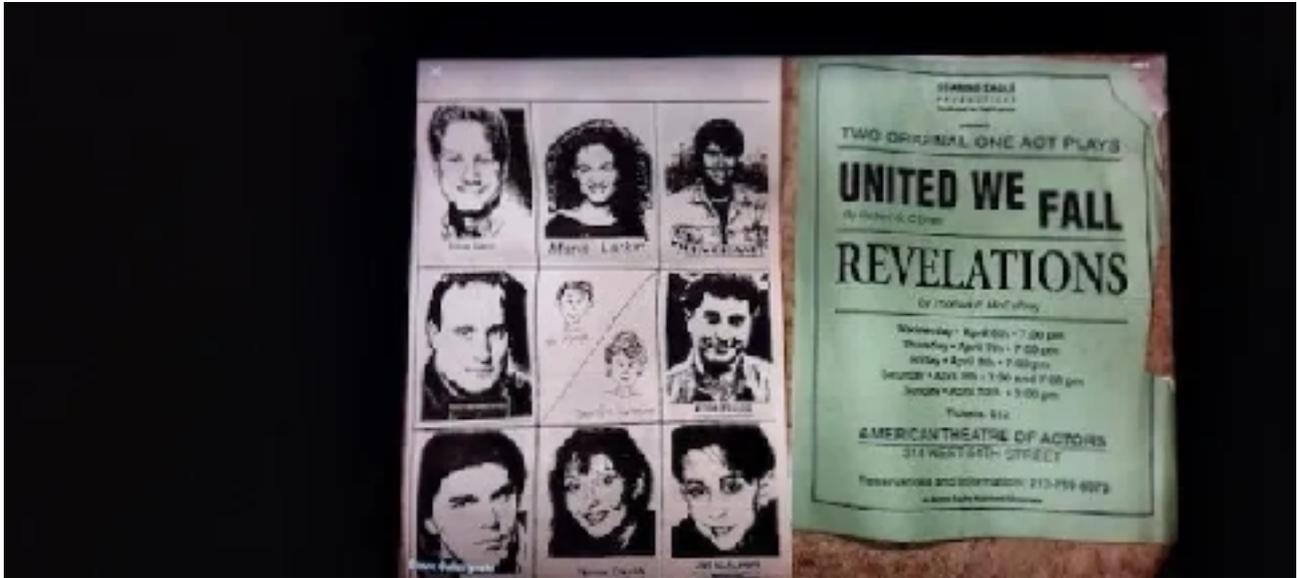
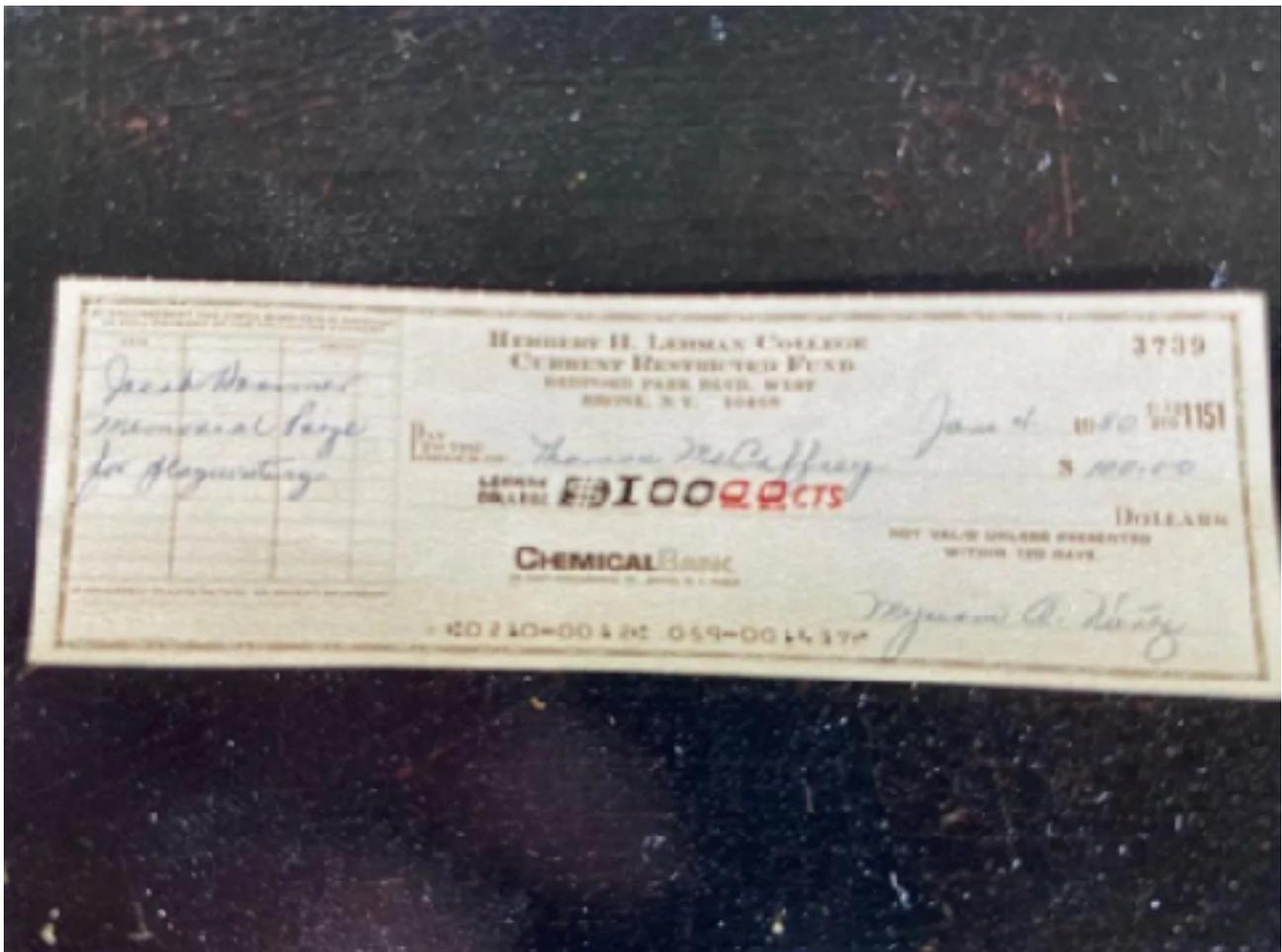


# Pat Francis - Revelations

December 31, 2021



If you keep at something long enough, good things happen. Those who have read my blogs over this past year will know about the One-Act Play I wrote while attending Lehman College. It won the CUNY Jacob Hammer Memorial Prize for Playwriting,



and then went into a drawer for over a decade. There it sat while I toiled away in the legal profession, until it was then resurrected by Pat Francis, a brilliant community Theater director, who learned of it through his sister, Tina Piras, who has been my #1 fan since the early 90s and has read everything I have ever written. Thank you Tina.

Now, if you have read my blogs, you will also know that the play was a bit of a ground breaker when I wrote it in 1979 because one of its leads, indeed, its primary character, was transsexual. It was during the typing of the play - I couldn't type for shit, still can't - that my sister, Veronica, in tears, finally came out to me. Indeed, it was through my observations of her own struggles, we were very close, and my growing suspicions of her true heart, that led me to write the play in the first instance. Art as family therapy.

Pat, who was openly gay, was determined to stage the Play. So, after major effort on his part, on May 23, 1993, it was performed at

the iconic New York City venue, *The Village Gate*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village\\_Gate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Village_Gate)



Now - as a not so quick aside - I just heard a great story of what happened after the play's premiere performance. Eileen Cotto (né Collins) had attended the performance with, among others, Joe Serrano and his later to be wife, Donna. Eileen was the designated driver that evening before that became a thing. Joe and Donna, however, had enjoyed a few cocktails before and after the performance. Eileen, who did not know lower Manhattan - remember this was before the ubiquitous GPS - was lost trying to find her way true north. So Joe became the navigator who immediately led her down the wrong way of a one way street. Of course she was pulled over by the NYPD. When the polite officer approached Eileen's window, Donna, who was sitting in the back seat, decided it would be a good thing to prank Joe and Eileen, and started to repeatedly call out that she was a kidnap victim, and could the officers save her. Luckily, Donna's thespian skills were not as convincing as she believed, and at the moment when her performance took place, the officer's radio went wild with news of a much more important event nearby that required all hands on deck. The now distracted officer raced back to his car with a final - "drive safely" - admonition over his shoulder. As I told you all many times, my friends are insane. And I would not have it any other way. Anyway, after the successful performance at *TVG*, Pat Francis was determined to take *Revelations* on a multi-night run off-off-off (and maybe one more "off") Broadway in Manhattan. So, he put together *Revelations* with another original one act play he had the rights to, *United We Fall*, and staged them (produced and directed both) in tandem as a combined night at the theater. So from April 6-11th, 1994, *Revelations* ran as the second play at the American Theatre of Actors on West 54th Street. Here's a bit of trivia. My eldest son, Luke, whose new novel, *Lebanon Red*, will be published in August 2022, performed as one of the characters in the other play. That's Luke in the lower right hand corner of the Playbill page.

The two plays played to full houses, and while I was there standing in the back every night, I cannot actually recall the actual performances (I'm still trying to locate a video of that production).

You see, all I cared about was the audience members' reactions to the play, so I never took my eyes off them. And when they laughed,

I laughed, and when they cried, I cried. That, my dear readers, is the only reason I write. To see if I can make my audience respond emotionally to a story I am telling. For that short stretch, I was in heaven. Thank you Pat Francis. I owe you.

But in a way, *Revelations* cursed me to a life of quite desperation.

That tiny window of watching the staged play every night confirmed to me that I had the ability to be a writer, even though I would not give it another serious go again for a quarter of a century, when I finally sat down and wrote *TWA*. That's a long time in Limbo - it wasn't purgatory because there was no promise of a future redemption.

But anyway, things happen for a reason, and now that it is all moving in the right (write?) direction, I'm hoping that I may see *Revelations* performed one more time. Maybe I'll get lucky and Lenny - who may have the last hard copy version of *Revelations* - can figure out how to stage it at *An Beal Bocht*. I think Lenny would be perfect as one of the leads, although, as cute as he is, I don't think he's got the looks or *cojones* to play the transsexual.



So Lenny, here you go, gauntlet thrown, public acknowledgement of your right to stage *Revelations*, see what you can do. There may be some life in the old lady yet!

(A side note - Pat Francis has my non-exclusive permission to stage *Revelations* any where and any time he wants.)

So anyway, this is the story I chose to share with you as the magical year 2021 comes to close. The writing life full circle.

The moral to this story is simple: Never. . . . Give. . . . Up. . . . !

So, to all of my five readers and all of the rest of you dreamers out there, chase your passions into 2022 and beyond, and do not quit until you catch them.

Happy New Year - 2022 is going to be big!

And make this last day of 2021, the greatest.

Thank you all for your support.

# I Really Hate Mountains

December 30, 2021

It's not their fault. I respect them and they are magnificent to look at but I just have a fear of heights that causes me to drive white knuckled along mountain roadways especially when I'm passing up and down such elevations that my ears keep popping during the ascent and descent.

Here was a level stretch where I actually had the nerve to take one hand off the steering wheel.



Add in the fact that it is snowing and tandem tractor trailers are sharing the roadway and you have a wonderful stress free trip. But yesterday was worth it.

It was cold - in the teens - and Breckenridge was packed with Christmas holiday skiers and snowboarders. There was a lot of vehicle and pedestrian traffic in the small town.

I got to see my daughter, Jackie, and her man, Zach, and most of all, my grandson Lucian.

They are staying in my sisters' beautiful ski chalet for approximately ten days.



All three are avid snowboarders. And yet they took the day off from the perfect powder to spend some time with us during Lisa and my seven hour visit.

I got to catch up with Jackie,



who I have not seen in over four years, spent some time getting to know her man Zach - I could not have picked a better mate for Jackie - but he is just way too fit to be standing next to him in a photo (both J & Z were D1 Athletes - Z/Lacrosse, J/5 separate sports/letters - in College).



and I had a blast getting my ass kicked in chess and scrabble by my grandson, Lucian, who has doubled in size since I last saw him

(I'm pretty sure I heard him whisper the same about me, the little rat bastard).



I also watched him perform 180s on a small snowboard jump Zach built him in the backyard. I should have taken my phone outside with me but I was too busy being cold.

At 9 years old, Lucian is tall and athletic (he also plays *Lacrosse*, as well as learning the violin and piano) and with his long hair looks like the ultimate snowboarder. And in perfect McCaffrey style, he is completely irreverent.



He swears he was only signalling to his mother that he only wanted one cinnamon bun for brunch. I wonder where he gets his cheek?!



She swears she was just pointing to Zach.

My dear wife Lisa managed to capture a rare photo of her and her daughter as well (sans the bird).



Lisa made Jackie keep her free hand in her pocket for that photo. Got to love the McCaffrey women.

And Lisa grabbed Lucian for a drive by photo as well.



Anyway, the visit made the horrendous drive there and back again (on the return trip we just made it through a long, mountain tunnel, when the road authorities closed it behind us due to some unidentified event - I felt bad for the poor bastards that reached there a minute after us - although I then worried what it was I may be driving into that was so bad they closed the tunnel - Mountain Trolls perhaps? <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trollhunter> - highly recommend this foreign film), so worth it, but drained me, as it still took us over three hours with traffic and weather to reach home, and we might have suffered a touch of altitude sickness for our troubles.

So, one more family related check mark on the year end "must do" list. And it was a great one.

But it is good to be back at only 5,000 feet on level ground with my mules. Thank God I don't like to ski - which may have to do with a ski trip Lenny and I went on during High School - but that's for a different blog.

Well, there's only a couple of days left in 2021, and there are miles to go before I sleep.

You other fine five readers, go out and *Carpe Diem*.

And make it a great one.

Oh, and shout out to my patient, fun and lovely wife, Lisa (né Wallen Witch) who, like in Groundhog Day, is again experiencing her 39th Birthday. Love you sweetie!

# What Really Matters

December 29, 2021



The above photo of my granddaughters, Scarlett and Savanna, was taken on Boxing Day. It was pleasantly warm. They are standing before Jack the Spruce in a spot I consider a magical grotto, right before my front porch. My family is blessed by their intelligence and beauty. When I wrote TWA in 2019, they were much smaller and different looking, but this is the image I had in my head when I described their characters during Claire's backstory. Funny how life imitates art.

This is Stella, you'll get to meet her character in KMAG.



As you can see from this Christmas morning photo, Stella has her eyes (and hand) on the (largest) prize.

When I wrote TWA, Stella was in utero. So, I didn't have a name to apply in the acknowledgements. I didn't have a spot in the story for her character either, so I made sure I came up with something by Book 3. She may have ended up with the biggest role of the group. Time will tell.

Below is my oldest grandchild, Lucian.



He is a musician, dancer and athlete. A triple threat. And as you can see from the photo, he is a real character.

While I got the idea for the character watching the children in a local family, the McQueens, all doing their early morning animal related chores one day as I was walking the area, I named the character after my grandson, and this is the image I had in my head while I wrote TWA (*sans* the lion costume).

My wife and I are actually leaving shortly to go visit Lucian, who is snowboarding with his mother and her significant other in Breckenridge, which means I have to drive through the mountains on I-70, which I absolutely hate. Ask anyone who knows me. I don't do mountains.

But such is the lot in the life of a grandfather. Unlike Mohammad, I must go to the mountain.

Anyway, I just wanted to put this out there.

There is nothing more important than family, as that term has been broadly and inclusively defined in my novels.

And that is what I will leave behind when I finally shuffle off this mortal coil (thanks WS). Novels and family, together forever.

So I must run, so I can spend some time with that branch of family tree and still get back here in time for Claire & Honey's (late) dinner, who are my family too.

The rest of you fine five readers go hug a family member before the year ends.

And whatever you do, have a great day.

# Mary Moran McCaffrey

December 28, 2021



The above photo is of my sister-in-law, Mary (né Moran). She comes from another Bronx Irish family who grew up with us all in Riverdale and they all have their own stories to tell. Her father

Frank, was hard working and the nicest guy you would ever know.

Her mom, Kathleen, is the funniest woman I have ever met and could spot a bullshit artist a mile away. She sized me up pretty quickly. They both had the greatest brogues. Mary's sister, Kathy, is a pip, and her brothers Frank, Tommy and John grew up with my brothers. Then young Kevin came along as the bozzy of the family.

In fact, Frank is one of the Ginger's best friends.

Mary married my oldest brother and has managed through her infinite patience and steel backbone to keep him in check for many decades. She bore him two great kids, who have now gone on to marry other great kids and started to provide them with awesome grandchildren. So that branch of our family tree is doing quite well. God bless you all.

Mary looks much better than Eddie does, has from the start, in fact, it was beauty and the beast from the get-go (I can write that last bit safely from a distance of thousands of miles). That is a great photo of her, and I would say that even if she wasn't holding two of my literary children in her hands.

But just to prove it is not a fluke, here's another great shot of her next to Eddie.



Mary has always been a reader. So I was just a bit afraid that I would be judged against the titans in her libraries and found wanting. Luckily, my novels held up to her discerning eye, and she has become one of my biggest supporters. She uses the pen name Mr. McScruffins in her many on-line postings, which you could read if these rat bastards at Go Daddy hadn't wiped out my comment section.

Anyway, I wanted to take a moment to thank Mary personally and publicly for her support and for putting up with Eddie (and truthfully, the rest of our Clan).

And wouldn't you know that a generation later my youngest has married into a whole new Moran family, whose patriarch, Jimmy Moran, provided me with that great character. I would have thought that all Moran families would have circulated a flyer at Christmas warning against contacts with McCaffreys. Their loss, our gain! Okay, I mentioned in an earlier post about Jackie Vaughan and Captain Turkey Legs that I would find out Robbie Vaughan's wife and new son's name. They are Alyssa and (little) Robbie, respectively. Welcome to the world little Robbie. Welcome to the family Alyssa. I am certain that you both have brought love, light and laughter into that amazing Clan. Good luck to you all. Okay, I am running short of time, I took a moment to respond to an amazing email from Stu Buchman of Kansas (Thanks Stu, best to Carolyn), and so I am playing catch up. The year is on the wane and I'm sure you are all thinking about all of the events that occurred in 2021. It's what we do to make sense of our world. But stay positive, focus on the good stuff and put the rest behind you. 2022 offers nothing but good things. So go out there and check off the last items on your 2021 "to do" list. And have a great day.

# Boxing Day

December 27, 2021



Yesterday was great fun. But I got so caught up in just hanging out with family, playing with grand kids, sharing a great meal (thank you Lisa) and shooting the shit that I didn't snap one photo. And that's okay. We managed to get everyone seated at the dining room table, including the two oldest grand daughters, while the youngest took a perfectly timed nap. Afterwards, Luke and b watched football in the living room while the rest of us enjoyed coffee and home made pies for dessert. The dishes were done and the visitors were gone before twilight. Perfect.

Went out and spent a little time with Claire and Honey while I dropped off their dinner - they were very happy that the weather had been mild - then came inside and put my feet up. And just like that, without another whisper, the Christmas holiday ended. And I was happy.

Earlier in the morning, while I was doing my rounds, I snapped the above photo. It just stood out in the predawn darkness.

It brought home the fact that you don't have to be the tallest tree in the copse to get noticed. Remember that.

Anyway, as we now spend the next few days saying our goodbye to 2021, I can write without qualification, that I have had one hell of a magical year. And for that, I am truly grateful. Thank you one and all, including my fine five readers, for making that happen.

Speaking of whom, I would like to acknowledge one of those readers, a man from Kansas named Stu Buchmann, who took the time out of his day to send me a very nice email about AAA. Thanks Stu, best wishes for the New Year to you and your wife Carolyn. I look forward to your future thoughts on KMAG. Greatly appreciated.

For those who wonder about the etymology of the term Boxing Day, I refer you to: <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/boxing-day-december-26>

Now all of you go out there - keep your heads down during what's sure to be an abbreviated work week - and have a great day!

# A Truly Magical World

December 26, 2021



Yes, I am old and grizzled looking. I am pretty sure I was born with this face coming out of the womb - facial hair and all - and I am now just aging into it. I have never been proofed and began buying and consuming alcohol at a very early age (although I am dry now). But I also believe that, as sure as that is a real rainbow encircling me, I was born into a magical world.

I intend to prove this when I write the prequel to the now complete *The Claire Trilogy*, which I am tentatively calling *The Riverdale Chronicles*. Hopefully this spring.

But to just give my fine five readers a snapshot as to why I believe this to be true, I will summarize my past few days in God's country.

As my readers know, my second book *AAA*, dropped this past Thursday, 12/23/21. To say I was nervous when I woke up that day, is the understatement of the Century. No one wants to die a one-hit wonder.

My wife decided we should commemorate the day by having breakfast at Grandpa's Cafe in Berthoud (which is mentioned in *TCT*). I love that place because every time I go in there I catch constant shit from a group of codgers I call "Grandpas Boys" (led by the devilish Carl - I mean it, I recognized him from the underworld - where I took the legal bar exam - the first time I walked through the doors ) which makes me feel like I'm back in the Bronx. I've also met and become friends with other characters there like Russian Biker - Nick The Lid and Cowboy Billy and Wolfman (Big Bearded Chris) Jack.

Anyway, Thursday morning was no different, so after having my hilarious exchange with this table full of lifelong local friends/ codgers, I joined Lisa at our usual table

We were waited on by the bubbly and vivacious Mellissa (her spelling - needed to be 8 letters long). Mellissa is a bright young woman who I expect to one day be joining Colorado's legal fraternity. She also likes to give me a hard time and I love every second of it.

Anyway, I no sooner take my place at my table, when I look down and there beside my right foot, sat this face-up 1972 penny.

Now growing up, finding coinage on the ground was not a rare occurrence, but in this day of ubiquitous debit cards, it has become quite the novelty, especially pennies. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/29/business/coin-shortage-penny.html>

Anyway, given it was magically face up, I scooped it up and placed it on the table.



Now on Friday morning, I went outside to take care of some Mule related chores - refilling hay bags and water buckets - before putting on my legal wig and beginning my work day. When I walked outside I was amazed to witness this incredible rainbow, so I started snapping photos with my iPhone.







And I have never before in my entire, long, life seen where a rainbow has actually touched down on our earth until that moment.



I knew instinctively that if I hopped into my Toyota Rav 4 (yep, the one in TCT) I stood a good chance of being the first of my Clan to actually capture the Leprechaun that was certainly lurking at the base of that tree by the foot hills, with his pot of gold, but I was afraid that such a capture could interfere with all future rainbows, and there's just not enough gold in this world to make that worth it. And after all, I still had that penny in my pocket.

And it gets better. . .

By sheer luck, Lisa and I got the opportunity to play Santa for a local family. I really did not expect to hear back from them, and we were thrilled just to be able to help. Yesterday, I received a note from the woman and I would like to share a snippet that proves my point - a voice from the grave:

" You brought allot of light to my home this holiday season and you truly did something amazing for my grandmother. My grandfather

passed away last June and we are all still mourning his loss but you not knowing anything about this woman gave her a gift that brought my grandfather's presence into this holiday season. The Sweet Pea scented items were a sign. I'm not sure if you believe in those kinds things but that was what my grandfather called my grandmother. So thank you very much!!!!!"

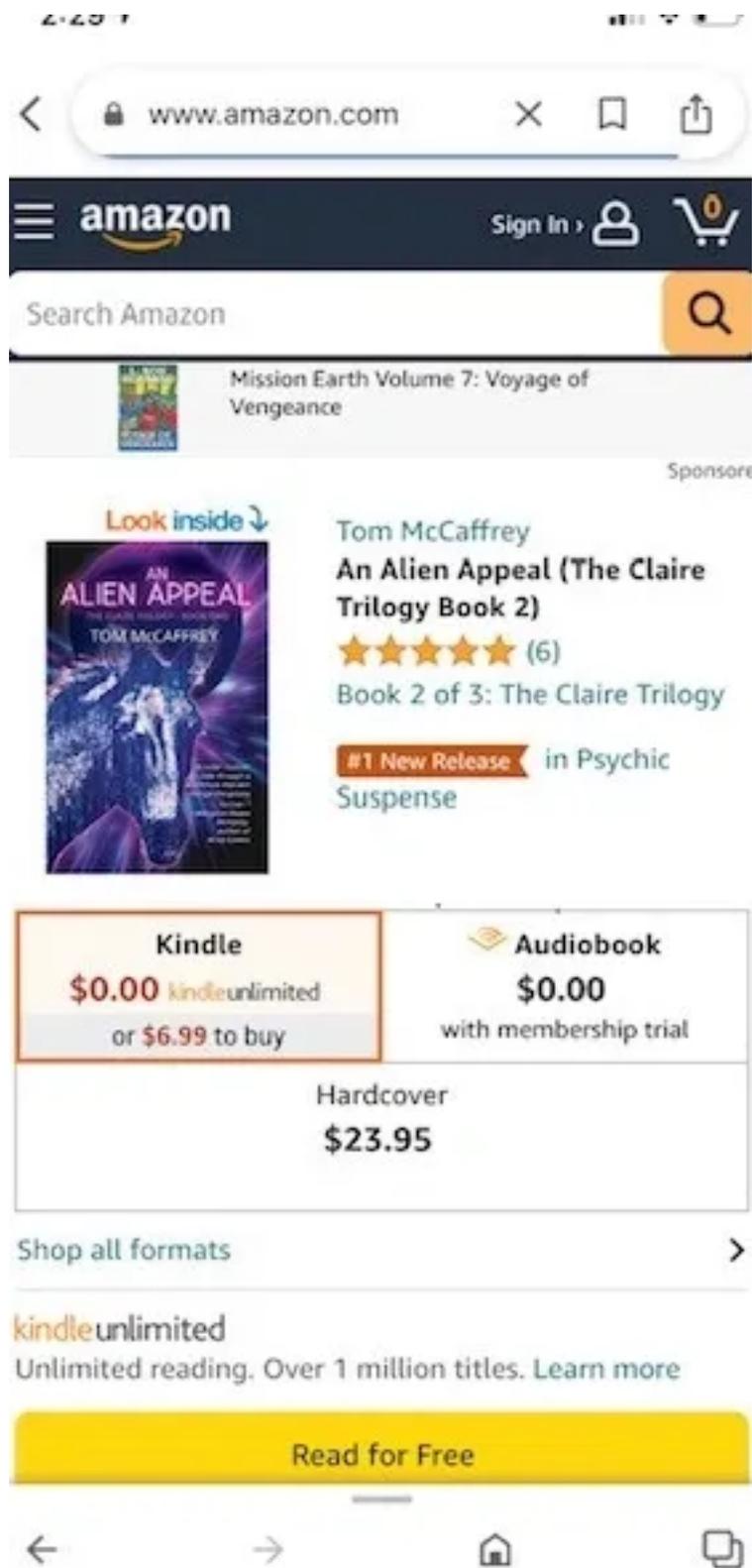
Now you just can't make that up. I could have died a happy man after reading it (although I'm glad I didn't because I still have stories to tell).

Still, it gets better. . . .

*An Alien Appeal* opened strongly out of the gate, landing on a couple of Amazon Top Ten lists. By Friday, it was sitting at No. 4, right behind *TWA* at No. 3, on the Amazon Dark Humor Comedy List. And the reviews started to trickle in, and they - with one trollish outlier (on Goodreads, of course) - were exceptional.

But it gets better. . .

When I woke up yesterday (Christmas) morning, after I came back inside from feeding Claire & Honey, with some extra Christmas treats tossed in, *AAA* was an Amazon No. 1 Bestseller:



And it stayed there the whole day. And the positive reviews kept coming.

And, for the first time in a very long time, our morning was free, so I sat down and watched my favorite Christmas movie.



Jean Shepherd was a genius: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3naRDmT3QGA>

As a kid, I used to listen to his radio show (I believe Ed "MacDoots" McCarroll turned me onto him) - "Excelsior" - and in this movie he plays a Cameo in the scene where Ralphie and his brother are going to see Santa. When Hollywood finally comes knocking for *TCT* - and they will (remember, I still have that penny) - that's going to be a clause in the governing contract. I will Cameo! And then Lisa and I got to spend Christmas afternoon with our eldest, Luke, his lovely Australian wife, Georgie, and their magical three daughters, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella (yep, they're the basis for their namesakes in *TCT* as well).

I didn't snap any photos as I was too busy chasing Stella around the house - she crawls with the frightening speed and dexterity of a creature from any horror film and likes to french kiss my dog Jeter,

so you have to stay on top of her. In the end, after a delicious Irish meal of Eggplant Parmigiana (the Italians stole it from us - I swear, ask any Mick), exhausted, we hit the hay and slept like logs (and yes, I know they are both cliches, and I don't give a rat's ass if the writing Brahman don't like it) .

And the magic continues today as we celebrate Boxing Day with my two sisters, v(blood) & b(love), the basis for Bonnie and Tessa in *TCT*. I'm going to really try for a photo of everyone at some point today.

Anyway, that is my slice of life snapshot that demonstrates why I believe that I experience magic in this world on a daily basis. You just have to know where to look.

So, the rest of you fine five readers go out there and take a good look at your lives as you recover from your Christmas merriment.

Trust me, you'll see the magic.

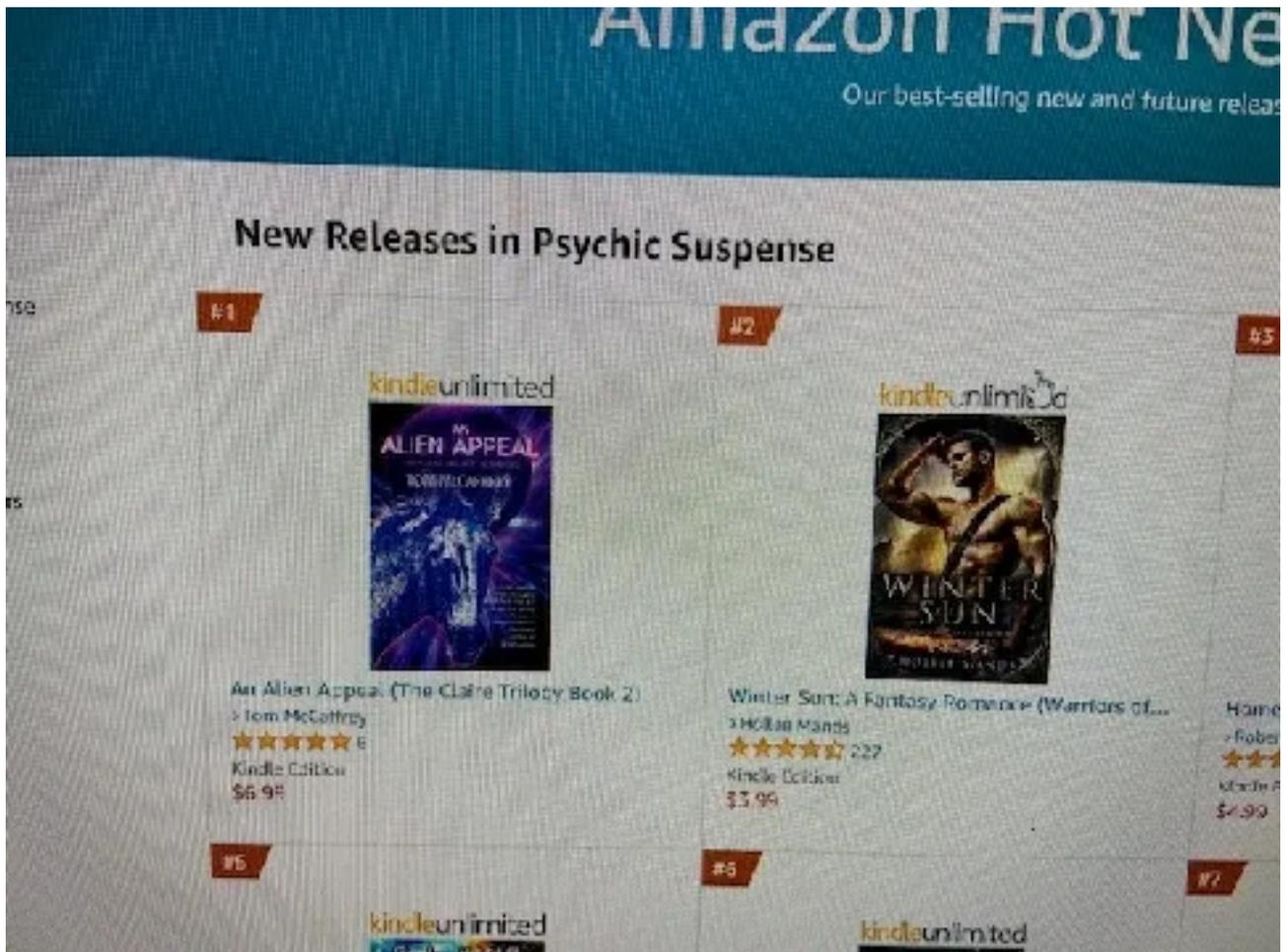
But most of all, have a great day!

# Merry Christmas at No. 1 - Congrats to Captain Turkey-Legs 2

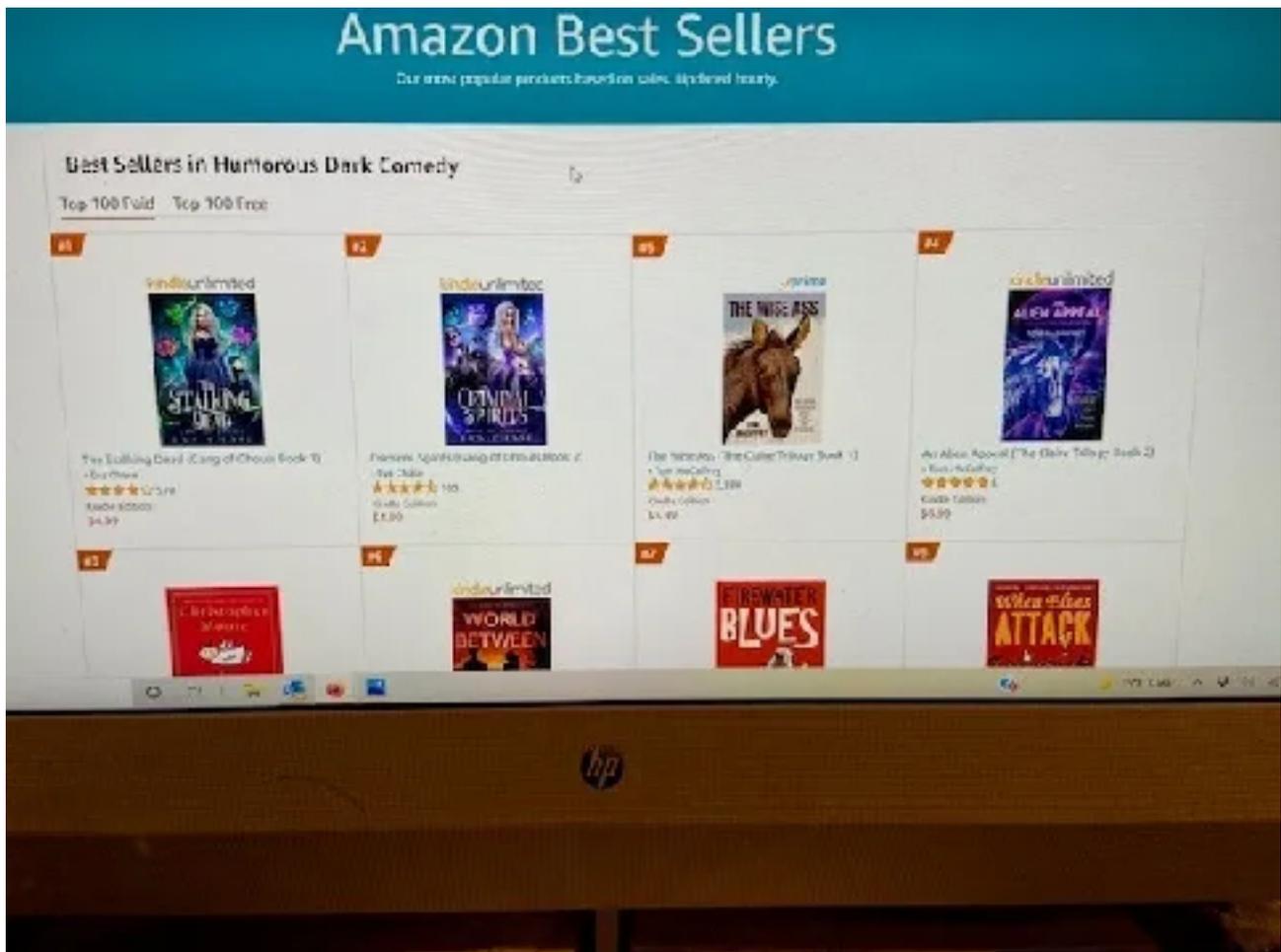
December 25, 2021



Okay, I'm not lying, this is one of the best Christmas presents I have ever awoken to.



I mean, I was absolutely thrilled yesterday to see TWA & AAA line up next to one another as 3 & 4 on the Dark Humor List. To tell you the truth, I almost didn't want AAA to overtake her older sibling.



So, as with all of my children, I am pleased that AAA has decided to carve her own path.

Thank you each and every one of my fine five readers for supporting my novels. I am blessed by your continued involvement in my life (even if I can no longer witness manifestations of the same through the comments you were once able to leave me).

Speaking of Blessed. Got a call last night from my old and dear friend Jackie Vaughan. He was calling to wish me success on the launch of AAA, wish me and Lisa a Merry Christmas and to tell me he and his lovely wife Sue, had just become grandparents for the very first time - via their oldest son, Robbie, and his wife. Like me, Jackie eschewed the idea of accepting the Title "grand\_\_\_\_\_."

As a nod to his extensive nautical background and his love for the sea, he was hoping for the moniker, "Captain."

Anyway, that flipped a switch and dragged me 55 years back through time, where his father, Big Jack Vaughan, one of my paternal surrogates, and a man I loved dearly, insisted on a similar

title. I, of course, acquiesced to his wishes, but added the suffix "Turkey legs," as a nod to his very skinny legs.

My first use of the full term "Captain Turkey Legs" occurred one winter night during my youth, when I was staying over at the Vaughan home in their large and top floor apartment in Riverdale Gardens (6D?). Anyway, Jackie's Dad and Mom, Connie [né MacLaren? - I believe Jackie's son Robbie is named after one of his uncles]), who gifted me with the childhood nickname "Slippery-lips" due to my penchant for having the most amazing excuses readily available at my lips whenever Jackie and I were caught doing something wrong - I got a lot of practice) were out for the evening, so when Jack and I got home (we had been drinking in the woods above the rocks directly across Riverdale Avenue from his home), we raided the fridge before calling it a night. I spotted a pristine pie, stashed in the back, and Jackie told me we should leave it alone because it was his Dad's favorite treat and off limits. Well, given my sweet tooth, and my alcohol-fueled dutch courage, I not only carved myself a large slice out of the pie, but I taped a note to its cover box, bragging about it - throwing down a gauntlet. I addressed that note to "Captain Turkey Legs."

At the time, Jackie shared a large bedroom with his younger brother Peter (hey Pete, Merry Christmas to you and your family) and I believe Pete had shifted to the bedroom of Jackie's younger sister, Robin - side note, Robin was a beautiful and bright young lady who for a time dated my younger brother, The Ginger. (hey Robin, Merry Christmas to you and your family). Robin was staying over at one of her friends' homes - probably at the Keenan's house - or was out hanging with The Ginger.

Anyway, I was sleeping in Peter's bed, which rested along the farthest wall, and was positioned kitty-corner to the bedroom's door.

At some point in the early morning hours, I was woken to a semi-conscious state by the sound of the heavy front door of the apartment closing, followed by the sounds of Big Jack and Connie milling about, dropping keys, and whispering to each other about things long lost to my memory. Then I heard the refrigerator door slamming.

Moment later, the bedroom door creaked open just a crack, and I could see one eye of Big Jack's face backlit by the hallway light behind him. I then thought I could hear a very cartoon-ish laugh - like that of Muttley the dog: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uSTOHa4Im4>.

Anyway, the bedroom door closed and it went quiet and I fell back to sleep.

Now here's where it got surreal. At some point in the minutes-hours after I fell back to sleep, I was awakened by the sound of a thump against the bedroom wall, directly above my head, and sudden sprinkling of something cold and wet on my face. When my eyes opened, the room was pitch, and everything was quite, so I wrote it off as early onset *delirium tremens*, rolled back over and went back to sleep.

When I woke the next morning, I looked over at the bedroom wall just above pillow level of my head, and spotted the remnants of a large circular wet stain on the wall. Its edges were irregular as if something had exploded and I could see a water stain trail leading down the wall beneath the bed level.

I remember, getting up, getting dressed and heading off for home, leaving the entire Vaughan family still sleeping.

I never gave the experience another thought until Jackie and I, now much older - I think we both were lawyers at the time - were having a conversation about the Captain Turkey Legs pie incident, when he shared that when his father, Big Jack, had come home and found the blasphemy to his pie, he went up on the roof of the building, molded a large snowball, and came down and let it rip towards my sleeping form. I loved that man!

So, congratulations to Jackie, Sue, Robbie and his wife (I promise to ascertain both wife and baby's names and post in a future blog - hopefully along with some photos) on this momentous occasion.

Another great transition in the circle of life. Congrats too to the remaining Vaughan Clan, in welcoming another family member. He is the luckiest kid in the world.

Oh, and one more thing, when you all get around to reading *KMAG*, you'll see Jackie appear towards it end as character - a high profile lawyer.

Until then, Merry Christmas to all of my fine five readers and their families and friends. Have a magical day.  
And make it a great one!

# Christmas Comes Early: Bunny Lives & AAA's Top 10 opening day

December 24, 2021



I knew I was in for a lucky day when it took me only one trip into my local ACE hardware store, and one clean attempt at disassembly and reassembly to repair Bunny. You see I really didn't want to lose my whimsical brass spigot, which reminds me of the hundreds of bunnies that race across my property every day and that share the two different warrens under my workshop and in a stack of wood

down by Geppetto's studio. It also reminds me of Alice's white rabbit. And for this writer there is nothing more fun than to follow it down a rabbit hole. Go ask Alice.

However, this project was till challenging enough to almost distract me from the stress of AAA's opening day. I tried desperately not to look at AAA's charting position. When I woke up this morning I was thrilled to find it sitting at #7 on Amazon Kindle's Humorous Dark Comedy List, while cracking the top 100 in two others:

2:23



www.amazon.com



## Product Details

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**Word Wise:** Enabled

**Print length:** 286 pages

**Lending:** Enabled

**Amazon.com Sales Rank** #4,265 in Kindle Store ([See Top 100 in Kindle Store](#))

#7 in [Humorous Dark Comedy](#)

#28 in [Psychic Suspense](#)

#55 in [Legal Thrillers \(Kindle Store\)](#)

## About the author

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Tom McCaffrey

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And I'm equally thrilled that by through her accomplishment, she joined her sister, TWA, in that top ten spot:

2:23



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## About the author

Follow the author to get new release updates and improved recommendations.



Tom McCaffrey



So thank you my fine five readers for your support. And thank you for those wonderful readers who are also beginning to post those reviews on Amazon, B&N and Goodreads. Nothing pushes a novel better than word of mouth. My youngest brother, John (indeed, one of the ghosts in TWA), is fond of saying "All politics is local!" I feel that the same applies to book sales. If you can get your local community behind you, there is no stopping you. So thank you, members of my family, OFC, Writers, Inner Circle of Readers, Riverdale, Berthoud, Blue Collar, Lehman, Fordham, Legal, Mystical, Twitter, Nextdoor, Instagram, National and International local communities for pitching in and helping me reach my dreams.

I am forever in your collective debt.

Oh and a special shout out to Angela Pascoe (of Loveland), and her son, daughter and grandma. Yes, Angela, there is a Santa Claus.

Merry Christmas to you all, and Angela, good luck with school. The world loves second acts.

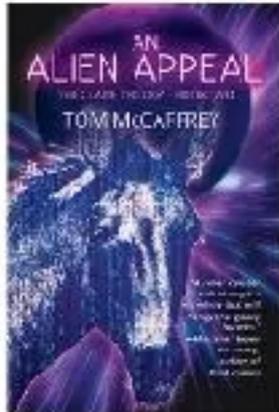
I don't need to wake up tomorrow and open any presents. I've got it all right here.

So you fine five readers pump the brakes on your harrowing daily lives and ease into Christmas. It truly is a magical time.

And have a great day!

# Best Laid Plans Of Mice And Men - AAA and Leaky Pipes

December 23, 2021



Tom Mc Caffrey  
**An Alien Appeal (The Claire  
Trilogy Book 2)**  
Book 2 of 3: The Claire Trilogy

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It's bad enough that I actually slept very little last night, but I woke up to find that Amazon seems out to get me today, of all days. For example, you'll notice that the paperback version of AAA does not appear as one of the available formats for the book. I know that this is not the case, because I have the paperback version in hand. It turns out that the paperback can be found on its own separate page, which doesn't do me a whole lot of good, if the potential reader goes to the above website and gives up. Then I went to Audible to purchase a copy for my friend, Karen (Cruiser) Anderson, and the Audible website didn't offer me the "Give as a Gift" option. So I called them and spoke with a wonderful young lady named Meagan, who after trying all of her magic tricks, had to submit a ticket with the higher up techies in hopes of fixing the glitch. Could take a few days.

I'm also hearing from some readers who have gotten early promotional copies that Amazon is not allowing them to post their reviews.

Zounds!!!! Jeez, I've always wanted to say that.

Anyway, I'll have to find something to distract myself while the world, or at least Amazon, sorts itself out.

Ask and the Universe provides.



There is a copper pipe that extends into my wife's office. It seems that the room was an add on to the original building, so the pipe

was probably part and parcel of an outdoor spigot. When we renovated that room this past year we decided to keep the pipe and put a whimsical brass bunny as the spout, to have it available to water the large ferns that also inhabit Lisa's office. We keep a huge, antique looking, pewter bucket below it, just in case of a leak. Hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

Yesterday, my wife was drawn to a tinny dripping sound coming from her office. Tap, tap, tap . . . the sound of water droplets hitting pewter. Voila. Just the distraction I need.

I have had numerous occasions to replace leaky and broken pipes in the house over these past five years - always in an unreachable spot in a ceiling or wall -- and it is always a pain in the ass and a terrible mess. I always get completely soaked at least once during the process. And it always happens during colder weather.

But I am insistant on repairing this leak because I really need something that is going to draw all of my attention while I screw it up 5 times before finally fixing it properly. This will require at least five different trips to ACE Hardware in Berthoud (they are awesome - I highly recommend that store) where these knowledgeable men and women will listen to me rant using the incorrect terms like *Green Acres'* Oliver Wendell Douglas trying to explain farming to Joe Carson, Fred and Doris Ziffel, Sam Drucker, Newt Kiley, and Floyd Smoot (you young people look it up, remembering that I am a transplanted New York lawyer living now in God's country).

[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=green+acres+youtube&&view=detail&mid=5CAABC44CA21E30552865CAABC44CA21E3055286&rvsmid=B3A138F3C526DB0CD3A0B3A138F3C526DB0CD3A0&FORM=VDRVRV)

[q=green+acres+youtube&&view=detail&mid=5CAABC44CA21E30552865CAABC44CA21E3055286&rvsmid=B3A138F3C526DB0CD3A0B3A138F3C526DB0CD3A0&FORM=VDRVRV](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=green+acres+youtube&&view=detail&mid=5CAABC44CA21E30552865CAABC44CA21E3055286&rvsmid=B3A138F3C526DB0CD3A0B3A138F3C526DB0CD3A0&FORM=VDRVRV)

The good news is that it will give the ACE hardware people plenty to talk about once I storm out their doors for the final (until next) time.

I can always see them staring out the front window after me as I pull away in my car.

And that will be just fine by me, because I will become so consumed by my growing frustration (rage) trying to fix this pipe that when it is all over, not only will the leak have ceased to exist, but I'll also check my Amazon page and hopefully will see that they've fixed everything as well. And maybe, if the Universe has found my plumbing antics comedic enough to invoke a special favor, that

website will show me that AAA has done really well on its opening day. Time will tell. Wish me luck.

Oh, and by the way - today's headline is a loose translation of a line from one of the Scottish Poet, Robert Burns' (had a professor in Law School by the same name) poems about a mouse and actually reads:

**“The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men. Gang aft a-  
gley”**. Those Celts really know how to turn a phrase.

Anyway, you fine five readers go out there and focus on the upcoming Christmas holiday this weekend. May there be no leaks in your homes.

And make this a great day!

# Equine Introductions - Winter Solstice Saging

December 22, 2021



Given that there are not a lot of humans to pay attention to, you start to watch what the animals are doing. In fact, that is how The Claire Trilogy first started to form in my head. Isolation plus observation plus imagination. Voila!

Yesterday, I noticed - through my back door - that the equines - Mules and Horses - were having a confab amongst themselves across three adjoining properties. It seemed to be an introductory thing.

As you can see, to the right of the photo are Claire and Honey at the back corner of their property, on the far side of what was once our pond (I pray the water tables shift back in our direction), directly communicating with the brown and painted horses across the back gully, while the two larger horses on the next property to the left stand there listening intently.

You see, the middle pair are new to the neighborhood. The smaller brown horse just arrived with the new owners - a wonderful young family - toward the end of the summer. I used to feel sorry for it because, while that family had goats and dogs, and were themselves very attentive, there were no other members of a horse herd for her to hang with (how's that for alliteration!). As a result, she often stood on her fence line, watching Claire and Honey or the two larger horses, dreaming she was part of their herd.

Yesterday, I was thrilled to notice the arrival of the larger painted horse. The tiny brown horse was so excited I could see her showing her new herd member the lay of the land. Then I watched as she walked the Painted horse over to meet the two big guys on her common fence, and could hear the dialogue in my head among them as Brownie made the introductions. But then Claire and Honey, who were actually in the backyard extorting carrots, turned suddenly in synchronicity and walked out together to the back and stood waiting while Brownie walked her painted pal over to make her introductions.

You can see from the way Claire is standing with her head and ears up and alert, that she was doing all of the talking, obviously telepathically questioning (there were no aural sounds exchanged between them) the newcomer about its *bona fides*. The blue coats on my two mules almost gave them a regal appearance, and I could tell that Claire was giving the new arrival her blessing as Queen of the Beverly Hills Estates Equine Association. Honey, as handmaid to the Queen, stood patiently focused on what she was hearing during the exchange. I could feel the joy amongst all three sets of the equines as they instantly bonded. I also could feel the positive energy emanating across all three properties as the Equine Clan was expanded.

Speaking of positive energy, given that it was the Winter Solstice, I took the opportunity to close off the gates - ending any further carrot extortions for the afternoon - so I would have time to use the wonderful gift Janice & Brian Erickson had left for me (behind one of my watch dragons) - and sage the house as we turned the seasonal corner from the shortest day of the year.

I selected one of the Hawk feathers from my extensive avian collection - which my granddaughter, Scarlett, another potential

McCaffrey (Glinda) witch (my daughter Jackie, Scarlett's aunt - presently skiing in Breckenridge with her man Zack -



has frighteningly powerful mojo), seems obsessed with them all and likes to leave them lying around different areas of my house - and went through all three floors of Casa Claire with my smoldering, sweet smelling bundle, being extra careful to sage every corner, window and doorway.



It was a great success, the house feels reinvigorated. (But I did leave the door open for Apples or BJ or Bob Mulvey or any other deceased Clan member - read my past blogs - to stop by anytime for a visit). I could hear my mother's voice telling me I'm never going to get into Catholic heaven if I keep following the old ways. Later, when I took a walk out to the road to collect my mail, I met Sally, the neighbor across the street, collecting hers. She shared with me - mail boxes are the country gossip equivalent of big city water coolers - that when she and her husband, Dick, went to Boulder to give blood (very commendable, I did it all the time in New York) this past week, the phlebotomist was reading TWA. Sally's husband, Dick, a brilliant polymath who is a big fan of *The Claire Trilogy* (now immersed in his inscribed copy of *AAA*), had a nice conversation with this obviously tasteful and bright woman

about both book and author. Six degrees of separation! I was thrilled by the anecdote.

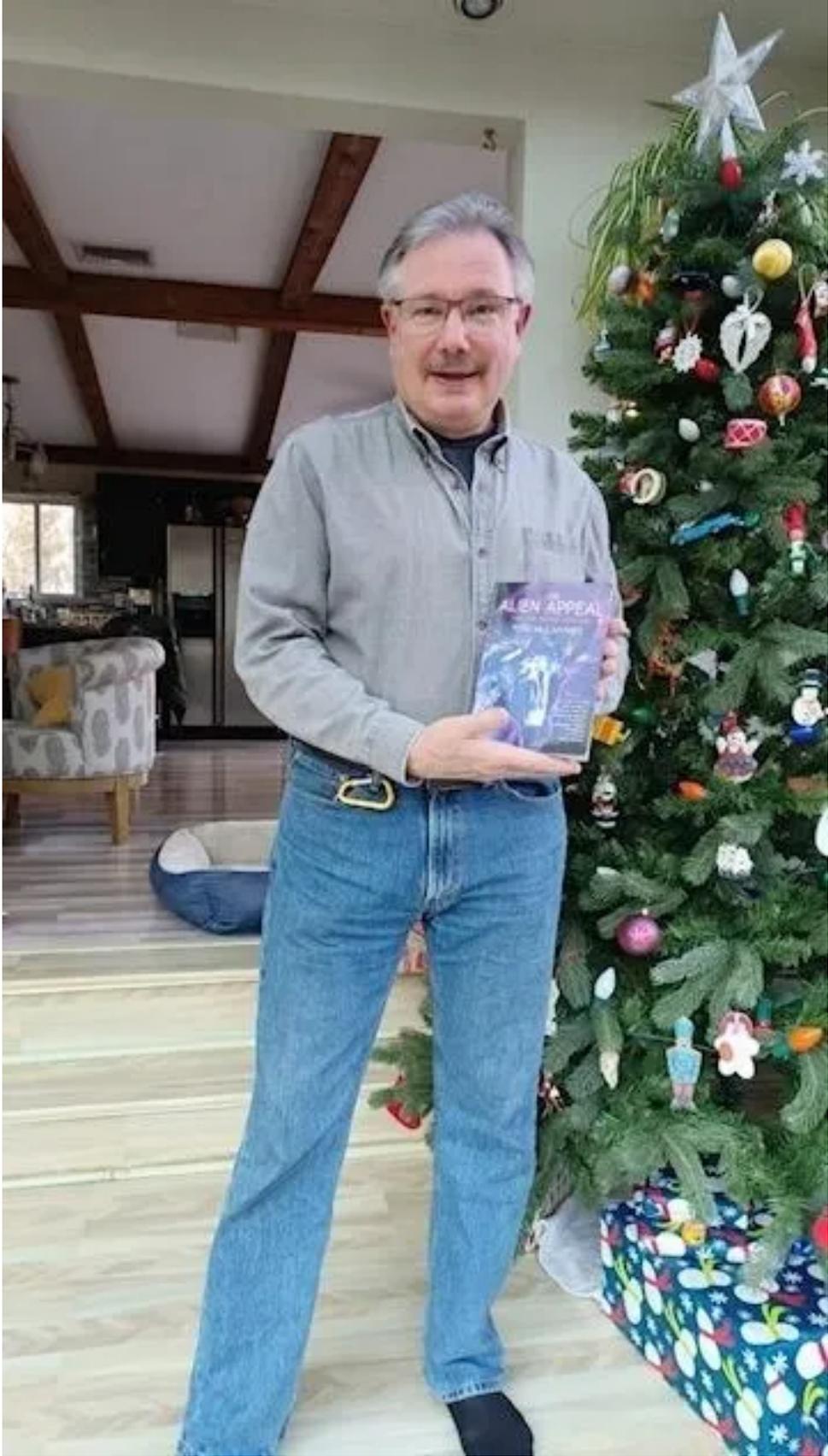
It is with all of this new and positive energy, and a definite spring in my step, that I head into tomorrow's official release of *An Alien Appeal*. I could not ask for a more benevolent wind at my back.

So let me share some of this positive energy with you, my fine five readers, as we cross the hump of the week and hurtle towards the magical Christmas weekend.

Have a great day!

# Stein (Disco) & AAA

December 21, 2021



Anyone who has been reading my blogs, will recall a character I grew up with named Mike Augustyni a/k/a "Stein" (phon. Styne) or "Disco." Mike is one of the good guys that hung with our crew back in the day. The only photo from that era of the two of us - taken with a Camera Obscura - is below:



Although I never realized this until BC recently pointed it out (as is his nature), that Stein was holding a voodoo doll - right out of a Monty Python sketch - that closely resembled me - behind my back in that photo. So I may have to reassess my thoughts about him. It may also account for why I wrote him into KMAG as a bad guy who (spoiler alert) gets his just desserts.

Anyway, as I sit here typing I cannot recall one time where Stein did anything wicked (putting aside his tangential association with the Midnight Tire Company, but I'm going to blame that all on Joe Serrano, Stein's best friend, who, I know first hand, could have talked Jesus into walking on the wild side, if only to keep Joe company, which also explains why Joe is unkillable). Stein was always quiet in a crowd and responsible to a fault. He wasn't the guy who started the fights but he never ran from one and was always there when you needed him, usually to drive getaway. You see, Stein worked his entire life and as a result, was the first of the crew to buy his own car, and his cars were always cool and fast. And Stein's driving skills were unmatched (although I will acknowledge that no one can drive faster in reverse than BC - and driving with Lenny - see my earlier blog about Maine - was its own unique experience). And so when Stein wasn't perfecting those driving skills on a quantum level, delivering Pizza between Yonkers and Sausalito California, on any given night, Stein spent his remaining time driving through the witching hours, his car packed with intoxicated, rowdy and/or bloody passengers taking us from bar to brawl to hospital. He was Mr. Dependable. He always got us home safe and sound (except that one time with Apples - see my earlier blog with that title - but that was a result of a malevolent intervening force).

Stein also fell hard for one of the young ladies named Delia Hecht that had the misfortune of hanging with our crew. The photo below is of the young lovers back in the day.



Behind the young couple lurks the mythic character from our youth, Tom (BJ) Delaney, whose abbreviated existence alone could fill his own trilogy and who is briefly acknowledged a couple of times in *The Claire Trilogy*. BJ was the first ghost I ever saw up close and personal. One of the first short stories I ever wrote when I first tried my hand back in the early 80s, *Why Kings Die*, later published a decade later in Colin Broderick's then start-up Literary Journal, *Everyman*, was based on BJ. But I digress.

You see, a lot of people and things did not survive our reckless youth. (This will all be revealed in the Riverdale Chronicles).  
However, in their own circuitous fashion, Stein and Delia did.



And that brings me, and the other remaining members of the OFC, great joy. True love is awesome. Again, Mr. Dependable.

So, I was absolutely thrilled to receive the cover photo by text yesterday of the ever youthful looking Stein holding a copy of AAA. Thanks for that, Mikey. Love to Delia.

Well I have two more days and a wake up before AAA officially hits the marketplace. Luckily there is enough on my plate with work and the approaching Christmas holiday to keep me distracted from worrying about it.

I'm sure the same is true for the rest of you fine five readers, so go out there and keep your eyes on the Christmas holiday, except for those stolen moments when you can focus them on a good book. By the way, it is indeed books that led to the modern practice of gift-giving during the Holidays:

<https://link.lithub.com/view/602ea956180f243d653a1154fjemi.3lwb/937b4426>

So let us continue that august tradition this Christmas. May I suggest the first two volumes of *The Claire Trilogy* for your favorite friends and relatives. There's still time. Or you could go all in and also pre-order *KMAG* so your loved ones also will have something to read this Spring.

[https://www.amazon.com/s?k=The+Claire+Trilogy&i=digital-text&crd=12PPM2CBQIK6J&srefix=the+claire+trilogy%2Cdigital-text%2C137&ref=nb\\_sb\\_noss\\_1](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=The+Claire+Trilogy&i=digital-text&crd=12PPM2CBQIK6J&srefix=the+claire+trilogy%2Cdigital-text%2C137&ref=nb_sb_noss_1)

But no matter what else you do, have a great day!

# Cold Moon Christmas

December 20, 2021



I love my early morning wanderings, especially during full moons.

Yesterday morning, I just happened to pass this particular house on Country Road 23 just as the Cold Moon was perfectly centered for this shot. Man and nature cooperating to provide this instantly classic photograph. Thank God for iPhones.

The bright Cold Moon also allowed me to capture some of the horses along the route who come to the fence line each morning seeking their treats.



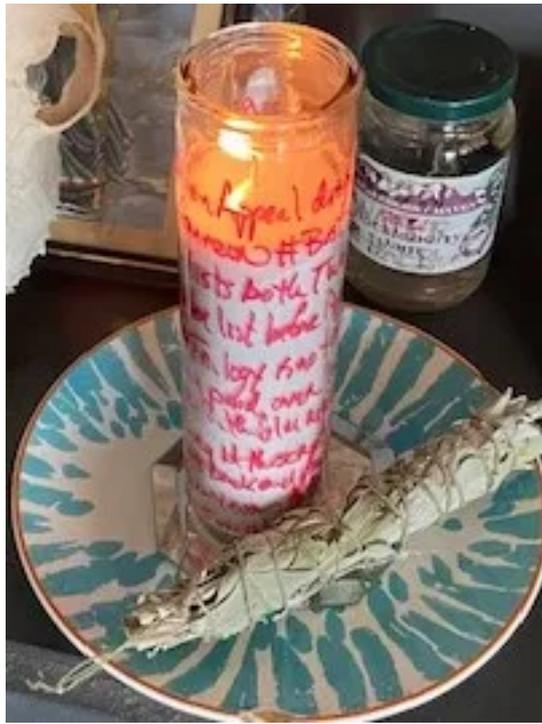
and



I may not know much, but I know that the creatures I encounter each early morning are as sentient as any two legged creature I have ever met. And a hell of a lot nicer than most of the bipeds. Speaking of fine two-legged sentient creatures who are as nice as my sentient four-legged friends, yesterday one of our locals, Janice Ericson (spouse of the Bostonian Brian) dropped off a perfect combination of three Christmas Tree Gnomes and a large bundle of sage. I sometimes bump into Janice during my early morning walks and she is always wrangling her own pack of lovely canines along the same route. They are a great couple - fun senses of humor - and I'm blessed to be able to consider them friends. Janice is also a fan of The Claire Trilogy, and is reading AAA as we speak. Anyway, the Gnomes immediately took their places on our Christmas tree,



And the sage will find its purpose during the Winter Solstice.



Thank you Janice (and Brian). So very thoughtful.

Yesterday, after Lisa's nursing shift ended (and my basement cleaning was complete) she and I treated ourselves to an early dinner at one of our favorite Longmont establishments, Mike O'Shays. Click on Gallery to take a virtual tour: <https://mikeoshays.com>

It has a quaint Bronx-Celtic ambiance and serves great pub food. It has the perfect vibe, and reminds me of the *An Beal Bocht* Cafe on 238th Street. I love their (non-Celtic) Caprese veggie sandwich with crispy fries. The manager, Lonnie, was born for his role.

Gregarious and engaging. He has big post-pandemic plans for MO'S.

The servers are wonderful and attentive. Yesterday's server, a petite and feisty Italian-Irish hybrid named Jen, who also bartends, (so very cool that she attended Sturgis when she was just 16) mentioned that she does local volunteer work with a women's group, that also has a book club. I mentioned that if they would be interested I would love to do a reading for them. Jen seemed excited by the idea. I later doubled back and left inscribed copies of TWA & AAA with Lonnie for Jen to read so she knows what she is getting into before she pitches the reading to the women's group.

Anyway, the last feat of physical labor I performed yesterday was managing to upright the Pisa Whirligig on my front property. And my right shoulder is telling me as I type this that bulling it vertical in typical Spaghetti fashion might not have been the best idea. But needs must.

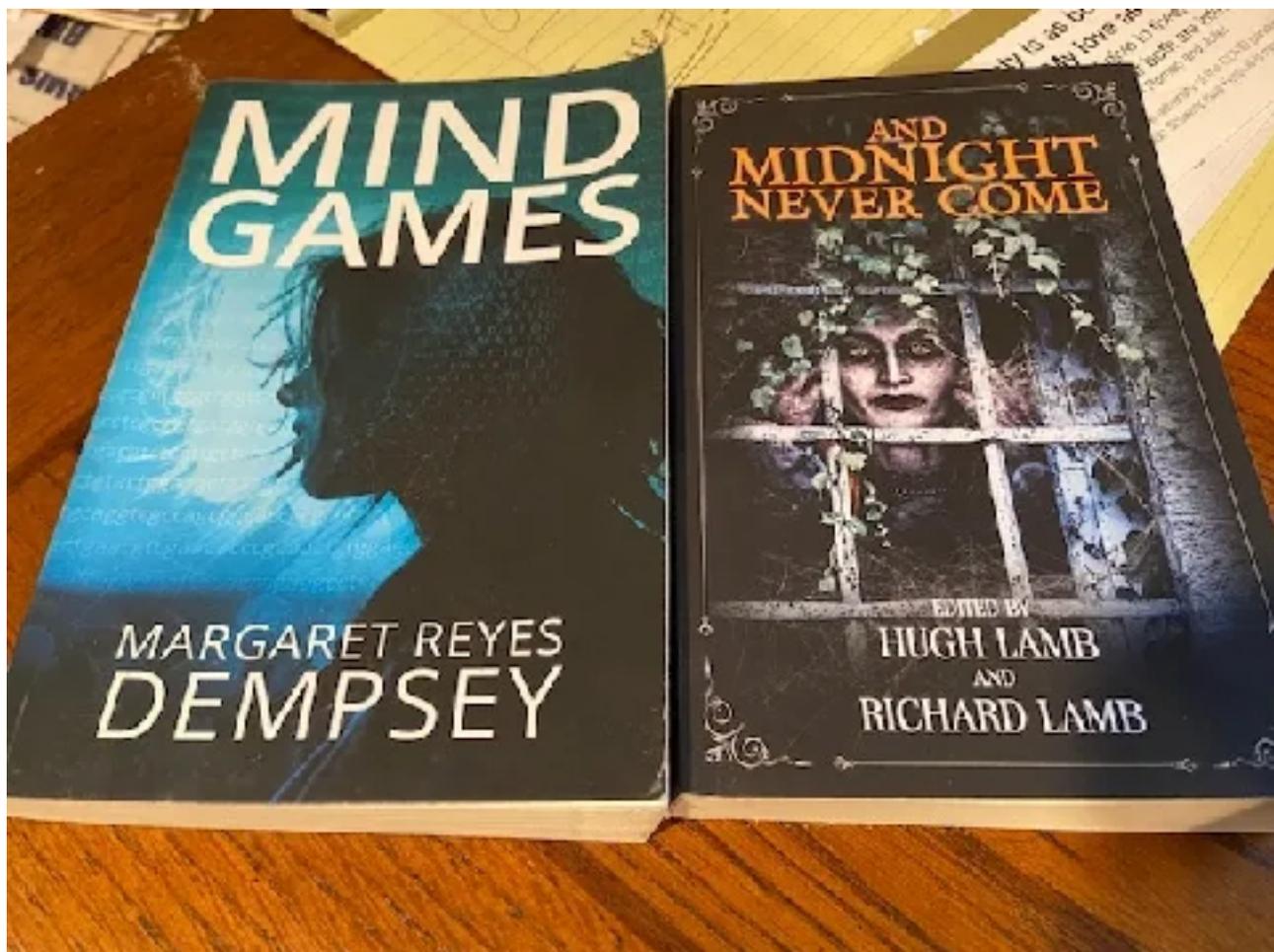
Well, Christmas week is here, but the law will not be ignored. AAA drops this Thursday. It looks to be an interesting week.

You fine five readers go about your business this week with one eye on Christmas. It truly is a magical time.

And have a great day.

# Mind Games & And Midnight Never Comes

December 19, 2021



Because I am a big fan of creative teams, in this case a husband and wife, I want to start today's blog out by noting that Margaret Reyes Dempsey's fantastic novel, *Mind Games*, is featured as part of a promotional 99 cent Kindle sale and can be picked up right here. Come on, that is an unbeatable price to try out this new author with a brilliant book. The paperback makes a great gift as well.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08P46SCFZ/>

I also want to mention that *The Spectator*, Britain's oldest weekly magazine on politics, culture, and current affairs, picked up and

reported the story on one of their favorite sons, Richard Lamb's spooky collection *And Midnight Never Come*. That's kind of like being mentioned in the Bible. Remember, there is always value in a spooky story, especially on Christmas. Give this collection a shot, or pick one up as a last minute gift for your more colorful friends. I have to say that as cold as it was outside this early morning, the Cold Moon looked beautiful in the sky above Casa Claire as I came in from feeding her majesty and personal assistant.



Nature is wonderful, if not a bit mischievous at times. Speaking of Nature, yesterday, on top of my endless list of outdoor chores and the indoor prep work, I had to spend time trying to Jerry-rig part of the eastern privacy fence in the Mule's paddock area that had taken a beating in the major wind storm we had during the

week. We get amazing wind storms in our neck of Colorado, I mean Tornado speeds at times, which is what led to its implementation as a plot device in TWA. It's too cold to attempt any real remediation to this fence, there's just been one too many storms, so I just pulled the one spot back into place and propped it up with wooden poles in hope that it lasts until Spring, when I'm going to have to replace the entire fence line. So I better sell a lot of books before then. There is no way I'm drilling all of those post holes myself, even with the power auger, given that I also have to continue the replacement beyond the paddock and right out to the street line, which suffered its own major damage in a couple of sections from the storm. And to tell you the truth, that auger reigns hell upon my hands, which leaves me having to type for the following week with my elbows while I await the misshapen claws to return to flexible digits. I also had to spend some time searching and locating the wind chimes that had blown free from Jack the Spruce and lay scattered across my front property. Luckily most were reparable and have been returned to their branches. Happy to report that Smokey's bomb shelter withstood all that Mother Nature threw at it and remains nice and toasty for our large grey feral watch-cat.



The storm actually knocked out power for a few hours that day.

Nature is not to be ignored out here.

Even one of the heavy cement gnomes (Geoffrey - stolen (liberated?) from a posh garden in the Primrose Hill neighborhood of London) on Gnome Island was toppled by the wind. I also had to locate and replace one of the four wings of the large whirligig that stands outside of Geppetto's studio out back. That meant first humping the heavy ladder down from the work shed to the back area and then extending it to its full length. I don't know how Spaghetti did it all of those years. Completely did my back in. Which reminds me, this morning I also have to check on one of the front Whirligigs, which now stands tilted like the Tower of Pisa, a victim of the same storm.

But first I have to clean. The most hated chore of all. If it wasn't for the fact that we have family and guests (Cruiser & Moshi) coming for Boxing Day, I would fake a severe sciatica attack and just soak, skyclad in SkyClad, all day (now that's alliteration). No rest for the Wicked.

But the good news is that all of this distracted my obsessive mind from the pending release of *An Alien Appeal* this Thursday. I would be lying if I didn't admit feeling like that parent attending their child's first solo event - athletic or cultural - and praying that they succeed.

Fingers and everything else fully-crossed by this point. Tell all your family and friends that if they loved *TWA*, they are going to love *AAA*, and Claire needs a new fence.

Well, I hope that my fine five readers remain happy and warm on this day of rest. They should all pick up a good book.

But most of all, have a great day!

# Harley Davidson McCaffrey's Must Read Christmas Book List

December 18, 2021



It's not just Claire that is special (although she is first among equals). Historically, animals throughout the McCaffrey Clan have been well-known for their amazing gifts. So, it should be of no surprise to find that the Ginger's bad-ass Shepherd "Harley Davidson McCaffrey" (named after the Ginger's totally bad-ass Steel Horse - I mean, what else would he ride) would spend his down time as protector of the Ginger line (modern day direwolf) - despite the fact that it has been irrefutably established in *TWA* that Gingers have nothing to worry about on the Celestial level since they do indeed have souls - expanding his mind and reading about the exploits of his cousin Claire. I offered him the audible version

but he said he really enjoys the tactile experience of the books in his paws. To each their own. But the above visual certainly send out the right message - *AAA* makes a perfect Christmas gift.

Speaking of over-the-top marketing, thrilled to see BRW stepping up and pushing *AAA*, as well as this Blog, on Instagram ).

Unfortunately, Instagram is the final frontier for me to master (I've even managed to post two videos of Claire on Tik-Tok, but I'll be damned if I could tell you how to find them), so I was lucky enough to learn of it through my dear friend and fellow BRW author, Christy Cooper Burnett (*No Way Home, Escaping Home and Finding Home*), who is working on her latest book, but still finds the time to look out for this old Luddite - even giving me a cool blurb for the top back cover for *AAA*:

# Instagram



blackrosewriting



## Kim & Anthony Russo -- An Alien Appeal

December 17, 2021



Liked by judgeanoop and 12 others

blackrosewriting Bestselling author Tom McCaffrey has another great article on his blog The Wise Novelist titled "Kim & Anthony Russo - An Alien Appeal". Check out the article and preorder the upcoming release "An Alien Appeal" today! (<https://bit.ly/3p22oJq>)



Add a comment



Thank you CCB, BRW and K&A!

Speaking of talented female authors (and their equally talented husbands), another dear friend Margaret Reyes Dempsey (*Mind Games*) sent me the following article from the Washington Post which extols, *inter alia*, the wonders of Richard (and his iconic father, Hugh) Lamb's new collection of Horror Stories: *And Midnight Never Come*

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/looking-for-a-seasonal-tale-of-mystery-murder-and-ghosts-here-are-9-books-just-for-you/2021/12/14/e8eb27fa-543f-11ec-8769-2f4ecdf7a2ad\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/looking-for-a-seasonal-tale-of-mystery-murder-and-ghosts-here-are-9-books-just-for-you/2021/12/14/e8eb27fa-543f-11ec-8769-2f4ecdf7a2ad_story.html)

Speaking of horror stories, happy to see Richard's Portsmouth FC on solid ground at 8th in Football League One.

Do you know that it used to be a common practice to share ghost stories on Christmas Eve:

<https://bookriot.com/ghost-stories-on-christmas-eve/>

Richard's book would be the perfect primer to restart this practice in your own homes.

Note, that Richard is also the brilliant artist who created the covers for *AAA* and *KMAG*. And Margaret's blurb appears on the front cover of *AAA*. It's wonderful to be surrounded by such talented friends.

I am certain that all of these books are on *Harley's Must Read Over The Christmas Holidays Book List*. And may I suggest *TWA* and *AAA* as the perfect starter set. *KMAG* (available now for pre-order with a 3/24/22 release date) will be perfectly primed for Spring Break Reading to shake off those winter doldrums. It is quite the finale.

Speaking of Winter Doldrums, it is in single digits on the frigid first night of the appropriately named "Cold Moon" so I have my intention candle burning for the upcoming success of the release of *AAA* on Thursday:



Druidic belt and suspenders. Happy Yule and Winter Solstice. Anyway, to distract myself from thinking 24/7 about the pending AAA release, I will freeze my ass off chipping piles of frozen mule muffins off the sparkling tundra, busting the inches of ice off water troughs and refilling outdoor troughs and buckets with hot water, before coming back inside and chopping and bagging fruits and veggies with my numb fingers. Must get mule chores done today so I can clean the basement tomorrow (I would rather chip ice) in preparation for our boxing day family gathering next Sunday. No rest for the wicked. Luckily the barn heaters are working and Claire and Honey have their warm winter coats. I must say that I find the loss of my comment section daunting, as writing my blog has now become much like writing a note to the unknown, slipping it into a corked bottle and tossing it into the sea. I will never know upon which beach it settles. Oh well, mustn't

grumble during the Christmas season. I have so much to be thankful for.

One more thing my Bronxite readers should be thankful for is that there is still time to catch Lenny's Falstaffian performance in the limited run of Rapunzel, at *An Beal Bocht* this weekend:



Honestly, I would not miss it for the world. If you do go, please video and send it to me.

And you, now mute, fine five readers must also be thankful that it is Saturday, which gives you this weekend to make those last minute preparations for the Wonderful Christmas Holiday. Get it done and then relax. You've earned it. And have a great day!

# Kim & Anthony Russo -- An Alien Appeal

December 17, 2021



Yesterday I received word that my friends, Kim and Anthony Russo, received their inscribed copies of TWA and AAA. They were kind enough to share the above photo. To someone like me, who has both feet planted firmly in the paranormal world, this is Christmas come early.

Kim is a world renowned psychic medium: <https://www.kimthehappymedium.com>

She is also an accomplished author: [https://www.amazon.com/Kim-Russo/e/B01F7W2NX2%3Fref=dbs\\_a\\_mng\\_rwt\\_scns\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/Kim-Russo/e/B01F7W2NX2%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_scns_share)

As far as I am concerned, of all of the extremely talented psychic-mediums I have encountered in my life, Kim is the top of the paranormal pyramid. Gandalf the White.

She has been a star of A&E paranormal programs like *Celebrity Ghost Stories*: <https://www.aetv.com/shows/celebrity-ghost-stories/cast/kim-russo>

Here's a couple of clips that previews Kim's work on that program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB75zX6EGPc> **and** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvTDMssTdBw> **and** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_mWk5Se-go4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mWk5Se-go4)

Kim has also starred in Lifetime Network's *The Haunting Of. . .* : <https://www.mylifetime.com/shows/the-haunting-of>

You can literally binge watch this amazing woman on her YouTube Channel: <https://www.kimthehappymedium.com/youtube>

It never gets old.

So, for me to receive this support from this wonderful woman a week before AAA drops is a manna from heaven. Just like that, my anxiety over my sophomore release has vanished. Claire is ecstatic!

Thank you Kim and Anthony.

For the rest of you fine five readers, go out and enjoy your Friday. I know I will.

# Jeter Gets Clipped - Another Lenny Poem

December 16, 2021



It is easier to get Jeter into an appointment with the local Dog Groomer to the stars - Annie (I will not share her last name because I don't want any more issues booking Jeter's appointments - she is just that damn popular) -- than it is to get Lenny to turn over his poetry. And I will tell you that Annie is already booked for 7 am appointments through May 2022. But as the photo and poem below demonstrate, both talents are worth the wait.



Note that this is just one more photograph of another McCaffrey behind bars. I didn't even ask Annie what his infraction was, I just

paid the fine, sprung him and moved on. At least Jeter is now ready for prime time.

Speaking of ready for prime time, the following Lenny poem is the one I mentioned in an earlier blog. I think it is one of his best, and this one is not as throw yourself off a roof dark, angry and melancholic as some of his other fine pieces. Those too are worth the read - but have a Edgar Alan Poe (I am now Twitter friends with his first cousin, multiple times removed, who also writes horror -

<https://twitter.com/AlyannaPoe> or [https://www.amazon.com/Alyanna-Poe/e/B07ZB1QCDF?](https://www.amazon.com/Alyanna-Poe/e/B07ZB1QCDF?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1639651365&sr=8-1)

[ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_1&qid=1639651365&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Alyanna-Poe/e/B07ZB1QCDF?ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1639651365&sr=8-1) - same dark brooding eyes - royal blood is royal blood) edge to them.

So without further ado, let me present the Lenny poem:

***For Jenny, Her Sister (and Me)***

*And the kaleidoscope*

*of broken shards,*

*hints,*

*fragments,*

*god-damns,*

*motherfuckers*

*circle around the one-eyed looking glass of our perceptions,*

*after a while perhaps not viewed daily or even regularly.*

*But always in our breast pocket Held close.*

*We wipe the salt trail fallen down our cheek.*

*Take a deep breath.*

*Put on our good shoes.*

*Our best shave*

*Clear our throats*

*Throw our shoulders back.*

*Bite our lower lip.*

*And we represent the wisdom we had hoped to gain much much later.*

*In our breast pocket*

*The Kaleidoscope.*

*Merry round colored spheres*

*dance and circle alongside*

*the edgy angular  
serrated blood-toothed points.  
And we smile  
And we kiss  
And we hope  
And we reach  
And we dance  
with partners light and dark  
And we seek blindly.  
And we see clearly  
through the kaleidoscope.*

Well done, Lenny (whose full name is Mark Lenahan, like the character in *The Claire Trilogy*)!!! With all due respect, *Annabelle Lee* has nothing on *Jenny* or *Her Sister*, in life or art.

Speaking of Lenny, last night was his debut performance of someone else's words in his role in the modern take on the grand old story of *Rapunzel* at *An Beal Bocht Cafe* in the Bronx - <http://www.anbealbochtcafe.com> - and while I hope he broke a leg, all I can really say is "Macbeth!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h--HR7PWfp0>

Oh, what the hell, I'm a free marketeer, here's how you can find Annie the pet groomer (but please don't book the early appointments): <https://www.facebook.com/anniesgroomingsalon>

So there you have it my fine five readers. Another day in the bank. Another day of promise before us. I will continue to pilfer and publish Lenny's poetry as the opportunity arises just as sure as I will drag Jeter to Annie the Groomer when the shit starts to collect on the fur of his ass! Jeter, like Lenny, likes to leave his Mark on the world, only Jeter is the master of Choo-Choo streaks. Like Banksy, you will never catch Jeter at his art. It is just there when you wake up.

I do want to thank those readers that disregarded my instructions and published their comments yesterday, during the swan song of the comment feature. Hopefully, GoDaddy keeps its promise and leaves them up for posterity.

Until, tomorrow, have a great day!

# Dreams, Writing and Claire

December 15, 2021



I do not have a long enough history as a writer to derive any scientific conclusions from what I'm about to share, but I have found that over the past few years that I know I'm ready to start writing a new work when I wake up dreaming about it. My restless mind forces me awake earlier than my far too old of a body should be returning to consciousness and I find that those last moments before I lift my head and look at the clock are filled with mental scenes of my characters' stories playing out in my head. It all unfolds in the first person, as if I am one of the characters. An actor in a play. There are other actors around me, playing out their roles.

And it's weird because I know there is a disembodied narrator, that I can feel is making adjustments to my story in real time. This narrator will play God and stop what is happening and say, no, let's try it this way. Like a director, only one that can actually cause everything to freeze, change and restart.

This will build up over some time until one morning I am compelled to sit up in my bed, rub the sleep from my eyes and go down to my office and start typing. This morning was the first of these kind of dreams that I have had since I finished KMAG this past spring. It's still the very early stages, and I don't feel that pressure to reach for the keyboard just yet, but I am happy to feel the process starting. In this morning's rehearsal, there were a bunch of young characters I had never seen before, all milling about focusing on their own lines, while waiting for me to do something. Their names and appearances kept changing every time I tried to focus on one of them, to see what their role in the story was. I was beginning to panic, like you do when you are trying to study for an exam and the information needed just seems to melt out of your brain. The last character that appeared just before I woke this morning was Claire, who said to me "Don't worry about them. Just tell me your story, Jimmy." And with that, all the anxiety I was feeling just vanished, and I woke up. It was 1 a.m., my time. I wonder what Freud would say about my assuming that character's identity. I'll keep you posted.

By the way, the above photo was one of the 400 Kathy Fronsdaahl took of Claire when we were deciding on a book cover for TWA. It's

pretty damn close to how Claire just appeared to me in my dream.  
And she looks like she always does when she's about to say something.

Anyway, today is the last day for the comments section.

I feel like I've not given my fine five readers much to work with today.

So let's just go out on our own terms and tell Go Daddy to piss off by not posting any comments.

My readers can still reach me by email through this website.

Now I want you all to go out there and have a great day!

# What's Up With Amazon?

December 15, 2021

3:16



www.amazon.com



amazon

Sign In



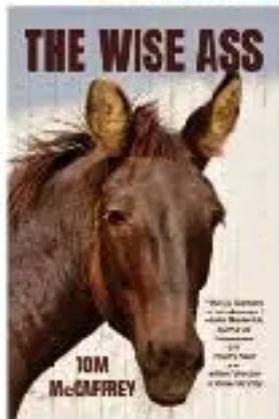
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Tom McCaffrey

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★★★★☆ (2,187)

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See reviews



Anyone who has been following my journey through the first year of being a published author knows by now that I pay attention to numbers, whether its TWA's position on an Amazon Bestseller list or my total number and nature of reviews. I know it can sound petty, but as a writer, those numbers are my only real daily barometer with which I can gauge the happiness of my readers.

This morning when I woke up, the TWA review numbers that I had luckily copied from the Amazon webpage and sent to BRW yesterday had been reset - lowered across the board:

Yesterday morning's total: 2288 Global Ratings:

This morning's total: 2,187 Global Ratings (loss of 101)

Yesterday: 5 Star: 1,421 global ratings | 352 global reviews

Today: 5 Star: 1,340 global ratings | 305 global reviews (loss of 81/47)

Yesterday: 4 Star: 547 global ratings | 60 global reviews

Today: 4 Star: 537 global ratings | 58 global reviews (loss of 10/2)

That means 49 of the readers who took the time to write a review under the 5 and 4 star category were just culled from my web pages.

And 91 of my readers who bothered to go on and at least log in a 5 or 4 star vote were erased.

I probably would not have even noticed this loss, if it weren't for the fact that I happened to update Regan Rothe at BRW with my rating numbers as part of an email discussion of our marketing strategy for the upcoming releases of Books 2 and 3 of The Claire Trilogy.

Now this isn't a situation where a human bean counter was audited and found to have committed human error. The same computer system that counted the first Global Rating/Global Review has been in place over the last ten months.

Well I have brought it to BRW's attention, so I will leave it in their capable hands. After all, a critical theft from me is a critical theft from them.

Who knows, maybe there is a legitimate explanation. Maybe this has been a system wide adjustment across all Amazon book sales. If you are a writer, check your numbers. Let me know what you find.

# Friends Oldish & Even More Oldish & AAA

December 14, 2021



The above is a photo of one of my dearest friends, Helen LaLousis. She is the basis for the character of that name in The Claire Trilogy.

We've known each other now for close to two decades. Other than my contacts at Lilydale, John White was amazing and has read most of my family, including Luke, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jquQCesQ-yl>), Helen has introduced me to some of the most gifted psychic-mediums, like the incredible Kim Russo <https://www.aetv.com/shows/celebrity-ghost-stories/cast/kim-russo> the ebullient Bobbi Allison (yes, that Bobbi) and the diminutive Dee (who once drew a map freehand of a place she had never visited which was a direct overlay of an area - including roads, bridges and cemetery - where we were searching for the body of a dead person - but that's a long story I'm not ready to share). Helen has an Uncle Gus, with whom she worked in the jewelry business, who has passed to the other side of the veil, and I've sat in at a number of her readings with different talented mediums, where he has made unmistakably eccentric appearances. You see, while Helen does not have any fully developed psychic powers of her own, she is the temple, the Oracle, through whom I have heard the other mediums speak. And yes, her very Greek family has run many diners. Helen is a purveyor of the most magical line of essential oil based products, *Simply Sacred Oils* - <https://www.simplysacredoils.com/contact-us> - which can be found all over my home - the smell alone is transformative - and are amazing. She makes them herself. She is standing in front of a display of some of the products above. Here's a shot of her and Elisa, the proprietress of the Hudson Valley Healing Center in Poughkeepsie, New York, in front of some of Helen's products:



Here's another end cap of Helen's products at Elisa's enchanting establishment:



Christmas is quickly coming, so if you are interested in checking out Helen's line of amazing essential oil products, you can find them

at either Elisa's place or on line (there are many other places but I don't have the list handy).

And yes, Helen belongs to the same sapphic tribe as my dear sisters, v&b, which is how I learned to speak lesbian. We share a common attraction for the female form.

Anyway, the next photo is of a much older friend, Joe Serrano, who is a member of the OFC and with whom I have shared way too many childhood adventures, especially during our magical cohabitation of Aunt Violet's Flop House. Indeed, this man should have been dead ten cat lives ago. Seriously, Death will no longer even put him on the list. It's just too frustrating for the Reaper. Joe is unkillable.



Here's what Joe looked like back in the day.



Note that Joe's T-Shirt says "One Of A Kind." I think Death gave it to him.

Like Lenny, Stein and BC (the next Voldemort), the above much younger version of Joe has been incorporated as a character into KMAG (spoiler alert - he's a bad guy). And for the record, despite the fact that he has now fashioned his head and facial hair styles on mine to curry favor, based upon the look on his face, and his dimensions, I swear he's holding in his stomach in the first photo.

Joe, Lenny and BC - as well as loads of other characters - will make their appearances under other names (because I've already used their real ones), in the Riverdale Chronicles. What can I say, I collect characters.

Well, the dawn approaches so I must flee. Thanks for stopping by. BTW, since Go Daddy will be shutting off the comment section of this blog on December 16th, if any one of my five readers feels the urge to be immortalized in this blog (the existing comments will remain in place), feel free to get your comments in by tomorrow at the latest.

And all of you, have a great day!

# Three Witches - Powerful Females in The Claire Trilogy

December 13, 2021



Now I have been asked many times by the locals if I can really see the Three Witches from my house. That photo was taken yesterday

from the end of my driveway. These mountains are beautiful and indeed have acted as the visual marker that has led me home on more than a few occasions when I first arrived in the area and was using an older cell phone that crapped out on me. Going left to right, I refer to them as Maiden, Mother, Crone.

<https://www.learnreligions.com/maiden-mother-and-crone-2562881>

To me, all women are magical. Enchanting. I have had an ongoing, life-long fascination with them. I cannot imagine living in a world without women. I have come to the conclusion that we men are just here as role players, the narrators of the story.

Anyone who has read The Claire Trilogy has figured out that I telegraph my great respect for the feminine form, as most of the most interesting and powerful characters throughout the trilogy are female. Even Claire. My characters also represent all three stages of the Maiden, Mother and Crone in the trilogy.

Now I used that title for these three mountains as a nod to Will Shakespeare -

<https://non-aliencreatures.fandom.com/wiki/>

[The\\_Witches\\_\(The\\_Tragedy\\_of\\_Macbeth\)](#) -

as I wanted them to represent something visually powerful that signifies the supernatural that watches over the area where Jimmy & Gina come to live. Like the "wayward Sisters," these mountains also portend the coming of something evil, both at the end of *TWA* and (spoiler alert) at the end of the trilogy in *KMAG*.

The tallest peak plays a more specific role in *An Alien Appeal*. It is a substitute for Olympus, where you actually get to identify the then most powerful of my characters - a Titan counseling one of the new gods that are arising - and that meeting sets the stage for those even more powerful females yet to come. I absolutely love this particular female character, who (spoiler alert) goes full Rambo in *KMAG*. The Amazons have nothing on the females of The Claire Trilogy.

I think this whole blog was triggered by my meeting a female austringer, a falconer that flies a hawk, in this case a red tail hawk, in, of all places, a Walmart parking lot. I was visually fascinated by this combination:



So when you read The Claire Trilogy keep this in mind. Women rock.

But don't worry men, if you play your cards right, life can be a hell of a ride (and that, my male readers, and with all due respect to the women, can be construed as a euphemism).

So, Monday awaits. I must place this writer's brain on the back burner.

To the female majority of my five readers out there. Go out and conquer.

To the male minority, watch them and learn - and enjoy.

And for all of you, have a great day!

# Hallmark Moments - Anne Rice RIP

December 12, 2021



Yesterday, after completing my outdoor chores, I was shanghaied into "Dude" duty through assisting my wife in watching our granddaughters. I had the easier task of just keeping my youngest GD, Stella, occupied, which mostly entailed pointing out things and making silly observations, or faces, or both. The most demanding part was chasing Stella around as she motored through the house using that transitional crawling/walking system that allows her to engage in scar promising adventures like attempting stairs and transitioning platforms. Lisa was more involved with the older two girls, Scarlett and Savanna, doing hair and makeup, playing Hide and Seek, reading to and drawing with, and feeding them. My only contributions to the older girls was to pipe in with the most outrageous and shocking stories I could share with them, whenever they took notice of me, like that I was only growing my beard because I was selected as the last minute replacement for the real Santa Claus. I have to up my game because they have now both gotten into dismissing my statements with classic eye-rolls and a

quip - "Dude, you're silly!" Of course, they have only become this jaded at such an early age because whenever I make my comments, the girls look to my wife, who then does the pig-Latin, America Sign Language version of "Don't listen to him, he's insane."

At the exact moment of the above picture, I was stage whispering something along the lines of "Should I make Nona disappear?" I may have won Stella over to my camp.

The only breaks Lisa and I had were naps (the children - although I may have nodded off for a moment) or hypnotic movie time. It was exhausting. But only the luckiest among us get conscripted.

By the way, if anyone ever wonders what the term "Nordic Blue" means, just look at Stella's eyes.

And yes, I do base characters in The Claire Trilogy on all three of my granddaughters (as well as my grandson Lucian). When I am dancing my jigs on the other side of the veil, hopefully not because of a hot foot, they will always have that to remember me by.

Speaking of remembering and the veil, I learned this morning that the literary icon Anne Rice has passed at the age of 80. I sustained my literary dreams during the prime of my legal professional life by reading everything she wrote. I loved the idea that the supernatural beings that she created could walk among the humans. Brilliant. Her literary influence made it so much easier for me to conceive how to combine the natural and supernatural worlds in The Claire Trilogy.

Here's a sixth degrees of separation moment. When my children were small they used to do some modelling and auditioned for films and commercials before their athletics started to consume so much of their lives that a choice had to be made.

One of the roles my daughter Jackie auditioned for was the child Vampire, Claudia, in the film Interview With The Vampire. She made it through the winnowing process down to a group of about five.

She was probably the youngest being considered - and it had gotten to the point where they brought her in to check her hair to see if they could dye it the appropriate shade of blonde. Of course, the role went to the older Kirsten Dunst, who was absolutely amazing in the role. Jackie went on to become a multi-sport D1 athlete and then conquer the business world.

Although I always remind her she was "this close" to hanging with some real Hollywood heavyweights.

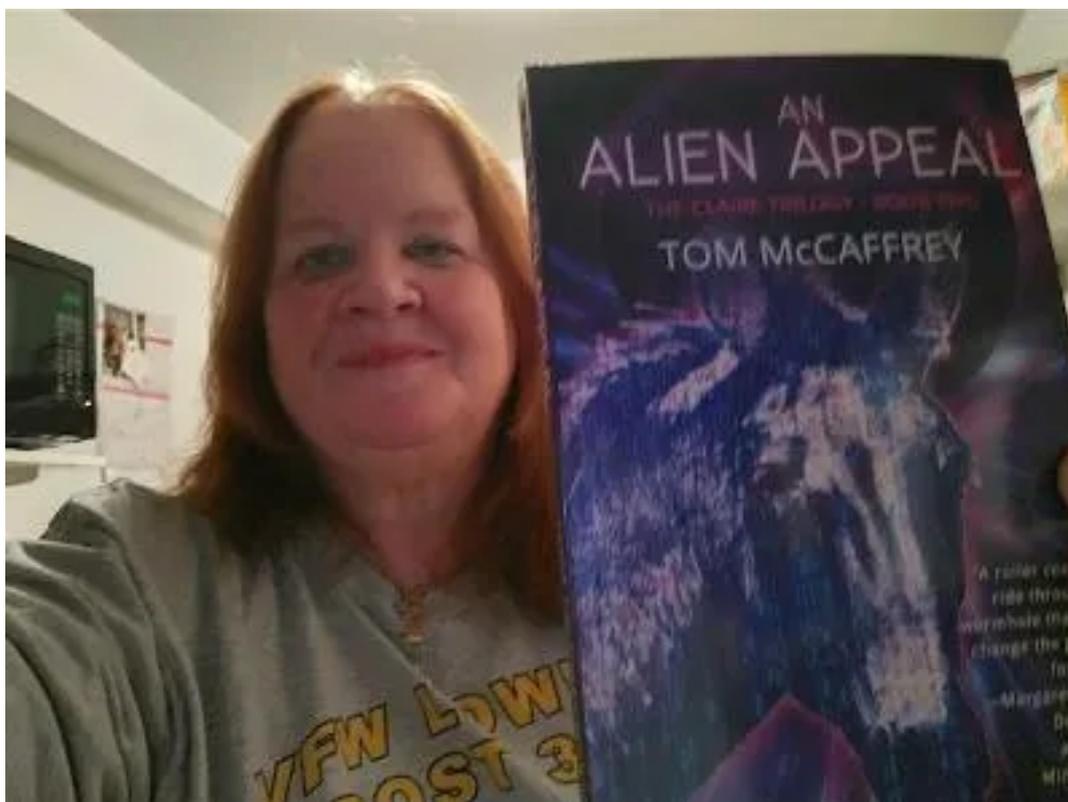
If you are lucky enough, your life will be filled with such exciting cross-roads.

Well, today I must perform the weekly veggie-fruit prep for the week after battling with my wife over which Christmas cards go to which friend and family members. A side note, after money and infidelity, the annual Christmas card debacle leads to more life sentences for spouses than any other issue. So be warned.

Anyway, ignore my cranky rantings. You five readers go out there and have a great day.

# I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends

December 11, 2021



Since most people who review my novels on Amazon continue to insist that my last name is really McCartney, despite what it may say on the cover, I figured I would borrow a line from one of the real demigod McCartney's songs to make a transformational point.

While writing is a solitary adventure (hell, I don't want anyone kibitzing on the initial creative part), I will listen to constructive criticism from those that I believe have a solid understanding of my writing style and the insane way my mind works. In other words, I openly seek the counsel of my friends.

Not every friend has the fortitude to engage in this role. I know its an imposition on their time. I always give them the opportunity to say no. Three opportunities to be exact. And if they say yes, and perform the role, then I am forever in their debt. They also become part of the backstory to the novels. I share the story of their

involvement with anyone who cares to listen. And I always acknowledge their help in the back of the novel. In other words, their stories join the stories in the novels for as long as those novels are in print.

Luckily, I write quickly, so their suffering is relatively short-lived. But they receive their chapters each day and I ask that they read what they receive and give me comments as soon as they can. There is usually a three chapter look back, where I can take a moment from moving forward with my writing to go back and address questions or comments that may trickle in from my inner circle of readers after a reasonable delay.

For some of those readers who are willing, or have particularly interesting personalities, I will ask them if I can incorporate them into my next work as a character that I may be thinking about. It is just another way for me to honor them. Some are fine with that, others are a bit more shy, and would rather remain in the background. My dear friend Jimmy Fronsdaahl broke his ass for me after I wrote TWA and during my writing of AAA. He then became the basis for the character Whitey, in AAA and KMAG.

One of my oldest female friends, in truth she is like a little sister to me, is Eileen Cotto (né Collins). Her parents, Dutch and Momma C, were surrogates during a transitional moment in my life. I love her entire family and claim them as my own Clansmen. I've known her for close to half a century. Her older brother, Denis ("Murray") Collins (RIP) hung with those of us that now claim OFC status. He is part of the Riverdale Lore. Eileen is one of the few females from back in the day that knows where *most* of the bodies are buried. Anyway, Eileen somehow got wind of the publication of TWA - probably because I was shameless in my Riverdale self-promotion - and got in contact. She is a voracious reader. One of those annoying speed reading types that novelists hate, since our work must not be devoured but savored on the palate and then slowly digested. There's gold in d'em d'ere hills. She is also a force of nature at the center of her million member family (they procreate like Star Trek Tribbles)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4wM5KvUGEc>

and everyone else within a 100 mile radius. She is also opinionated. But there is no one who can laugh as heartily as Eileen. Luckily,

she liked TWA or I am certain I would never have the opportunity to type another letter. Instead, her good will helped carry TWA to a successful launch on the east coast.

Now, Jimmy Fonsdahl had to reluctantly defer assisting me with the writing of KMAG, as he relocated with his lovely wife Kathy (who snapped the iconic photo of Claire for the covers of The Claire Trilogy) from Colorado to Idaho. He was my wrangler. I had my other loyal members of my inner circle of readers - who I love dearly - some like my SIL Cathy B also made creative contributions to my story lines - but I needed someone to take the lead for me on a daily basis. Someone who would text me demanding the new pages and break my balls if she saw any sign of slacking. Someone who could tell me to f\*ck off if I needed it. Eileen stepped up.

First she read the publisher's manuscript of AAA so she was up to speed and helped me get Book 2 put to bed.

Then, during the writing of KMAG Eileen turned my chapters around within hours of receiving them. She would question the shit out of my story line and never accepted any bullshit for an answer.

When I got to a certain point in the third novel where I was about to introduce a new and central character, I asked her if she would lend her name and personality to that character. She agreed.

Now that she was personally invested in the story line, she became even more of a fury, holding me accountable for even the slightest variances that I would normally allow under the catch-all of poetic license. And this was important for me, as this novel not only had to move forward with a new story line, but also had to tie together and resolve all of the previous story lines in the first two novels. It is important that I don't take any short cuts. I owe my readers that (and so much more) for their loyalty.

We butted heads - often spending long periods on the phone, battling over our respective interpretations of an event or bit of dialogue. We laughed our asses off and Eileen demonstrated an almost uncanny recollection of The Claire Trilogy universe - much like her predecessor, Jimmy F. So she would say, in substance, "but in TWA (or AAA) so-and-so said/did this, and so now so-and-so cannot be doing that." And then she listened to my explanation, which sometimes required that I filled her in on something else coming down the story line, and that either compelled her to accept

my rationale, or tell me I'm full of shit - which then caused me to rethink things and sometimes rewrite them. She was exhausting. She was hilarious. I am forever in her debt.

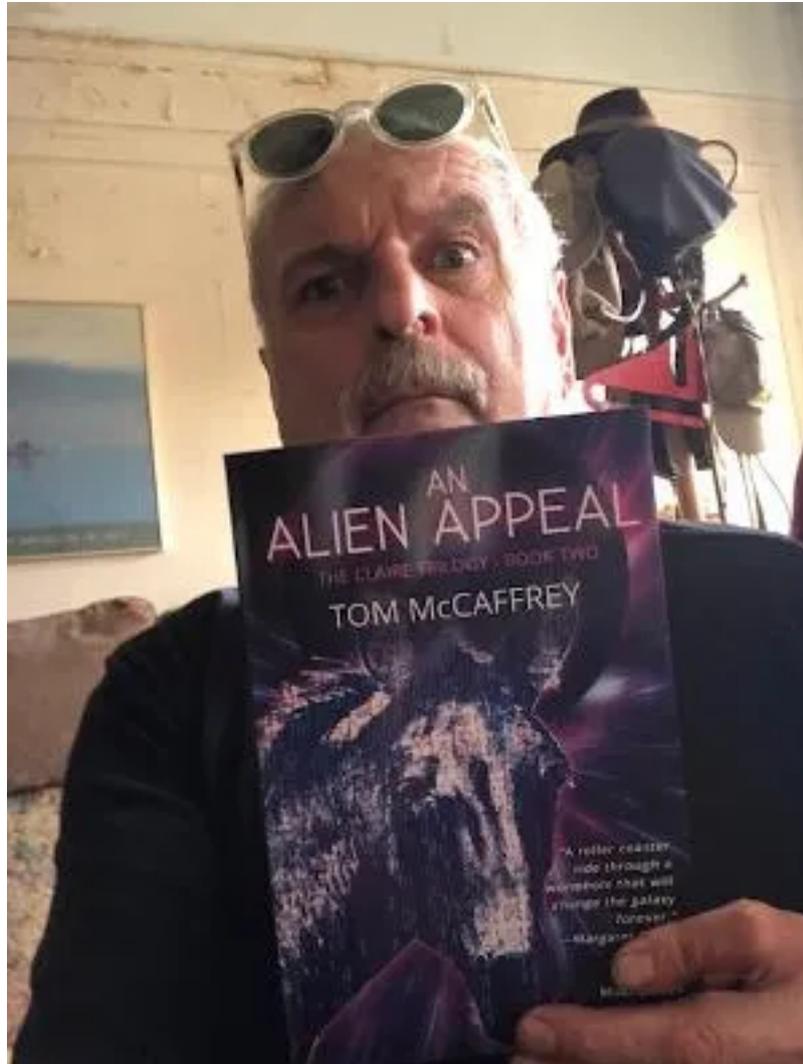
And she provided the perfect prototype for her namesake in KMAG.

So, I was thrilled when Eileen sent me the above photo of her holding her writer's copy of AAA. Thank you Eileen. Enjoy.

And the rest of you fine five readers, go out and enjoy your Saturday. Or better yet, read a good book. Christmas is coming.

# Turn About Is Fair Play

December 10, 2021



My dear friend Lenny - the basis for the character of the same name in *The Claire Trilogy* - received his copy of AAA, and then sent me this proof of life. You can see the madness in his eyes.

Where have I seen that before?

[https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?q=Salvador+Dal%C3%AD&client=firefox-b-1-d&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOOQUeLQz9U3slyvyDMSSUvMzS8tVkgSksLilWKMIPSayMEg1IzMwrSS0qVsjJzE5VCMhMTiwuzj_FCZNZhBvDmWax-caQZkg004xcoKYhqbZBiZQYcOKvCwo08TU0OAUlzulmZ1sBIVrZJ)

[q=Salvador+Dal%C3%AD&client=firefox-b-1-](https://www.google.com/search?q=Salvador+Dal%C3%AD&client=firefox-b-1-d&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOOQUeLQz9U3slyvyDMSSUvMzS8tVkgSksLilWKMIPSayMEg1IzMwrSS0qVsjJzE5VCMhMTiwuzj_FCZNZhBvDmWax-caQZkg004xcoKYhqbZBiZQYcOKvCwo08TU0OAUlzulmZ1sBIVrZJ)

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[caQZkg004xcoKYhqbZBiZQYcOKvCwo08TU0OAUlzulmZ1sBIVrZJ](https://www.google.com/search?q=Salvador+Dal%C3%AD&client=firefox-b-1-d&stick=H4sIAAAAAAAAAOOQUeLQz9U3slyvyDMSSUvMzS8tVkgSksLilWKMIPSayMEg1IzMwrSS0qVsjJzE5VCMhMTiwuzj_FCZNZhBvDmWax-caQZkg004xcoKYhqbZBiZQYcOKvCwo08TU0OAUlzulmZ1sBIVrZJ)

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Given that I have been imposing my literary exploits upon all my friends (including Lenny), my family and every stranger I can wrangle (it is gotten so bad that people now cross the street to avoid me), I felt it was time that the creativity flowed back from the East Coast in my direction. I was determined to force Lenny to start sending his writing my way so that I could finally start publishing it for the world (or at least my five readers) to see. You see, he is quite the writer himself, having written a couple of really cool short stories (which, if he dies first, I will definitely steal). But my personal assessment is that his true *forte* is in the realm of poetry. His poetry is always honest, and sometimes a little dark. It can be funny. His writing reminds me a lot of Bukowski. And Lenny is twice the mad man that Bukowski was.

So, while I had my eye on Lenny's most recent poem, which he just wrote and showed me yesterday (and was a big hit with the other members of the OFC), beggars cannot be choosers, but they can be thieves, and so I have instead stolen one of his other works and have published it below:.

### ***It Must Be the Shoes***

*I've seen those shoes before  
Nothing special that I ever saw  
Certainly not NEW shoes.  
Must be a girl thing,  
She always looks at her shoes.*

*I see the top of her head  
As she looks at her shoes.  
I wish the shoes a Happy New Year  
thinking they must be magical.  
The shoes do not respond.  
They silently shuffle by*  
**MUTE**  
**BLIND**  
**IGNORANT**  
**SHRINKING**

It is my intention to continue to steal and publish Lenny's poems as often as I can get my hands on them, until he mans-up and establishes his own website and starts to publish his own work. It is his time to leap through the airplane bay door. Not to worry, the net will appear.

You see, Lenny may not remember (he has indeed led a Bukowskian life), but I have a decent cache of his older poetry, which I can dip into at will and publish at any time. But let's start with this one poem and see where it goes.

I was going to wait until tomorrow to publish this blog, but I do not want to upset my regular process of writing whatever I think of in the moment during those early hours, and so I am publishing this second blog for the day, in order to get it out there before Lenny seeks social libation among his comrades (I actually believe he may be a "fellow traveler"). Hopefully, someone of my five readers may see this posting and confront him in *An Beal Bocht Cafe*.

<http://www.anbealbochtcafe.com>

If you do happen upon Lenny, confront him with this blog and get him drunk enough, he will open up his creative soul.

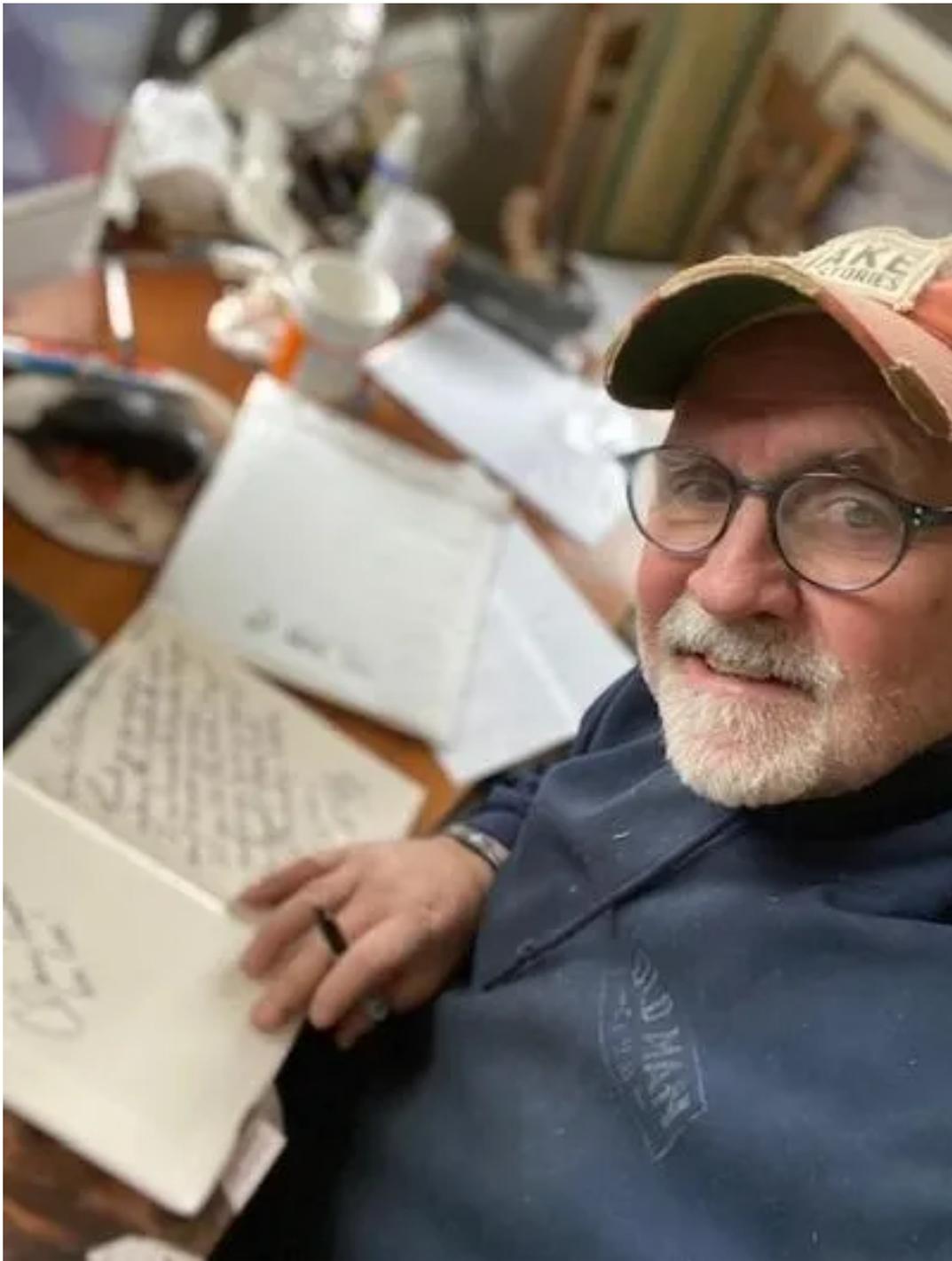
So, have a great night!

# The Joy Of Leading A Double Life - Happy Birthday Donna Serrano

December 10, 2021

During business hours, Monday through Friday - and a lot of weekends - for the past 35 years, I have maintained my identity as the mild-mannered (?) lawyer, a legal beagle, with canine loyalty to the firm's clients, focused, like a dog with a scent, on nothing but their well being. However, now, due to pure luck, once that day ends (or, like right at this moment, before it begins - all on East Coast time) I return to being my new alter-ego, Tommy the writer of The Claire Trilogy, which I kind of make-up as I go along.

There's a lot of busy work to this new role. For example, after seeing on Nextdoor that a popular local Librarian has a large following that hangs on her every word about book recommendations, I had to rush off before closing time to the Library in a nearby town in order to drop off copies of my first two books, just on the hope that they can work themselves into her rotation. Fingers crossed. I also dropped off copies of AAA to the Berthoud Library, and was absolutely thrilled when the Librarian asked me if AAA was as good as TWA. Then I received a set of hard cover copies of TWA from BRW that needed to be inscribed and mailed out to five lucky winners in a Goodreads Contest, to make sure the books arrived to the winners before Christmas (that's a grizzled me inscribing one of those books - I know I was never beautiful but how the mighty has fallen).



And of course, I have been spending the last week inscribing and distributing Author's copies of AAA, by hand and post (I am on familiar terms with Rik - a real Rat Bastard - and Topher of the Berthoud branch of the USPS), to those wonderful people who have allowed me to incorporate them as characters into The Claire Trilogy. That magical list is getting long. Factoring in the daily battle of textual wits I must engage in with the ghosts of my sordid past, including the reigning members of the

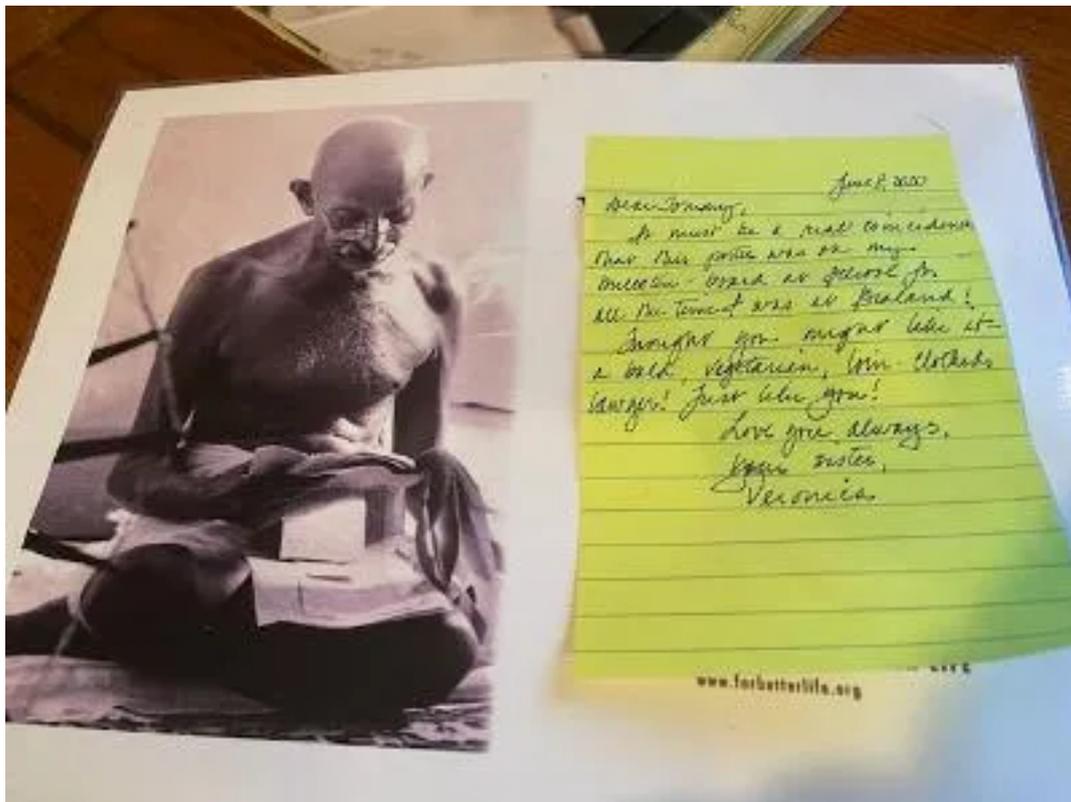
OFC - they know where all the bodies are buried, so I can never drop my guard - plus trying to not display my chronic Ludditis on social media -- plus happily engaging with the growing list of writers I can now call friends - and last but not least, engaging with and seeing to the needs of the lovely Claire and her assistant, Honey -- and I use every second of my eighteen hour day. As you can see, I forgot to mention my wife, Lisa, and I know I shall pay dearly for that oversight in both practice and acknowledgment.

Interestingly enough, while a day in the legal mines can often leave me mentally and physically drained, I find that even the non-writing life as a novelist is exhilarating. [Note - as I have mentioned in the past - I have no recollection of actually writing anything - which leads me to believe that it is dictated by Claire and typed up by elves and pixies while I am asleep before my computer.]

I pinch myself every freaking day. I cannot believe that anyone really cares for my stories (all true - but I will never swear to it in Court) and characters - although Claire is a notable exception - what's not to love - or are interested in anything I will write in their book covers. [I have always hated a generic "Best Wishes" inscription - so I do try to write something memorable - sometimes even off color.] You see, this is all a dream for me. One more role for the Great Imposter in a life of blessings that I probably didn't deserve. And that includes every person I have ever met, befriended and/or loved. Thank you for coming into my life and putting up with every mistake I have ever made that may have impacted you. My most sincere apologies, I am a work in progress. [But if I bought a smile to your face for any reason, hang onto that. It is a rare occurrence.]

Each day brings more certainty that I must have been Mahatma Gandhi in my past life to have earned the life I now have. After all, I am a bald, bespectacled vegetarian lawyer with a bit of a pot belly that is quite comfortable walking around in nothing but a sheet and communing with nature.

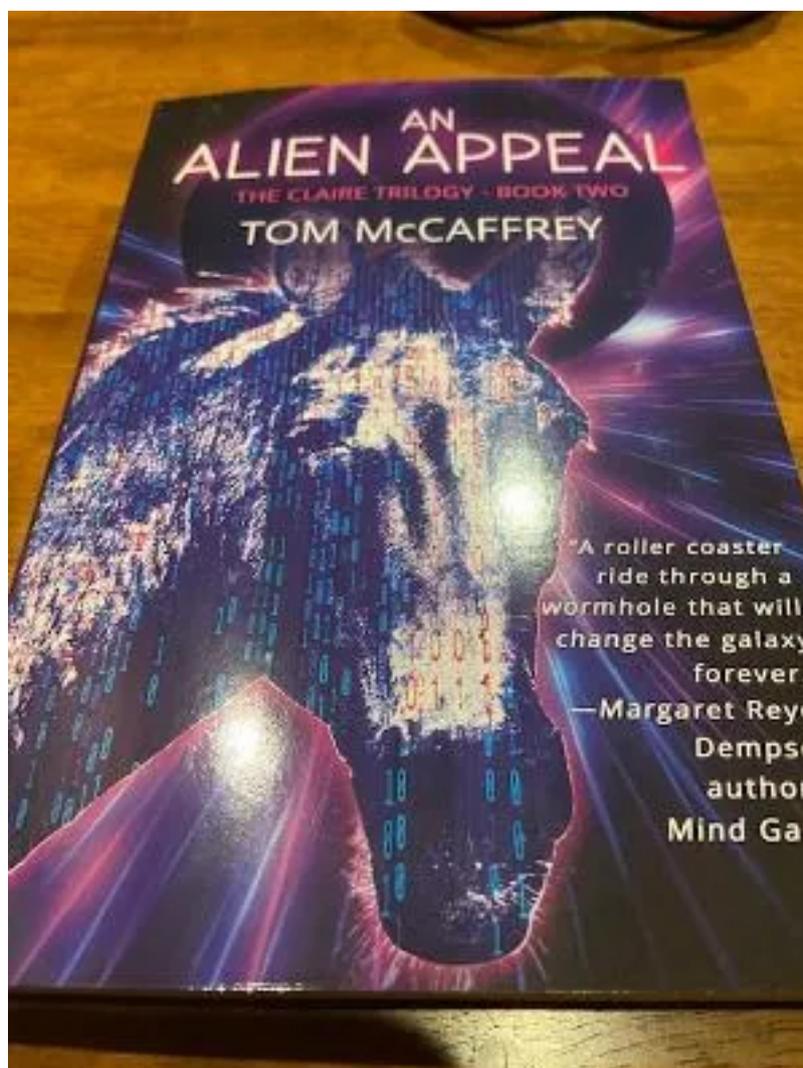
As you can see, it is a theory shared by others in my life:



Damn, we even share that hairy chest and those prodigious ears! So there you have it. Thank you Universe! I am one eternally grateful son of a bitch for this double life of mine. Now, today is Friday - the most magical day of the week - given that it is abundant with the potential for love, beauty, laughter and more stories to collect. So you fine five readers go out and have a great one! And be thankful. On a final note, let me take a moment to wish Donna Serrano a happy 39th. My sincere apologies for being one day late, but your rat bastard of a husband didn't let the cat out of the bag until late yesterday. I hope you had a wonderful day.

# A Face That Launched A Thousand Books

December 9, 2021



The first thing that the polymath, Richard Lamb, told me when we discussed what kind of cover we needed to have on not only Book 2, but Book 3 of The Claire Trilogy, was that it had to incorporate the iconic photo of Claire the Mule, that had appeared on the cover of TWA. It was Claire that tied together this series.

Now, that TWA cover came about by divine desperation. I had been speaking with a couple of new artists over submitting designs for a cover. I figured why not chance breaking a new artist on my

project. They would get the chance of adding a book cover to their resume. I was going to submit both of their proposed covers and let Reagan Roth decide on the better choice. I mean, what the hell do I know about what sells a book. I had no idea that TWA was going to be an Amazon bestseller.

Unfortunately, both artists backed out pretty much at the same time and at the last minute. So, I was either going to submit my own version of cartoon stick figures or the Universe really needed to step up its game.

Luckily (a word I use often) I had befriended a local transplant named Jimmy Fronsdaahl. We had met during senior hour of early shopping at Walmart's on Tuesday mornings. Jimmy was a retired engineer. He was smart and a lot of fun, and it made my time standing on a cold outdoor line pass quickly.

Anyway, one day I asked Jimmy if he liked to read. When he responded positively, I asked if he wanted to read my new book, which I was trying to get into final shape for delivery to BRW.

Jimmy was a godsend. He attacked the novel with an engineer's precision of thought and perspective. He went over the minutia in character development, caught a bunch of typos, suggested some upgrading in my technical vocabulary and then, after numerous passes, declared everything perfect.

When I mentioned to Jimmy that the cover artists had both done a runner, he mentioned that his wife Kathy was a brilliant photographer, and maybe they could both come over that Saturday afternoon so she could shoot a few photos of Claire.

When Saturday arrived, this husband and wife team from heaven arrived on schedule and Kathy told me to go about my business while she started shooting Claire as she moved around the property.

Four hundred photos later, I swear I saw Claire throwing a Blue Steel pose, Kathy said she had enough and would download them all and send them to me. I had them the next day.

I had settled on the title, *The Wise Ass*, to capture the personalities of both Claire and Jimmy Moran. I wanted it to be the banner across the top of the cover. So, the photo below it had to reflect that concept. When I came to the very last photo from Kathy's file, having already selected a dozen possibles, there was Claire,

looking over one shoulder, staring directly at the camera as if saying "this should do it."

And it did. Based on the recurring comments in the hundreds of positive Amazon reviews TWA has received in the last ten months, I have netted many sales based solely on that photo of Claire gracing the cover. Readers seem to be drawn to it. I completely understand that. Claire can bedazzle you with that look.

So, when it came to writing AAA, Jimmy again offered his editing services. The pairing and process worked perfectly. In exchange for all of his and Kathy's efforts, I not only created a character in AAA (and KMAG) that is based upon Jimmy, but I dedicated AAA to both of them in the beginning of that book. I love them both. Sadly, for me, they both moved to Idaho during the time I was working on KMAG. However, Luckily, Jimmy lent a long distance, last minute hand in helping me and my merry band of readers, especially Eileen Cotto, put KMAG to bed.

Anyway, back to Richard Lamb and the cover of AAA.

Richard absorbs the feel of a novel when he is coming up with his concepts for a cover. He works very quickly and within no time had presented me with a set of possibilities. As readers will soon experience, minor spoiler alert, instantaneous binary digital information transmission plays a major role in merging the primary new story lines with the continuation and further evolution of the existing field of characters and story lines. What better way to visually capture this concept on the cover, than by its incorporation into Claire's head shot. Richard is brilliant.

AAA's drop date is 12/23. Two weeks from today. I am so excited and cannot wait for my fine five readers to get their hands on the novel. Please tell all of your friends. My publisher and critics alike will be watching to see how the second book of the trilogy opens on that first day. Let's make it a Merry Christmas for Claire and her band of misfits.

It's a recycling day, so I must go collect the bags of plastic and metal acquired over this past fortnight and drag them out front so they may live again in the products I consume and not destroy the world that my (and others') descendants will inhabit. Our children, including blood, adopted, animals and even books, are our future.

It's Thursday, we are all on the precipice of the magical Friday, so let us all go forth and have a great day!

# Nan & BC

December 8, 2021



Now for some reason BC was the first to receive an author's copy of AAA ahead of the others in the reading circle and members of the OFC. This leads me to believe that his nefarious network has reached as far as the Postmaster General (and odd choice for a henchman), but given the role BC has played in my life and now in

the last book of The Claire Trilogy, I can now understand how he can use this early knowledge.

His forever patient wife Nan, who is clearly the one in charge of their home, snapped this photo of her holding two copies of TWA (one inscribed, the other they will donate to their local public library) and the one inscribed copy of AAA. Nan, you look marvelous! Nice hair, great smile. But the look itself is intriguing, it has that look of finality. The cat that ate the canary.

Now, at first I could not fathom why BC would forgo his own photo with the books - the man is the king of Christmas Card Photos and loves to use those photos to taunt the rest of us - and then I realized what is happening here.

Anyone who has been following my blogs knows that I have made the BC character a bad guy in the third novel. But he is not just one of the bad guys (although he is one of the bad guys). He is the next Voldemort. I even reference this fact in both of the inscribed copies of the books Nan is holding.

BC, who has an incredible instinct for self-preservation (proven time and again during our collective misspent youth), knows that once KMAG hits the streets, millions of (at least Bronx) fans of The Claire Trilogy will have marked him for street justice retribution. A review of its Amazon webpage has now established for the readers of the first two installments that the clock is ticking on the March 24, 2022 delivery date for KMAG.

2:53



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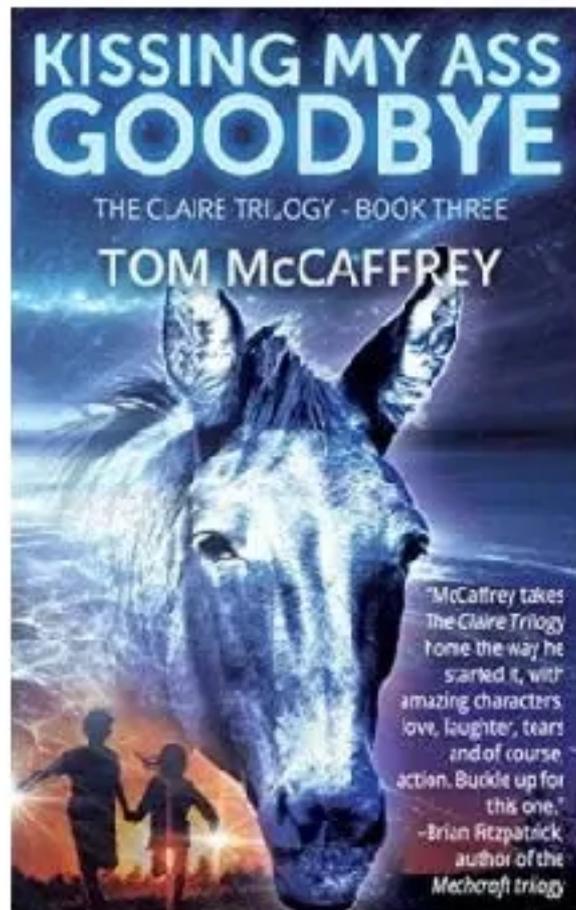


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In anticipation of the rapid approach of this hard and fast date, BC has obviously begun transforming his appearance to escape detection by the mob. This explains the photo below which was sent to me anonymously by a faithful fan. It is the last and most recent photo I have of this demon.



I have now gone back and researched the location of the computer that sent me the above photo and see that its IP address is located at BC's Rochester home address.

I can only surmise that Nan is working carefully behind the scenes in this soon to come-to-a-head drama.

Nan has obviously posted this photo to ensure that the readers can identify her and not mistakenly attack her in the streets, looking for the transformed BC, especially if Nan is standing among a group of females. And this is where Nan's true genius is demonstrated. Its all in the books in her hand in the photo.

As I mentioned, Nan is holding two copies of TWA. In the one in the middle, the face of Claire the mule is obscured by the cover of AAA to that book's immediate left in the photo. Nan is signalling that if she is seen walking anywhere with another woman, that woman, always to her immediate left, will actually be BC, who has obscured his appearance with that of another. Brilliant.

So, the rest of my fine five readers, if you happen to see the lovely Nan walking in the streets with another tall woman, you have your mark. But harm not Nan!

However, in the mean time, I want each of you to go out there and have a great day!

# Time For Winter Coats & Rapunzel

December 7, 2021



Yesterday was the first day that the night time cold remained with us throughout the day. Up until now, I have left the Mules coat-less to allow their natural winter coats to come in. But yesterday the temperature was not slotted to rise above the low thirties and average much closer to the low twenties. So, after administering Honey's medicine, after a solid round of Ringolevio, I took advantage of her time in the halter and put on her coat. Claire of course, was fine with donning her coat - this one a matching blue and both coats fresh from a good cleaning and repair at Hygiene Feed - Gerami (his spelling) is the man:



That is my black Pitty, Blue, seeing to some final tailoring adjustments to Claire's coat. Anyway, I sometimes feel silly chasing them around to take care of their needs. After all, what did mules do before man came along and declared - you guys need a winter coat!

But I cannot help myself, its either ensuring that they are weatherproof, or risking divorce and sneaking them into the basement. I wonder if I can get Claire to use Lisa's very expensive tread mill. I think Claire would love to take an iFit run through the Italian Alps.

The mules thanked me for my efforts by going out back and rolling in their new threads in their silty spot in the now dried up pond area.

As an aside - the mystical pond that arrived between the time I bought the house and the time of my arrival in Colorado - that helped inspire all three books of The Claire Trilogy - disappeared this past spring immediately after I completed KMAG. One moment the mules were ice skating during the late spring snowstorms, the next they were enjoying munching and sleeping in the now totally accessible tall pond grass and rolling in the soft sediment at its center. It occurred overnight, as the water tables that created the fresh water spring on my neighbors property, shifted back to the way they were, leaving me pond less. I intend to create a man made water course in the back yard next summer. Must have water to keep the property's spirits happy, and allow the wildlife to draw their sustenance.

Shifting gears, I want to wish Lenny success in a short acting gig he has embarked upon with The Poor Mouth Theatre Company's staging of (the barely even touches upon) Rapunzel at An Beal Bacht Cafe on 238th Street in the Bronx: <http://www.anbealbochtcafe.com>

The Poor Mouth Theatre Company  
Proudly Presents

# Rapunzel

A Holiday Panto!

DECEMBER 16TH - 8PM DECEMBER 18TH 2PM & 8PM  
DECEMBER 19TH 2PM, PERFORMANCES AT  
AN BEAL BOCHT CAFE, 445 W 238TH STREET, BRONX  
TICKETS \$20/ ADULTS 12 & OVER, \$15 KIDS UNDER 12.

ON SALE AT THE CAFE 12/2  
ONLINE AVAILABLE AT [WWW.BROWNPAPERTICKETS.COM](http://WWW.BROWNPAPERTICKETS.COM)

ALL ATTENDEES WILL BE REQUIRED TO SHOW PROOF OF VACCINATION & MUST WEAR  
A MASK FOR THE DURATION OF THE PROGRAM PER NYC COVID GUIDELINES.

As you can see it will be a limited run on December 16 (8 pm), 18 (2pm & 8 pm) and 19 (matinee only).

Make sure you get there early because ABB has a reputation for being a bit of a literary salon - lots of writers have sat on its stools and at its tables -- and for putting on quality shows (Colin Broderick has staged a couple of his plays there) and its a relatively small venue.

I will know I have made it as an Irish writer if I ever get to do a reading at ABB.

I made the mistake of wishing Lenny "Good Luck" and had to immediately cover my superstitious tracks with wishes for his breaking of various appendages. I threw in his neck for good measure. Then, I decided to go all in and say "Macbeth!"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h--HR7PWfp0>

For those that have never watched Black Adder, put it on your bucket list.

I'm certain Lenny will knock them dead.

Well, the new day awaits, and its pretty cold out there. But the animals count on their Carrot Clause.

The rest of your readers, stay warm.

And have a great day.

# Claire & Mr. Rogers

December 6, 2021



I believe I mentioned that as soon as I adopted Claire I began looking for a companion, because it had always been my feeling that, despite how much fun to be around I can be on a daily basis, just ask my wife (wait, better ask my dogs, Lisa may tell you the truth), a herd animal needed to be among their own kind.

My morning walks had introduced me to a wonderful family, Darren. Silja and Anya Knowles. Darren now handles my AC/Heating. He's a great guy, doesn't up-sell you and fixes whatever problem your system may have. And he arrives when you need him. Their daughter Anja is a wonderful young lady destined for great things.

Silja is not only one of the local horse people (she owns a couple of pretty horses) and can be seen riding through the neighborhood,

but she was also a farrier. So this woman knows her equines. This is also the family of the coolest one-eyed small collie named April, who made it into TWA.

Anyway, I mentioned to Silja during one of my walks that I was looking for a mule companion for Claire. She mentioned that she was involved as a volunteer with the Colorado Horse Rescue (an amazing organization, I highly recommend that anyone looking for a horse in NoCo reach out to them first). By the time I arrived home that morning, I received a call from Silja, who told me she just learned that her organization had their eye on a male mule who was up on a slaughter auction that coming Wednesday. I didn't hesitate to say "go for it."

Now I have since learned of what a slaughter auction is, and I have to say I am appalled at the barbarity of humanity that they can treat any creature in that fashion. If I were emperor of this world, they would all quickly end and their purveyors and participants would receive quick and rough justice.

For purposes of this post let's just say that CHR rescued Mr. Rogers. They kept him at their ranch for approximately eight weeks to bring him from the bony scarred, and frightened condition he was in into some semblance of health. Lisa and I used to visit him there on weekends. He was a sweetheart. I made him a promise during those visits that once he arrived as Casa Claire, he would be in his forever home. I used to come back to my house and show Claire his photos. He looked pretty gnarly, but she recognized his potential.

Mr. Rogers' arrival at Casa Claire that is described in TWA is pretty accurate, except it was someone from CHR that actually delivered MR to the house. But the sounds and the responses of the two mules was right on the money.

Now I love Claire with all my heart. She is magical, amusing, amazing. She has changed my life forever and I would do anything for her.

But Mr. Rogers was, by far, the absolute sweetest creature I have ever met. He was docile and just so loving. You could tell he was in Nirvana at Casa Claire. And Claire doted on him. It was love at first sight.

The above photo was taken shortly after his arrival. My heart breaks every time I look at it. They were constantly nuzzling each other like teenagers in love. They were inseparable.

Once MR's oily and malnourished coat came back to life, I was dumbfounded at what I found one day as I brushed away his winter fur:



I will never forget the amazement I felt upon seeing my first initial in a heart on his shoulder. If there was ever a sign from the universe, that was it.

I had never seen Claire so happy.

Mr. Rogers and Claire would both come right up to my door every morning, Claire in the lead, he respectfully following on her right shoulder, and while Claire would pretty much extort her treats, MR would always do something comical in movement or mannerism to collect his. He had a way of mouthing his request and then tilting his head sideways and smiling. Sort of the way Ralphie blurted out his request for a BB gun to Santa in A Christmas Story.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxLuS8BzFGs> (at about 2:24 of the video)

I have to admit, I'm finding writing this blog harder than any other I have ever written. Just remembering my interactions with this beautiful creature makes me tear up. I'm sorry that I cannot go into much detail, as his memory and loss is still very painful.

Anyway, it was early in the morning on Friday, March 13th, that I went out side and found MR lying cold and dead beside the pond he loved so dearly. Claire stood over him. When I arrived beside her, I hugged her and she started to wail like a Banshee. I am literally weeping as I write this.

The vet - who had just been by to examine him the night before - confirmed that after the life he had lived before his arrival here, and his advanced age, his heart probably gave out.

Claire and MR had just over a year together. I draw comfort and solace in knowing that we had made his time with us as magical and comfortable as possible.

Claire mourned more soulfully and heart wretchedly for MR than my mother mourned the loss of my father.

I'm really sorry, my writing skills have abandoned me. I really cannot go on about this at this time. But my loyal readers will find that I have tried to capture it in a way.

I have kept my promise to MR. He is buried on the property in a grave that Claire visits daily. Indeed, she will often lie down next to it and dream about their time together. I'm certain that he comes to her during those moments.

On his wooden headstone is the epitaph: "Mr. Rogers' Forever Home, Home Forever."

And we have replaced MR with a sweet little mini mule named Honey (also found through Silja Knowles) that follows Claire around like a little sister. Claire dotes on her with a different kind of caring than she showed her beau, but the love is there, and they seem to be happy. Unfortunately, Honey doesn't like men, and gives me a wide space (until Lisa and I capture her during our regular games of Ringolevio). And that's okay, it just shows she is a good judge of character. And as long as Claire is happy, I'm happy.

Well, Monday awaits and I have to return to the legal mines.

The rest of you fine five readers go out there and conquer the world.

And have a great day.

# Dances With Wolves

December 5, 2021



Yesterday was filled with the usual Saturday chores, including the weekly fruit and veggie prep, shifting hay bales and bags, water buckets and mule poop scooping and wheel barrowing. But it wasn't all my regular fun, I also got to do a little writer-related good will.

First, I got to spend a wonderful half hour with an equally wonderful local couple, Shawna and Bob Ruegg (with a brief walk through by their Emma Stone Evoking - could be quite at home on the coolest streets of Brooklyn - enchanting daughter Elise), talking about the backstory of TWA and inscribing a copy for the couple. I am quite certain that when it was over, that Bob - a recently retired Psychiatrist, and Shawna, a recently retired therapist - were both considering coming out of retirement just to challenge Freud's maxim that the Irish are impervious to psychoanalysis:

<https://www.irishcentral.com/opinion/others/was-freud-right-is-psychoanalysis-of-no-use-to-the-irish>

Anyway, I escaped just in time to avoid blowing their retirement.

They are wonderful people who have worked hard all of their lives, let them enjoy these years and not crash their souls on the hidden rocks of the shores of the Irish psyche. But I had a great time during my brief tenure in the Rabbit Room. Thank you Shawna and Bob.

I also got to deliver and inscribe a copy of TWA for Lonnie, the manager of the absolutely wonderful Irish pub style restaurant in Longmont called Mike O'Shays. I am hoping to be able to do a double reading for TWA/AAA there in January - with maybe a bit of KMAG. I also intend to make MO'S my Sloppy Joe's, even if I don't drink. It has to start somewhere, and better with a book. Maybe I can invite the OFC into town, let them get drunk for me and start a brawl, which I enjoy just as much sober, just to make it memorable. Better not mention that idea to Lonnie.

But I also got to spend some quality time with the most wonderful Dianne Rosenfeld, a dear friend, one of my inner circle of readers and an otherwise tremendous supporter of my writing. We must have known each other from past lives because I could hang with this woman all day long. It may also be because she is just so damn

cool. Her latest adventure involves a local Wolf habitat (up in the Ft. Collins area) where she has become a serious and avid supporter. She not only donates her time and money, but she is going back to school just to become more knowledgeable about wolves in general, so that she can represent the Wolf Habitat's mission as a diplomat in the area.

But here's the really cool part. She is going to take Lisa and I on a VIP tour of the Habitat early next year as soon as weather permits.

I am howling at the moon over this invite.

And as a little more good news, Dianne is leaving this week to adopt a 3 year old, Red Dobi named Lena (short for Marlana Dietrich) as a companion for her beautiful Dobi Bekka. I told Dianne that if I die suddenly (don't get too excited BC) that she must promise me to adopt the first Bald Dobi she crosses paths with, especially if it sports an earring.

Anyway, it was a full on day, but completely sustained my writer's soul. And by the late afternoon, I was back home with my Mules.



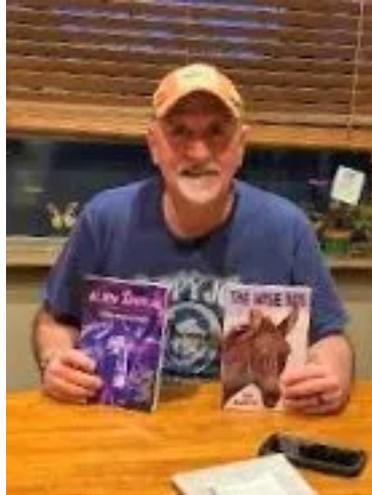
And that is the sweet stuff.

But a new day is here and more chores to take care of. The new poop isn't going to scoop itself.

The rest of you fine five readers, enjoy your Sunday, and have a great day.

# Middle Child Syndrome

December 4, 2021



Hi, my name is Tommy, and I am a middle child... Hi Tommy!  
According to Web MD, there is a middle child syndrome: <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/what-to-know-middle-child-syndrome>

Here are my point-by-point thoughts on the Web MD article:

**Web MD: "Characteristics of a Middle Child"**

**Web MD: "Rebellious.** They're also less religious than their siblings and parents. Still, they're less likely to act out against their parents."

***TPM Notes: Nailed it on Rebelliousness.***

***<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NkkAQIifo>***

***Definitely the least religious of all of my siblings that have a soul - The Ginger doesn't count. However, I am highly Spiritual.***

***Also not sure how you can be the most rebellious and not act out against your parents.***

**Web MD: "Sociable.** They're good at being mediators and want fairness in situations. They're also trustworthy friends and work well as team members."

***TPM Notes: Definitely Sociable. I think they nailed everything except "work well as team members." I tend to work best***

*when left to my own devices and once I figure out my position on something, I am not one who likes to subjugate that position for the different position of the team. That also explains my resistance to organized religion. And my employment history. I walk a more solitary and eclectic path. But I really do try to be fair.*

**Web MD:** "Not as family-oriented as their siblings. They may have a stronger sense of not belonging than their siblings do. So, even though many can be great when working in groups, some middle children can struggle when working with others."

**TPM Notes:** *Not Family Oriented. This may have been true in my younger years, when I would do anything to escape the confines of the family structure so I could pretty well do whatever I pleased. However, I now understand that I was able to get away with doing whatever I pleased only because my family - The McCaffrey Clan - loomed in the background which, in itself, protected me from most of the ramifications of my doing as I pleased. I am extremely family oriented now, in that the bonds of my Clan - blood or adopted -- are extremely strong. Of course, that may be because we have strong Clan leadership in the matriarchal combination of v&b, who ensure that all familial duties are complied with. I do take a knee.*

*However, I am not needy in that I don't need to be in the Clan's physical presence to exercise that strength. We all appear in each others lives as needed, and not a moment before. And to this day we will kill for each other.*

**Web MD:** "Feeling overshadowed. They come to believe that their parents don't care about them. Looking back as adults, they express a negative view of childhood."

**TPM Notes:** *This is utter bullshit. The parents of my generation barely had the time to become parents. My parents showed they cared by staying in our lives and sacrificing their own dreams so that we could get ahead. I had a wonderful and magical childhood, which I will mine for a lot of The Riverdale Chronicles.*

**Web MD:** "Mobile. They're often the first sibling to move out of the house. They're also more likely to move the farthest away. This stems from their feeling misunderstood by their families."

**TPM Notes:** *Okay, I was the first to officially move out of the house. But I only moved as far as Aunt Violet's Flop House about a quarter mile away. Although my sister v, had de facto moved out at around the same time by staying at her college dorm 24/7/365 and then moving downtown to the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Again, the "misunderstood by their families" is complete bullshit. My family understood me all too well. And while I have moved far from my Bronx Homestead, I still have family within easy reach.*

**Web MD:** "Not perfectionists. Still, they tend to take up something that an older sibling isn't so great at. For example, if the older sibling is a scholar, the second-born may focus on athletics."

**TPM Notes:** *They nailed this. Anyone who has read my novels understands that my writing is anything but perfect. I am the Slip Mahoney of writers. As they say, perfect often gets in the way of good. I am the master of the phrase "good enough." And I was better in my youth with women than both my older siblings, straight or gay. And that is only because I was born with the gift of Blarney.*

**Web MD:** "Outstanding Qualities of Middle Children"

**Web MD:** "Despite how you may see yourself as the middle child, you will learn how to act, make friends, and come into your own by watching your siblings or peers. But it seems that your status also can drive you to excel. This may come from feeling second-best compared with your older or younger siblings."

**TPM Notes:** *Nailed it. Coming from my family, I did "learn how to act, make friends, and come into my own" and maybe my familial position caused me to excel. To tell you the truth, my first cognition of this feeling was in my late teens, watching my friends go off to college and succeed. That experience pushed me to push myself, just so I would not be left behind. But it was my immediate family, my wife and children, that caused*

*me to throw my aspirations into overdrive, and prevented me from ever giving up.*

**Web MD:** "As a middle child, you may not be a perfectionist, but you may be more open to taking risks and to new ideas. In studies, 85% of middle children showed such openness, compared with 50% of firstborns."

**TPM Notes:** *Nailed it. I have always been a risk taker. Some of them beyond stupid. I have the scars to prove it.*

**Web MD:** "You may be more skilled at persuasiveness and debate. You probably can see more than one side of an argument, which makes you empathetic. Some middle children claim that their success is due in part to their ability to compromise."

**TPM Notes:** *Got this right. Anyone who has ever met me will tell you I will argue the head off a penny. I will defend positions I do not believe in just for the sake of argument. I am relentless which can make me unbearable. But I am also the person everyone else likes to trot out to defend their positions. But in the end, I can see both sides (often from switching sides mid-argument) and I do favor a compromise that ensures that no side gets screwed in the end.*

**Web MD:** "If middle-child syndrome is real, it might be the middle child's sense of their own uniqueness that has led to many discoveries, important theories, and social movements."

**TPM Notes:** *Wouldn't this be nice!*

So, why am I engaging in this self analysis right now?

Well, it could be that I spotted something else that made me think of it. Like maybe I married a middle child? Yep. Or maybe I see the middle child syndrome reflected in my daughter, Jackie. I do.

But it was actually brought on by the fact that I received a copy of my second novel, *An Alien Appeal*, on the same day that my third novel, *Kissing My Ass Goodbye*, also appeared on-line for pre order.

3:56



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kissing my ass goodbye



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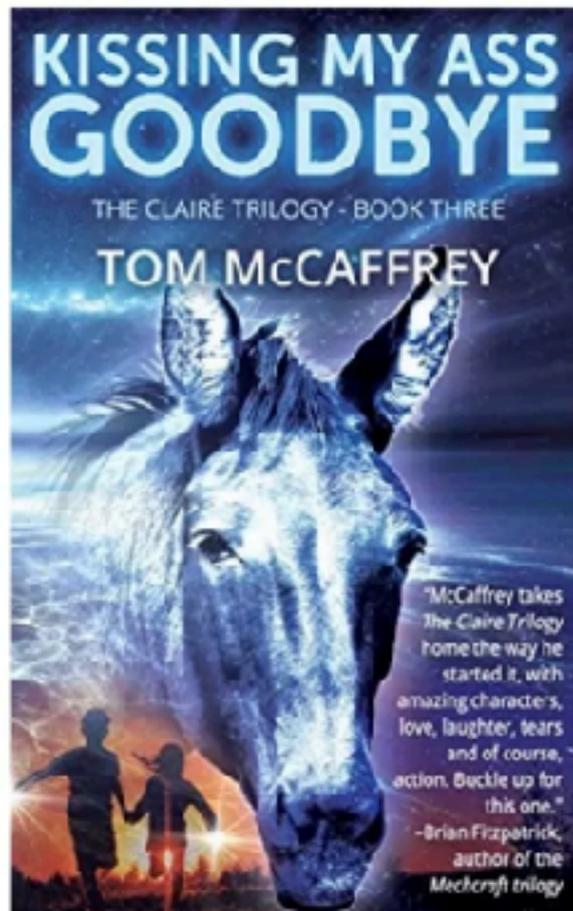


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## Kissing My Ass Goodbye



***You see, I actually recognize many of the attributes of the Middle Child Syndrome reflected in my middle-child novel.***

For example, I am certain AAA feels a bit overshadowed by the success of TWA. AAA seethes with rebelliousness. It certainly "move[s] the farthest away" and is not a perfectionist. And it takes major literary risks in form and substance. In the end, it relies on its persuasiveness to move *The Claire Trilogy* story along the arc that I have provided and bridges the two worlds that are reflected in TWA and KMAG. So don't sleep on *An Alien Appeal*. It is going to rock the literary world.

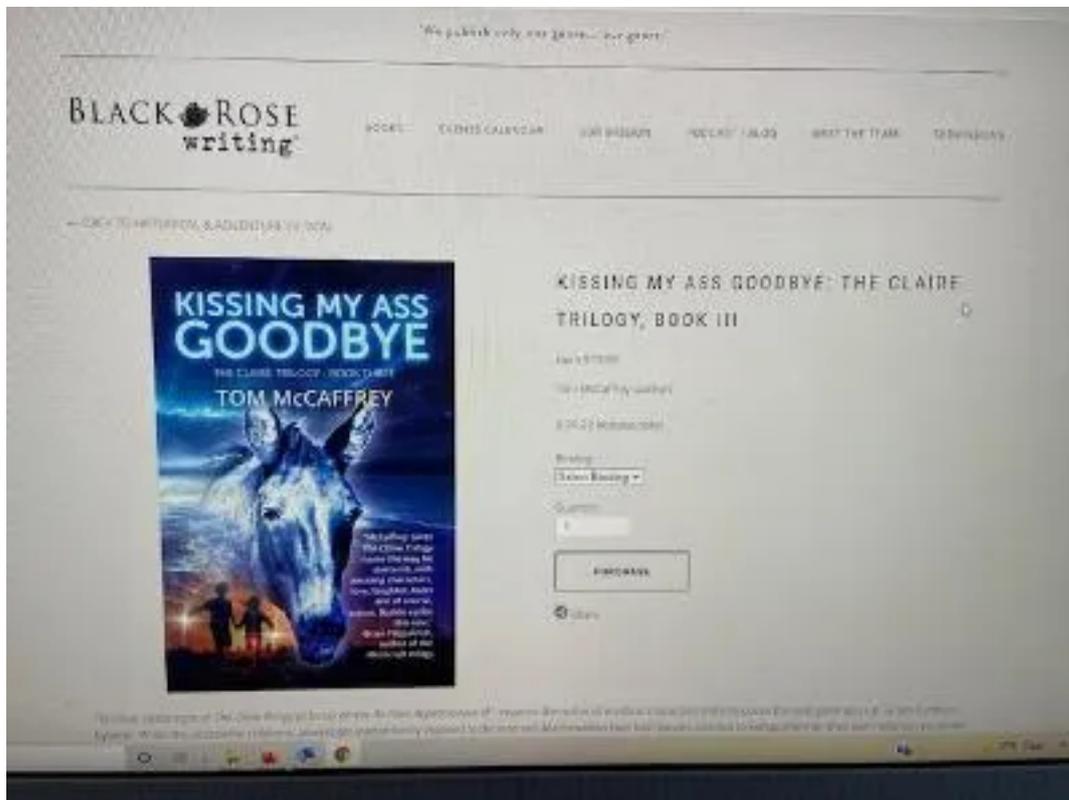
Okay, Saturday is here, and I have my chores to do.

The rest of you five readers, tell all your friends, especially those that are middle children, to make sure they go out and buy AAA for Christmas. If enough middle children engage, 2021 will have ended on a wonderful note.

But most of all, go out there and have a great day!

# A Wonderful Day & An Irish Blessing

December 3, 2021



Now any day that I have to go to the dentist to have my quarterly teeth cleaning - a barbaric practice that is carried out with the utmost care, sensitivity and humor by the attentive and wonderful staff members of Berthoud Family Dentistry --



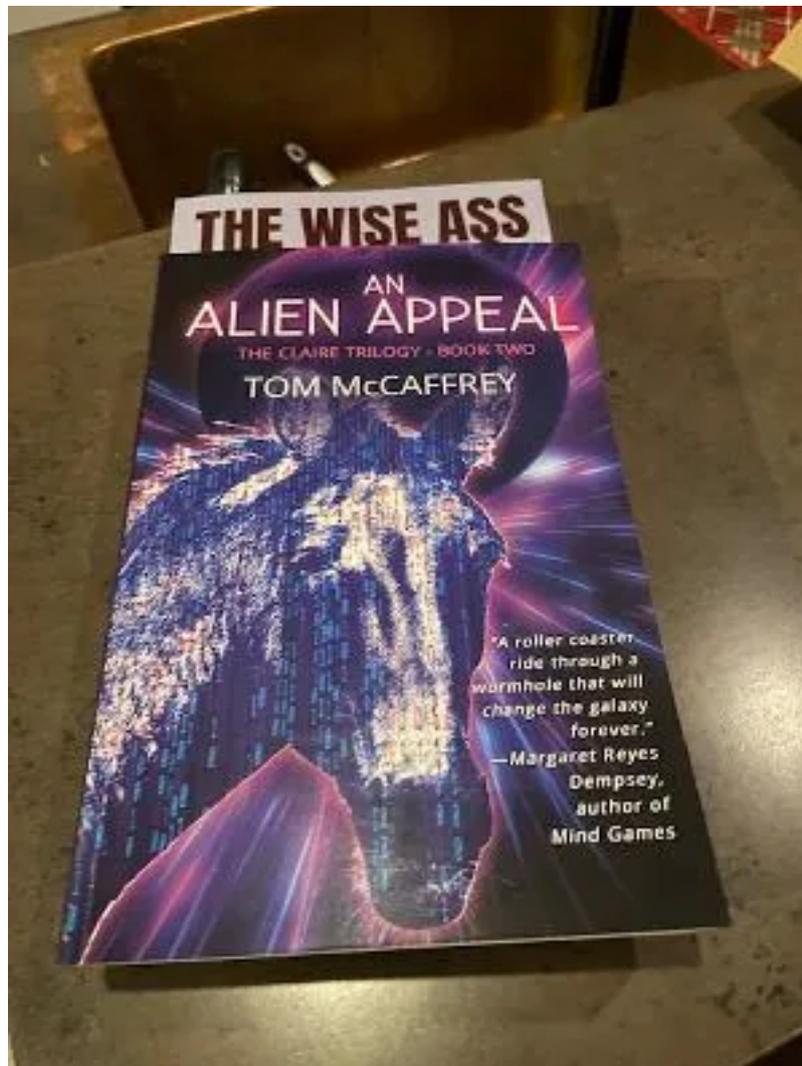
-- you know it is going to be a good day! Yesterday was no exception. I laugh more during my trips to the dentist than I do at any given time.

<https://youtu.be/pOMqqI-kzHY>

They must be pumping Nitrous Oxide through the air vents. Or it could just be that they are all attractive females and just the nicest people ever. You decide. Either way, I highly recommend this crew.

Anyway, when I returned home, I found that BRW had not only gotten my third novel, KMAG, up and on-line for pre-sale purposes on the BRW website (thank you Reagan & David)--

<https://www.blackrosewriting.com/historicaladventure/kissingmyassgoodbye?rq=Kissing%20My%20Ass%20Goodbye>  
(use of the promo code **PREORDER2021** for a 15% discount)  
-- but that the mail had delivered my author's copies of my second novel AAA to my doorstep.



So the day may have ended with a little less plaque and tartar on my teeth (I need to start chewing Milkbones) but the end results of my literary output had increased substantially. Truthfully, while Kindle has trained us all to experience reading on a computer screen, there is nothing better than feeling the actual book in your hands.

And just when I thought it could not get any better, I received a birthday gift from my wonderful sister-in-law, Mary (né Moran) McCaffrey, who is married to my oldest brother - everything I said

about his character is true (except I don't think he's dead) - sent me an Ogham blessing. Which by the timing of its arrival appears to be working.



Now the Ogham alphabet is the earliest form of writing in Ireland. Indeed the first Ogham sentences ever recorded were written by an Irish woman to her husband, and was believed to have stated - "Potcheen running low! Pick up some more on the way home from battle." This particular one blesses my home. I have a copy of the entire alphabet that belonged to my father hanging on the wall of my office (no wonder I never understood his notes on the fridge).



I am truly thrilled by this recent acquisition (thank you Mary - who also goes by the pen name "**Mr McScruffles**" - I know Eddie had nothing to do with it ;) ) and I can use all of the Celtic celestial assistance I can get.

Anyway, it is Friday - and the first night of the New Moon - great for new beginnings like novels - so I am dead chuffed.

The rest of my fine five readers, get through this last workday and embrace the weekend.

And have a great day!

# Color Me Scrooge

December 2, 2021



I love the Christmas Holidays. I hate decorating for the Christmas Holidays!

Honestly, I would rather shovel 10 wheelbarrows full of Mule dung on a cold winter day than put up one Christmas tree.

I hate every part of the process. I hate digging out the storage boxes containing the tree and its decorations and then carrying them down from the tower to the main floor.

And because I hate killing trees (just ask Jack the Spruce), I have had artificial ones for over thirty years. And that's the rub!

I come from a family of live Christmas tree Hondlers. Indeed, I watch *A Christmas Story* every year just to reminisce about my father's masterful CT hondling skills - he once almost reduced a Boy Scout to tears in striking a twofer deal that was a steal:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEtHo1jvn1g>

Of course, we also experienced the replace the bulbs and blow the fuse process every Christmas as well - we had those circular screw in fuses in the basement:

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

As an aside, we also had the exact same old boiler that acted up every Christmas - and drew a similar response from Spaghetti (even after he was dead) - who took every house repair as a personal challenge to his authority:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPSaRffd5rw>

God bless Jean Shepard: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean\\_Shepherd](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Shepherd) That man knew how to tell a story.

Anyway, for the first decade of my marriage, I always hondled over the most full and expensive real tree we could find. It was embarrassing. It was ecstasy.

Then in 1988, my youngest was born. That was the year I landed the Moby Dick of expensive and full trees, at a bargain.

I remember how we actually had to go out and buy additional bulbs, lights and tinsel (you remember tinsel) just to cover its expanse (remind me to tell you about the time a drunk apples pulled down one of my Christmas trees on top of him).

Anyway, here we had this amazing tree, the greatest tree in the annals of McCaffrey history, proudly taking up a quarter of the space in a very decent sized living room. If the iPhone was around, I would have filled its memory to capacity with selfies with my tree (not a euphemism).

The first morning after the tree's arrival, my youngest, just nine months old, started having respiratory problems. By the time we got him into the pediatrician that morning, his face had swollen to such a state, that the doctor immediately stripped him down to see if he had been beaten. No lie.

Thankfully, a full examination established that he was somehow highly allergic to the Christmas tree. It had to go.

For the record, that was not an easy decision. I was certain I would never land another Christmas tree like this one. Absolute perfection. I briefly considered shipping Mark off to my parents' house for the duration of the holidays, but given that they had a live tree too, and Lisa threatened to murder me, that plan was scotched.

Anyway, when we got home, Lisa would not even let me remove the decorations. She made me toss that mythic tree out onto our lawn as is. It was snatched within an hour.

To add insult to injury, she dragged me out to buy the most expensive artificial tree she could find, with a whole new set of decorations. I actually wore a brown bag over my head when I brought it in from the car (a minivan) into the house, in case the neighbors could see me. I was mortified.

But it turns out that that expensive artificial tree lasted 25 years.

And as I evolved in my perspective concerning the sentient nature of all things, that gave me the same pleasure I once had handling for a sacrificed living tree. (I am not anti real Christmas tree, the same way I'm not anti carnivore. My decisions are my own. I respect the decisions of others.)

But after a long run the artificial tree saw its final Christmas, and we replaced it with an even more expensive one that came with its own set of lights built in.

The problem with that is that those lights never really worked past a couple of years, and then you were forced to either get a new tree or just wrap a new set of lights around the non-functioning areas of the built in lights. It always looked shabby.

We left our last Riverdale artificial tree in Riverdale, with the son who spawned the need for them. I understand his wonderful new wife - Sara (né Moran - I used her father, Jimmy's name for the central character in The Claire Trilogy) - has made Mark get a new one.

Our present Colorado artificial tree came with millions of lights built into it. But its electrical system had a complexity that would have made a neurosurgeon weep.

Of course, after the first year, those lights started acting up. Some sections worked, some did not. Again, we tried to patch the darkened sections with after market string lights. The tree began to look like Frankenstein.

This year, after my wife shanghaied me into the Christmas decorating fiasco, I was determined to get all of the lights working. Within an hour, that determination transmorphed into blind rage frustration, and I ran out to the workshop and returned, moments later, with my trusty wire clippers.

For the next two hours I went through every branch of that tree and snipped off the original lights that came with it and every electrical wire that connected them. No lie, I actually raised blisters on the cutting hand. Both hands are sore as I type this. Then I ran out to the Berthoud Ace Hardware store (I highly recommend this store, helpful and lovely employees), arriving just as it opened, and purchased a 300 light string of multi colored LED lights.

Luckily, in my absence, Lisa primped up all the bendable branches that suffered at my surgical manhandling, so that when I returned, I could just wrap it with this now fully functioning, removable and replaceable set of lights. Which I did, but not without my already frustrated disposition developing into full belligerence as my wife kibitized as to the placing of those lights. Luckily for all, I was able to retreat to my office lair with the excuse that my legal workday had begun on the east coast (remember, I am up at 2 am), before I said something that would cause her to permanently maim me.

When I returned to the main level of the house at the end of the workday, Lisa had completed decorating our entire house. Thank God.

So I snapped the photo of the now fully decorated tree, which now has a complete set of functioning lights (although I forgot to turn them on), for posterity.

Wait, here's a better shot - it's still dark here - voila!



(Is anyone else out there seeing the ethereal gnome peeking around the corner of the fireplace at the base of the tree?)  
So that is my rambling version of why I hate Christmas decorating.  
Bah Humbug!  
But don't let me ruin your day. Go out and have a great one. And let someone else decorate for the holidays.

# Box of Books - The TWA Variant

December 1, 2021



I'm glad I'm not yet dependent on my book sales to support myself. This is my latest box of the copies of TWA that I purchased from the publisher. I will inscribe each of them as the need arises and either give them away to individuals or donate some of them to a group or organization, like street libraries, or the more brick-and-mortar versions of the same (I gave five copies to the Berthoud Public Library and another five to a very cool used bookstore). I will often size up a person to determine, through artful conversation, whether they really like to read and whether their more important demands on their income may prevent them from investing in the story I have told, and then grab one of the extra copies I keep in my Toyota and give it to them.

I've probably given away close to two hundred copies over the past nine months. That adds up.

Bread on the water. You see, every time I give a person an inscribed copy of TWA, unless that person burns it, sells it or throws it in a box at home, it is either read by that person, in which case, I may have created a convert who will buy my future books, or even better, an apostle who will spread the word, or it is left by that person somewhere around their house or office, where it becomes a talking point for someone visiting that person who happens to pick it up and ask about it. In the latter situation, the interested visitor

may borrow the book from the less interested original recipient, and be spotted with that copy somewhere else, where someone else may see it and ask about it. Even better, that visitor may remember the title or cover the next time they are on Amazon, and pick up their own copy.

So, the freebie books act like a literary virus. They pass from one person to another without much thought beyond the initial infection by this author. The people who don't actually read it, are basically asymptomatic, and pass it on without feeling or appreciating its full impact. But those that do read it are hopefully hit hard by its writing, characters and/or story lines. The anticipated end result, is that, after wrestling with the novel for approximately two to three days (some reporting experiencing bouts of insomnia during the process), the reader has been eternally infected with that smile on their face, or a pleasant feeling as they recall the story. Maybe they even laughed out loud, which has been a noted recurring symptom of this infection. But the most important impact of their exposure to the TWA variant, is that they have developed enough antibodies that hopefully render them forever immune to potential illiteracy.

They have learned to love the trip through our collective imagination that reading my book has given them. And that is not only good for my literary career, but for anyone else who has sweated over that blank first page. It is also good for the infected, because once you love to read, there is nothing in this world that you cannot experience through the words of another, or even better, there is nothing you cannot teach yourself.

So look upon that photo of my box of books as ground zero for a hopefully super spreader event of the TWA variant.

With any luck, as with all viruses, we will soon experience the AAA and KMAG variants as well.

Let's just hope they don't develop a vaccine.

Anyway, its hump day, and the first day of the Christmas month.

(Happy Hanukkah to my friends of the Jewish faith). If you have been infected by the TWA variant, I hope you are considering AAA, which drops on 12/23 and would make a great Christmas present.

KMAG drops shortly afterwards (3/24/22) and would make the perfect book to take on Spring Break.

But no matter what you do today, go out there and have a great one.

And if you happen to see a copy of TWA lying around, don't be afraid to pick it up, and don't bother washing your hands. It will be too late.