will leave it with the statement that over half a century ago, during those rebellious years, I made my contribution to that company's profit margin. How's that for a teaser?

But condoms are the horcruxes of libidinous young men who want to keep that part of their mystical essence away from the females of the muggle world, to prevent its escape so that it does not work its biological magic to create another life. And while it is more often found in the company of younger magi, even old wizards like myself are triggered by the sight of its packaging, especially on a roadside in the middle of nowhere. Such is their power. Now this particular horcrux was sitting there right in my path as I made the turn in the bend on 23S. A closer examination allowed me to determine that this packaging was intact and that its contents maintained its full magical power. Now if it was an empty wrapper, I would not have given it another thought, as it would have joined that collection of emptied containers of temporary pleasure. But given my natural abhorrence to wasting anything of potential value, my mind could not help but consider how a perfectly good unused condom found its way onto the roadside. And a couple of scenarios arose in my imagination as I made my way home.

The first was that there was a car full of rambunctious twilight teens heading down 23S excitedly drinking in preparation for and in anticipation of a Saturday night excursion in a local bar where there may be women and they may get lucky. The designated driver, obviously the most responsible of the group, asks his cohorts if they have brought any protection with them, and, always looking out for his brothers, begins to hand out these cum catchers to

his friends from the personal stash he keeps in his glove compartment. However, at that moment, one of his less responsible friends in the back seat decides he's going to exploit the physics I mentioned earlier and toss his empty beer can out of the car as they pass the curve on 23S.

Unfortunately, he cracks the window at the exact moment that Mr. Responsible is leaning back to hand him his cock sock and the sudden change in the car's internal pressure creates a vacuum which rips the condom out of MR's hand and sucks it out the window. In the end, drunk boy was too inebriated to make any use of it anyway.

In another scenario, we find young Ms. Virtuous, driving home with her libidinous boyfriend. She notices a strange circular impression on the outer leather side of her date's wallet, which is sitting on the console of the car between them. So as not to lead this young lad on as to her intentions, MV grabs the wallet, opens it, removes the one condom this poor bastard has been carrying around with him, and with the bold statement, "this is never going to happen," MV opens the passenger window, and, with a flourish, much to her date's chagrin, tosses his Jimmy Hat right out her window as they hit the curve on 23S. Voila! There were other more unsavory scenarios like the cheating husband tossing the condom out the window as he sped home to what he thought was his unsuspecting wife who was actually waiting patiently with her nine millimeter for his faithless ass to walk through the door, but I didn't want to imbue that particular horcrux with that kind of evil mojo. I finally concluded that some hitchhiker accidentally dropped his raincoat as he walked along this path to wherever, when he removed his iphone from his back pocket, taking the condom that was sitting there with it.

In the end, I gave this Trojan my blessing and continued on home. The next day, I found that someone else had wedged that particular item into the top of one of the roadside markers, so that whomever had accidentally dropped it would see and collect it. Hope springs eternal.

HAPPY 5TH BIRTHDAY SCARLETT - CHARTING - KMAG 5b FINAL COVER

August 5, 2021



Yesterday was my oldest granddaughter's fifth birthday. I have been blessed with three beautiful granddaughters, **Scarlett, Savanna and Stella**, (along with an amazing grandson, **Lucian**, via daughter **Jackie**) the name sakes and models for those characters in The Claire Trilogy. Their mom, **Georgie**, is an Australian model so we have bred in height, beauty and sweetness into this next generation. That's an old picture above. However, I would

not want to be in my son **Luke's** shoes when they hit their teens. I recommend just killing the first libidinous male that comes snooping around and hanging him on a pike in the front yard as a scarecrow to keep away the others.

Although if the girls have Luke's lethal, assassin genes, we might just let them handle it.

I did come away from the event with my own gift, a draft of Luke's latest novel, which I'm hoping to get to this weekend.

I expect to be very jealous.

Anyway, we had delicious, home made, butter-cream frosting birthday cake, gave Scarlett her gifts, and watched the kids bounce on a huge enclosed trampoline. And we had a chance to catch up with the parents. These are Hallmark moments. Scarlett's official child party is this Sunday. Happy Birthday Sweetie!

Both **TWA** and my friend Christy Cooper-Burnett's novel, **No Way Home**, topped BRW's summer bestsellers list in the Legal Thrillers and Sc-Fi categories, respectively. Today may be the last day of that insane 99 cents Kindle sale for **NWH**, so I recommend that you fence sitters pull the trigger or miss out on this almost freebie. Once you read **NWH**, you will undoubtedly jones for the rest of that trilogy, **Finding Home** and **Escaping Home**. Congrats CCB!

Richard Lamb sent me the five potential mock-ups for the cover of **KMAG** yesterday. He was right, the fifth version, **KMAG 5**, was the first among equals. We tweaked it by switching out the coloring for the lettering in another version to make it more ethereal. I am well pleased! Well done Richard! Did one hell of a job. The perfect cover to wrap up this saga. Now I just need that final blurb and we are done with the cover. Voila!

I also want to also thank my cousin, **Christina** (Youngest sister of **Apples**) who has read and given me valuable feedback on two of the three novels and who also provided her opinion, along with members of the **OFC**, my sister-in-laws, **Cathy** (great writer) and **Dina** (great mystic), friends **Eileen C** and **Helen** (both characters), and brother-in-law **Beau** (I base and name the main bad guys in **KMAG** after **B (Seth)** and his twin **Victor**) on the final **KMAG** cover selection.

People often don't realize that writers would be nothing without friends and family. A lot reviewers have commented on how much they would love to hang with the characters in my novels. I actually have done just that, for over six decades, which made it easy to incorporate those eccentric personalities into my characters. Claire was icing on the cake, truly magical, and she remains my BFF. Thanks guys.

The rest of you - have a great day!

Bigfoot - Audible TWA - OFC News - KMAG Covers - Secret Battles

August 4, 2021



I have spent the last four years trying to make my home and property as whimsical as possible. Anytime I can purchase something -- dragons, elves, fairies, gnomes, whirligigs, and every windchime known to mankind -- that will evoke a magical element, or make a visitor or passerby pause and take notice, I will do it. I even have a replica of the Titanic

bell for my granddaughters (and any other visitor) to ring as they approach the house. So when I spotted this Bigfoot Crossing sign on Amazon I had to have it and I knew just where on my front property it would go. It arrived late yesterday afternoon, so up it went. Taking a page from Field of Dreams, an absolutely perfect movie, if you post it they will come. I hereby declare Casa Claire to be a Sasquatch Sanctuary!

I really need some cool gargoyles for the roof.

Yesterday I was thrilled to learn that **TWA is now on-line for presale on Amazon Audible**. I was worried about who would narrate the book, because you need to hear as close to a real Bronx accent as you can in order to maximize the experience. However, I was thrilled to learn that TWA was narrated by the character actor **Joe Barrett** (<https://tantor.com/narrator/joe-barrett.html>), who has performed a long list of narrations - <https://www.audible.com/search?searchNarrator=Joe+Barrett> - that includes "**A Prayer for Owen Meany**" by **John Irving**. So I am in heady company indeed. You can listen to a sample of Joe reading the latter - including his ability to read the word "fucking" in a perfectly natural way, an absolute must - here: <https://www.audible.com/pd/A-Prayer-for-Owen-Meany-Audiobook/B002V8N8WG?>

[qid=1628063743&sr=1-2&ref=a_search_c3_lProduct_1_2&pf_rd_p=83218cca-c308-412f-](https://www.audible.com/pd/A-Prayer-for-Owen-Meany-Audiobook/B002V8N8WG?qid=1628063743&sr=1-2&ref=a_search_c3_lProduct_1_2&pf_rd_p=83218cca-c308-412f-)

[bfcf-90198b687a2f&pf_rd_r=T6F30T95RCYVZ08A0CGF](https://www.audible.com/pd/A-Prayer-for-Owen-Meany-Audiobook/B002V8N8WG?qid=1628063743&sr=1-2&ref=a_search_c3_lProduct_1_2&pf_rd_p=83218cca-c308-412f-bfcf-90198b687a2f&pf_rd_r=T6F30T95RCYVZ08A0CGF)

As an added bonus, Joe also practiced law for five years: <https://www.hoopladigital.com/artist/6863687?kind=BIO> - so I'm confident he summoned the appropriate angst in his reading.

I cannot wait to hear **TWA** on August 24th: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09BSYM3ZC/>

[ref=dbs a def rwt bibl vppi i2](#) (thrilled to see a bunch of Harry Potter audiobooks lining the bottom of that webpage under "Related to this topic"). I hope JB does the narration for all three novels. Now, all of you Clan members that have put me off without any remorse because you don't "read" books anymore - like your fucking eyes all stopped working -- and I will single out my youngest son **Mark** (Go Blue, love to **Sara**) at the top of that list, no more excuses!

Speaking of Joes, yesterday, **Joe Serrano** challenged the OFC members to post photos of children and grandchildren on the group text. It was great to see the human (?) legacy that this group of crazy persons that never should have survived this long had spawned and raised to healthy adulthood, and that there were adorable grandchildren to boot. I hope someday in the not too distant future, one of us can arrange for us all to meet somewhere over a long weekend, so we can horrify our children and grandchildren with our outlandish stories. Hey, it could happen.

My friend, the wonderful author, **Margaret Reyes Dempsey (Mindgames)** - who is working furiously on her next novel in the mountains of NC -- turned me onto another new author named **Geri Throne** (what a cool name) who has written a WWII novel, **Secret Battles**, that is now on my summer reading list. <http://www.gerithrone.com/secret-battles/>. Good luck Geri!

I was also thrilled to learn that the magnificent British polymath, **Richard Lamb**, has completed not just one, but five possible versions of the cover for **KMAG**. Talking about going above and beyond the call. Given how he knocked the cover for AAA out of the park, and referred to this project as "possibly one of my best covers ever," I am waiting on tenterhooks to receive the WeTransfer link so I can view them. I will report back as soon as. . . .

Finally, let me wish **Brian Reinthaler** a happy 44th Birthday from his friends and family at the OFC and the extended Clan!

The rest of you five readers have a great day!

Animal Farm

August 3, 2021



This is what it looks like when the animals run the world.

Buoyed by her meteoric success in TWA, Claire and her personal assistant, Honey, have claimed the shadey underdeck patio - with its very expensive overhead fan -- as their new stomping grounds. Claire explained that, not only is this area twenty degrees cooler, but she can also poke her head in through the doorway to enjoy the central airconditioning that is pouring out through that open sliding door. Even Honey has taken to inserting her upper body into the doorway to enjoy the cooling comfort. She also explained that this way she doesn't have to travel far to extort her carrot tithe. The treacherous Blue, like the Vichy French, has thrown in with the conquerors, and has even demanded her own share of carrots. Man's best friend my wise ass!!!! Lisa and I have been relegated to the blazing

hot upper deck, at least when I'm not on call to man the
carrot station below. No one ever said life was fair.

Palisades Peaches & Book Cover Blurbs & Baby Showers

August 2, 2021



When I first arrived out here in NoCo, my son Luke turned me onto the annual event called the arrival of the Palisades Peaches. Anyway, they appear here in Berthoud mid summer and are sold by a lovely family farm in the parking lot of a local gas station. No lie, this is the first time I saw people voluntarily lining up for anything here in the hinterlands. I was missing the regular daily NYC experience of standing in lines, so Lisa and I took a mental number and

stood in cue. The wait was sufficiently long that I even got to employ some of my best NYC "waiting in line" lines for the locals, much to Lisa's chagrin.

Speaking of NYC, my first bite of this year's peaches evoked one of my favorite Seinfeld Episodes - The Mackinaw Peaches!:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-sfk3PGQDg>

Switching gears to something equally delightful, I am in the process of finalizing my book cover for KMAG, including its blurbs. The cover itself is almost completed (I cannot wait to see what the brilliant **Richard Lamb** has come up with), and I am just waiting on one last blurb, which I expect to be here shortly. As I am very superstitious, and TWA had 3 book cover blurbs by authors, I have employed that same magic number on the covers of AAA and now KMAG. I read an article over the weekend that alleges that the first blurb was purportedly employed by Walt Whitman, who used a blurb from a letter from RW Emerson on his book *Leaves of Grass*. Good enough for WW, good enough for TM. I am a big believer in blurbs, as they work to cross-pollinate your work with those of the blurbing author, and thus, increase the demographic pool for both authors. If the blurbing author is more notable than you, you get the juice. If you are more notable than the blurbing author, they get the juice. But no matter who is the more prominent, it expands both reader-demographic pools. It's a win-win. A rising tide floats all boats.

I know readers read the blurbs because I have seen them cited in the reviews.

I was blessed by TWA receiving the front cover blurb from my friend, the illustrious Irish author and film auteur **Colin Broderick**. I have mentioned one of the earlier references

to Colin's TWA blurb in an earlier posting, However, this morning I awoke to another citation to Colin's witty gobbet:

drblank

5.0 out of 5 stars

Thoroughly entertaining!

Reviewed in the United States on August 1, 2021

Verified Purchase

I am not going to expose the little surprises that pop up in “The Wise Ass” during “Jimmy Moran’s” journey, just read it and enjoy a book that will elicit a few good belly laughs. **Colin Broderick nailed it when he wrote, “This is Grisham on mushrooms”.**

Thanks again, Colin. Anytime anyone can mention my work in the same paragraph as the famous lawyer-novelist, **John Grisham**, with mushrooms or not, I am truly blessed. Speaking of talented lawyers, my law partner, **Robert Meloni** (yes the mafia lawyer in TWA), called me out of the blue yesterday afternoon - we rarely speak on the weekends, although its always a delight - to mention that one of his friends, with whom he had shared TWA, had reported back that he really enjoyed it, which is always a thrill to hear. Robert was hosting the baby shower of one of his daughters, **Isabella**, and had popped outside his upper West Side digs for a moment (probably to sneak a cigarette - very bad Robert). So let me take a moment and give a shout out to Isabella, her two sisters, her significant other, and her soon to be baby (and the soon to be grandma - although she does not look anything like a grandma - the writer/entrepreneur **Adrienne**). Well done all of you.

Speaking of other talented lawyers, it's Monday so I must soon put on my Lawyer hat. But first my walk. The rest of you have a great day.

Horses & Hay Fields

August 1, 2021



Pretty much every large family farm around here grows hay. It is a resilient crop and just appears to need some watering and voila! (I am oversimplifying and I am sure there is not enough Aleve in the universe to allow me to last a week at doing it, so God bless the farmers). Most of these farms sell the hay directly to the public. You just need to call them and then stop by and pick it up. Most of the larger ranches around here raise horses. Some raise cattle. A few smaller ones raise alpacas, sheep, and goats.

This past week I was driving by one of the larger ranches in the area, just off county road 23S and spotted this herd of horses having the time of their lives munching hay at its source. There had to be thirty horses, all head down below the hay line, but in order to capture a good shot I focused on the batch closest to the road way. Remember this photo when Lenahan is driving Jimmy to Hygiene in TWA and when you come to a particular scene with coyotes in AAA. Horses are magnificent creatures and this particular family does right by giving their herd the run of a large section of their huge property. This must be some family, as far in the distance you can see a large residence that would make the British Gentry quite jealous. They actually appear to own large fields on both sides of the county road. Very impressive.

Anyway, a cattle ranch at the end of this length of roadway ends up setting a significant catalytic scene in KMAG. You come to a hill and then the road ends at a T, where you can turn right and head to Hygiene (and all that is magic in that small town), or turn left and head towards Longmont (and pass the home of the bull, Methuselah). So if you are ever on this road, or reading my novels, pay attention.

Happy to report that my Toyota Rav 4 had a healthy 40,000 mile check up yesterday at Stapp Interstate Toyota off Highway 25. I love that car and I love the service at Stapp. What I don't love is housecleaning. However, given that the basement level is not only where I spend 90% of my day toiling at being a lawyer (and at times enjoying my writing), and is also the entranceway to the magical patio (and beyond) where Claire and Honey spend a significant amount of time during hot days in the shade under the fan, demanding their carrot tithe, a lot of dirt and dust passes through those sliding glass doors. The mules bang loose the

large clumps of mud from their hooves on the concrete, and just leave them like archeological artifacts where they fall. I try to maintain some daily semblance of cleanliness but once a month I am forced to provide a wall to wall deep cleaning. Including sweeping the outdoor patio. I hate it. Today's the day. Get my Aleve ready.