

BC and Murray The Ghost

June 30, 2021



Great text string with my core of ex-Riverdale compadres yesterday evening, as we discussed a number of things, including Joe Serrano's Puerto Rico lost wife trial run of the crime of the century (all in preparedness for his trip to Italy with his lovely wife Donna) and a really cool paranormal event at BC's house in Rochester, NY. We also discussed Lenny's despair over not stocking gin (bathtub or otherwise) to counter the heatwave the Bronx is suffering at this moment, as well as his wanderings around the country following his graduation from the prestigious Culinary Institute of America. Finally, that led to a discussion of the last time we may have been all together partying in one spot. The possible answer: Jamestown, NY, July 29, 1978.

As I am limited in time this morning, and I want to keep some stories for later blogs - and also want to observe the outcome of Joe's trip to Italy to see if poor Donna survives (Donna, check to make sure no double-indemnity large travel Insurance policies have been taken in your name) -- I'll focus on the paranormal one for today's blog.

BC was on the first floor of his house yesterday when he heard a loud thud coming from upstairs. When he went up to investigate, he searched all of the rooms to see if there was something that could have caused it but found no obvious culprit. As he was searching the last of his rooms, the den, he spotted something on top of his very tall bookshelf. Whatever it was had a tiny American flag sticking out of it. Given its location on the top of a very tall bookshelf, he was the only one in the house who could have placed it there. When he went to examine the object, it turned out to be the

inscribed tankard I had given BC on July 29, 1978, for being a member of my wedding party. The last time we were all together partying in one place. BC has no recollection of the last time he had seen that tankard, or of placing it in the spot on top of the bookshelf. On top of everything, the tankard was in pristine condition, glistening as silvery as the day he received it. What's even more interesting was that on the shelf directly below the Tankard's spot, was a stack of books, the top two being travel books for Colorado. Given BC's penchant for tracking things down, the Colorado books gave me additional pause and worry that he may be seeking to cash in on the potential bounty on a purported WITSEC survivor. Truth really is stranger than fiction.

Given that we immediately suspected paranormal influences, Joe and BC simultaneously texted the culprit had to be Denis "Murray" Collins (jinx on you both, name seven brands of cigarettes and whistle - don't want to give that soft drink company any light).

The general consensus was that Murray was lobbying from beyond the veil for a mention in The Claire Trilogy - BJ already having had his moment in the sun. After a brief debate we concluded that, given that Murray's sister Eileen had made it into K MAG as a central character, and that his other sisters are all mentioned in the naming of the gnomes (interesting alliteration),

Murray was actually just making sure in advance that he received the appropriate ink in the follow-up prequel to TCT, which will be The Riverdale Chronicles. Rest easy Murray, it could not be written without you.

But the really interesting thing was that I then, on a whim, shared the BC event with Murray's sister Eileen

C, first by text, and then by a follow-up phone call. Now there was no other reason for me to reach out to Eileen yesterday, other than to share the story about her brother Murray (and subsequently another involving Murray's aerial destruction of a perfectly good pizza - it was really good pizza), and Eileen was having a particularly sad day for reasons I will not go into. But it was clearly Murray's intent to bring his existence to Eileen's attention yesterday through a Rube Goldberg series of events to let her know that he was still looking out for, and trying to cheer up, his little sister, on that particularly sad day, through a series of sibling surrogates (love that alliteration). I also reminded Eileen that Colorado had interesting gun laws involving one's ability to protect one's home and property. Eileen ended the call with a series of laughs. Well done Murray, BC, Joe (Donna) and Lenny.


PS. BC was very careful to replace the tankard in the exact same spot on top of the tall bookshelf, just in case it needed to be there to propel Murray to his next stop off in Colorado, and followed up with an attempt at the rosary, which almost caused him to burst into flames. That will teach him to be hunting his compadres.

HARDCOVER BOOKS

June 29, 2021

For my friend
Tom

COULD N° CARRY
WE SHOULD START A GANDG.



It seems that Hardcover versions of books are as novel as a Big Foot sighting. I completely understand that in our throw away society, paperbacks are the trash of choice (was thankful to learn this past weekend that a paperback copy of TWA was recycled to another reader through the Berthoud Habitat for Humanity). Now that we have electronic books, even paperbacks are a novelty. But instead of tossing them, pass them on to another reader or donate it to one of those outdoor lending libraries. There is value in those pages. While I like to read informational books on my iPhone, because I am not there to enjoy myself, I love the tactile experience of reading fiction. I love holding the book in my hands, the experience of licking my fingertip to turn the page, and the anticipation and then the aha moment as I find what is on the next page. I love checking the book mark peeking out of the top of the novel before I open the book, so I can see how much of my fictional journey is before me, and how far I have come. I love the smell of books, new and old. I even like carrying a book around, because it lets others know that you actually read and what you consider worth the effort. Carried books also are great conversation starters. A win-win.

I have a collection of hardcover books by the great authors that I inherited from my namesake maternal grandfather.

Thank you Poppa (Thomas) Burke. I have moved them around with me for many years. They now adorn bookshelves in the Two Mules Salon - Art Studio out back. Back in the early nineties I donated many boxes of saved hardcover books to my friend, the author Colin Broderick's used book store - the Guitar and Pen - which became a setting in his memoir - Orangutan (highly recommend all of his books and films). The shop was so cool while it lasted. He had wine & cheese and music and readings on some

evenings. Indeed, there is a scene in the book that takes place in G&P where Colin speaks with his unidentified lawyer/friend about an adoption issue (that was me). I have a hardcover inscribed version of Colin's book *The Writing Irish Of New York* (that's the inscribed inside cover above).

I also have leather bound, gold embossed hard covers of LOTR and *The Hobbit*, that I purchased during my honeymoon when my wife and I were book store browsing in Connecticut (thank you Lisa). Love book store browsing.

I always visualized my own work in a similar format. Yesterday, that visualization took a step forward, when Reagan proposed that BRW release TWA in hardcover form. I am thrilled because it will now be available in hardcover, paperback, ebook and audiobook versions. AAA will also be released in hardcover format right out of the gate, and although we didn't confirm it, I expect KMAG will be released in hardcover format as well. And that is all thanks to you, my readers, for buying and reading TWA. Anyone who purchases a hard copy (or any copy) of any of my books and wants it inscribed just reach out to me through this web page and I will do my very best to arrange to inscribe it any way you like.

Who knows, maybe there is a leather bound, gold embossed set of *The Claire Trilogy* somewhere in the future. Fingers crossed.

TAKE CARE OF THE BEES

June 28, 2021



I have a deep respect for bees. Without them, we would be absolutely screwed. A number of the neighbors keep hives, and I think that is cool. I know I could never be a bee keeper because I do not care how cool those meshed hats and suits look, or how effective those smoke pots are, I just don't have the nerve to pop open those hives, shoo away the disturbed bees and collect the honey. So, I do what I can to support the local bees, which in my case is to make sure that they have access to enough water while they are out on their daily rounds collecting honey. Bee bar is open!

JIMMY & KATHY FRONSDAHL

June 27, 2021



Lisa and I were lucky enough to have dinner yesterday evening with our dear friends Jimmy & Kathy Fronsdaahl at Pinochio's in Longmont (highly recommend the food and service there). It was bitter sweet, because J&K are moving to Idaho. Colorado was just a stopover for them during their post retirement search for their forever home. We were blessed to have entered their gravity during their time here.

Jimmy is a retired engineer from California with an eye for detail and an old school work ethic. Kathy is the more artistic of the two, who has an incredible eye behind a camera (she also provided me with the mugger squirrel

photo for an earlier blog). I met Jimmy as a result of the pandemic, when Walmart ended their overnight hours (when I used to shop) and the earliest they would allow old people in was 6 am on Tuesdays. Jimmy and I kept bumping into each other on the line each Tuesday morning and given that I will talk to anyone, anywhere, anytime, we struck up conversations and found we had a lot in common. Anyway, I was working on the editing of TWA and I asked him if he would like to read my novel. I wanted an engineer's viewpoint to make sure the science sounded at least plausible (my gold standard). I hadn't built up my inner circle of readers beyond my wife (the tiny one to the right of the photo), my SIL, Dina, the fairy-witch, and my sister, Veronica (never Ronni, which rhymes with Bonnie). Jimmy was a godsend and I would never have gotten TWA done in time without his invaluable assistance. Jimmy then went on to become my right hand in writing AAA, reading and editing it for me chapter by chapter as I wrote it. I would never have been able to turn it around so quickly had it not been for Jimmy. Kathy, on her part, stepped in for me when two separate artists who I had approached to do the cover had to both back out at the last minute. She came over to the house one afternoon and shot hundreds of photos of Claire in the side paddock. It was the very last shot, when Claire was standing in front of her Lair(e), and she turned and looked over her shoulder (perfect Blue Steel/Zoolander moment) at Kathy, that the iconic cover photo was captured.

As soon as I saw it I knew it was the one.

Anyway, the wind finally changed direction towards Idaho, and J&K had to go into moving mode - including finding a new place to live in God's country - just as I started writing KMAG, so I lost Jimmy's invaluable day-to-day services and friendly counsel. Luckily, I had built my inner circle of

readers up to the solid base of selfless volunteers that I have today and have identified in my earlier blogs and who have each reviewed AAA & KMAG (thank you all).

Moreover, Kathy's iconic photo was incorporated into the new and brilliant cover for AAA by the talented Richard Lamb (thank you Richard, Hi Margaret!). I hope I can work it into the third cover as well.

To commemorate Jimmy's contribution to The Claire Trilogy, I created a character in AAA (and KMAG) based on him and wove the character into the trilogy tapestry. I also named another dog that makes a brief appearance in AAA, after J&K's malamute.

Anyway, dinner was delightful and luckily my nose did not grow any longer as a result of any of the tall tales I was telling (love that alliteration). J&K sent their regards to our other dear friends, the aliens Everett and Michelle, whom they met at our home one evening for an interstellar dinner and conversation.

As we were leaving we asked a passing waiter (thank you young sir) to snap the above photo (I would kill for Jimmy's hair line and I am beginning to look like Shrek). We are going to miss J&K dearly, and hope we get a chance to break bread with them again in Idaho at some point in the not-to-distant future. Good luck to you both. *Vaya con Dios*. Much love. And thanks for everything!

SMOKEY THE CAT

June 26, 2021



I have mentioned our feral cat, Smokey (that's her up in the limbs). She's a sweet little thing that hangs around the front area in the feral cat grotto around the base of Jack the Spruce. We of course have provided her everything she would have as a purely domesticated cat, shelter and food, but she insists on living outside. We even spray catnip in her house to make it a pleasure palace. She, in turn, likes to leave us dead presents. I've read that this is a sign that

Smokey considers us family. She always leaves the dead animal, usually a mouse, right in front of Tolkien, my little dragon. At first I was not sure whether or not Tolkien was the perpetrator, but then I saw Smokey making a delivery.

You see, Tolkien sits directly under the front window that Lisa likes to keep open. Smokey will sit below that window and meow until one of us comes outside and gives her a cuddle. So she is a very smart cat. We are very well trained humans. I guess Smokey heard from Claire that we are soft touches.

I spotted another food related reference in the reviews that I am compelled to share by "kindle customer" (I wish the reviewers would at least give themselves a notable nickname, I would like to give them their due) on June 23rd:

"I don't usually read a book more than once but this one I could read for dessert every day." Thank you kc. Another gastronomical review on June 19th, from the equally ubiquitous "Amazon Customer" volunteers, "[a]te it all in one fell swoop (sooo groggy the next day, because I couldn't put it down!)." Thank you ac.

Its funny how the reviews range from purely emotional to somewhat clinical responses. I've seen a couple of wonderful reviews that focus on a clinical analysis. For example, a recent five star review from another kc (common name among the reviewers) on June 24 states: "Pretty good writing, no grammatical errors that I noticed.

Reasonable actions and reactions from the characters as the plot progressed." While I appreciate making the grade any way I can, and am totally relieved that I haven't been called out for bad grammar, because that is not one of my strong points, I cannot help but wonder if the reviewer was one of my old high school English teachers (if they are still alive they are obviously Centaurian). Another recent

reviewer, Robert Wagner, closes his wonderful five star review yesterday with "well edited reading." Thank you both so much for the positive reviews.

I am far more comfortable (by which I mean far less frightened) reading reviews where there is a visceral, emotional response to my writing, like the one by Jackie Sixt that I mentioned yesterday. I love when readers "love" TWA, or when they confess that they "couldn't put it down" (Robert Wagner being the most recent), especially those that complain that their reading cut into their sleeping and/or chores (one early review coined the wonderful phrase "unputdownable"), or that they love the characters and want to hang with them, especially Claire, or even want to come to visit the area. I also love reading how many of the positive reviewers are not into the paranormal or science fiction and yet confess to being drawn into what they expected to be just a legal thriller and then carried along to its end. I love that one of my reviewers, "reader 56" an avowed animal lover from Alaska (alliteration), who on June 16th gave TWA five stars, admittedly enjoyed even the parts of the story that was focused on the humans: "There also some interesting people that the author got me to care about." I love the positive references to TWA being "fun," "humorous" and "entertaining," and that it provides the reader with an escape from reality, if only for a few hours. I love those that get the Irish influence (Thank you Ken Fox).

I love the reviewers that confess that they picked TWA up on a "whim" and then became a convert. Some admit to responding initially to the title, which I knew would catch a few eyes. Some responded to Claire's photo on the cover. I love references to the "suspension of disbelief" that allowed the readers to just follow along and enjoy the story (in spite of the truth behind it). And I must not forget to mention all of

those reviewers who admittedly look forward to the remainder of The Claire Trilogy. That's gold. These are the reasons story tellers (at least this one) tell stories. I'm really not trying to impress anyone with the idea that I am a great or notable writer. I'm way too old for that kind of ego. I'm a utility journeyman scrivener just happy to be here, doing my best to tell an interesting story which evokes an emotional response that hopefully provides the reader some pleasure. If I get a laugh, that is the cherry on top. I thank every one of you readers I mention, and all the other positive reviewers, for supporting my writing and providing me with your feedback. You are my literary *raison d'être*.

STRAWBERRY SUPER MOON - LOA

June 25, 2021



I love and follow the lunar cycle. Last night was the peak of the Strawberry Super Moon (3 day cycle), the last of the Super Moons this year. The Strawberry Moon is a name given by the indigenous people to the first of four full moons in the summer season, which coincides with the ripening of fruits that begins at the end of the spring season. What makes it a Super Moon is any full or new moon at its closest approach to Earth (technically within 90% of its closest approach). There are some purists who only consider one moon a year to be The Super Moon, the one that has the closest approach of all of them, which would have been last month's Flower Moon, but I say the more the merrier. I snapped the above photo when I was returning to my home this morning from the back property after feeding Claire and Honey.

I love the full moons because they always imbue my property with this really cool, ghostly light. A mystical energy. That's right, I believe there is magic in this world. And it all comes from the exchanges of energy. Learn to master that and you will be a magician.

Speaking of magic, as a big believer in the Law of Attraction (or Intention to some), I try to focus my new, start up, intentions during the new moon phases and the full execution of my existing projects or intentions during the full moon phases. I get it, it sounds mad, but it has always worked for me. My novels (hell, my entire life) are a direct result of the LOA. I opened my mind to possibilities, decided on and then focused on an outcome, created a plan, took steps to make it happen, and the universe stepped up.

Now don't misunderstand, you cannot sit in your basement just making wishes for a better life and expect something to happen. It takes work. But if you create, focus on and

follow a plan, the universe moves the impediments out of the way. Of course, if you sit around thinking of all the reasons you should not or cannot do something, the universe will prove you right as well. And a lot of times, just when you are ready to quit, don't. Success is just around the next corner.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to what we know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there will ever be to know and understand." Albert Einstein.

"Everything begins with a thought, and thoughts are turned into plans, and plans into reality." Marshall Sylver

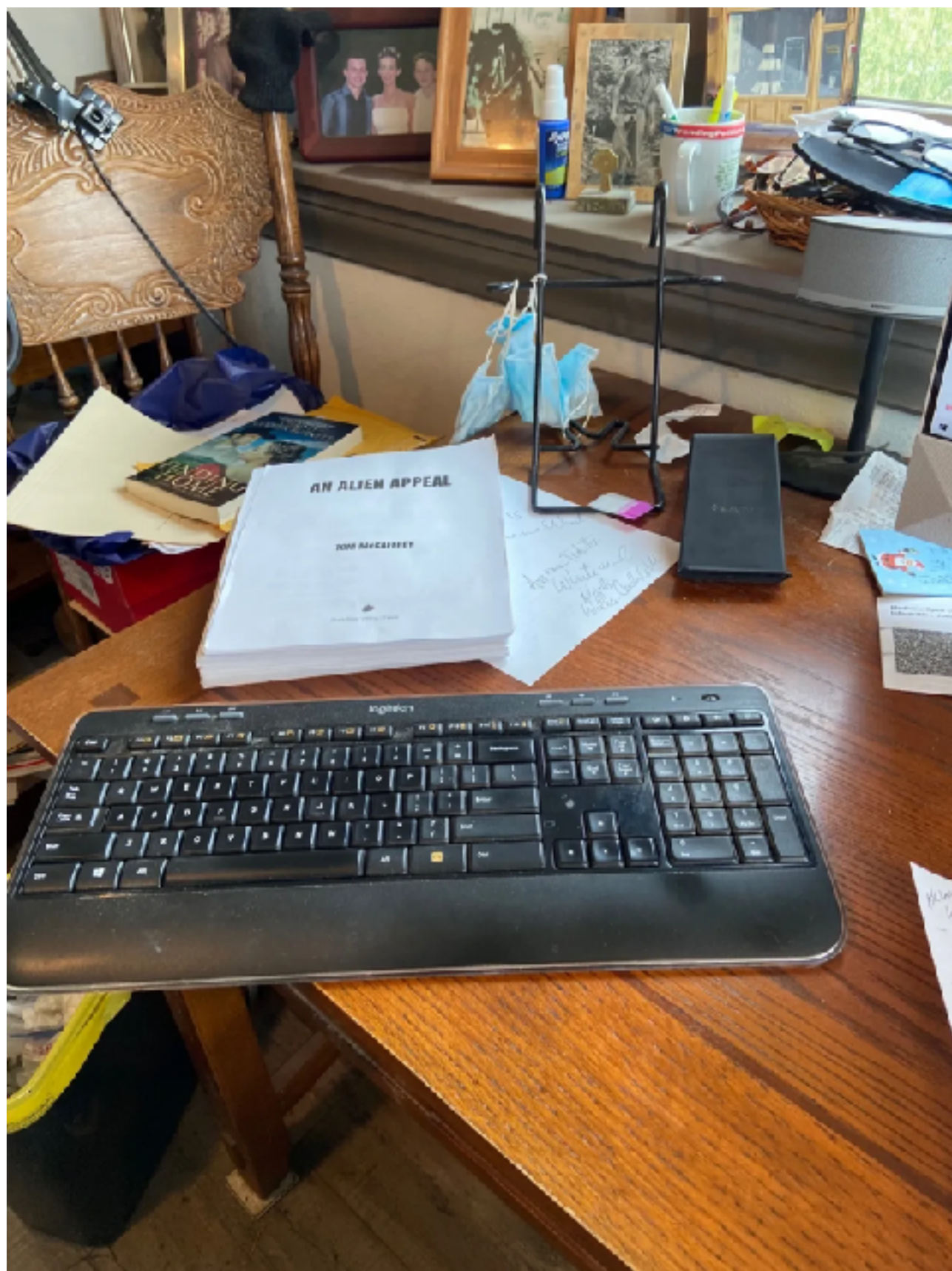
"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:1

So, let your imaginations run wild, then select and focus on a thought as to how you want your life to be, and put that thought into words that let you create a plan to get your there. Then get to work, get out of your own way and see what happens.

Today's notable quotable comes from yesterday's review of TWA by Jackie Sixt: "I want to sit on the patio among all those wonderful characters and eat and drink and laugh."

An Alien Appeal

June 24, 2021



Over the past weekend and during the early morning hours of my weekdays this week (my eyes are too shot in the evenings) I've been working on putting the last two books of the trilogy to bed. There is the general process where you send the publisher what you think is the final word version of the novel and they then send you their suggested edits in word and then you send them your real final word version of the novel and they then convert it to actual book manuscript form and you have to work off that form from that point on.

When I get to that point, I usually print it out and then go through it with a pen and make edits in the margins. Real old school. But there is something about reading it in the manuscript form that allows you to see it like you are reading it for the first time.

So with AAA, (that's it in the printed manuscript form above - I know, my office is a mess, dust everywhere, but this is me unvarnished, I'm superstitious about dusting my writing room, but will do so once The Claire Trilogy is finally out of my hands) I found myself actually giving it another solid pen editing (not just misspellings, typos and spaces) and I truly believe it is now in amazing shape in story and form. I think it was really helpful to know exactly how the story ends in the next book, to make sure everything works perfectly leading up to that ending in the middle book. However, there were too many edits to do it by a "find and replace" schedule using the formatted form. So I just included all of those changes in the word version again and sent it in.

Unfortunately, this will now require BRW to reformat that word version (sorry guys, mea culpa) but the good news is that all that can be left to find at this point will be spacing and typos, I'm pretty sure I caught any misspellings, and I'm not going to change anything else. That will only require (at

most) one more schedule change pass to the manuscript version and it should be good to go.

The really good news is that with respect to KMAG, which I sent into BRW in its final word version on Sunday, given that I've been editing (with my invaluable group of inside readers) both novels simultaneously, I am confident that it is already in absolute final form with only typos and spaces issues to deal with when I get the publisher's manuscript form. I figure I've probably got one more weekend of work ahead of me for both books.

I am really excited by how The Claire Trilogy plays out. The major plot lines in each book are so different, and yet the trilogy is woven together like a medieval wall tapestry by the subplots of all the characters, including new characters introduced into each of the novels. I am confident that I have continued the magic that has made TWA so enjoyable to my readers. Time will tell. Stay tuned.

I'm actually looking forward to reading someone else's novel as soon as I'm done. *Finding Home*, by Christy Cooper Burnett, is next on my list.

"A main character who has flaws and is still a good guy."

June 23, 2021

8:13



Helpful

Report



Cara Dale Akerley

★★★★★ Verified Purchase

Great read.

Reviewed in the United States on June 20, 2021

My only problem with this book is that I started it too late one evening and I absolutely had to stop reading and get some sleep. The next morning I was back to this book and totally ignoring the list of things I had to do. Thoroughly enjoyable. So skillfully written that the supernatural events slide into the narrative and the reader never even questions that such things happen. Interesting characters that you really care about. A main character who has flaws and is still a good guy. Buy this book. Just start reading it well before bedtime.

Helpful

Report



Bob Burnett

★★★★★ Verified Purchase

Woo Woo plus

Reviewed in the United States on June 20, 2021

Within a caldron of magical characters what could have been a zany stew came out a feast of a story. A New York mob lawyer turns witness against his boss and is relocated to a safehouse in Colorado. An unlikely crew of neighbors band together to defeat the hired... [See more](#)

Helpful

Report



cynthia gould

★★★★★ Verified Purchase

Absolutely Amazing!

Reviewed in the United States on June 19, 2021

I got this book because of the title, I thought it was

I have repeatedly told you that I read every one of the reviews. I am thrilled each morning to find that one or more of my readers have taken the time to read TWA and then formulate and record their thoughts to assist other potential readers. There are those occasional reviews that are not so nice, and I have to keep reminding myself that this is not a story for everyone. However, I am thrilled that a substantial majority of the reviews reflect that the readers have, all-in-all, enjoyed their time immersed in my story with my characters. Thank you for that.

While I love all of the positive reviews, no matter how long, and love the recurring references to themes or characters in TWA that resonate with particular reviewers - Claire does deservedly receive a lot of my reader's attention, she is every bit that special - I get an extra kick when I read a review and spot a line which lets me know that that reader picked up on something that other reviewers have not verbalized. Cara Dale Ackerly captured the essence of the character Jimmy Moran in the above quoted line. Cara is right. Jimmy is just a regular guy caught up in a supernatural situation who finds himself surrounded by others who see past his flaws and are drawn to his basic goodness. That is all any of us can hope for in life. We all make mistakes. It is what you do afterwards that defines you as a person. I believe that is why so many of my readers identify with Jimmy and root for him. Thank you Cara for highlighting that point.

I also get a kick out of reviewers who put in that extra literary flourish to their reviews. I mention in one of my earlier blogs that notable review by Patricia S Bundy that compares TWA to a "superb soup." Bob Burnett, also

above, continued the *haute cuisine* analogy and knocked it out of the park with his opening line "[w]ithin a cauldron of magical characters what could have been a zany stew came out a feast of a story." It is enough to make this old lawyer stand up and do a happy dance. Luckily Claire was not peeking through my office window or I would never hear the end of it. But thank you Bob for that as well.

Now I have to cut this short because I am in the process of finalizing AAA and need the rest of these morning hours to work on that. Thank you for your patience.

To be continued.

BRW SUMMER FEATURED
AUTHOR - TWA
AUDIOBOOK 8-24-21 - OLD
FRIENDS

June 22, 2021



Got an email yesterday afternoon from Reagan Rothe informing me that I have been selected as BRW's Summer Featured Author. That gets my face on the publisher's home page (<https://www.blackrosewriting.com/home>) for three months, on their face book page (someone will have to send me a snap shot), and mentions in their Rosevine newsletter.

I am honored by the selection. Thanks BRW and Reagan Rothe for selecting me. And thank you Claire for getting us there, much love!

Another special shout out to Eileen Cotto for working her butt off to get me her notes on KMAG. Will review after blogging and incorporate into manuscript before sending off to BRW. Then I just need to finish my review of AAA and do that schedule. I will get one more shot at KMAG after it goes into actual production. Its easier to read and edit in the PDF format.

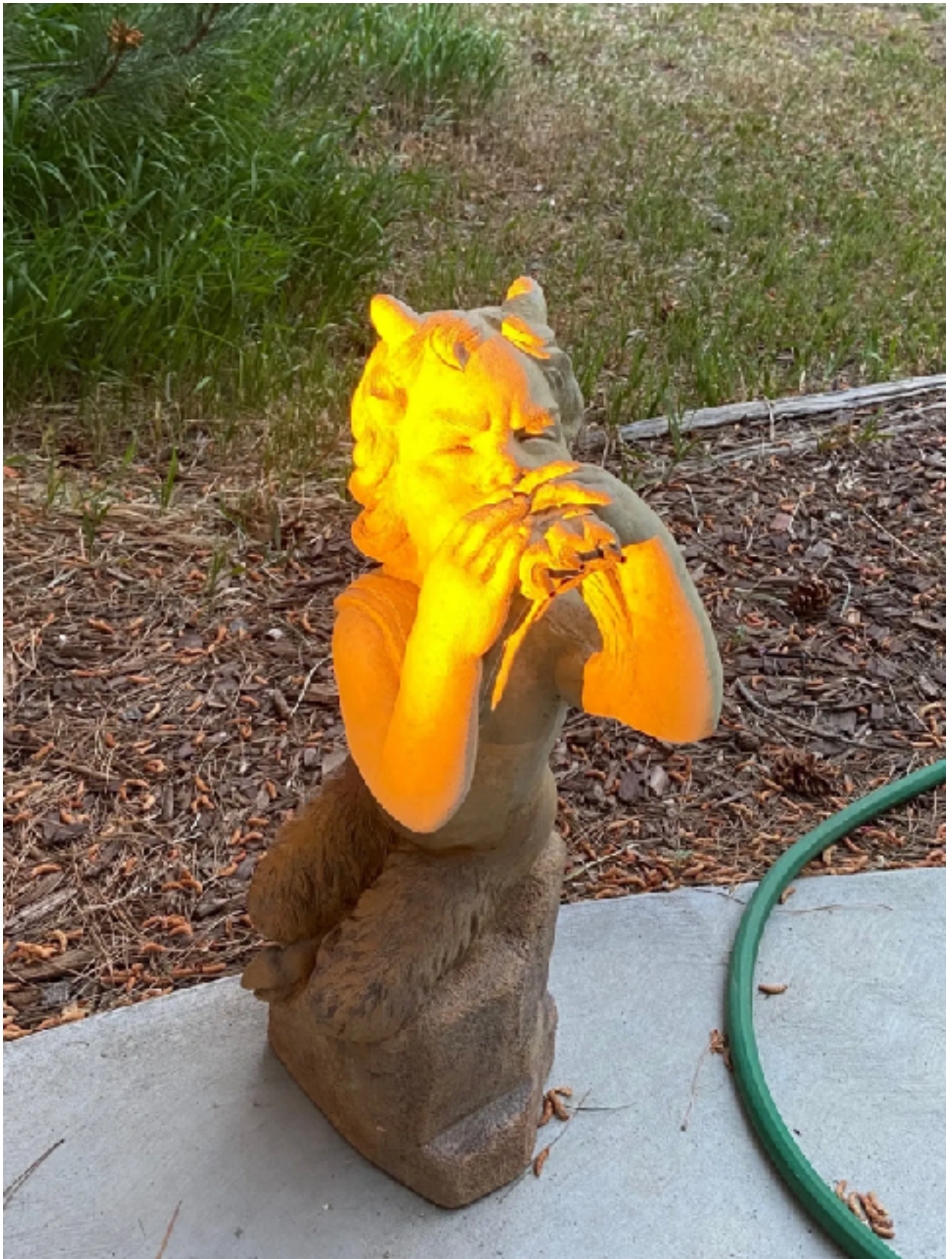
Also learned yesterday that TWA will be released in Audiobook format on 8/24/21. So, no more excuses to my family members who swear they can only read a book through their ears (McCaffreys have prominent ears)! You know who I am talking about! I sure as hell hope the narrator has a proper Bronx accent.

One more item on the absolutely wonderful surprise list from yesterday is that I heard from an old friend and powerhouse entertainment attorney L. Londell McMillan, Esq - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L._Londell_McMillan - with whom I worked at Gold Farrell & Marks back in the early 90s. It was like playing intramural basketball in grade school with Lebron James. This guy had that aura around him that just let you know he was destined for greatness in the legal field. Hell, he took me with him to Minnesota and introduced me to Prince. There's a story for a different time. Anyway, yesterday I received his text congratulating me on TWA and

of course I immediately popped an inscribed copy of the same in the mail. Thanks Londell for your kind words and please give my best to your daughter Kyla - <http://amsterdamnews.com/news/2015/apr/23/kyla-imani-mcmillan-13-year-old-inspiration> - a talented young lady in her own right. Kyla, *mea culpa*, I spelled it Kayla in the inscription. I suck at spelling (phonetic). Must do better.

PAN & THE CREATIVE PROCESS

June 21, 2021



Yesterday morning, after I finished blogging and went upstairs to have coffee with my wife, Lisa, she surprised me with a second Father's Day gift, the above concrete statue for our front patio area.

Pan is the Greek god of unspoiled, harmonious wilderness, who watches over shepherds and flocks, fields, groves, wooded glens and of mountain wilds. He is known for his goat horns and hindquarters, his pan-flute, fertility and the season of spring.

I had been coveting this particular statue for some time but given our recent acquisition of the giant dragon, Drogon, I figured this was off the table. This was quite the wonderful surprise. Thank you Lisa! My magical patio area is complete (for now).

So now Pan is positioned on the edge of the front patio, facing the house, where he serenades the dragons, the SSS fairies (and two smaller ones in the feral cat grotto), Jack the Spruce, Smokey the Feral Cat, Henri the Lion, Lucian the Elf, the wild birds in my fountains and any humans who are lucky enough to sit out on the front patio. I'm certain my gnomes can hear him, as their island is only a stones throw away. Between sets, I'm sure he scampers around back and checks on the remaining cast of whimsical characters as well as Claire and Honey in the fields.

With the creative Pan in place, I was inspired to complete my review of the publisher's notes on KMAG, as well as including some edits and additional material as I went back through it. I sent that completed version off to Dianne R for one final critical beach read (with her wonderful family in California), to vet the new material. Thank you Dianne. I then began my final review of the publisher's manuscript for AAA, and this time printed it out to go through it the old fashioned way, pen edits and notes in the margin. They will

all end up on a spread sheet which will be returned to BRW to use in revising their master manuscript. Eileen C spent part of her weekend also going through the publisher's suggested edits manuscript of AAA one last time and sent me her valuable thoughts (which I will incorporate on my spread sheet before I send it back to David in BRW's Production Department. Thank you David for your eternal patience. Eileen is now reading KMAG one more time (and already spotted a tiny inconsistency between the two novels which has now been corrected). Thank you Eileen. There is extra value in having both books being finalized at the same time because it is easier to spot the inconsistencies, as long as you have those extra set of eyes reviewing it for you. I do not know how any writer can do this alone. I was blessed by having the meticulous Jimmy Fronsdaahl handling this process for me on TWA. Thank you Jimmy.

Speaking of extra eyes, let me thank my SIL, the Wallen Witch, Cathy Beauseignoir for her final thoughts on KMAG, as well as those of the attorney and dear friend, Michael (always Mikey) Abramson, who provided an email full of extremely positive analysis of KMAG. Both sets of comments arrived this weekend. Both confirmed that I have accomplished what I set out to do in The Claire Trilogy. My inner circle of readers are absolutely invaluable to me. My readers are blessed by this assistance.

Speaking of readers, Jordan at A&W confirmed to me yesterday evening that she finally got to TWA on her impressive reading list and completed it in three contiguous sittings (around her very busy work schedule and life as a 1/2 year newlywed), and really enjoyed it. That was music to my ears. It made my Beyond Papa Burger and Vanilla Milk Shake all the more tasty. Thank you Jordan.

It was great that yesterday was the longest day of the year (Happy Summer Solstice) because there was a lot to get done on the creative front. Thank you Gaia.

Summer Solstice & Happy Father's Day

June 20, 2021



In case you haven't figured it out, I am a big fan of Mother Nature. Not one of those "let's go camping" type guys, although I did enough of that in my teens, but I do love all creatures great and small and following the lunar and solar cycles throughout the year (See my March 20th post). Tonight at around 9:32 pm MT, we celebrate the Summer Solstice. (Some day I'm going to make it to Stonehenge for this event.) It is the longest day of the year, and the true beginning of Summer. Interesting that it coincides with Father's Day this year. I discuss my feelings about the many fathers in my life (I am thankful for each one) in my January 30th post "Wisdom Has Many Parents." So all of you Fathers out there, enjoy every minute of what today brings you. If you have done your job with anyone who needs a father, even for one moment, you have earned your day.

And for those of you who have Fathers out there, give them a call/text/email/note in a bottle, and let them know you are thinking about them. They'll all be gone before you know it.

All of mine are passed. Special shout out to Edward T. McCaffrey, RIP. The rest of you surrogates (Big Jack, Big John, Dutch, and Dr. Mel) know who you are and I have been blessed by you all.

The little yellow guy on one of my wife's (truss busting) cement geranium flower pots above is the Western Tiger Swallowtail (Can't tell the difference between him and his Eastern cousins). I spotted him yesterday having a gnosh and a rest while I was taking care of the watering in our back area. Absolutely beautiful. I have tried growing perennials that would specifically attract butterflies and bees, but I don't have the soil or patience, so we (and by that I mean Lisa) go with colorful annuals in large pots and other containers to offer what we can each season to the

local and transient pollinators. There are a couple of local bee hives in the area and I love trying to figure out who the bees belong to when they come for their meals. They really should wear name tags. I love watching the bees land on my fountains and bird baths to grab a drink. Bee Bar is always open at Casa Claire. I only ask that they stop off at Big Eddie's (Spaghetti's) Orchard and pollinate my five young apple trees. Its a win win.

The Business End of Writing - Uncle Dan & Aunty Liz

June 19, 2021



Yesterday, I received both the Galley version of the AAA Manuscript for final review from the production team at BRW and also the final word version of KMAG from Reagan Rothe with the publisher's suggested edits. Both have deadlines for their review turn around. Luckily this is the weekend, so I will get it all done (with the help of some inner circle friends with an eye for consistency and detail like the contrarian Eileen C - who may be fantasizing about milk

trucks at this moment). (If you are reading this Jimmy F, I miss you dearly. Hi to Kathy.)

The good news is that it means there are some optional items on the Honeydew list I can put off (anything not mule related - like basement housecleaning). The bad news is, there are some things I cannot put off (everything mule related - water troughs, hay bags, dung clean-up, and weekly veggie prep). While manuscript editing is the least appealing aspect of being a professional writer, it is a wonderful problem to have. I am blessed.

The above recent photo is of my Australian (now a proud US citizen - well done sweetie) daughter-in-law, Georgie (far right - married to my oldest, Luke, a great writer - adding the Amazonian height and beauty genes into my branch of the family tree), with her British Auntie Liz (front center - attractively Amazonian statuesque with a great sense of humor) and her American Uncle Dan (rear left - smart chemical engineer, I would kill for his hairline). L&D were over at Georgie's for a visit from Arizona. I love these relatives. They are great folks with lots of great stories from a life well lived all over the world. They are always welcome in Colorado.

The rug rats appearing left to right in the photo are my magical granddaughters, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella (alliteration runs in this family). The first two make their appearances as the original caretakers and tutors of the foal Claire in TWA and then grow up through the final two novels. The last, who did not make her earthly appearance until after TWA and AAA were written, makes her literary appearance as the central character for the final book of this trilogy (and beyond?). My other and oldest grandchild, Lucian (not in this photo - he lives with my daughter Jackie - a beautiful titan of industry (my wife's genes) -- in Atlanta)

makes his literary appearance along with the adult Claire in TWA and continues to appear throughout the trilogy. After I am long dead, they can tell their grand children that they have been indelibly woven into modern fantasy literature by "The Dude" (I refuse to be called "grand [anything]").

NATHAN SIMPSON- COFFELT AND THE DEATH OF APPLES

June 18, 2021



The other night Nathan Simpson-Coffelt, nephew of the Aliens Everett and Michelle (Nathan immediately demonstrated alien tendencies), stopped by with his paperback copy of TWA for an inscription and to meet Claire. He and his mother have been visiting E&V while they are also doing road trips to Yellowstone and other parts of Wyoming. Didn't get to see the space ship they've been travelling in, as it must have been shrunk and tucked away in Casa Coffelt.

Claire, always accommodating to her fans, welcomed the photo opp with young Nathan and when the time came to inscribe the book, took a page from those old westerns where the horse lies down for its cowboy to become a shield during a shoot out, and offered her body up as a field desk to allow me to lean on something when I wrote the inscription. She is selfless, she is!

Nathan, a compatriot creative type who is an actor by trade, then accompanied me on my next morning's rounds so I gave him the cook's tour, introduced him to all of the animals (and some of the people, like Pam Ervin & Tique, for instance) and I explained every nook and cranny of the area and how it all worked itself into TWA (and the other novels).

So now Nathan is the repository for the minutia of the entire back story to Claire's Universe and my role in it, in case I am struck by a milk truck (right Eileen?). So all of you potential video biographers out there who may feel the desire to record that back story to The Claire Trilogy, look Nathan up (Albuquerque, NM) and he'll set you right. Plus his thespian training will only make that story more dramatic in the retelling. A win-win!

Now I've mentioned my beloved cousin, Apples, in some of my earlier blogs, and his role as a recurring character in my youthful adventures. Huck to my Tom. I also explained

how, once we all started crossing the barrier into our twenties, Apples disappeared out west never to be heard from again. Well, during a group text among my Riverdale conspirators, during which Apples came up in the retelling of one of the adventures, one of the other recurring characters, BC, put on his detective hat - its really quite a hat, makes one think he may be x-CIA -- and tracked down a Colorado address for another person with a similar name, and after tracking that person on Twitter, I sent him an email asking if he was any relationship to Apples. I was thrilled when I received a text shortly afterwards, from Son of Apples, but then was sad to learn that dear Apples had passed in 2015 from cancer. A life time of ubiquitous cigarettes had finally claimed him. He was one of a kind and shall be missed, but will be memorialized in the future Riverdale Chronicles. Joe Serrano promised to consume a beer in his honor.

Hopefully a Coors.

The good news is that I have not only established a new connection with Son of Apples, who is out here in Colorado, but also then heard from Sister of Apples (whose mother was known as "Sister" among the family), who was a free spirited sweetie growing up, and I then shared that contact information among my siblings. I hope to do better in the future of maintaining my connections to this branch of the family tree and to regale the next generation of that family with the Riverdale tales of Apples. James Joseph ("Apples") McEntee, beloved McCaffrey cousin, Rest In Peace.

A BEND IN THE RIVER (CB)- FINDING HOME (CCB)

June 17, 2021



I'm thrilled to announce that my dear friend, talented writer and auteur, **Colin Broderick**, shared yesterday that his film, ***A Bend In The River***, received two Irish Film and Television Academy ("IFTA") Nominations for 2021: (1) **Actress in a Supporting Role - Kathy Kiera Clarke** for her role as Katie in *A Bend in the River*, and (2) **Original Music - Colm Mac Con Iomaire - A Bend in the River**. As I said in an earlier posting, *ABITR* is a brilliant film that I cannot recommend enough. Well done Colin, Kathy and Colm. Good on you all. Best of luck!

Another important announcement is that my good friend **Christy Cooper Burnett's** brilliant second book, **Finding Home**, drops today and can be purchased on Amazon, Black Rose Writing's website, and the other major outlets. This is the sequel to **No Way Home** (and will be followed by **Escaping Home** this November) mentioned in earlier posts and for which I have provided a 5 star review

on Amazon. For those of my readers waiting for An Alien Appeal to drop in December, I recommend catching up on this entire three book series before then. You will love the writing, characters and the story lines. Good luck Christy! In closing, I am compelled to mention the "**Best Title Among TWA Reviews**" which I have awarded to **Tom R** for his review on June 13, 2021: "**Love this Ass.**"

CATHY WALLEN BEAUSEIGNEUR & THE READERS INNER CIRCLE

June 16, 2021



Cathy is my sister-in-law, one of the Wallen Witches, and one of the two SILs who - among the others in the readers' inner circle -- read my novels as I write them (Dina, the youngest of the WW coven, a half-blood fairy/witch, is the other - and is great on the mystical aspects of life). Cathy's husband Beau (a magical grand-wizard ballbreaker of the

highest order - right from the moment I met him) also gets the insider's look, as each one of them provide a valuable viewpoint from a different demographic. I thank them all for their time, honesty and counsel.

Cathy is a supervisory level counselor by day and is also an excellent writer. For AAA, she provided me with a valuable insight that led me to go back and add a new chapter, after I had thought I had completed the novel. That's a very hard thing to do because I am extremely stubborn, just ask Lisa.

That recommended addition made a big difference in the final story. With KMAG, Cathy was buried with work and just got to reading the entire novel last weekend. True to form, she came back with a tiny tweak yesterday to the turning point in the novel that, in retrospect, made all the difference in the world. I immediately made the suggested change and sent the new version off to the publisher. Thank you Cathy.

All my inner circle readers are invaluable to me. That includes my wife, Lisa, who has such a nose for inconsistencies that we call mistakes appearing in films and television shows we watch "Lisas". She is my muse.

Another example of tiny tweaks in TWA based upon specialties of members of the inner circle came from Lenny, a Culinary Institute of America educated professional Chef of the highest order (as well as a damn fine poet). His contribution resulted in a tweak to the Italian restaurant scene early in the novel. Other readers like Dianne Rosenthal are excellent typo hunters and grammarians, and Eileen Cotto, a renown contrarian, challenged me on a number of items in the final two books which resulted in an ongoing debate over the lethal nature of a milk truck that continues to this moment. Jimmy Fronsdaahl was absolutely invaluable to me in getting TWA put to bed and in writing AAA. He knows The Claire Trilogy story (and backstory)

structure and characters better than I do. My sisters (V&B) were invaluable in capturing life across the pond that plays such a major role in the last two books of The Claire Trilogy.

There are others like Helen LaLousis (shout out across the veil to Uncle Gus) who hate to read, but knows her restaurants and Greek dishes, and if I can grab her attention and keep it, I know I have something. Michael ("Mikey") Abrams, provides me feedback from a lawyer's viewpoint and I know if he likes the story, we are off to the races. And Carl Fisher, the physicist, one of Grandpa's boys, vetted my science for the second two books. I want to give a separate shout-out to the brilliant author Margaret Reyes Dempsey ("Mind Games"), who, when reading AAA for purposes of providing a cover blurb, raised a potential moral sensitivity issue -- remember, despite my emotional evolution, I remain at my core an unapologetic male of our species -- which was then resolved with a tweak.

I cannot imagine how lonely it would be to write a novel in a complete vacuum. I know I have been blessed by the access to immediate feedback throughout the creative process. For those other readers of the inner circle whose only contribution was their expressed continued enjoyment in following the characters and story of the trilogy, that has value to me as well, because that is my *raison d'être* as a writer. Thank you one and all.

Finally, above is a photo of my loyal companions, Jeter (named after Yankee Legend, Derek) and Blue (yep), who are so exhausted listening to me prattling on about my stories that they turn their faces to the wall and feign sleep whenever they enter my home office.

Tolkien's Trees - Happy Birthday Lenny

June 15, 2021



The first thing I noticed when I arrived at my new home in Colorado, was this huge fir tree standing directly opposite the front door. Jack the Spruce stands about twice as high as the house. Its long branches screen the front door from view from the street and it creates a wonderful feeling of protection from all that is negative in the world. As you can see below there is the feral cat grotto, with the nuclear bomb proof cat house, Smaug the cat napping dragon, and the three fairies, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella, caring for the flowers underneath. You can even see our feral cat, Smokey, in the foreground. Lisa and I have adorned Jack

with all kinds of exotic looking wind chimes and amulets.

When the wind blows Jack sounds like a tinny orchestra, just to let us know he's on the job.

As I have mentioned, I have been a fan of JRR Tolkien since the 70s. I have loved all of his magical characters. But one that always stood out for me was Treebeard of the Fangorn forest. Talk about a character having your back. So, I have always considered the trees to be the protectors of mankind here on earth. As an example, there was a huge (40 feet tall) tulip tree in my backyard in Riverdale that watched over my family for five generations, who my grandfather, the infamous Spaghetti (no exaggerating that character), nurtured for almost 30 years. So when I wrote TWA, I made sure to include an equally magical tree in my story. Jack the Spruce is as magical as they come. That move he pulls towards the end of TWA didn't appear until the actual final edit to the manuscript. I wanted to give his character that brief moment in the sun. Don't blink or you'll miss it.

In closing, let me wish my dear friend, life-long conspirator, and amazing poet, Mark Lenahan, a healthy and happy birthday. Enjoy your day, buddy! Now, what are we all going to do with the second half of our lives?

The Grand Kahuna

June 14, 2021



This is my fireplace, who I have named The Grand Kahuna. I know I have an overactive imagination but I defy anyone to tell me that this fireplace does not look like a giant stone face that would give any of the giant Easter Island heads a run for their money. Indeed, he looks like he's about to gobble up poor Wilson in this photograph. Well TKG is the centerpiece to my living room, the stones go all the way to the vaulted ceiling (my son Luke has scaled it like a rock wall), and he does a great job throwing off dancing shadows

and comforting heat on those cold winter nights. And for that bit of magic, TGK is greatly appreciated.

Speaking of comfort, I received the good news yesterday from one of the writers I have asked to provide a blurb for the cover of *An Alien Appeal*, Christy Cooper Burnett (No Way Home/Finding Home/Escaping Home), that she has completed reading the sequel and "loved every word of it."

Whew!!! You have to understand, Christy's first novel won the 2020 California Author Project award in the Adult Fiction category, and the 2020 PenCraft Award in the Science Fiction category. So given the story-line of my sequel, I was holding my breath waiting to hear back from her. I felt the same way while waiting for the blurb from the equally talented writer in this genre, Margaret Reyes Dempsey.

Luckily, that was comparably positive. I am thrilled to have lined up two such talented women writers (waiting on the third) for the cover of AAA (I had three men for the first).

Three is a lucky number.

While every writer must believe in their own work, or why bother sitting down at the keyboard, I would be lying if I did not admit that my anxiety level has been tweaked by the consistent requests by reviewers for the publication of the remainder of The Claire Trilogy, which includes lines like "I definitely want to read the rest of the Claire Trilogy to see if it lives up to high expectations set by Wise Ass." (Linhem, 6/7/21). I am thrilled that the readers want to see more of the characters, and trust me, those reviews certainly assisted in bringing the remaining two books to market (so please keep them coming), but seeing the gauntlet thrown by a reviewer can be daunting. Speaking from my limited experience, when you are writing your first novel, you create your story praying someone beyond your immediate family will like it. When you write your sequel, you are praying that

you don't disappoint any of the readers that enjoyed the first novel. They have become emotionally invested in your characters, which is wonderful, so you cannot let them down. I know, its an impossible standard to meet, and yet you must try. I take that obligation to my readers very seriously.

That is why I have a small circle of readers who read my work chapter by chapter as I write it and give me instant feed back. They are an honest bunch. One of my readers, Dianne R, volunteered that she was afraid to start reading the draft of the second novel for fear it would not live up to the first. So I knew right from the beginning, that I better bring my A game. For what it is worth, to continue the sports analogy, when I completed AAA and then KMAG, I promise you I "left it all on the floor."

So thank you one and all for continuing to purchase, read and promote TWA. I really appreciate the support.

Can Never Have Enough Dragons

June 13, 2021



Timing is everything. Yesterday, after an arduous morning mowing and weed whacking the front property, I accompanied my wife Lisa to a local nursery to check out shade trees that Lisa hoped to install on the west side of the side deck (She selected two that will grow to create the perfect canopy and wind screen should we live long enough - thank you Codi). Now I had been coveting the above particular oversized concrete dragon for quite some time, but could never justify its expense. I have other smaller concrete dragons in the area around the front of my home.

My first was Tolkien, who sits on the other end of the front patio and keeps an eye on the front lawn, the bird bathes and fountain, and on the road beyond. His twin, Scooter, who arrived later, sits on the front stoop, collects pine-cones and watches who comes in the path from the driveway.

Smaug lies curled up in a cat nap in front of the feral cat grotto under Jack the Spruce, with one half opened eye carefully trained on the front door. I have one more dragon perched on the back retaining wall, a female named Drakaina, who single handedly watches over the entire back area (the females of all species are so much more efficient).

But I had this one spot tucked away in the corner that I had been saving for this particular dragon.

It is common knowledge among those steeped in the magical and whimsical that one of the key traits of dragons is their desire to protect. In this crazy world, you cannot have enough protection. (Side note, I first developed a real love for dragons reading another wonderful author named Anne McCaffrey in the early seventies. Of course, then I read LOTR).

Yesterday, as we were heading towards the outdoor tree area, we passed this dragon, who was holding court among other smaller concrete dragons at the front of Loveland

Garden Center & Nursery right off 287. Out of reflex I stopped and looked at the price tag around his neck, sighed and continued on my path towards the trees. Lisa stopped behind me and actually looked more carefully at the price tag, and using her female superpower spotted a smaller tag adhered to its bottom that said that this dragon was 20% off. The more expensive an item is, the more 20% actually means something.

So, after we selected the two trees Lisa wanted to install, as we headed back inside to pay for the future arbors, Lisa stopped at the dragon and proclaimed that it could be my Father's Day gift. I was a kid at Christmas.

But this dragon was not going to come easily. At an awkwardly distributed 225 lbs. (the weight of The Ginger) it took myself and two nursery men of much younger years to load the creature into my Toyota Rav 4. Once I got it home, it refused to leave the SUV, having made its very heavy self comfortable in the back. With much effort by both man and spouse, Lisa has always been preternaturally strong, it had to be shimmed onto a the end of a large wooden plank and then slid down to the concrete base just in front of the garage, where our large concrete Lion, Henri (that's right, he's French) watched silently from his post on the far side of the garage opening. This dragon was then hoisted onto my industrial strength hand truck and rolled past Scooter, Smaug, and Jack the Spruce along the front path ever so slowly to its final resting place in the back corner of the front patio. As Tolkien, the three metal Fairy sisters (Scarlett, Savanna and Stella, no resin for this collector) and Smokey the feral cat, from her perch on one of Jack's branches, all watched in great anticipation, the large dragon was carefully shimmed into its forever home. Note, to those studying the above photo, the elf to the right, sitting in a flower pot with

his back to the dragon, is Lucian. Of course he remained asleep the whole time.

Once installed, this very large and heavy dragon, declared himself the king of all the other smaller dragons on the property, and they in turn, pledged their fealty to him. And as all royalty for time immemorial have done when installed to the throne, this dragon selected a regal name worthy of his title, choosing in this case the name of the biggest and baddest dragon he could think of. Long live King Drogon! (Thank you George R.R. Martin).

Pity the fool who comes onto my property seeking mischief.

The Stifling of Storytellers

June 12, 2021



Wombat

**Review of the Wise Ass**

Reviewed in the United States on June 8, 2021

I am reminded of the quote of the person who read Tom Sawyer: he said he told Samuel Clemens that he was very sorry that he had read the book, because he had liked it so much he wished that he had the pleasure of reading it again for the first time. I really hope the author writes a sequel, because I want to know about the sister, and the characters are so interesting I would like to see what happens next for them also. I don't normally care for para psychology in a book, but the characters were so believable I enjoyed the time I spent in their world.

Helpful

Report



Tejanogrande

**Fantastic**

Reviewed in the United States on June 7, 2021

Loved every part of this book from beginning to end. Eagerly awaiting the next in the series. Please please hurry.

Helpful

Report



Linhen



As I have mentioned many times, I read every single review.

Its part of my daily routine after I wake up and feed the dogs and then take them with me outside to feed the mules each morning. I love each positive review, no matter how brief, because it lets me know that there is one more person out there who has made time in their lives to read TWA, "gets" the story and has taken the time to post the review.

As of this morning, five star reviews make up about 65% of the total I have received since 2/18/21. Another twenty-five percent are four star, and while the competitor in me used to get upset at what I consider a B grade, I have found that each one of those reviews has been just as glowing as the top tier (Patricia S. Bundy's "like a superb soup" 4 star review was particularly creative and appreciative).

Hopefully I will bump it up to the top tier for them all with An Alien Appeal and KMAG.

I do read the negative reviews, which I consider anything below 4 star, at least once just to see if there was something I missed and can fix going forward. Everyone has a right to their opinion and I must accept that I am just not for everyone. There has only been a couple of actual posted 1 to 3 star reviews, most of them just satisfied with giving me 3 or less stars alone like a drive by shooting and moving on.

On this topic, I did read a frightening email thread yesterday by a very intelligent and discerning source in the writing industry who goes under the moniker "Counter Craft" entitled "Morality Plays and Goodreads Threats." It discusses the rising cancel culture in literature where a group of on-line justice warriors (both conservative and

liberal) are attempting to extort censorship in literature under the threat of burying a book on Goodreads and Amazon in one star reviews. For authors who self publish or publish through small independent publishers, that is tantamount to a death sentence. As a new author, I find that terrifying.

I have selected parts of this email to reproduce below:

"But it's perhaps strange to see those ostensibly invested in books be trying to narrow the scope of literature. Insisting that all villains must be punished. That all crimes must be condemned. That all offensive lines of dialogue get direct pushback from other characters so that no reader could possibly draw the wrong lessons. Basically, that all literature needs to be a series of Goofus and Gallant comics in which a text explicitly states what is good and what is bad."

"Part of this just seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding of how art works. Art is at best a form of indirect communication in which the author can attempt to nudge readers in different directions but is unlikely to succeed. You simply can't control what people will take from art. Right-wing fascists love to quote Orwell, a man who literally joined the Spanish Civil War to fight fascism. [Paul Ryan rocked out to *Rage Against the Machine* while tuning up the machine.](#) Everyone, as Elif Batuman put it, thinks they're Dumbo."

"The ideal that a book must signal so clearly delineate its author's politics to a degree that no reader anywhere could possibly take away the "wrong" message is quite literally an impossibility. It's just not how this works."

"The insistence on moral purity in fiction is an especially odd stance in a time when—let's just be honest—barely anyone reads fiction. The idea that a novel that will *at best* have a tiny fraction of the audience of Marvel movie or even the nightly news can “normalize” anything in 2021 just seems naïve."

"There is, of course, lots of bad art out there. Lots of art that is sexist, racist, and so on. All of that is deserving of critique. But it's also vital to preserve art as a space for exploration of ideas, even dark ones. Despite what some Twitter critics claim, I don't think this is a defense of the privileged. I think it's quite the opposite. Notice how all the writers attacked in my first paragraph were women, POC, queer or all three? We need art to be the space where we can be messy, confused, honest, contrary, mysterious, and, yes, even wrong."

* * *

* *

I appreciate Counter Craft's position. I recently received a one star review on Goodreads that summarily dismissed TWA as some form of extreme liberal propaganda.

Seriously. I'm guessing it is because the novel is openly accepting of the LGBT community and the main character becomes a vegetarian during the course of the story.

Readers often confuse the writer with a character they write about. However, to be attacked based on those grounds would not only prevent a writer from ever creating a villain, but also a fallible hero, or even interesting and distinct supporting characters. There can be no arc, redemption or transformation of your characters. Where is the interest in that? It would prevent a writer from including characters ranging from a serial killer to a immature teenager to a

prostitute to a titan of industry to a street criminal to a politician in his/her novel for fear that the locals with torches and pitch forks would draw some inferences about the author's personal, moral or political leanings and arrive to burn down their home in the middle of the night. That is stifling to me not only as a writer, but as a citizen of this wonderful country of ours. Drawn to its logical conclusion, not only is the author at risk, but anyone carrying a copy of the novel will be outed as some form of sympathizer and cancelled as well. And forget the poets out there, you would be FUBAR. We must not let this happen. We are better than that.

Anyway, I hope discerning visitors to any book on Amazon or Goodreads makes the effort to read past those one star snipers who don't even have the courage to support their position with an actual review with specific, objective critical references to the novel itself. That is cowardice.

The same holds true with the bottom dwellers on other social media sites who believe they can impose their will on even established authors.

<https://slate.com/culture/2021/06/elin-hilderbrand-casey-mcquiston-antisemitism-israel-social-media.html>

We must not continue to give them oxygen or the form of the novel as we know it will cease to exist.

But to end this posting on a positive note, I am compelled to reference the above-posted, wonderful five star Amazon review by Wombat, who was nice enough to mention my work in the same paragraph as the writer Samuel Clemens.

That's the honey any writer yearns for. Thank you Wombat!

Missed Again!

June 11, 2021



I remember hearing a joke as a kid about ballsy bishop from New York named Lenahan who was a foul mouthed golfer.

It is well known among us Catholics that all men of the cloth enjoy their golf. This bishop was no different. However, whenever he missed a putt on the green, he would shout "Oh shit! missed again!"

One day, the bishop was out on the links with a young priest who was astonished to hear such language coming from a man of God.

"Your Grace," the young priest said respectfully as they approached the 18th green, "aren't you worried about Our Dear Lord becoming angry with a prince of his church having such a foul mouth?"

"Fuck Him if He can't take a joke," said the bishop in reply, "now kindly remove your ball from in front of mine so I can finish my game."

The young priest did as he was told and as he stepped out of the bishop's line of sight to the hole, the bishop putted and the ball rolled softly towards its mark, only to be diverted at the last second by the forces that be and missed the cup by centimeters.

"Oh shit!" screamed the bishop, waving his putter over his head in defiance, "missed again!"

Suddenly, a lightning bolt flew down from the heavens and disintegrated the poor young priest who stood just feet away from the blasphemous bishop.

"Oh shit!" came the almighty voice of God from the heavens, "missed again!"

Now as a young man who had been tossed off the St. Margaret's altar boys (the same day as my oldest brother, after we were compelled to learn the Latin Mass I might add), forgive me if I found this joke to be funny. But as an Irish-American who has grown up in mother church, I understood from immersion therapy that ours could be a judgmental and wrathful God, if pushed far enough. So there was context.

Anyway, after our small town's recent near miss on the Tornado front the other day, my youngest brother, John (yep, him), who still owns and lives in the McCaffrey Compound back in the Bronx, sent me the above photo of the exact moment a lightning bolt struck directly between the two family houses the day after we had our Tornado.

From the vantage point of the talented and brilliant photographer (if someone sends me your name I will provide you credit for this newsworthy photograph), the photo must have been taken facing east from on top of one

of the three tall buildings overlooking the Hudson River called Sky View. If you expand the photo you will see geographic markers like the stores on Riverdale Avenue - Hi Enzo, Chrissy, Cathy and the Bagel Shop crew - and off to the background right, you will see the silhouette of the Russian Mission, which just sits a bit south from our compound on the opposite side of Mosholu Avenue.

The lightning strike fried all of the important electronics (the cable box and flat screen TV) in John's house and basically scared the shit out of everyone.

"I guess He didn't get your forwarding address," John deadpanned.

"Oh shit," I replied. "Missed again!"

Now I say this with tongue in cheek, because I do believe that the perfect God of my people has a sense of humor, or She would never have created an Irishman in the first place.

But just in case, I will make sure to keep my eye heaven bound to look for flying houses or thunderbolts.

Unfortunately for those of you who are more scientifically oriented, six feet social distancing will put you right in the danger zone, so the closer you stand to me, the better.

And God, if you are reading my blog, I'm just kidding. *Mea maxima culpa.*

CAT FOUNTAINS & CONGRATS HELEN LALOUSIS

June 10, 2021



The thing about Colorado is that the weather can be extreme. In the spring, it can go from the forties to the nineties in one day. You want to get your outside watering done in the early morning because it gives the water a

chance to soak into the earth around your plants rather than being quickly lost to evaporation.

Smokey the Cat is a stray that showed up this past winter. I first noticed cat tracks in the snow coming along the front of my house and so I started leaving out some food for it on the porch. After a while Lisa and I started to watch for it and we finally spotted this beautiful small grey cat coming by each day for a snack. Lisa named the cat Smokey. With the weather so cold and snowy, Lisa decided to order an industrial strength outdoor cat house that would keep the animal warm and pretty much withstand not only the precarious Colorado weather, but probably a nuclear blast.

We placed it in a tiny grotto that is formed at the base of Jack the Spruce, that provided additional protection from the elements and any overhead predators that might mistake Smokey for one of its natural prey. We leave Smokey wet and dry cat food and a bowl of water each day. But the water quickly disappears so Smokey is reduced to visiting our fountain if we don't get out there quick enough to replenish its water bowl.

Smokey is a sweetie. She now waits out on the porch each morning, not for the food, but for a cuddle. So Lisa and I can be found switching off, sitting on the front porch steps while Smokey leaps into our laps and receives a good rub down. I once read somewhere that petting a cat does wonders for your blood pressure and reduces stress. Thank God for Smokey.

Of course, now that I've lowered my blood pressure with a good cuddle from Smokey, its been re-elevated by learning that TWA is back at #1 on Amazon's Kindle Dark Humorous Comedy List (#7 Psychic Suspense, #6 Legal Thrillers (Books), #11 Legal Thrillers (KU)). Thank you all for getting me here. Now where is that cat?

Just want to give a shout out to my dear friend Helen LaLousis (yep, her) who just passed her Real Estate License exam. Well done Helen!!!

Aunty-Em, Aunty-Em, Mark Has Published A Poem On Our Site

June 9, 2021



I've told you all that Berthoud is a magical place. Claire speaks for herself, the UFO phenomenon (I refuse to change the acronym) is alive and well in our area and throughout the US, and we have the most magnificent rainbows (the one in the photo posted on the top of this site was taken on Beverly Drive and that is my Toyota - love that car). Bobbi Allison (Angelini in TWA), who lived by me for a while, is every bit as paranormally gifted as her literary character, if not more so. She's on the Internet, look her up. We also have a large number of Hot Air Balloon Enthusiasts in our area. Now, to complete the literary comparisons, we have twisters in the area (the photo above was downloaded from the Next Door app and, despite my best Luddite efforts, I could not go back and find the wonderful person who posted this particular photo - but if you own it, reach out to me and I will immediately add your name with the proper attribution - or remove it if you insist. I claim no rights to this photo). Luckily, no one was harmed by this particular twister. However, I do keep one eye skyward to avoid having a house drop on me. Better than a milk truck, right Eileen?

These events were harbingers of something truly magical. which was having my friend Mark Lenahan - yes, the basis for the US Marshall -- post one of his (dystopian?) poems in the comment section of yesterday's blog (see below). I hope that one hundred years from now, some literary biographer will make note of this event. If not, at least I've done it here. If you have not read it, I recommend you go back and do so. Its worth the couple of extra clicks. He's a natural talent.

Mark Lenahan Poet & Keith McDermott Photographer

June 8, 2021



Those of you that have read TWA (or the other books in The Claire Trilogy) know that I am incredibly visual in my writing style. I don't think in words. I see the story actually play out in my head, just like I'm watching a film. As a result, I am in awe when I see the work of real photographers capturing a moment.

The above photo was taken by Keith McDermott. It is a photo of my dear friend Mark Lenahan, the basis for the character who appears throughout The Claire Trilogy (and beyond?), sitting in An Beal Bocht, reading a copy of TWA with an open bottle of Macallan within reach. Now I could have tried to snap that shot 100 times and never matched the lighting and composition (right down to the symmetrical placement of that cork). That is true art.

Keith is an artist. A photographer. We all have our day jobs, and Keith's is working at ABB as an affable, rascally bartender who has developed a regular following as all good ones do. (A good bartender, like a good mechanic and tailor, must be treasured). As a matter of fact, I believe Keith was working the last night I was in the Bronx where I met Mark for a quick meal at ABB (northern side of 238th Street, a long block east from Riverdale Avenue) and had our "middle fingers" photo taken by the attractive auteur Aoife Williamson (how's that for alliteration), who at the time was working on staff at ABB.

Keith has a wonderful collection of stills he has shot over the years that can be found and purchased at **kmcdermottphotography.com**. While the photo is visually worth the price of admission standing alone, just for kicks, anyone who purchases a copy of the above photo from Keith should ask him to sign it and have Mark and me inscribe it with little personalized notes addressed to the purchaser or any one else they request. Mark can easily

make that happen. I'm in as long as the other two go for it. I will always support another artist. Who knows, maybe your grandchildren can flog it on PBS's Antique Roadshow someday.

I took a leisurely stroll through Keith's collection last night and for the first time since I left NYC, I felt homesick for the city that never sleeps. Keith McDermott does not take photographs, he captures moments. Love his up close shots of the Brooklyn Bridge.

I have always loved Untermeyer Park in Yonkers. I have been there many times in youth and early adulthood. It has an interesting history, including as the place where Son of Sam and friends purportedly performed animal sacrifices as part of a cult in the 70s (check out the "Sons of Sam" documentary that is out on Netflix). Keith has a collection of photos taken at UP, my favorite being the one of the Gazebo that sits back in the woods. It is haunting.

Speaking of artists, if any of you ever corner Mark Lenahan at ABB or anywhere else, ask him if he'll read any of his poetry for you. Mark's lyrics evoke and match Bukowski in creativity, pathos and humor (I have read most of his work).

And he has a great reading voice. So go on, don't be shy, buy him two fingers of Macallan and ask him. You'll be in for a treat.

Keurig & Selfies

June 7, 2021

8:20



E

Eileen Cotto >



Text Message



Not even sure how I managed to combine those two photos above but they were taken yesterday in the backyard while I was watching the mules. Claire insisted on holding the camera for our selfie. She also wanted to try on my hat (thanks again BC). Don't know where that black smudge came from below my eye. I think she was just trying to distract me so that Honey could raid Lisa's Geraniums. It almost worked. I caught her just before she started munching. Once I realized I was being played, I shuttled them both back through the side gate, and continued with my Keurig shucking, its amazing how quickly those accumulate. But I got a large batch of coffee to go around the bases of all five apple trees and a large batch of empty Keurig containers for recycling.

Got to catch up with my dear friend Helen LaLousis (she does exist) who, among the many other roles she juggles on a daily basis, is studying for her real estate license. Much love and good luck on your test this week. You're going to crush it.

Once I completed all of my chores, I realized that I had an hour to kill before Lisa got home from work, so I opened my iPhone to the Kindle book I had been saving for just this moment, and began reading "No Way Home: A Time Travel Novel of Adventure and Survival" by Christy Cooper-Burnett. If you have read any of my work, you know that I love strong female characters who have a subtle comical observational sensibility even during dramatic moments. The lead character and narrator, Christine Stewart, fits the bill perfectly (I am wondering if there is a Darryl Burnett out there, lol.)

Anyway, before I knew it, Lisa arrived home and I had to put the book down, but I am locked in on this story and cannot wait to see how this author resolves this very precarious situation she has artfully placed her heroine in. This is one of those sneak some reading while you are supposed to be doing other things kind of book because you just cannot stay away. In fact, I'm going to grab a few more pages after I finish this blog and before the real world intrudes. Stay tuned.

One final note. Thank you AJ and Andi (and JoEllen and Cowboy) for the invite to your "red-neck wedding."

From all appearances a good time was had by all. I wish the bride and groom nothing but happiness.

Lesley Romani & Karen "Cruiser" Ans

June 6, 2021



Like



Comment




Share




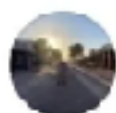


Lesley Romani and 7 others

All Comments

2 Shares

**Mark Lenahan**...and you can meet my alter-ego!!!  3on Thu [Like](#) [Reply](#) [More](#)**Karen Anderson**

Yes Mark right there in the book!

I just found out all three of his books are going to be on Audible! Yay on Thu [Like](#) [Reply](#) [More](#)**Packie Jo Gilheany**Looking forward to part two, didn't know it was a trilogy. Great read from a great guy . 13 hrs [Like](#) [Reply](#) [More](#)**Lesley Romani**I'm in love with this book! Tommy has me crying with laughter with his descriptive prose. This book is SO Tommy! 100% highly recommended! 3 hrs [Like](#) [Reply](#) [More](#)

Write a comment...

Post



Didn't get a chance to post early this morning because I needed to check out some legal issues for my day job.

Then there were the chores.

Karen Cruiser Anderson forwarded an exchange lifted from the Riverdale NYC FB page. It included a posting by Lesley Romani, a childhood friend I haven't seen or heard from since High School. I actually know her since kindergarten.

Last I heard she had moved to London with Terry Carrigliano (I hope I got that spelling right). However, I was thrilled to learn she not only has read and loved TWA, but that the novel was "SO Tommy." Hi Lesley, thanks for the review. It may seem strange, but it is important to me that people who knew me growing up see my writing as a true reflection of the person they knew, and not as some silly affectation. I am who I am. Thank you Pat Giheaney for the positive words. Thank you Cruiser for starting the post and thank you Lenny for repping your alter-ego. He is no where near the eccentric character that you are, or half the bad ass, but most of you went into him, especially your loyalty. Still hanging tough on the Amazon Bestsellers Lists (#1 Humorous Dark Comedy, #5 Psychic Suspense, #5 Legal Thrillers (books), and #13 Legal Thrillers (KU)). So thanks to each and every one of you who have supported TWA. I am forever in your debt.

The Old Man and the Tree

June 5, 2021



We have this large old tree on the front property that I have always called "Old Man" (which is what my youngest son, Mark, calls me - long before it was actually true - the cheeky bastard!) Old Man has been on Lisa's hit list since our arrival because he has a few dead branches littered throughout his otherwise lush green exterior (don't forget now, make sure I'm fitted with that bell and string). Indeed, this past week, I was compelled by my wife to take down a number of his smaller brethren in his immediate vicinity. Yesterday morning, while I was waiting for the trucker to

arrive and remove my nemesis (see above), I decided I would get out the large ladder and take off some of the more obvious ones and toss them into the 20 Yarder before the pick-up. I hoped it would quell Lisa's blood (sap?) lust. I did manage to get most of them, but there was one branch that sticks out the top of Old Man that I could not reach (and almost fell off the ladder trying to get to it). Don't you know it, whenever I gaze at Old Man now all I can see is that one branch, like a white streak in the hair of Cruella De Ville. All of the harvested branches went onto the top of the already filled dumpster (and there were quite a few, and I understand from Everett, that all seeing alien that watches over the area, that the trucker had a devil of a time getting the cover on the dumpster, which is why I made sure to leave him a tip in an envelope taped to the front of the dumpster.

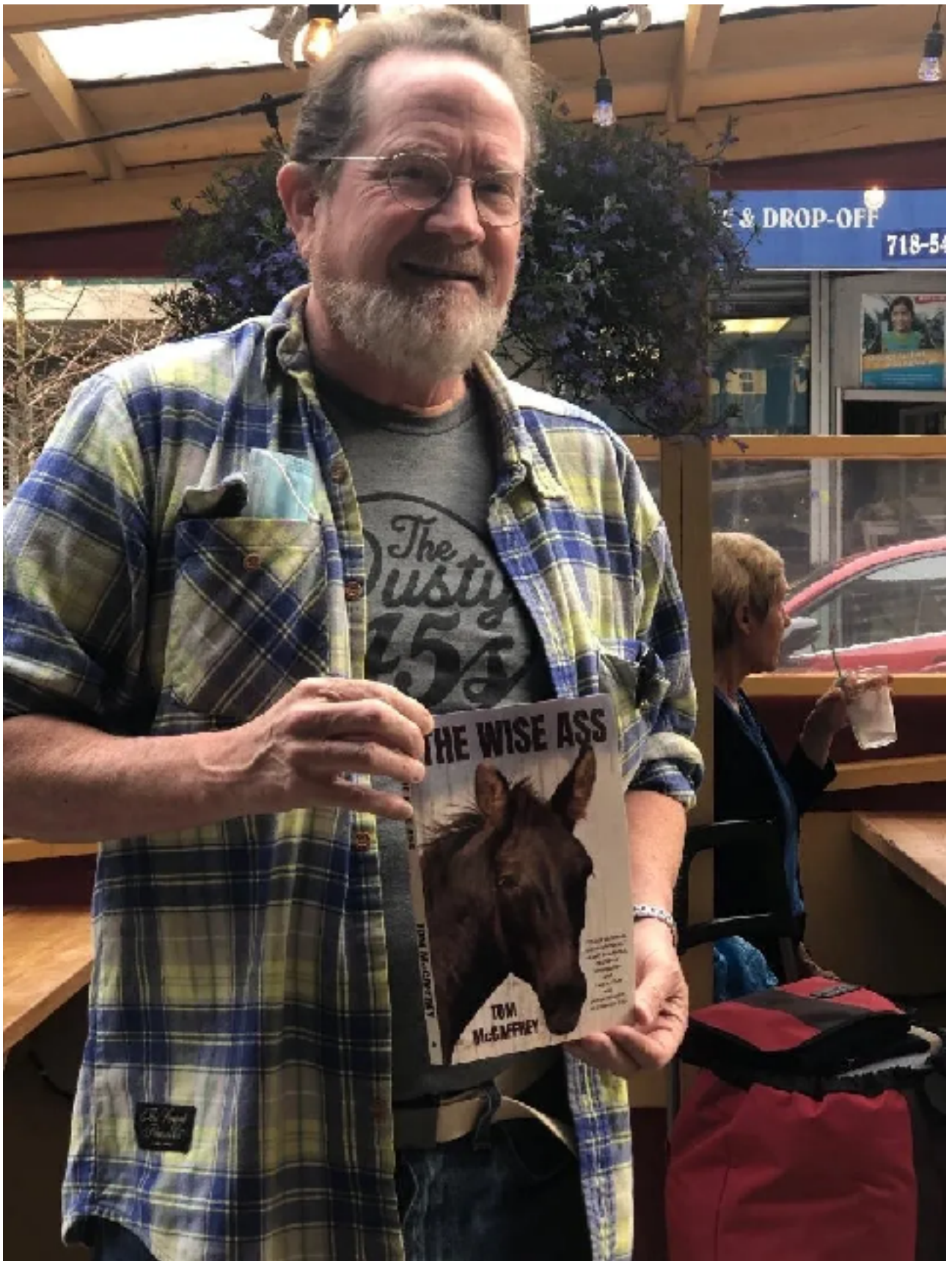
Speaking of Mark, his adorable wife Sara informed us that she was hoping he would be able to do a pop-in for his sister-in-law Dana's upcoming baby shower (I'm confidently counting on the fact that none of them read my blogs so I don't spoil the surprise). They are all NYPD Blue, as is the girls' father, Jimmy Moran, the hero I named the lead human character after in The Claire Trilogy (Hi Jimmy, and Hi to your lovely wife, Liz). I am proud of them all. Back the Blue. I asked Sara to snap a photo if Mark does appear to commemorate (to my limited knowledge) the first male McCaffrey to attend a baby shower. Another barrier broken in the unending quest for male equality. Best wishes for Dana, Kevin and their soon to arrive baby. We struck gold when they joined the Clan.

Today is Berthoud Day. There will be a small parade and other commemorations in my adopted home town. Very Norman Rockwell. I will do my very best to stop into town to view some of the festivities before hopefully heading for my own pop-in at the wedding reception of JoEllen's and Cowboy's son and daughter-in-law at Side Tracked. I am truly honored by the invite.

That means I have to get an early jump of my Saturday chores. That shit isn't going to shovel itself! I wonder if they make mule sized diapers? No rest for the wicked. Have a great Saturday!

BYE BYE DUMPSTER - HI
CRUISER - THANK YOU
SCOTT KENNEDY

June 4, 2021



After one week of torment and back-ache, my most recent arch-nemesis, the 20 yard dumpster, is leaving this morning.

But not before he has had his fill of the extremely heavy detritus (real or imagined) from around my property, as well as final load of scrap wood from the aliens' property down the road. As a last minute dessert, Lisa had me trimming dead branches yesterday from some thorny trees adjacent to Jack the Spruce and tossing them on top of this metal monolith. My wife's understanding of dead is a fluid one.

And I therefore ask of my readers to ensure I am given a long string with a bell attached to it hanging from my headstone, should I suddenly meet my mortal end and find myself planted in a graveyard. You cannot be too careful.

Finally had a totally unexpected meet up with Karen "Cruiser" Beck (Anderson) from the old neighborhood.

Given the 40+ years since I last saw her around Riverdale, she looks great. I met her at a used car lot in Boulder to assist her with a Rube Goldberg plan to purchase a new Prius, but after considering a number of moving parts and potential downsides as filtered through my lawyer's eyes, Karen decided not to pull the trigger. The good news is that I got to meet her adorable little dog Moshe, who will be staying at Casa Claire for a week in July while Karen attends a week long workshop in Aurora. We Riverdalian have an unwritten rule that we drop what we are doing to assist any other Riverdalian that passes through our neck of the woods. Job done.

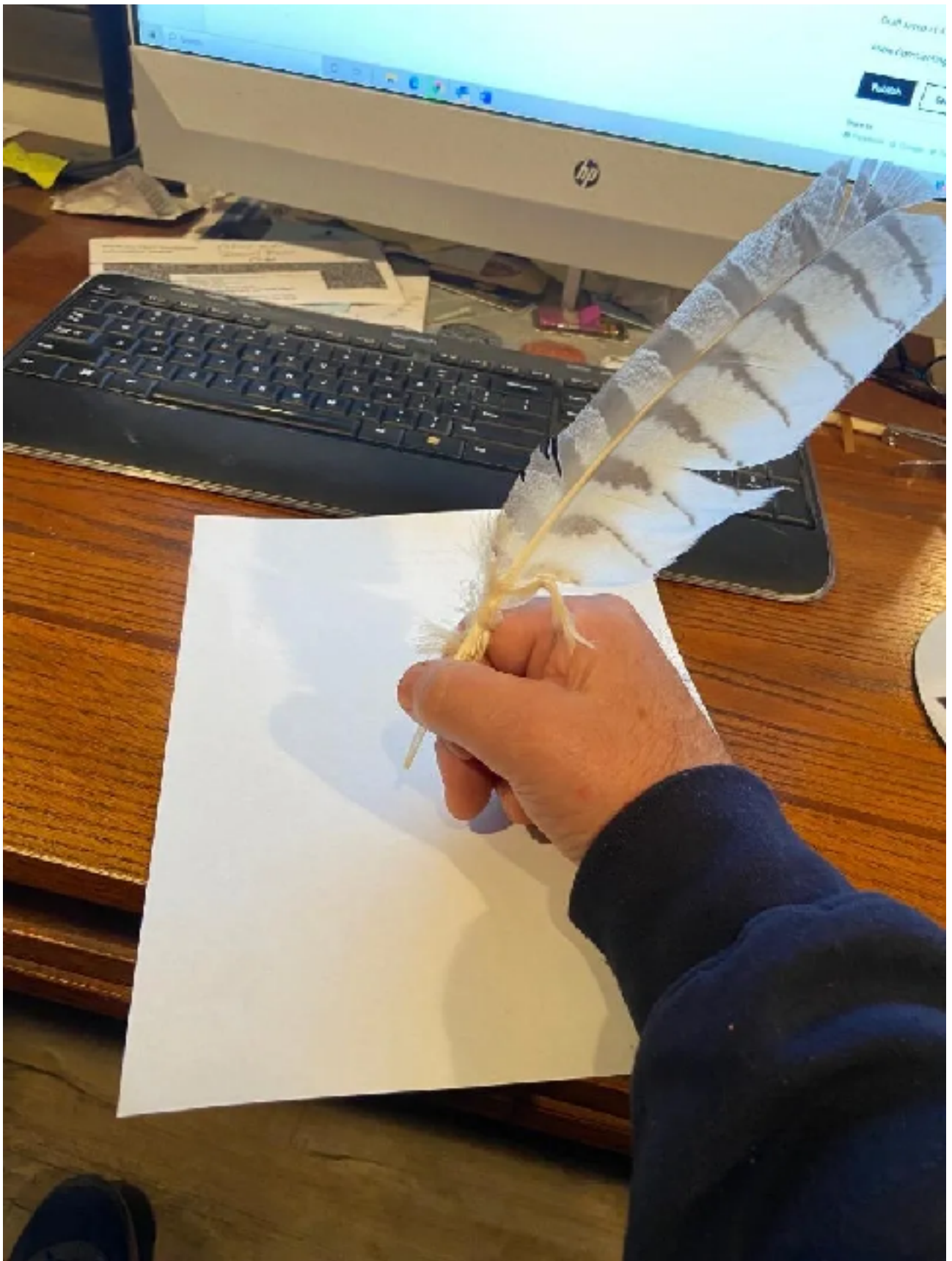
TWA continues to sit comfortably on the four Amazon Kindle Lists (#1 Humorous Dark Comedy, # 3 Psychic Suspense, #6 Legal Thriller Books, # 11 Legal Thrillers KU). I thank all of my friends who continue to push sales among their friends and associates, I would be nothing without your continued support.

Special mention this morning goes to Scott Kennedy (that's the handsome gentleman above) a regular at Tony Caffrey's *An Beal Bocht* Cafe (Gaelic for "The Poor Mouth") -- <http://www.anbealbochtcafe.com> -- who, after a continued and relentless sales pitch from my dear friend, regular customer, and quite the writer, Mark Lenahan, for whom the US Marshall character in TWA (and the sequels) is named, purchased a copy of my novel. Thank you Scott for making the purchase. Enjoy! Tell all of your friends. Thank you Lenny for your persistence. Keep up the great sales work and your writing!

By the way, *An Beal Bocht* (238th Street and a long block east from Riverdale Avenue) is a legendary Irish venue in the Bronx where great published and aspiring writers, poets, musicians and actors congregate and perform. Someone is always writing their next lyrical anthology, play or best selling novel at a table there. If you have never been to an "Irish Pub" this place will tick all of the boxes for your bucket list. I will beg Tony Caffrey (despite his bastardization of our common last name) to allow me to do a reading there should I ever get back East. I will show him a copy of the Billy Collins' letter to Colin Broderick (another ABB Literary Legend) if he needs to see any proof beyond our comparable last names that I am considered both Irish and a writer. That should do it.

HI, MY NAME IS TOM AND I AM A LUDDITE

June 3, 2021



When it comes to technology, I am basically a very smart monkey. When a problem occurs, I usually fumble around banging on the keyboard until something good happens. If I had a few more monkeys tapping on this keyboard I eventually could be writing Shakespeare. I never actually try to remember how I actually fix things, I have unlimited RAM memory but limited space on the hard drive, so once I shut down the computer the RAM stuff disappears forever.

So when the problem reoccurs, and it always does, so does my cursing and swearing!

This morning I could not get into this webpage to write my blog. So I banged on enough keys and suddenly a window opened to my friends (Sumit and his Supervisor) in India (they appear, just like the Jinn), and they patiently - and I mean patiently, because by now I am throwing the keyboard against the wall - walked me through the process of clearing my "cache" in order to allow me to finally get back to my blog writing. Boys, the next round of Chai is on me.

If my hands weren't so old that they would cramp, I would probably go back to a hawk feather, ink and parchment.

But since i have spent all of my blogging time this morning trying to get into my blogging page, I have to cut this blog short. Have a great day.

NEVER GIVE UP

June 2, 2021



I've mentioned in earlier blogs that I went back to Lehman College in 1979, after I married (thank you Lisa for always supporting my efforts), with the intentions of studying literature and creative writing so that I could develop into being a real writer. During my first year there, working in a tutorial with Professor Clement Dunbar III, I wrote a one-act play called Revelations. I had never attempted that writing form before. I was not sure I could do it, but the professor had faith in me. So I tried it.

Revelations was about a small town guy named Barney who was a pillar of the community and did all of the right things.

He stayed in town, bought a bar, and hired one of his childhood best friends to be a bartender there. He was everyman. We learn that there was this other best friend from childhood had left town for the big city and the last Barney had heard, became a successful international lawyer. Twenty years later, Barney gets a message left on his phone machine (remember those pop-up tapes) from this lawyer friend saying that he was coming to town and would like to meet up with Barney, so on the appointed night, the play opens in Barney's bar where Barney and his other childhood friend have been waiting unsuccessfully for the arrival of this lawyer friend. Barney figures something must have happened that caused the friend to cancel and is clearing up the bar while his other friend finishes off a long night of drinking spent waiting for their friend.

Just as Barney is locking the front door a cab pulls up and an attractive woman gets out. As the cab pulls away, it begins to rain and the woman comes to the bar door and knocks. Barney tells her they are closed and she begs him to let her in to call another cab (remember folks this is pre-cell phone). Always the gentleman, Barney relents and she comes in and makes the call, Due to the inclement weather there is an expected wait for the responding cab and Barney invites her to sit and have a drink to kill the time. Of course by now the bartender friend has drank himself to unconsciousness at one of the tables, so its just Barney and the woman, who introduces herself as Janet.

The conversation starts out like any polite conversation between two strangers if they are friendly enough. There is snippets of basic biographical information exchanged and just a little flirting. But it is clear there is a chemistry. As the

wait extends, the dialogue subtly discloses certain knowledge on Janet's part first about the friend and then about Barney that a stranger would not have. Barney ignores it and blames it on the drinks he has been consuming. Finally, as the time gets close to the expected arrival of the cab, Janet discloses that she was Barney's childhood friend, who left town all of those years ago and had a sex change. There is of course the initial shock on Barney's part and things look like they will end badly, but the honesty and history between these two old friends finally surfaces and rapprochement occurs. Janet had placed the final piece of her puzzle onto the board and can now move on from her old life, and love.

I knew nothing of what it was to be transgender, other than what I could discover from books and articles about Christine Jorgensen (the old fashioned way, no internet).

What I did know though was what it was like for someone close to me to be hiding a painful secret. My sister, who had appeared throughout her life to be heterosexual, had recently come out to me. Ours was a very heterosexual Irish Catholic family. We had one gay older cousin named Pat Gaffney (RIP) who had moved out to California and was pretty much abandoned in the Hinterlands (Hi Robert - Pat's wonderful husband). This was serious shit. But being that my sister and I had always been very close, it was the right move for her to approach me with the news. The information did weigh heavy on my shoulders as we talked a lot about how she should handle sharing it with the rest of the family. This all occurred at the time I was writing my one act play. So I channeled my emotions into my writing. I could not type for shit, so my sister offered to do it for me. I still remember the tears streaming down her face as she sat and typed it in her apartment on West End Avenue.

Anyway, I got an A for my project, and then Professor Dunbar pulled me aside and asked if he could submit Revelations for this new City University wide contest, the Jacob Hammer Award for playwriting. He told me that because it was a controversial subject, not to expect a warm reception. He also told me that there was rumors about another play being submitted -- I think it had to do with cowboys -- that was considered a front runner. I figured I had nothing to lose. It was already written and would otherwise spend its life in a drawer with my other creative writing, so I said go for it.

To say I was shocked to learn that I won the award is the understatement of the last century. I took the above photo of the check I received -- \$100 dollars was a lot of money back then -- with one of those small Kodak instamatic cameras with the revolving cube bulbs. It was the first time I had received any compensation for my writing. My wife was thrilled that someone besides her had recognized that I could write. My sister was thrilled as she always was for me whenever I accomplished anything. I'd like to think the whole process helped her in coming out to the family.

Anyway, over a decade later, a friend of mine, Pat Francis, who, among other things, was a gay director of off-off-off Broadway productions, produced and directed a performance of Revelations at the then iconic New York venue The Village Gate. I still have the plaque I received for that performance hanging on my office wall. Pat later staged it again for a week's run at the American Actors Theatre on the upper west side in the 50s. It was warmly received. This was during my early days as an attorney, and I felt like a domesticated dog listening to the cry of wolves in the distant mountains. I could only dream then of the possibility of the freedom of being a writer. But the play

and the plaque kept that burning ember hidden deep in my heart, which I finally used to rekindle the fire of my present writing.

So never let anything stop you from being true to yourself and never give up.

AAA GETS A COVER & TRC CORRECTIONS

June 1, 2021



Brilliant Richard Lamb sent me four proposed covers for AAA this weekend, and as hard as the choice was, the favorite has been selected. I think the readers will be pleased. Reagan Rothe liked the selection. Learned recently that certain evolutionary characteristics found in AAA have been substantiated by the paranormal powers that be on the Gaia network. I'm beginning to feel a little psychic. I could be channeling, since I never remember the

actual writing process. I know I was there, as I can see myself sitting in front of the computer. I just let Claire tell the story and let the elves type the damn thing. For the record, I never read any books or watch any films or shows that could be anywhere close to subject matter of the story I wish to tell in the months leading up to and throughout the time I am writing. I stick to binge watching British or European detective shows (love subtitles) on the BBC, because I know I'll never attempt that genre. But when it comes to fantasy, I don't want to be limited by anyone else's view when it comes to the universe or characters I create, or the powers that I imbue my characters with, no matter how solid it later turns out to be. However, that being said, its nice to learn after the fact that there is a basis for my madness.

Almost had all four Amazon lists in the top ten this morning (Dark Humor #1, Psychic Suspense #2, Legal Thriller Books #5, Legal Thriller KU #11).

Learned that the bachelor party, bar brawl event that I had described in my last post actually occurred in a strip joint called Edgar's Pub and not the Eagle's Nest. What can I say, I was very drunk and it was a very long time ago.

However, I stand by the rest of the story, and BC filled in some interesting details that will make their appearance in The Riverdale Chronicles. Thanks BC.

Wilson has had his week leading up to Memorial Day in the sun up in the main living room in a place of honor right before the fireplace, which I call The Grand Kahuna, because its clear facial features makes it look like it would have been very comfortable among the giant stone heads on Easter Island. Wilson will be returning to his spot near me in the basement, to keep me company while I am working during the day, and to keep a close watch on the back door during the night. He still stands guard over my

family from the other side of the veil. He will return to his spot before the fireplace on July 4th, 9-11 and Veteran's Day. Thank you for your service Wilson!