

# You'll Never See A Three Legged Horse

September 30, 2022



One of the early equine truths I learned from my dear friend Pam Ervin when I moved to NoCo, is that the most important care you

must give a horse has to do with its legs. Unlike a dog, who will hop around on three and even two legs, the equines need all four to survive.

That is why my mules have a very attentive Farrier for their manipedis. He always gives me an update on how their hooves and legs are doing.

Men, on the other hand, are like dogs. We will carry on with a damaged limb(s) because we have less sense than our pooches. Case in point is my frenemy BC. Yes, that BC from KMAG. He also is resurrected in FJM as Brian Kelly.

Well the crazy old bastard was out on his bike the other night when it threw him like a scared horse.

That's the man in the ER shortly afterwards. I think he keeps that blacked out tooth cap in his pocket at all times just for these photo ops.

Pisses me off that he remains the most youthful looking of the crew. Bastard.

Those Claire fans must still have their fatwa in place. Need to work harder. Easier target now that he's limping.

It will be a while before he's back wearing his FMPs.

But he's up and about, hobbling away on that damaged pin, because that's what men do. Carry on BC!

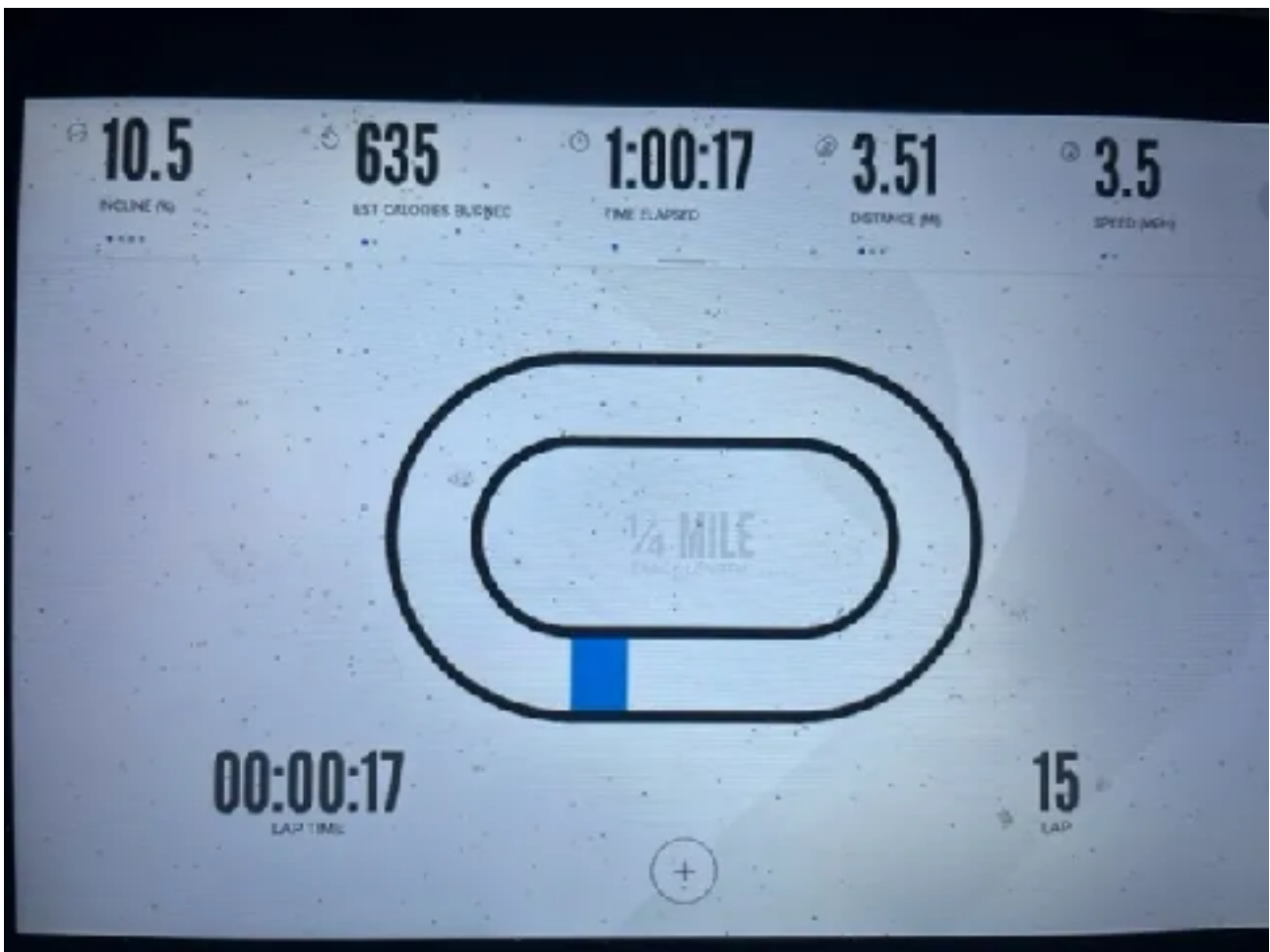
Speaking of hobbling. About six weeks into my daily torture routine, I stepped into a hole while out doing my morning rounds and rolled my right ankle.

Part of me wanted to use that as my excuse to give up the hamster wheel, but then I figured it would mean that all of the prior torture would have been in vain. And being vain, I kept at it.

For some reason, the endorphins kicked in early enough that, as long as I kept my strides even and straight, my right ankle held up.

Relief Factor did the rest. But as I pushed myself harder and harder to try to squeeze out a few more calories to burn in the same time period, I think I crossed the limit.

By the end of week lucky 13 I was increasing the incline every five minutes until I reached 10.5, but I was burning those extra calories:

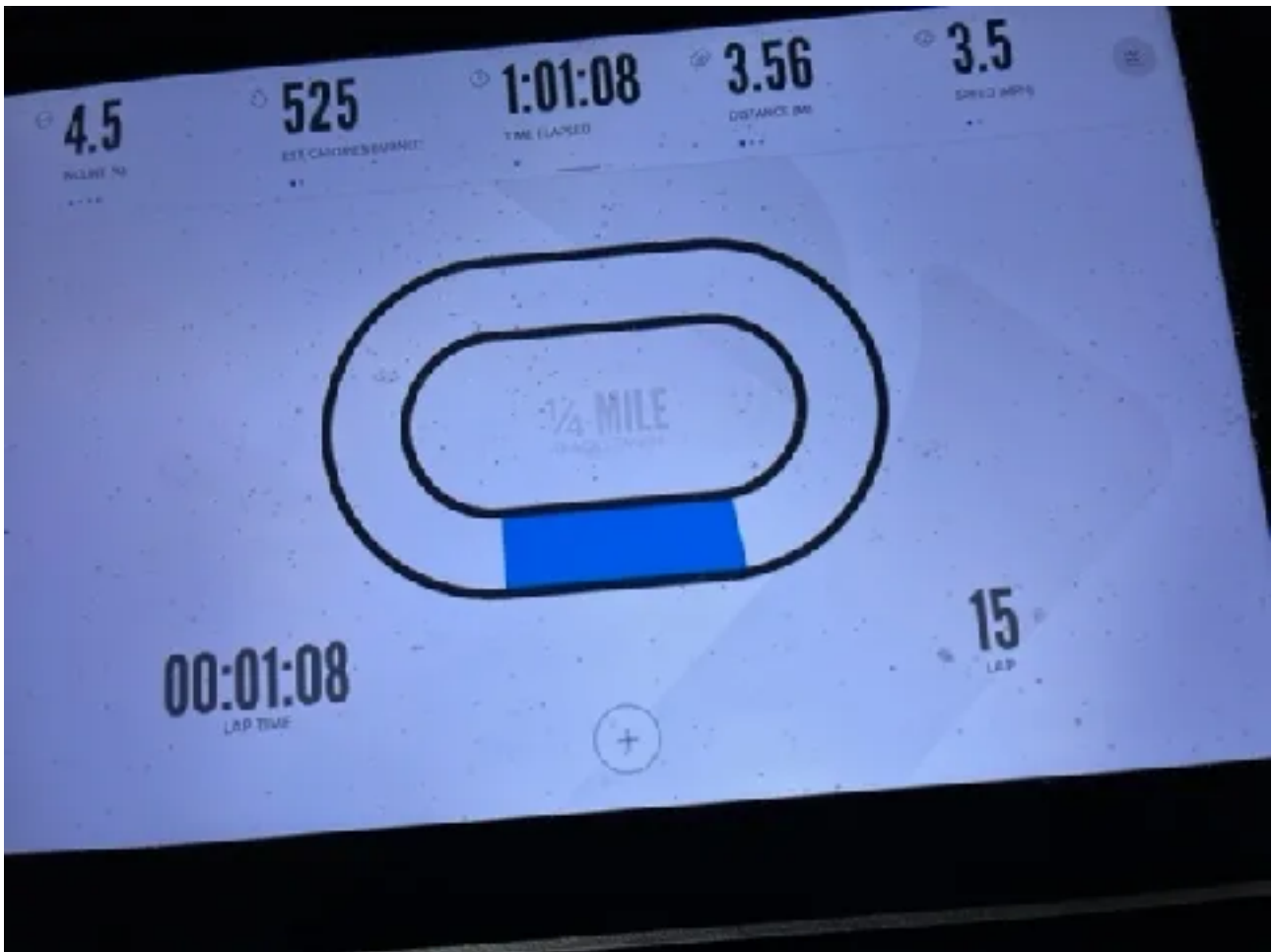


And then it happened. I pushed it too hard and I found myself hobbling around the rest of the day like Festus on Gunsmoke. But I didn't give up. Remember, all men are vain. I got an ankle brace and slathered the effected joint with biofreeze,





then I kept the incline at 4.5 for the whole cycle and went at it.



I was thrilled to see that I only lost 100 or so calories in the process. But then I found that my left knee was getting sore, and I'm guessing it is from trying to keep that right ankle stabilized by carrying more of the weight. So now I've started using a left knee brace.



More biofreeze. Some Aleve. I will keep you posted.  
Men are thick. Old men are thickest. And all men are vain.



I refuse to be the heftiest writer at the Austin book fair in November.  
Even if it kills me.

Now I must get about my business and limp through my morning  
kitty cuddle, rounds and then onto the hamster wheel, strapped  
together by a lot of rubber (and not in that fun S&M sense).

It's Friday, and everything feels better on Friday, including torture.  
So you fine, five readers get at it. Do whatever you need to do to  
get through the day - even if it means limping to the finish line -  
because the weekend awaits.

And make today a great one.

My prayers for a strong recovery goes out to the beautiful State of  
Florida and all of its citizens and creatures.

# Finding Jimmy Moran - Tying Up Loose Ends

September 29, 2022



Okay, yesterday I called upon my inner council to look at Richard Lambs' wonderful latest versions of the covers of FJM. Luckily, the crew was up to the task and made the selection process more fun than picking out a wedding dress at Klienfeld's. I had a great group, who all had their preferences, and were able to humorously articulate why certain fonts and color combinations were preferable to others.

And of course, any time they could give me shit, they did. I would expect nothing less.

My being color blind certainly had me at a disadvantage, but that is why I try to see things through their eyes.

And they all loved the actual cover art.

So I am down to a final selection, and Richard is just tweaking the color on one important item.

Eileen is now giving the post Yvette Benson incredible grammatical version one final read, and was able to bring two sentences to my attention that warranted a tweak. Hopefully, she will finish her last review before I turn in the final draft to BRW tomorrow. I have been blessed by other important readers who have all provided their invaluable insights, including assisting in resolving minor structural issues. The devil is in the details. Thank you all.

I so appreciate the assistance of my crew. I know that if they are happy with the final product, most of my readers will enjoy the story.

This book is very important to me because while it is not an actual part of The Claire Trilogy, and can stand alone (although I would highly recommend you read TCT first), it provides the reader with a clear insight into what went into creating the character my readers know as the mob lawyer Jimmy Moran in TWA and beyond.

As with The Claire Trilogy, Jimmy is defined by the family he is born into and the friends he surrounds himself with. And yes, Claire is essential to the story.

This entire book series is about the family and friends one has in one's life. They help create and celebrate the good times and help get you through the bad times.

This series is also about love. Finding it is a quest we all engage in. It is the Holy Grail.

So when I finish each story and run it past my friends I feel like Dorothy waking up after the tornado:

[https://www.bing.com/videos/search?](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Dorothy+wakes+up+bac+in+Kansas+scene+and+you+were+there&view=detail&mid=EB61C3E2F2806A4145F0EB61C3E2F2806A4145F0&FORM=VIRE)

[q=Dorothy+wakes+up+bac+in+Kansas+scene+and+you+were+there&view=detail&mid=EB61C3E2F2806A4145F0EB61C3E2F2806A4145F0&FORM=VIRE](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Dorothy+wakes+up+bac+in+Kansas+scene+and+you+were+there&view=detail&mid=EB61C3E2F2806A4145F0EB61C3E2F2806A4145F0&FORM=VIRE)

There is no place like home.

So you fine, five readers go out there and give Thursday its due.

Treat it with respect. But reach out to your family and friends if you find a moment. It will make you smile.

I have recycling to deal with and a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and torture to engage in.

Make today another great one.

I actually came back to this post because I realized how insensitive I was to the real problems facing the millions of Floridians who have been struck by Hurricane Iain. My prayers are with you all.

# Marcia & Jonathan Manz - 4700 Beverly Drive Is A Steal

September 28, 2022



So, Luke and Georgie go off to Oz, and a week or so later, they learn from their Realtor Randy Trahan (great guy), actually mention him in TWA, that the lights in their upstairs hall way, and the over head fans in two bedrooms off that hallway, are on the fritz.

I don't remember my appointment as property manager, but family is family and when duty calls, you respond.

I put the word out on my local Nextdoor asking for recommendations for electricians while I tried to dig up the contact information for the guy who handled most fo my work during renovations. Randy Porter, a great guy. Turns out, he has a COVID crisis dealing with his mom, so things are very busy. Get well soon, Mrs. Porter.

Luckily, I received word from the lovely Marcia Manz on Nextdoor, who is a friend of my dear friend Pam Ervin (appears in TWA) in Foothills Estate, that her husband, Jonathan, is an electrical engineer/electrician, and can probably sort it out.

Thank God!!!

Well, I have to say that it was an absolute pleasure watching/ assisting Jonathan as he played electron detective and

methodically went from breaker to outlet to light switch to light tracing the issue, which he finally solved and corrected, a surprisingly simple fix, to cheers all around. I cannot recommend this man's skills enough.

Plus, Jonathan is one of those amazing people with a varied background (including musician) that can pretty much converse on any topic, including philosophy. The time passed almost too quickly, as I totally enjoyed playing electrical Holmes and Watson. I actually had a flashback to the Carl, "No rats" scene from the Exorcist when I popped my head up into Luke's attic crawl space in search of a possible hidden breaker box. The crawl space was pristine, no vermin or breaker box. Or Carl.

Anyway, the good news is that Jonathan double checked all of the relevant electrical while he was there and we now are more confident than ever that the house remains in tip-top shape for anyone looking for a wonderful new home for a family with kids and animals. There is an amazing playset - swings, rock wall, slide, in the backyard, lots of property, new floors throughout the first floor and a remodeled kitchen with new appliances.

There are also lovely young families with children on either side of this property. Instant kids playmates and adult friends you can commiserate with.

For any creative type who wants to tap into the literary mojo on Beverly Drive, note that Luke wrote his debut Novel, *Lebanon Red*, in this house.



I'm telling you, it's the ley lines that cross here, because I've written four novels just two properties down. Literary inspiration abounds. So, if anyone is looking for that perfect home for a young family, with pets, while you work on that next bestseller, look no further. <https://www.remax.com/co/berthoud/home-details/4700-beverly-dr-berthoud-co-80513/4403248430665115590/M00000118/975619> Plus, you can see Claire & Honey from your new back yard, and can walk down the road and give them a carrot if you like. Finally, if you are looking for a local electrician, check out Jonathan Manz. He's on Nextdoor.

Well, that's it for this morning's blog. I've got a kitty to cuddle,  
rounds to make and some torture to engage in.  
You fine, five readers get over the hump.  
And have a great day.



# Summaries Are A Pain In The Ass

September 27, 2022

***Finding Jimmy Moran***

***By Tom McCaffrey***



***(Codicil To The Claire Trilogy)***

***All The Best Lies  
Are Wrapped Around  
A Kernel of Truth***

Part of yesterday was spent lining up cover blurbs and working on the dreaded summary that goes on the back cover of *Finding Jimmy Moran*. I have to provide these to the incredible Richard Lamb (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/richlamb/>) so that he can fit everything into the amazing artwork he is creating.

Of course, I turned to two of the trusty members of the OFC ("Old Fuckers Club"), Mark Lenahan and Eileen Cotto, to critique the proffered summary, because they are fluently familiar with *FJM*.

Indeed they are characters in the book (different names because I used their real ones in The Claire Trilogy). They also have been giving me shit for half a century, so I knew they will not let me skate with "good enough."

You would think that as the person who wrote the story, it would be easy to boil it down to a few suggestive sentences without, as Lenny put it, giving the reader "Cliff Notes." Eileen was a little more subtle when she told me it "needs more punch."

So it was back to the drawing board a couple more times before I somewhat placated my critics. I'm expecting a few more suggestions before it is final, but it will get there.

I have to admit, writing TWA was a truly lonely endeavor. In stark contrast, I've enjoyed writing the sequels/prequel, now that I have a close circle of readers, who know the characters and storylines in TWA better than I do. And I have enjoyed the melding of really old friends with the newer ones I have made during the process. I've tried to make the writing of each sequel more like another group adventure we can all remember by engaging these friends in the creative process as I go along. Each book creates another backstory that I hope will be shared and repeated among the crew and their families for a few generations. It evokes the camaraderie that most of us experienced during the adventures of our youth, from which I borrowed heavily.

When I was a young lawyer working at Cahill Gordon & Reindel in NYC, the Rob Reiner movie, *Stand By Me*, was released. I absolutley loved that film, which is based on the Stephen King short-story, *The Body*.

<https://screenrant.com/stand-by-me-movie-stephen-king-childhood-true-story/>

I remember mentioning it to a group of young associates around a table during one of our weekly Litigation Breakfasts, and I was shocked to hear it immediately being scoffed at and criticized by a young female associate as not being realistic. Now in her defense, she grew up in a swanky part of Manhattan, where the social exchanges are far more regulated and homogenous.

The Bronx of my childhood was more feral. The kids in my neighborhood did not have each minute of their day strictly scheduled. There were no "play dates." We didn't meet up at "the club." As a result, the friendships that arose on the streets were instinctive and spontaneous and often established while crossing the line of social norms. Bonds were formed from secrets shared.

Those are the bonds that last.

I've been blessed by the fact that my books have brought a lot of those old friends back into my life. Each friend that reaches out brings with them that old story, the laughs that come with it, and the shaking of heads as we wonder how we survived our childhood.

And then we remember those of our friends that didn't.

I believe that this has helped me write *Finding Jimmy Moran* - which for the record is entirely fictional. Really. I swear.

So when I turn to those friends in the OFC and run the stories or summaries by them, it is my acknowledgment that I know I didn't get here on my own, and I appreciate each of their roles in the life we led and the secrets we shared.

I feel bad for people like that young female associate whose cultured, yet sheltered, life wasn't as realistic as my own.

Well, the dawn approaches, and I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make, and torture to suffer.

But you fine, five readers, get out there and fully engage in your lives

And make today a great one.

# To sleep, perchance to dream. . . .

September 26, 2022



For the first in a very long time, I found a moment yesterday to lay out on my back deck and enjoy the sun. This was a cooler, Autumn sun, which was just enough to warm you, and give a slight blush to your cheeks. In the summer, you can sit for maybe 10 minutes before you need to retreat to the shade, and a bald man would never dare to leave the house without a hat on. (Go ahead, Joe Serrano, say it in a limerick).

I had gotten all of my chores done, my animals were all content (although Claire was down below deck knocking on the back door) and my wife had been inside unpacking her bags from the LA trip. I think she must have thought that I had passed across the veil, and was snapping the photo of my death mask for insurance purposes. Not a too bad looking corpse, given the life I have lived. I wasn't born this pretty. Jeez, it looks like my throat has been cut.

Michael Collins and Peter Betz (RIP) were both stoned (back in the day) and swore they could open beer bottles using the top edge of my orbital sockets. They may have been right.

Anyway, I know I was running through my mental checklist for *Finding Jimmy Moran* as I sat out there. I need to turn it in to the publisher by October 1st. I was thinking about the two possible book covers by the amazing Richard Lamb (who did AAA & KMAG) and was also thinking about how frustrated my dear friend Yvette Benson must feel reading my run on sentences as she makes her way through the last 100 pages of the book. I was thinking about some of the other changes I had made when tiny inconsistencies to the storyline in The Claire Trilogy were brought to my attention by my other wonderful women readers (thank you Eileen C, Anna H and Anne R). Women have a better eye for details. The devil is in the details, especially in this book.

It is important to me that women readers enjoy this novel, which is in substantial part, a coming of age story of very young man, during a magical time, told five hundred years in the future by a very old hybrid alien. I held my breath while Lisa and my sister-in-law, Mary Moran (Eddie's wife), read it. Luckily it made both of them laugh, and Lisa hasn't filed for divorce just yet. Maybe she's waiting to see the sales figures.

My guy friends - many of whom share a history - let me repeat these stories are entirely fictional - have all signed off on it.

Many of the characters are based upon my ever growing list of dead friends. I wanted to bring them all back (with a lot of still live ones) so that they could be fixed in this story forever. My homage to love and friendship. And every time a stranger picks up this book and reads it, they all come back across the veil to play together one more time, if only in that reader's imagination. And that is immortality.

And of course, Claire, Stella and Apollo play an integral part in the novel.

So, as I sat out there and napped, perhaps I dreamt of things that never happened, and that makes me smile.

But now the real world awaits. A kitty needs cuddling, rounds need to be made and that treadmill is not going to kill itself.

So off I go.

But you fine, five readers go out and take Monday out in the first round.

And have a great day.

# A Recovery Day

September 25, 2022



Lisa needed all of yesterday to recover both physically and emotionally from the past few weeks. I had forgotten how much energy the tiny three witches in training can drain from you by continuous engagement. Psychic vampires. So Lisa slept in and when she finally surfaced in the livingroom, she rarely left her recliner.

We received word mid-day that Luke & Co. had safely arrived down under. They all must have been exhausted. God bless. Now the fun begins.

I tried to keep the house tranquil by spending all of the morning taking care of outside chores. There were hay bags and troughs to fill and lots of mule muffins to scoop. I was happy to see the mules so content, especially out in the front of the house.





And Claire stopped by the side deck for a good earrub and a solid half-hour brushing. I think she was disappointed that I didn't bring her a coffee. There's Blue below giving her knees a good grooming.



Not sure if my relatively new side and back deck are warranted against large mules. I must keep Claire from making her way

around to my first floor rear sliding doors or I will never be able to escape her by retreating to the living room. Must be sure to close that gate, because she is not afraid to try new things.

Provided a birthday wish for my eldest brother Eddie, and got a call from my youngest brother in England, where he and his lovely wife, Tara, are visiting. John shared that Veronica and b, the fairy god mothers, who are also visiting London, are both suffering from another bout of COVID. God speed in your recoveries ladies.

Heard that my dear friend, and one of the primary characters in The Claire Trilogy, Mark Lenahan, performed some of his poetry at a spoken word event. Hoping that went well. Will see if he will share the poems he recited.

Love that my friends are poets.

Another dear friend, Johnny Carey, who is mentioned in FJM, completed reading and posted an Amazon review for Luke's novel, Lebanon Red. Thank you for the support JC. Johnny is also quite the poet, and I hope to talk him into allowing me to post some of his work in future blogs. Screw it, better to ask forgiveness.

Here's a poem that was inspired by Johnny's career as a nurse, where he witnessed many poignant and painful transitions from this plane to the next:

## Silent Love

He stood at the door unable to move  
His tears were silent, yet could be heard  
He thought of the years gone by  
The laughter and joy shared and the  
Trials of their married life  
She was a good woman and wife.  
She won't hear me, he kind of knew  
I will stand by and guard her like she would do  
He spoke quietly to her and expressed his love  
She didn't stir but maybe she heard  
For love that strong needs no words  
Quietly she passed and he stood tall and strong  
By her side as he had done all along

His silent tears could now be heard  
His silent heartache all too there

So there you go Johnny, I just shoved you out of the poet closet.  
Hate me if you will, but it had to be done for the good of humanity.  
Welcome to your third act.

I will be sharing the latest version of FJM with Johnny (a voracious reader) later this morning, as soon as I incorporate the latest set of edits Yvette Benson sent me late yesterday. She hates my trademark run on sentences, and my total inability to consistently decide when I should use a comma, versus, a, period. . . . I shudder to think of what she would have thought of the writing and story, had she read it before the careful eyes of Eileen Cotto, Anna Hillman, Anne Rifenberg, Joe Serrano and Mark Lenahan caught the most outrageous errors. Given our six-degrees of separation relationship growing up - through the Collins Clan, and Jaysree and Jimmy Whitelaw - I'm pretty sure Yvette suspects that there may be more truth than fiction in the novel. That I can neither confirm or deny. Wink, wink.

Well that's it for this morning. I have to wake my dear wife so she can get ready for work.

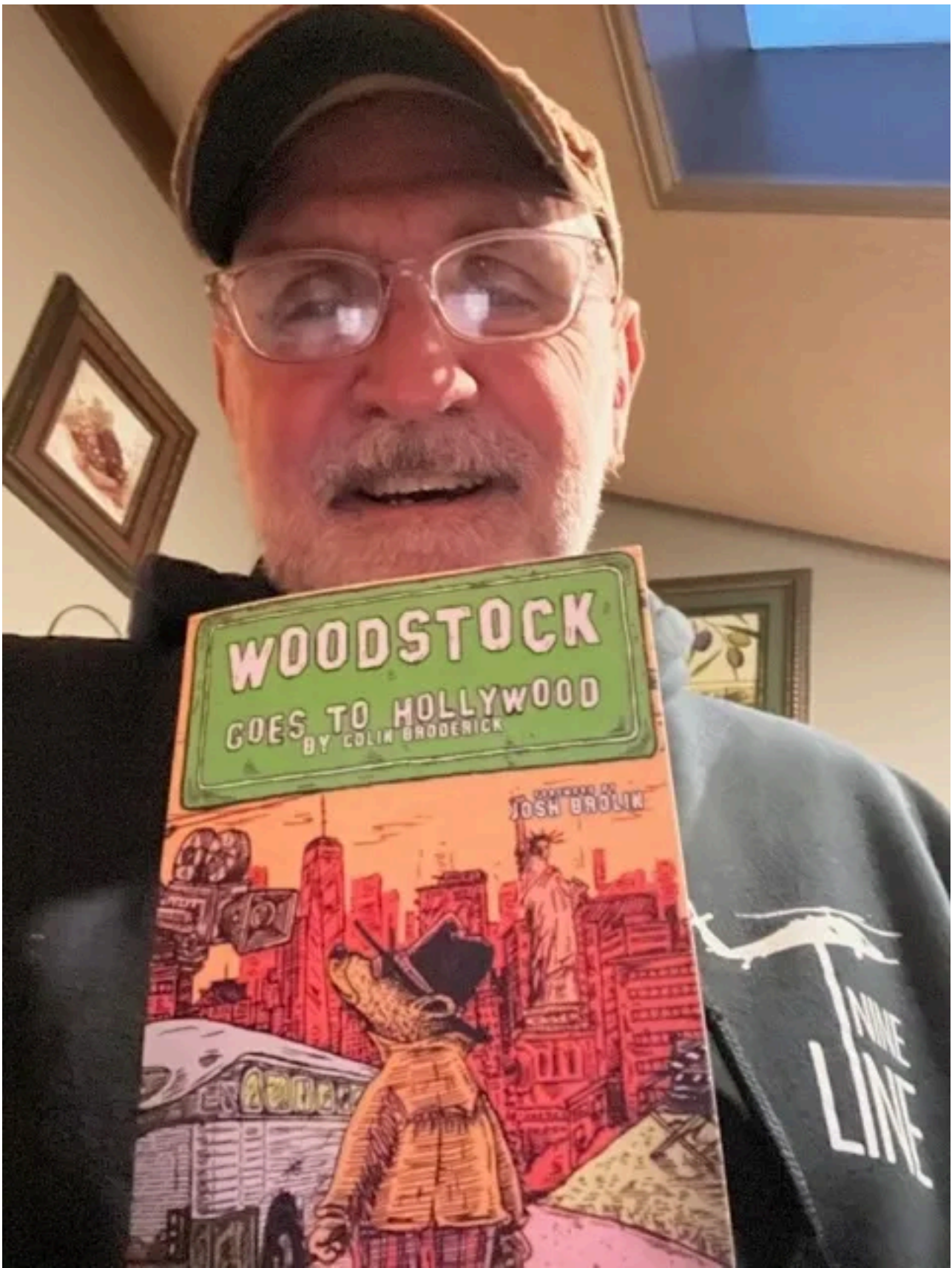
Then it's the kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and a solid hour of repetitive motion torture. Then I need to complete the week's veggie/fruit prep.

But you fine, five readers sit back and enjoy the Lord's day of rest. Catch a football game or read a book. You have all earned it. And have a great day.

Post Script. The good news is Lisa doesn't have to work today. The bad news is that I woke her thinking she did. Oh well, hopefully she will be able to get back to sleep.

# Woodstock Lands In Berthoud - RIP Frances Mahoney

September 24, 2022



Yesterday was a weird day. I needed to distract myself from the idea that out in LA, the eldest of my children was leaving the US with his family for Oz.

Luckily, the Universe stepped in.

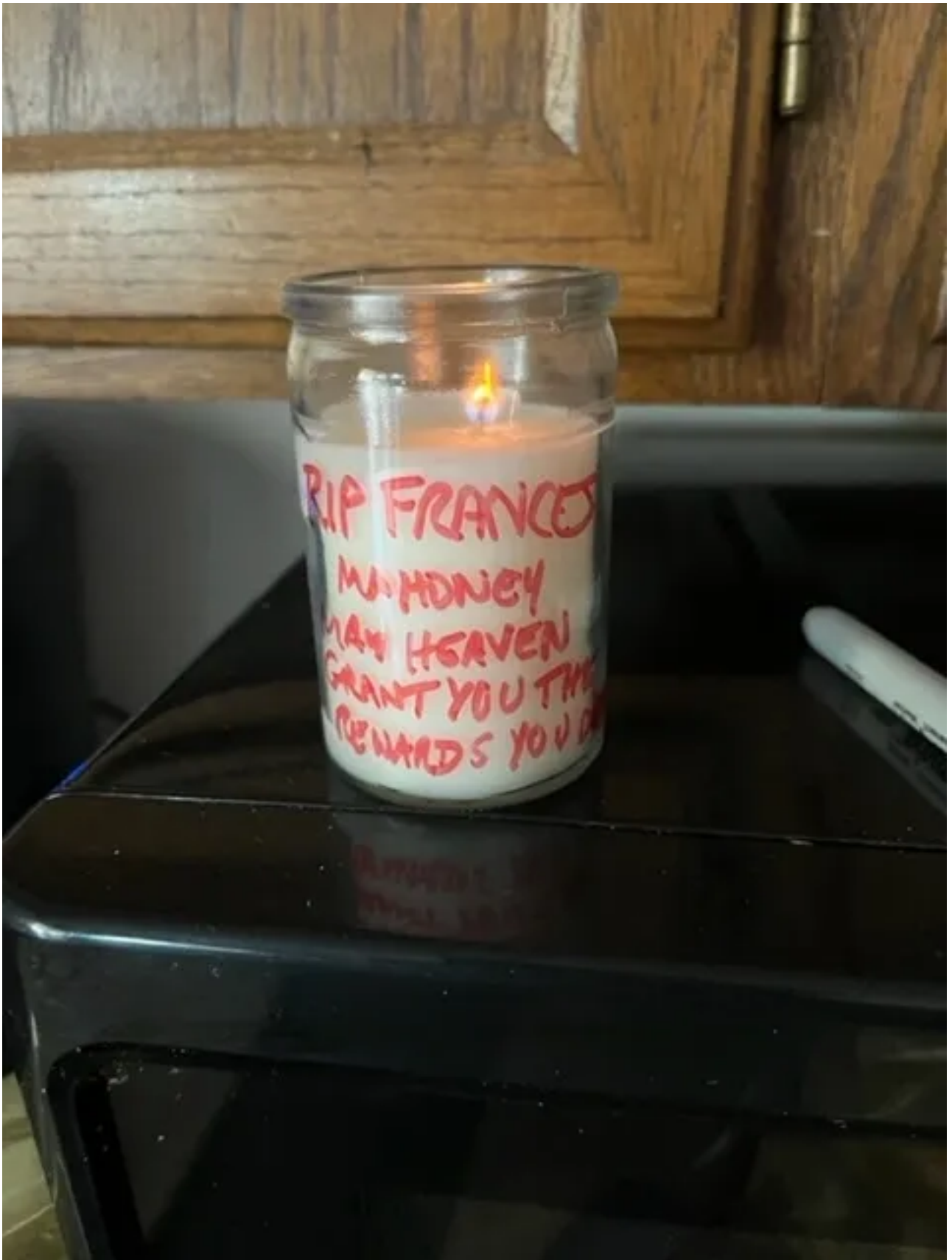
First, yesterday morning Blue tracked in mud throughout the house and on the couch and Lisa's recliner. So I had to clean all of that with vacuum and wetjet. Plus I had to wash a white comforter that Blue finally came to rest upon. Check.

Then I got an Amazon package with a paperback version of Colin Broderick's *Woodstock Goes To Hollywood*, which I have already read in manuscript form and must predict for the record that this is an instant classic. I will be sending this copy out so that Colin will inscribe and mail it to MOS' for its literary bookshelf. He promised me my own inscribed version as well for my collection. Thank you Colin.

Then my friend and cover illustrator, Richard Lamb (who also publishes classic horror tales), sent me two mock-up covers for *Finding Jimmy Moran*. Both brilliant. Seeing the covers made it very real. I circulated them among my inner circle of readers for FJM and the one I call the Elysium field version is the runaway favorite among the women and some of the men, while most men went for the more bad ass Sci-Fi cover. Given that FJM is, on one level, a love story, and I do want to keep the highly supportive female demographic engaged, I am leaning towards Elysium.

Richard says I can mix and match from the two, so we'll see where this leads us. Stay tuned.

On a more unhappy note, I learned from my son Mark, that Sara's aunt and her mother Liz's sister, Frances Mahoney, passed away. I shared my condolences directly with Sara's dad, the Real Jimmy Moran. My prayers are with Frances and the loving family she leaves behind. I also lit a candle.



They are an amazing family and I am thankful everyday that Mark had the good fortune of marrying into it.



I wanted to do something positive in Frances' honor, so I went out and bought a birdfeeder. My DIL, Georgie, had left behind a huge bag of bird seed. Waste not want not.

Now Lisa doesn't like me hanging birdfeeders on the enclosed property because Claire will actually rise up on her back legs - almost giraffe like - to destroy them and eat their contents. In order to avoid this, I would have to hang them very high, which would require a ladder every time I needed to refill it.

I selected a small tree on my driveway that is far way from the fencing and out of Claire's reach.



I was told by the prior owner of Casa Claire that this tree is an invasive species and actually illegal to plant in Colorado. I, of

course, continue to provide sanctuary to this criminal. And now, it can provide sustenance to the local birds as the weather turns colder. It has lots of thorns, so it will prevent the predators from climbing it to get to the birds.

Then the only real problem I had to deal with was staying awake long enough so I could drive to Denver International Airport and retrieve Lisa when she landed at 11 pm. Her flight home was comfortable and, while she did shed some tears over the parting with our grandchildren when she saw me waiting for her, she remained stoic during the remainder of the ride home while she recounted her last two weeks in LA. She's a tough gal.

But now I have to get to my chores. A kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and a treadmill to torture me.

You fine five readers go out and take care of your Saturday chores, and then relax. It's the weekend.

Make today a great one.

# Adios America

September 23, 2022



Well, today is the day. Lisa will board her Delta domestic flight and return to Casa Claire and Luke, Georgie, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella will hop on their international flight and head South West to the Land of Oz. I'm sure Cairo will be glad they've caught up with him there.

I'm thrilled the girls got a chance to see a MLB game before they left, even if it wasn't a Yankee game. It will be crickets from here on in.

They also got to see Disneyland this past week. Everyone should visit The Magic Kingdom at least once in their lifetime.

I hope those two totally American experiences lock in their memories forever.

I expected to be more emotional about it, but I have made my peace with the move. They are going on an exciting adventure. They will have a wonderful life.





Luke will not let anything bad happen to his girls. I find comfort in that knowledge.

My world here will continue.  
My feral cat, Smokey, will need cuddling.





Claire will continue to check on me.



I will continue to look after Claire & Honey, which will fill my time.



And my wheelbarrows.



And I'll continue to write my blogs and my books.  
But I will send this branch of the family off with a final candle, with  
all my love and wishes for a healthy, happy and successful life.



And that will just have to be enough, until I see them again.  
Vaya con Dios. I love you all.  
So now I have to get on with the rest of my life.  
More edits to FJM - thank you Yvette Benson you have an amazing  
eye for detail.  
Then a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and terrifying treadmill that  
won't take no for an answer.  
But it is Friday. And there is always hope in that.  
You fine, five readers get out there and launch your weekend.  
And make today a great one.

# Westridge Estates Book Club - Thank You Sandra & Dean

September 22, 2022



Yesterday I had the honor of attending a meet and greet and Q&A at the Westridge Estates Book Club in Ft. Collins, New York.

The event was hosted by a delightful couple, Dean and Sandra Schilling. That's Sandy and me sharing a hug/selfie. It was a wonderful mix of personalities. Lovely people.

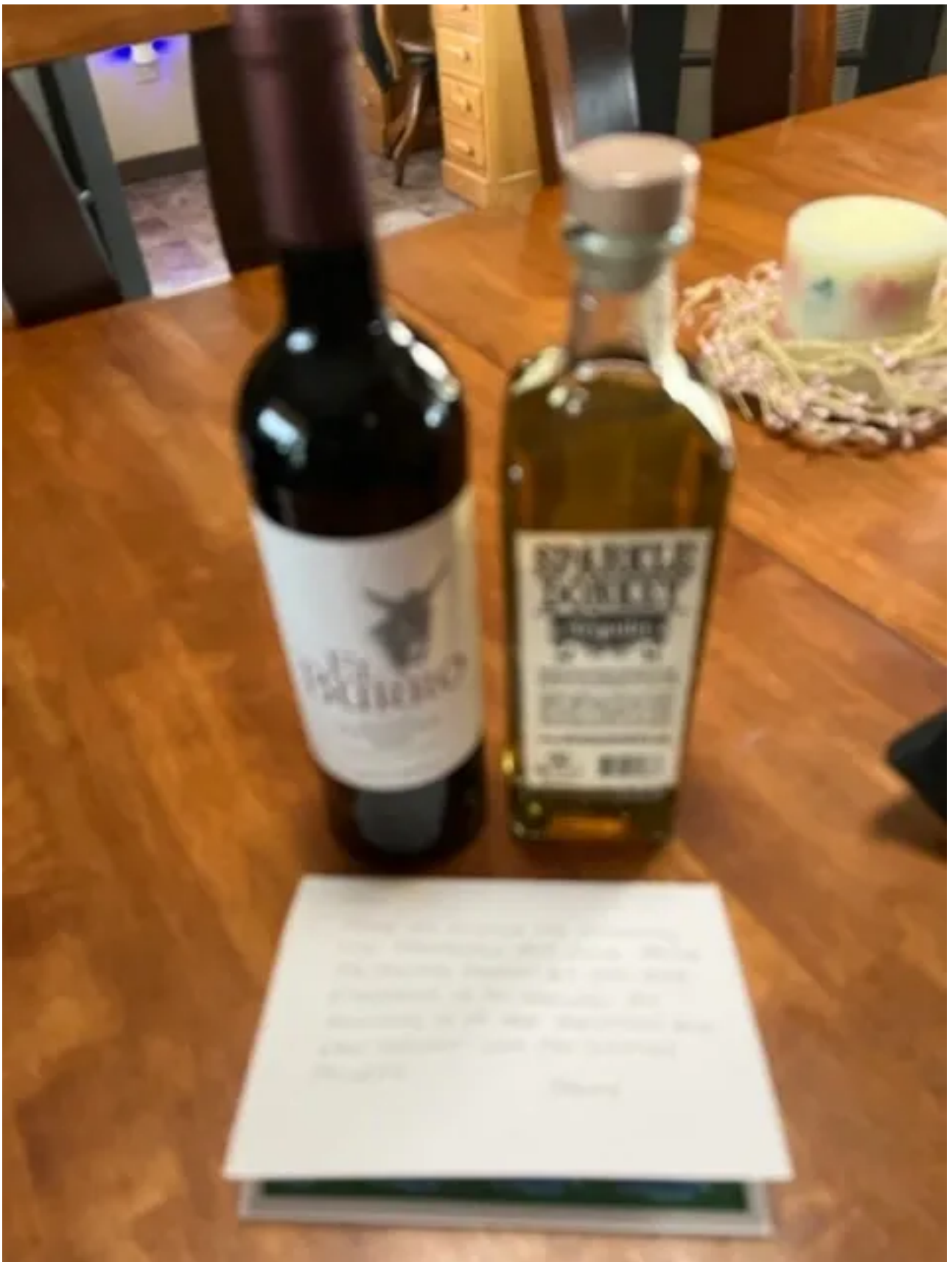


Dean (That's him in the photo, back left), was the only male in the group, which is fine, since I'll take a female captive audience any day of the week (wait, that sounds iffy).



I got to tell a few stories and answer some writing process and story structure questions. I was able to share some back stories about a lot of the characters in the book. I signed a few copies of the book, even a copy that one of the women had borrowed from a local library. That should have the librarian scratching her head. The two hours passed quickly, and it was a gracious and receptive crowd. And when it was all said and done, S&D sent me home with a theme gift. Donkey related alcoholic beverages which are going to look great on the side board.





I loved the experience. I enjoy speaking with anyone who makes the effort and sacrifices the time to read any of my books. Without

the readers, why bother writing. Thank you S&D and the Westridge Estates Book Club for your patronage.

During the event I mentioned how important it was for readers, who enjoy a work, to post reviews about the books they read. Good reviews are the lifeblood of sales, especially for a new writer.

And the reviews aren't always good. Every reader brings their own life perspective to the books they read. You cannot please everybody.

A writer has to quickly develop a thick skin, because not everyone is going to find your literary child to be beautiful.

But just because you cannot find a compliment to share, doesn't mean you have to offer an insult in its place.

When I got home I heard from a dear and extremely talented writer friend who, after a string of solid, positive, mostly 5 star reviews for a new book, got hit with a cheap shot 1 star review.

The reviewer used the line "I need to be honest," as a justification for his very lengthy and to me, totally unsupportable, critique.

You could tell from the outset that this reviewer considered himself to be the arbiter of fine literature.

It made me wonder if this person had ever sat down and written anything longer than a nasty review. Ever created anything from scratch. Ever sweated before a blank page.

I was raised with the regular admonition by my grandmother, Posie, that if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

But the Bronx boy in me wanted to smack him. This review had hurt a friend.

Finally, I recalled a paragraph from a much longer speech given by Teddy Roosevelt at the Sorbonne in Paris. My father used to recite it to us whenever the proper moment arose and its life lesson needed to be remembered. It's often referred to as "The Man In The Arena" speech:

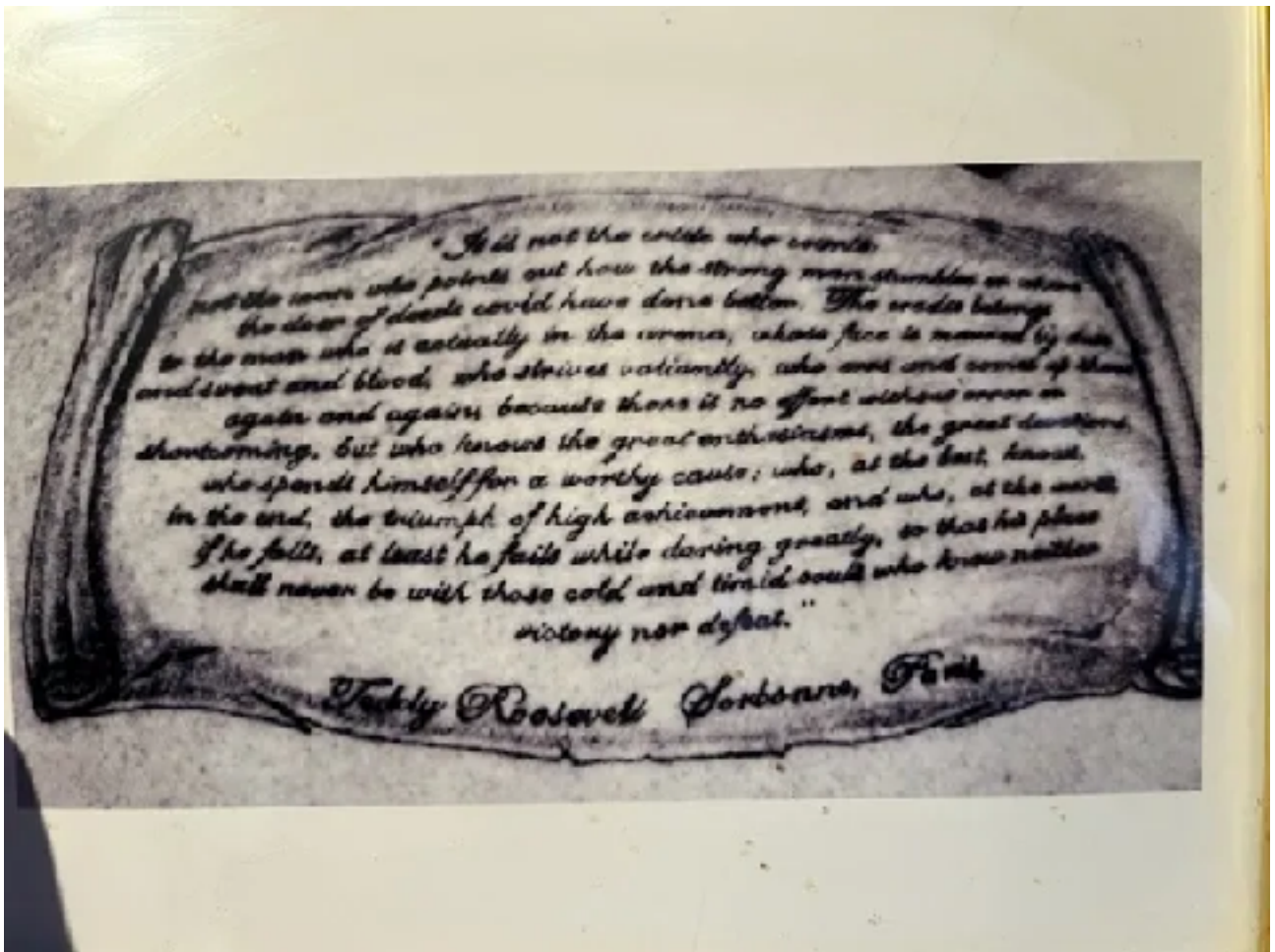
*It's not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles,*

*or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,*

*whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again,*

*because there is no effort without error and shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause: who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory or defeat.*

I heard that speech from my father so many times I can recite it from memory, but just to be sure I never forgot the lesson, I spent an afternoon many years ago, having it tattooed across my back (it was a fiftieth birthday gift from my dear friend Helen Lalouis - yep, the basis for the character from The Claire Trilogy). .



I was on an endorphin high for days after that was inked.

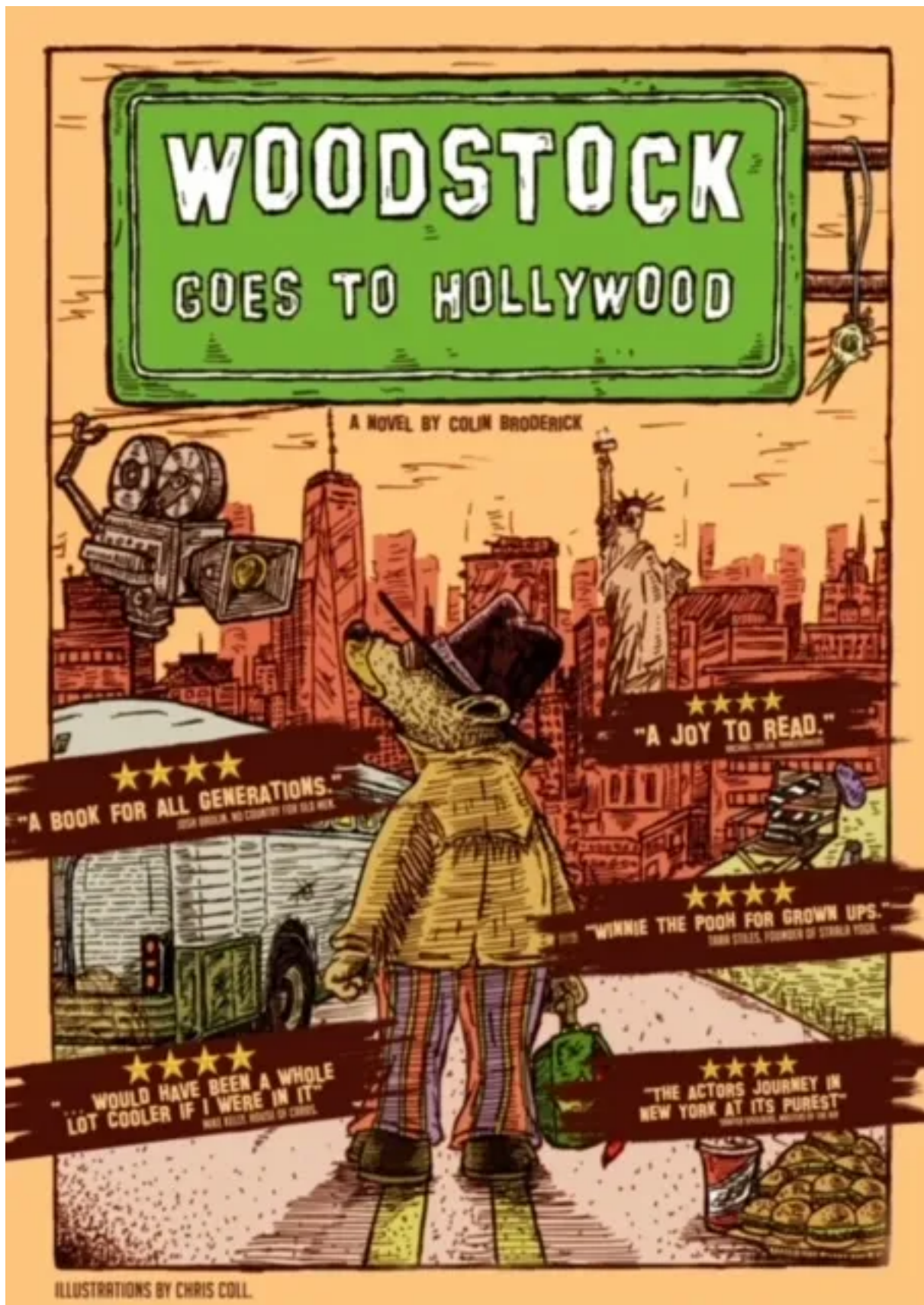
So, dear writer friend, continue to dare greatly and accept the review at face value, written by a cold and timid soul.

Well Thursday awaits and I have a kitty to cuddle, fur friends to visit and a treadmill to conquer.

Get out there, my fine, five readers, and seize the day. Make it a memorable one.

# Congrats Colin Broderick - Woodstock Goes To Hollywood

September 21, 2022



Anyone who has read or watched anything created by my dear friend and literary mentor, Colin Broderick, knows that he has

engaged, explored and survived the dark underside of life, both here and abroad. Now for something completely different.

Woodstock Goes To Hollywood is the most charming and loveable book I have read in a long time. This is a modern day Winnie The Poo (with a little bit of Huck Finn) that can be read and appreciated by any age group. It can be shared among generations in a family, and will probably become one of those literary legacies that are handed down from one generation to another. As a writer, all I can say is that I'm appropriately jealous.

When Colin was putting the finishing touches on this book he sent me a draft. I meant only to glance at it and leave it to read on a weekend, but I literally could not put it down. I love the character.

Absolutely love this character. In fact, I love every character in this book.

As implausible as it may seem, this story just works. You immediately suspend your disbelief on page one because you want to see where Woodstock takes you. And the most wondrous thing is that Colin takes this make believe character and seamlessly weaves him into the make believe world of acting and film. The Hollywood in the title is not the physical place, but the magical realm. The setting is primarily in NYC, with all of the eccentric characters you would expect to find there. And the door remains wide open for as many sequels as Colin cares to share with us.

This is the birth of a successful series.

The artwork is amazing.

This is a book for dreamers. And we are all dreamers.

Anyway, well done Colin. This may be your masterpiece.

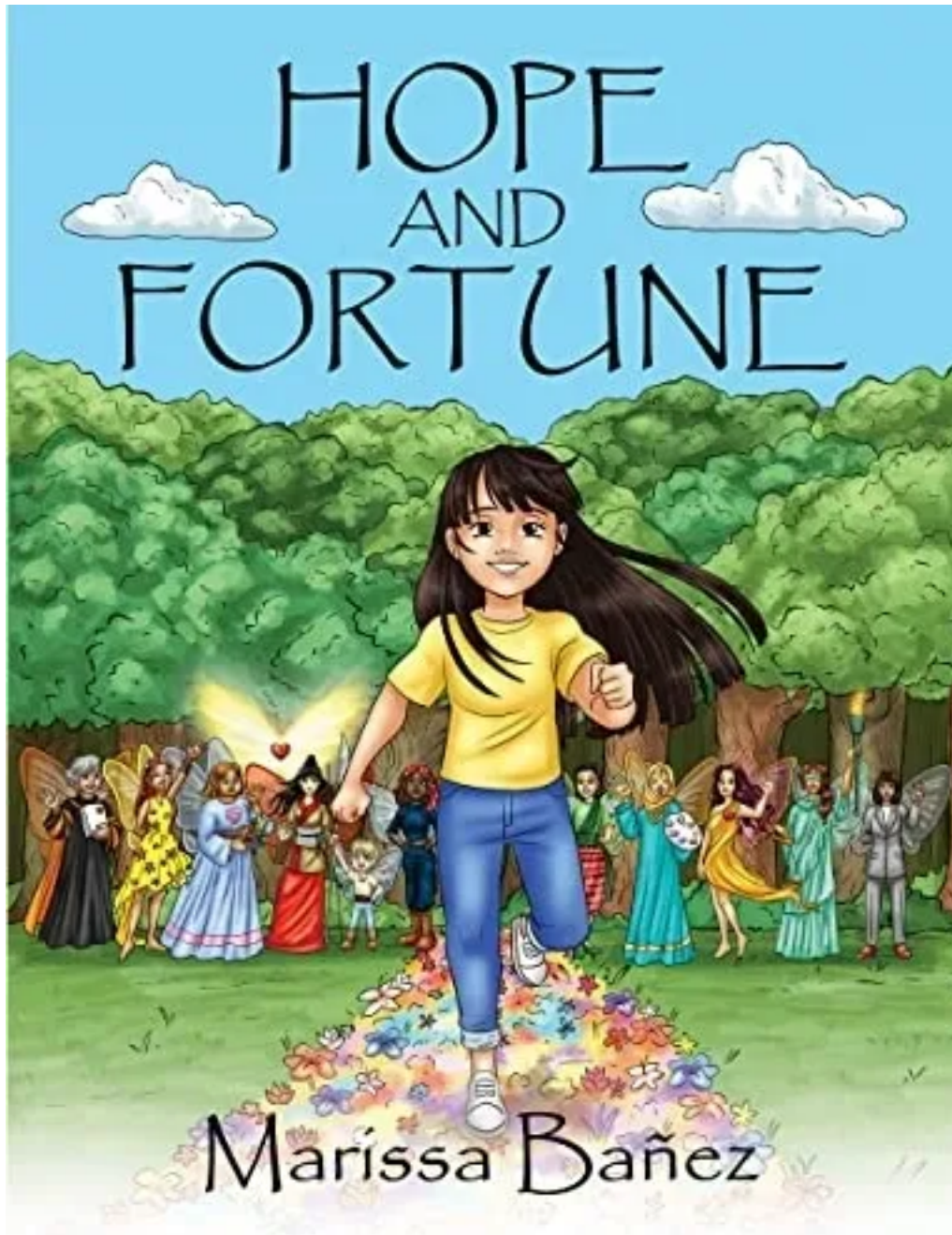
Well, now I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make, and a treadmill who wants a piece of me.

You fine, five readers check out Colin's book. Get the paperback, because this is one you will want to read to others, and maybe share it with your friends and family.

But most of all, go out there and have a wonderful day.

# You Never Forget Your First - Congrats Marissa Banez

September 20, 2022



I am thrilled for my dear friend, [Marissa Bañez](#). Her debut children's book, *Hope and Fortune*, appeared for pre-sale on Amazon, B&N and BRW yesterday. It has Fairies! I've already



placed my order and will be sending it back to NYC to get it inscribed once it hits the street in February 2023.

Best of luck to you, Marissa. I know this is just the first of many.

Well done you!

When TWA first went live for pre-order, I must have looked at every Amazon posting in every country that carried it. I could not believe my good fortune. And that's exactly what it is. Luck. It must be appreciated and savored when it arrives because it is not owed to anyone.

But I wish that luck to every writer out there. In every genre and at every level. They create the magic that transports the rest of us to worlds we may never experience otherwise.

And I especially admire the writers of children's books. They are the magicians who first spark an imagination. They create the opportunity for bonds to be forged between the adults that first read the books to the children that are listening and following along on those pages until they start to recognize those words on their own. Sometimes the book lulls the child to sleep at the end of a day and sends them readily into a fantastic world of dreams. Sometimes it calms a child sitting in your lap and, if you are really lucky, you hear the word "again" as you turn that last page.

Then one day the child repeats a word out loud from a worn page that they now recognize from the repetition of hearing your voice read it all those times, and they are off to the races. The child can now begin to read, and nothing is beyond their grasp from that moment on. Generation after generation repeats this process.

And it all starts with those children's books.

So well done Marissa. I hope you sell millions of copies, and that someday those same young readers that fall in love with your magical fairies grow up and read about the ones in The Claire Trilogy (if they must they can also read books by JRRT or JKR as well). A rising tide floats all boats.

Now I must turn back to the real world. A kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and then a forced increase to my respiration and perspiration, which hopefully does not lead to my expiration, on the treadmill.

I will take a final moment to wish my son's Mastiff, Cairo, God's speed, as he disembarks for Oz, where he will do a couple of weeks quarantine before being released back into the loving arms

of Scarlett, Savanna and Stella, who will have by then followed him across the Pacific. They leave LA this friday.

Speaking of my son, Luke (and Georgie) took a moment yesterday to track down the final resting place of one of his literary heroes.



Well done Luke. Love Bukowski. Seems like a perfect place to plug Luke's novel.



For any and all who have bought and read Luke's book, I beg the favor of a positive review on Amazon, B&N and Goodreads. Those reviews are the lifeblood of all writers, especially the new ones. But you fine, five readers go out there and welcome Tuesday, which greets us all after our harrowing Monday. And most of all, make it a great day. You owe that to yourselves.

# Back Into A Routine

September 19, 2022



Saturday was done and dusted, so yesterday I had to cover all the outdoor chores - poop scooping, hay bags, water troughs - and then back inside for the weekly veggie/fruit prep. It was full on to get everything done, but I managed.

These are labors of love. When I stopped for a moment while outside and saw just how happy Claire and Honey are together with the freedom to go anywhere they wanted on my property, it touched my soul.

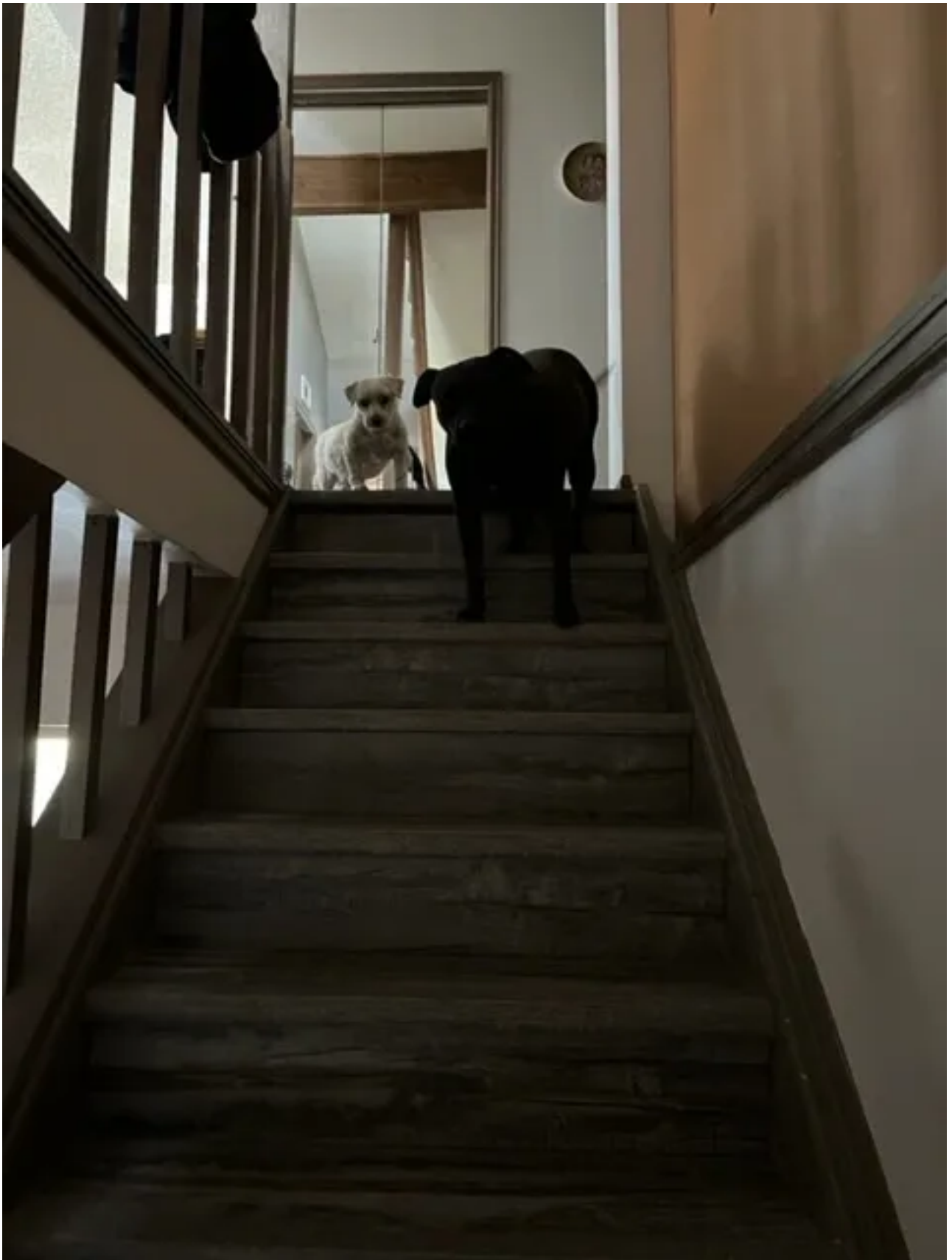




Life without restriction or obligations has probably made them both a little more feral, and I'm fine with that. They've put in their work in



this life. Now is the time they get to enjoy it on their own terms. If I can continue to make that happen, then I'll be the better man for it. Blue and Jeter love to hang around while I'm inside doing food prep.





It's funny, but despite being alone this week, I never feel lonely.

Especially since Claire always comes a knocking.



Well this week looks like it will be busy, so I have to get moving.  
A kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and a treadmill to survive.  
Then work.

Routine.

But you fine, five readers start your week with gusto. No prisoners.

Make this Monday a magnificent one.

Have a great day.

# Old Friends Are Good Friends

September 18, 2022



Funny thing how my writing keeps resurrecting old friendships.

Case in point. While I was about half way through writing FJM, I was recounting a scene from my childhood (remember everything about Jimmy Moran is fiction) where I worked at Gaelic Park in the Bronx slinging hot dogs at concerts. I got to see a bunch of cool bands from the day. Great gig. Anyway, while I was writing it, I wanted to include the name of the friend from back then who got me that gig - Johnny Carey. Now I have known Johnny a long time.

Since grade school. We swam together on the RNH swimteam and then when we were both first married, we hung together as couples. Our first children were born within a month or so of each other. Johnny drove Lisa and me to the hospital when she was delivering Luke.

Now I hadn't heard from Johnny in forever. He and his lovely wife, Helen, moved out to Long Island and that was that. Life gets in the way.

I put Johnny in the book, wondering how I was going to track him down and clear it with him.

Just over a week ago, I get a call from my youngest brother John, who starts the conversation with "Guess who is standing next to me?"

Yep, Johnny. They met at a benefit for Johnny's youngest sister, Maureen, who has suffered a malady. You rock Whitey. Never surrender.

Anyway, numbers were exchanged and after Luke and crew left, we spent an hour catching up on the phone, like I had seen him yesterday.

And that's the true test of solid friendships. Forty years disappear in an instant, and you are right back to breaking each other's balls like old times.

That's Johnny up above. I told him I'd make him famous if he snapped a selfie with all three books. Thanks for the support JC.

Love to Helen and the kids and grandkids. And the siblings. I had forgotten that Johnny's voice is more nasally than even Murray Collins' voice was. And anyone who has heard my voice knows how nasally I sound. It's a Bronx thing. They are both 10

times worse than me. Johnny may be eleven times worse. Now a six degrees of separation moment: Murray's family move into the Riverdale house that had been owned by Johnny's family (who had moved into the McBride family's old home, which was right next to Chrissy Pompa's old home - you will need to read FJM to string all of this together - it's a Riverdale thing). Speaking of Murray, that brings me to Schwartz.

I mentioned I would report on Jimmy & Jaysree Whitelaw.

So yesterday, I killed myself cleaning the house because I knew that if friends stopped by while it was still a mess, I would be better off hanging myself in Claire's barn than facing Lisa when she learned of it. Just as well that I did it yesterday, as I had to do it before she got back anyway. Place looks nice, if I say so myself.

Although it was with mixed feelings that after five years I finally removed the child guard gate leading down to the basement level. So at 4ish, J&J arrived on my doorstep and it again felt like I had just seen them the day before.





That's them both standing with Jack the Spruce in the background. So of course Claire wanted a photo op.



And then I whisked them away to Mike O'Shays for a nice dinner and lots of catching up. The place was packed. We ate in the same area where I had shared a meal with Yvette Benson and family a few months back. It was great (highly recommend MOS).



Now that's them standing before the MOS Literary Bookshelf.



Jimmy had done a similar winding river wood working piece like the beautiful bar top.

Of course my dear friend Lonnie Bell (like Schwartz, a fine Scot Celt) stepped in to shoot a group photo for us.



And then it was back to Casa Claire where I gave them the cook's tour explaining each part of the house and property where the TWA

story unfolds (remember, everything I write is fiction). We had a lot of laughs talking about how BC (Voldemort), Joe, Stein and of course Eileen "Bubbles" Cotto/Collins are woven into the tapestry. They have some great photos of them with Claire (I used their iPhone) out back that I will share if they ever send them to me. Then we had coffee and dessert and more hours of catching up.



It was magical. Really. I had a wonderful time.

At the end of four hours (which felt like ten minutes) we were all feeling our age and knew it was time to say goodbye. They are off on the rest of their 3 month road trip. God bless them.

Well today's a new day and I have my chopping and outdoor chores to attend to. Then I have some edits that Mark Lenahan and Yvette Benson have suggested to FJM. Mark marathoned FJM yesterday.

Thank you Mark. Yvette is carefully making her way through FJM, and I am forever in her debt as well. That, along with the careful eyes of Anna H, Eileen C and Anne R, should cover up my incompetence. Remember, I am the Slip Mahoney of writers.

But first, a kitty to cuddle and the Hamster wheel.

You fine, five readers go out and look up an old friend. Have a chat.

The years will melt away.

And have a great day.

# Facing Oz - 800 Words

September 17, 2022



The above photo was sent to me yesterday by Georgie, my beautiful Aussie DIL. Funny that Luke is wearing Babe Ruth's number. My father used to deliver groceries to The Babe when he was a kid. There are always connections if you know where to look. Left to right, it's Savanna, Stella, and Scarlett.

They are facing the Pacific Ocean, and Australia that awaits them. The parasail directly above Luke's head is a metaphor for the sailing ships that used to carry my ancestors away from their homes. I hope the wind is always at their back. *Vaya con Dios.*

Yesterday, I started binge watching *800 Words*, and Australian TV show (on Britbox/Amazon) that follows the lives of a father, George Turner, and his two children Arlo and Shay, who move from Sydney



to a small town in New Zealand after the death of the wife/mother, Laura. The title comes from the number of words in the weekly article the father writes for a Sydney magazine. This is pre-blog times. His articles are mostly observational and biographical. The TV audience follows the daily events in the writer's and his children's' lives in real time as he recounts them in his articles. I can relate to this character.

It appears to be shot on location in New Zealand, which is absolutely beautiful. It reflects the culture shock the family goes through as its members adapt from a big-city, Sydney, life style to the small-town culture and personality of their new home in Weld, NZ. I can relate to that as well.

An underlying theme throughout each episode is the pain the family suffers as each member deals with the loss of Laura in their own way, and the struggles each character has as they try to move on with their lives while keeping their memory of Laura alive as well. There are also feelings of guilt that arise as the characters transition to and embrace a Laura-less present and future.

The show's characters are well developed, and each is enchanting in his/her own way. The writing and acting are great. It is a perfect escape for me once my eyes are too tired to read at the end of the day.

Yesterday, I also received another order of my Mark & Sara's bee honey, which I am thrilled to start incorporating into my morning routine.



I have been using local honey (that large jar in the background) since I ran out of M&S's last batch. I'm looking forward to trying their newest darker Autumn honey that is on the right in the photo.

Thank you Mark and Sara for the honey, and the love that's in it.

Got a text out of the blue yesterday from Jimmy & Jaysree

Whitelaw, friends I met through the Collin's family back in the day, who Lisa and I regularly socialized with when they lived for a period in Riverdale. Their oldest, Asha, is around the same age as Luke.

As with many of our friends, we lost touch after they moved to Upstate New York and continued on with their busy lives.

They are now retired and traveling cross country. They are in the area and will be stopping by for a visit. Cannot wait to see them.

I met Jimmy when Dennis "Murray" Collins, brought him around the neighborhood once Murray and his large Irish Catholic family moved to Riverdale in the late 70s. I knew Jimmy by the nickname he was introduced with, "Schwartz."

Jimmy, Jaysree and another girl from the neighborhood, Yvette (now married name) Benson, all grew up together on the opposite side of the Grand Concourse from where I was first living, back when my family resided on Gerard Avenue, a few blocks away from Yankee Stadium.

I became reacquainted with Jimmy & Jaysree when Jay reached out through this website and let me know that she has been following my blogs and reading my books. I was thrilled that my books led another set of old friends back into my life and we've maintained the contact ever since.

Yvette is now one of my close circle of readers who is giving FJM a final read through. She reached out through this website after reading TWA on Jay's recommendation and has followed the creation of FJM. I like that this work is being vetted by women, given there is an unconventional love story line. Thank you Yvette.

Well, I now have to wind this up and get to my kitty cuddling and rounds, then torture, and chores.

I'm also going to have to clean up a bit, since I have been living like a bachelor these past few days

But I will report back on the Whitelaws tomorrow.

You fine, five readers have a great day.

800 words exactly.



# Passport To Terror - Luke & City Star Brewing- Hope and Fortune

September 16, 2022

# PASSPORT TO TERROR

Passport Time Travel Series | Book One



HOLLYWOOD

Christy  
Cooper-Burnett

Yesterday, my dear friend and fellow BRW author, Christy Cooper Burnett, published the first in her new Passport Time Travel series, Passport To Terror. Having read the publisher's manuscript (I also bought the Kindle and paperback versions), I was seething with jealousy of both her writing and storyline, which tells me this is going to be a big book. Indeed, I loved it so much that I asked to borrow her main character, Madison Taylor, to use as a cross-over character in my latest book, Finding Jimmy Moran. Time traveling Madison and Jimmy have a wonderful chapter together in Hell's Kitchen and Central Park. So if you fine, five readers want to fully appreciate FJM, I strongly recommend you read PPTT at some point before April 13, 2023. While you are at it, you can also read CCB's other excellent Christine Stewart Time Travel Adventure series, No Way Home, Finding Home, Escaping Home.

Switching gears.

Shout out to Berthoud's own City Star Brewing for its fabulous brews. <https://citystarbrewing.com>

Yesterday Luke came upon a can of one of their elixers - West Coast Classic IPA - out in California and posted a photo. Which CSB then republished.



citystarbrewing 5m



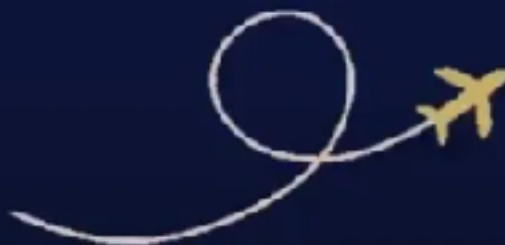
# WEST COAST CLASSIC IPA



luke.mccaffrey.author



luke.mccaffrey.author The Bronx & Berthoud are present.....





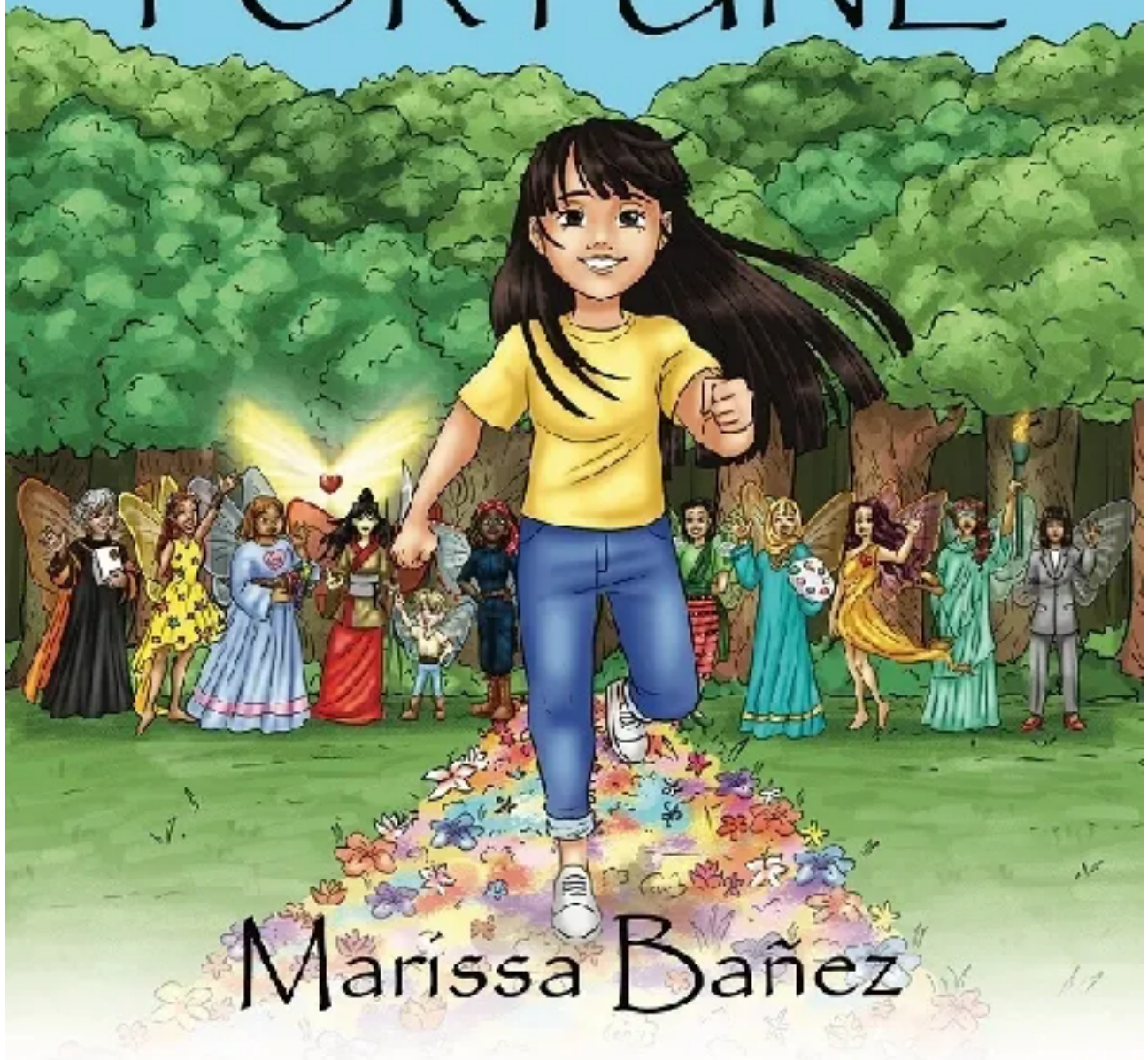
Glad Luke is still repping our towns in his travels. Let's hope CSB ships to Oz. And while you are out looking to find a case or two of one of CSB brews, my fine, five readers, check out Luke's book, Lebanon Red (and if you enjoy it please post a review).

[https://www.amazon.com/Lebanon-Red-Luke-McCaffrey-ebook/dp/B09Y2BS5L3/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_product\\_top?ie=UTF8#customerReviews](https://www.amazon.com/Lebanon-Red-Luke-McCaffrey-ebook/dp/B09Y2BS5L3/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8#customerReviews)

Speaking of BRW Authors. My dear friend (from back in the GF&M days) Marissa Banez's new children's book (<https://thefilam.net/archives/36349>), Hope and Fortune (it's about a young girl and a wonderfully diverse set of fairies) is now available for pre-order on Black Rose Writing's website.

<https://www.blackrosewriting.com/childrensmg/hopeandfortune?rq=Marissa%20Banez>

# HOPE AND FORTUNE



For those young readers who can really appreciate a life affirming story (and did I mention its got fairies). Hopefully those children will grow up to read my books with their fairies.

Well, that's it for my public service announcements. Thank you for listening.

Now its off to cuddle Smokey (that's her yesterday morning)



Then I'm off on my morning rounds and then back on the Hamster Wheel for some punishment.

It is Friday my fine, five readers (Claire's Theorem) so I hope you all have big plans for the weekend ahead.

But most of all, have a great day.

# Kindness of Strangers - Thank You Adrienne Stuki

September 15, 2022



I get up each morning wondering what I will write about.

Sometimes I have something going on in my life that I will share, like my children/grandchildren moving to Australia.

I share such things because they help explain why those people are so important that they end up in my stories. Also, I want my fine, five readers to understand that I am just like everyone else. I am driven by my emotions. I love, and I hurt, and then I get better. And then I laugh again. And I save all of these emotions up in a bag, and when I need to include them in the lives of my characters, I take them out and see which ones fit the character and the scene, and then weave it into the story.

I used to get feedback right on these blog pages. Since GD removed that option about a year or so ago, this blogging process has returned to feeling like a personal diary. You sit down and write something. Then put it back in your drawer. None the wiser. Every once in a while, one of my fine, five readers reaches out by email to comment on what they have read.

I like when I find that I have made someone laugh. I also like when I learn that I have connected with someone because of some common aspect of our lives.

But there are those rare occasions when someone reaches out just to tell me that its all going to be okay.

Yesterday was one of those days.

I received an email from Adrienne Stuki, one of my fine, five readers, just to tell me not to worry, that everything works itself out and that my bond with my grandchildren will continue through technology and trips.

Thank you Adrienne. I appreciate your kindness. And you are right. The family has made it safely to LA. They have returned the RV to its rental spot. Today they get Cairo squared away with his trip. Then a week of sightseeing and then off to Oz.

I hope the strangers Cairo meets on this journey are as kind as my fine, five readers.

But now I must start my day with a kitty cuddle, my rounds and my torture.

I also have to put out the recycling.

Then back to the law.

But you fine, five readers get out there and embrace Thursday, but be quick about it, because Friday beckons.

And have a great day.

# C'est Fait.

September 14, 2022



Yesterday was physically and emotionally exhausting. Humans plan and God laughs.

The next generations were scheduled to disembark at 7 am. Did not leave the driveway until 1 pm.

But they left.

In true Georgie fashion, the Fed Ex Truck arrived delivering one final package before they left.

I said my goodbye to Luke while the two of us were alone on my driveway, before everyone gathered to enter the RV.



There was so much I wanted to say, words of wisdom to impart, but I couldn't find any words, so I just extended the hug a little longer than usual.

Anyway, there is nothing more left to teach. He is a good man. He will be successful as a father and a writer. He knows how much I love him.

But I did snap the above photo.

I hugged Georgie as well and told her I loved her. She has a lot of work ahead of her but she will be back in her home land. Happy. The kids had gotten their hugs from me back at the house. I didn't want them upset at the RV. They weren't.

Lisa went along with them as far as LA. She will wrangle the three granddaughters until they can be safely strapped into their seats on their flight to OZ. Then she'll weep, when no one is looking. She's strong like that. I'm not.

I'll pick her up close to midnight at the Denver Airport a week from Friday. And we'll weep again during the car ride home.

Until then, I have to finish moving the last minute stuff they placed in our cars into our now again packed to the rafters garage, and clear up the tornado ravaged house the kids left behind.

Jeter will probably need therapy after Stella.

Blue is despondent after saying farewell to Cairo.

There's a few more "save this" items left at their house I'll need to collect. I have a set of keys.

I dropped off a package to a local fireman friend of Luke's.

Then I sat quietly in the dark last night listening to the ghosts.

My friends from the OFC were in wonderful form, breaking my balls so I wouldn't get too maudlin. Laughter is good for the soul.

An old friend, Johnny Carey, called me out of the blue. It's been 40 years. Funny, I had included his character for a brief mention in Finding Jimmy Moran, but I hadn't yet tracked him down to clear it.

Synchronicity is just cool. He's now joined others from the old crew pantheon in The Claire Trilogy and Beyond.

Veronica called to see how it went. She and b have spent a lot of hours helping them get their plans in place. They will miss them dearly.

Georgie brought over the girls final project that they had worked on with their Fairy Godmothers. A representation of what Casa Claire meant to them.



It's got everything I had hoped they would remember from the property, right down to Smokey the cat. I hope the project helped seal those memories in their heads and hearts. There is magic in this world.

Lisa and I are the gnomes in the kitchen area.

We will put it in Lisa's office on the small table the girls spent hours drawing over the few short years we have been here.

So now I must move forward. Another day awaits.

There is a kitty that still needs to be cuddled, animal friends still need a snack and a good word on my rounds, and finally, the torturous treadmill to punish me.

But I will survive. It's what I do. And then I write about it.

The rest of you fine, five readers go out there and have a magnificent hump day. No prisoners.  
And make today a great one.

# Vaya Con Dios

September 13, 2022



Well here we are. In a little while the younger generations will start to wake and load into the RV that will take them to LA.



Then, a few days later, a plane to Oz.

They'll want an early start. I don't blame them. Miles to go before they sleep, again.

Spent yesterday babysitting and being my usual silly self because I didn't want to telegraph the finality to the engagement. Lot's of laughs and cursing and shrieking and the house looks like a

tornado went through it. Shot a few short videos of stupid stuff.

Hopefully my thumb didn't get in the way.

My prayers are for their safe travel. My heart breaks so that each of them can take a little piece with them as they drive away towards a wondrous future.

And I know that their future will be bright. For some strange reason, the Lord looks after drunks, madmen and McCaffreys.

Even down under.

If I can find the appropriate photo, I'll open this back up and add it later.

Time to say goodbye.

Then I'll need to fall back into my routine.

A kitty to cuddle, rounds to make, treadmill to cry on.

Claire & Honey will distract me, as will Blue and Jeter.

But you fine, five readers go out and master your Tuesday.

And make it a great one.

# 24 Hour Reprieve - 9/11.

September 12, 2022



The governor called yesterday afternoon and stayed execution until Tuesday morning to allow Luke to sell his car, and take care of some final last minute clearing up. It's one of those mixed blessings. It provides Lisa and I with one more day with the grandkids, but it extends the agony one more day as well. It also saves Monday from one more strike against it in my memory box.

I did get some one-on-one time with all three of the granddaughters yesterday, during which I engaged them in those kinds of silly conversations that I hope they will always remember, even if it means that they only remember my eccentricity. I can live with that.

It's my best feature. I posted snippets of those conversations on Twitter in case they forget and hopefully they will stumble across them in the future. I even repeatedly lifted both girls up and held them upside down by their feet just so they would get used to the feel of what living full-time in Oz will be like, given they will now be living on the bottom of the world. Hopefully that will seal the memory. Given that it took both hands to hold them, I didn't get that on film.

One of those conversations was with the middle child, Savanna.

Scarlett had locked herself in her bedroom for some alone time, Stella was off for a nap, and as I was walking out of another bedroom, Savanna called out "Dude (the name my grandchildren call me), would you play with me?" I normally run and hide from those requests because Savanna is an energy vampire, a vortex that sucks you in for hours at a time. I was literally three steps down the hallway making my escape before it registered that I wasn't going to get any more of those requests, so I turned back and sat on the floor with Savanna Joy while she told me the rules of her collection of jungle cats, which led to a question of what those cats eat, which led to her sharing that they were Australian jungle cats, and vegetarians, which led to the question of what does anyone eat in Australia. Seems it's peaches and grass. Classic Hallmark moment. I posted that one on Twitter. #wisecelt.



I also published one of the videos with the two of them, while I challenge them with my silliness. Its the top video on the "About" page of this website.

Silliness is underrated. Kids grow up today so caught up in what is necessary to get ahead, what they need to look like, what they need to know, that they often forget to just enjoy those stolen moments when they can just be silly kids. Life without whimsy is no life at all.

Yesterday may be that last lesson I can teach them. Don't ever be so full of yourself that you cannot act silly.

So the grandkids will get to hang with us one more day and sleep over one more night. No more reprieves. Luke has to get Cairo to LA by the 15th. There is no more fat in their travel plans. Everything will have to go perfectly smooth, and it will.

So today will be one more day of silliness and the corresponding eye rolling. And I am thankful for that.

Now I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and a treadmill to master me.

Then a last day of grandchildren. Lots of silliness.

But you fine, five readers go out and take on your world. And if you can sneak in a little silliness in solidarity, go for it.

And have a great day.

One final note, I made an egregious error yesterday by forgetting that it was the anniversary of 9-11. I do not care how distracted I may be with the issues in my own life, there was no excuse for me forgetting that date and the heroes that lost their lives protecting ours. I will never let it happen again.

# Tick, Tick , Tick. . .

September 11, 2022



Another day of babysitting while the next generation ties up loose ends. One day closer to emmigration.

Nice to see that Stella has my eyes. She'll take that with her. I'm glad she escaped the rest of my looks.

Drove Luke down towards Denver to pick up the RV yesterday afternoon..



Might be the first time this line of McCaffreys rode in one, although I'm quite certain we have Travelers in our blood line. Irish gypsies are cool. We are all Tinkers at heart. Luke's goal is for everyone to be packed in there by first thing tomorrow morning and then a final trek west to LA. He's used to driving a fire truck, so this is no problem for him.

Lisa will escort them to the western shore and then say her goodbyes. Must pack extra hankies for her trip home. She's flying home first class so she has a little extra room to mourn.

The two older girls - Scarlett & Savanna - slept over last night, although I was asleep before they were. The Bard was right about many things, but especially "Youth is wasted on the young." They wore me out, so Lisa manned up and got them settled. Their Aussie grandparents, Nigel and Sarah Moss, better be on their skates, because there is no rest for the weary with this crew. I will spend today saying goodbye to everyone without them realizing it.

A friend of mine, now passed, wrote a powerful play called "Gone Away With A Sailor," about an Irish family's pain with the emmigration of one of their family members. It moved me then. It brings tears to my eyes now. My grandfather's generation dealt with it on a daily basis. He never saw half of his siblings again once he emmigrated to America. Modern technology has blunted the pain. But it is still there.

On the way to pick up the RV, Luke and I talked a lot about his plans to return to the US for visits in the coming years but I hope he spends that money more wisely taking care of business in his family's new home. Travel for 5 is expensive. Trust me, I've lived it.

Lisa and I will make our way down under at some point to check up on them. So will Luke's siblings, and I hope the girls remain close to their cousin Lucian, who will certainly want to travel to the land of the coolest poisonous creatures, great whites, crocs, Kangaroos and cute Koala bears.

I make my mother's promise to my grandchildren. "I will dance at all of your weddings."

But make sure to invite at least one Medium to each, just in case. Belt and suspenders.

I know the Fairy Godmothers will fly down to make sure the girls are towing the female family line. Matriarchs in training.

But the good news is that Georgie's parents are just wonderful. I'm not sure they will be able to teach the girls to curse with a Bronx accent, but I think they have everything else covered just nicely.

"Fuck," like "Truck," just doesn't sound the same as "Fook," like

"Cook." But there is no doubt that they will love them with every ounce of their being, just like we do.

Well, I have things to do before the girls thankfully monopolize my time today.

A kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and then the treadmill.

But you fine, five readers get out there and do something fun.

Make a memory, because sometimes that's all you're going to have.

So make today a great one. I will.

# Stella Godzilla

September 10, 2022



The division of labor yesterday had me babysitting my youngest granddaughter, Stella, while my oldest sister Veronica took the older two girls to some museum and out to eat. That allowed Luke and Georgie freedom to empty the last of their moveable feast into the truck taking it to storage down under. I also had Cairo with me, which Blue absolutely loved.

Today will be spent going with Luke to Denver to pick up the RV that is taking his family of travelers to LA on Monday where they will complete the last legs of the disembarking for Oz. All hands on deck.

Lisa shall be joining them on their RV trip to LA, to help wrangle the urchins. They'll say their goodbyes at LAX, and then she'll fly back here.

Managed to shoot a couple of short cute videos, and if I ever master technology, I'll post them.

But I did get to shoot a quick series of photos when I managed to get Stella to sit down for two seconds, which I call "Who shall wear the crown?"













The second to last shot is my favorite.

Please forgive the signs of magic marker on her face. Stella has a tendency of mimicking her mom putting on makeup. Human adults just cannot move fast enough to stop her. Thank God they are not indelible. Although she is. She's right here on my heart.

Maybe Stella will be the third generation of Bard in our Celtic line. I have a feeling she is going to have a lot of experiences to draw from.

I know its bucking the odds, but I do hope she remembers a few of our last days together. I've been sharing the family secrets. If not, maybe someday she'll read these blogs to learn just how much her Nona and Dude loved her and her sisters. Or she can read between the lines in *The Claire Trilogy* and figure it out herself. I'm also hoping that maybe someone will come up to her someday and in that cool Aussie accent say "Are you related to that Yank writer named McCaffrey?" And she'll respond in an equally cool Aussie accent, "I am that Yank writer named McCaffrey!" You see, my hat (thanks BC) looks really good on her. Heavy is the head. . .

Speaking of which, RIP QE2 and good luck Charles III. What can I say, I like The Royals. Sorry Spaghetti.

Well I still have lots of my own chores to get through this morning before I pitch in next door.

The property is all mucky. The Berthoud skies have been weeping for me these past few days.

Now I must go see about a kitty cuddle, my rounds and the treadmill. Then chores.

Then family.

You fine, five readers have a great day.

And if any of you have read Luke's novel, *Lebanon Red*, please post a review on Amazon, my granddaughters' weddings aren't going to pay for themselves.

# Sorry The Morning Got Away Trying To Put FJM To Bed.

September 9, 2022

I will make up for it.

# Feral Creatures

September 8, 2022



Luke, Georgie, Scarlett, Savanna and Stella (and Cairo) are moving in for the weekend while the movers come and clear out their house and send everything to Australia. It's great that they are moving to where they have access to the Outback, because these children are, indeed, feral creatures. Savanna definitely has the McCaffrey death stare. They are going to need open land to thrive.





Those primal McCaffrey genes have surfaced and they never stop moving, wrestling, tormenting the animals and the grandparents, and getting into anything and everything.



That's Savanna on the treadmill staring back at the mules through the back door.



The mules are even running for cover.

Well, if this is going to be my last cup of coffee, I might as well make it a triple shot espresso.

Hope my heart holds up. Pray for my survival.

Shifting gears. Heard separately from Jaysree Whitelaw and Yvette Benson, two lovely young ladies that make up the incalculable number of fine, five readers of this blog, that grew up with the Mythic Collins family on the opposite side of the Grand Concourse in the Bronx just across from where the McCaffrey Clan first lived on Gerard Avenue.

They are both traveling around the country with their husbands.

Jay just finished KMAG and I'm thrilled to report that she attests to shedding many a tear. Yvette reports that she just finished Luke's book, Lebanon Red, enjoyed it immensely, and is clamoring for a sequel. Given her insider status, and deep familiarity with McCaffrey literature (and backstory), I emailed Yvette the latest draft of FJM, to see how it fits into her vision of The Claire Trilogy. Fingers crossed.

Well I have lots on my plate for the next few days. I will try to get down before the computer to provide updates but if I suddenly go silent beyond the weekend, you'll know these creatures have bested me.

But this morning, I've still got a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and self-torture to engage in (assuming the girls did not destroy the treadmill).

You fine, five readers go out there and survive Thursday, Friday awaits.

But make today a great one.

# Routines Are Beneficial

September 7, 2022



My life here in the NoCo hinterlands could be considered routine, and I am okay with that. My writing and legal work provide the changing mental stimuli necessary to keep my mind active and sharp, but the daily repetitive obligations I have to my fur family keeps me grounded. My dogs and mules like to be fed their real meals at certain times. Going out into the back property between 2 and 2:30 am, to provide Claire and Honey a snack, allows me to check on them to make sure they are comfortable and safe during a time when the most dangerous of predators are out and about, or, during the winter, the coldest of weather occurs. I get to know that they are safe and warm. That is important to me. I check the barn to make sure that the electricity is on and the fan (summer) or heaters (winter) are working to keep them comfortable. If they are ever going to need my emergent intercession, that is the time it will happen. Blue always comes with me out back, which adds to my sense of security as I walk through the darkness. I usually feed Blue and Jeter breakfast at this time as well. After the mules eat, I come back into the house and the dogs go back to sleep for a few hours

while I sit down and write my blogs and books. Today I worked on my acknowledgements to FJM.

Giving Smokey her/his food and a cuddle each morning around 4 am is another routine, which forces me to finish up my creative writing for the day. Routine.

Once I come back from my morning circuit around the area, where I have handed out carrots, apples and scoobies to my local fur friends, I let the mules out of the side paddock and feed them again.

This time its a real large breakfast of fruits and veggies, which fills their bellies enough to distract them for a few hours of people watching and grazing out in the front area while I go on the treadmill and then get ready for my legal workday. If I don't feed them first, they will harass me at the back door until I do.

During the summer, I also carve out a routine where I fill the birdbath, fountains and water the trees and flowers, usually before I go out on my rounds.

Now each day about late morning, the mules are back outside my office window demanding their tithe. That forces me to take a break from whatever legal work I am focusing on to interact with and appreciate the unique personalities of these two amazing equines. The dogs also get their snacks at this time as well. Animals are very sensitive to the concept of fairness. What you do for one you must do for all.

Then its more work until around 4 pm (6 pm NYC time) when I usually call it a workday and then head out to provide Claire and Honey with their dinner. If they are still wandering the property I call out to them and shake my large bag of mixed fruits and veggies, so they know to come to the back property, where I serve their dinner in large rubber bowls and then close them into the side and back property for another night.

That's them above eating last night's dinner - carrots, apples and a side order of watermellon. They also graze and eat hay from the barn and from the hanging bags on the fences. They have access to plenty of clean water in their troughs, and can escape from inclement weather into the barn as they determine.

But I will be out there again tomorrow to check on them and start the day anew.

I have a separate weekend routine that entails picking up wheelbarrows of mule muffins, replenishing hay and water, and chopping fruits and veggies for the week.

These routines have been good for me.

They remind me to appreciate the little things in life.

Well, this morning's routine means I need to go feed and cuddle Smokey, then go on my rounds, then torture myself for an hour.

Then work.

You fine, five readers go out there and engage in your routines. Get over the hump. I can see the weekend ahead.

But most of all, have a great day.



# Finding Jimmy Moran - Fini

September 6, 2022

Yesterday (and early this morning) was spent putting the final edits on FJM. I now just need to add the acknowledgments (which are like a separate chapter) and a dedication or two. This morning Eileen Cotto sent me her final edits for the third part of the book, which weighs in now at almost 121K words. It's going to be a fun read for anyone who liked The Claire Trilogy.

I do want to say up front how much the work of Eileen C, her sister Anne R, and Anna Hillman went towards keeping me honest, and finding those edits and typos that my old eyes and editing software keep missing. Plus they were on top of all of the tiny inconsistencies that pop up whenever you are adding to a larger body of work. Women have a better eye for details. I am forever in their debt.

Also a special shout out to Joe Serrano. a lifelong friend who I not only got to kill off in KMAG (although I gave him cool dialogue), but I got to resurrect him under another name in FJM. Joe was my conscience when it came to portraying the old neighborhood and its denizens. Thank you Joe.

Well, because I spent this morning cleaning up the final edits I don't have time for a long blog.

So let me just leave it here for now.

I'm off to cuddle a kitty, do my rounds and then the rack.

You fine, five readers go out and have a great day.

And if you are at all interested in reading FJM, I recommend that you first read The Claire Trilogy this fall, so you are all up to speed. If you already have read it, give it another run through. You'd hate to miss a detail.

# Happy Labor Day

September 5, 2022



Yesterday was a nice day. Most of the heavy chores were done Saturday, so it was just some topping off work for troughs and hay, running to the store to replace the resources for the week, and scooping up whatever had been left in the barn overnight. Claire and Honey spent a lot of time out front under the shadows of the tree I call "Old Man."





Honey thinks the initials on the trough mean "Honey's Water."

Lisa and I went down the road to Luke and Georgie's for their farewell party. They had the young neighbors on either side of them and their children over for a barbeque. Great young families with great futures ahead of them. One of Luke's close friends from the DFD Academy brought his wife. They are a lovely young couple. The adults all sat around shooting the shit while the kids all raced around the property having a great time. No melancholy. Just the next generation eating, drinking and laughing. A perfect afternoon. As much as I wanted to break out the iPhone and start snapping photos, I resisted because I just wanted to spend the time locking in the memory, the feeling, and not acknowledge the reality that this would be the last party they would throw at their Berthoud home. Next stop. Australia.

Lisa and I didn't stay too long. Lisa has to work today so she had uniforms to wash and other things to get ready for her work week. Luke, Georgie and the grand daughters will be staying with us next weekend, before they hop in their rented RV with their dog Cairo and head west to LA. There Cairo, their Mastiff, will be placed on a plane and sent ahead to quarantine for a few weeks. My children & grandchildren will depart a few days later.

Lisa will make the trip west with them in the RV, to squeeze in some final memories. They will say their final goodbyes at LAX. We booked her a first class ticket back to Denver so she can mourn in comfort.

The Irish's history has been driven by emmigration. Oddly enough, many of the best of our ancestors headed to the penal colony in Australia. It is the perfect place for Luke to pitch his flag, extend the Clan's reach, have new experiences and write about them.

Georgie will be closer to her family, Nigel and Sara Moss, and that's fair enough. We've had her for over a decade. Must not be greedy.

Will miss her sweetness and smile. I have loved her like a daughter since she joined the Clan, long before she and Luke tied the knot and started having babies.

The girls will all go to private schools and wear uniforms with floppy hats with big ribbons. I hope they pick up some of their mother's lyrical Aussie accent. I will miss them more than I can express in words. I'll just have to leave that to my tears.

Luke will make his way in this new world. He has visited there quite a bit and knows what he's getting into. He has all the tools for success - smart, educated, well traveled, strong and imbued with the Clan's strong sense of family love and loyalty. And he is absolutely fearless. His family is in good hands. I am very proud of who he has become. He will eclipse me as both man and writer, and I am just fine with that. That is how it should be. In recognition of Lisa's Latin blood line, *vaya con dios*.

But now I need to return to the present. I have set aside the holiday today, while Lisa's at work, to make one final run through FJM with Eileen Cotto's last set of notes, and then pop it in the email to Reagan Rothe, to start the production process.

New beginnings for us all.

Before that I need to get a kitty cuddled, make my rounds and get on the Hamster Wheel.

But you fine, five readers go out there and hit that final Summer BBQ. Hug your families and friends, laugh and make memories. It is all that is really important.

And have a great day.

# Meet Stella & Her Sisters (and Cousin)

September 4, 2022



When I wrote TWA, my only granddaughters were Scarlett and Savanna. So, along with their cousin, my grandson Lucian, that's him sizing up a rock wall, below



I worked them in as characters in the novel.

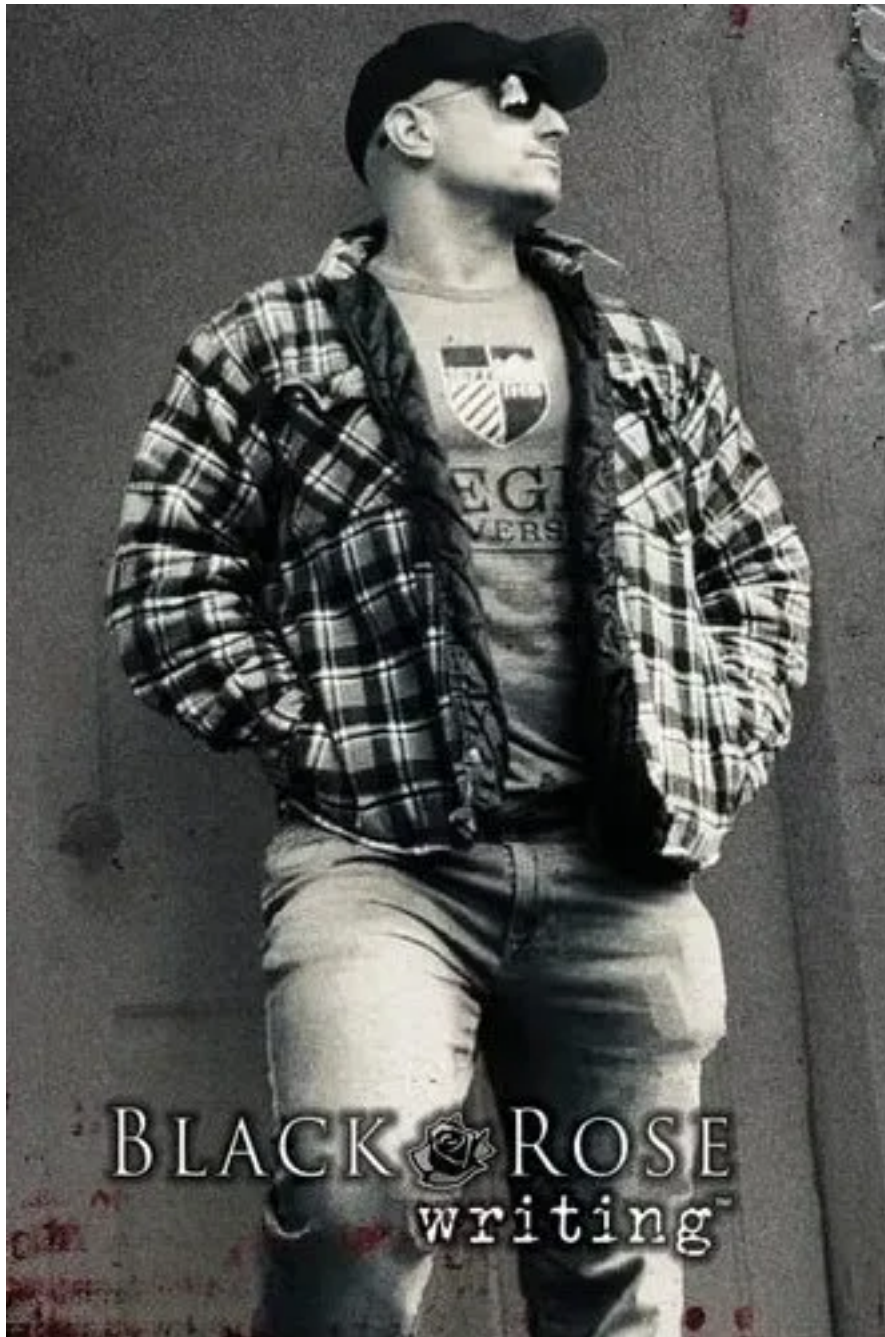




Remember, I never thought TWA would see the light of day, and would just be found in my desk drawer after I was dead. I wanted to leave something behind for my grandkids to let them know I was thinking about them. That I loved each and every one of them. The above shot is the three girls during a break in floor wrestling yesterday. Blue (yes, that Blue) was officiating. Here's a lovely shot of my gorgeous DIL Georgie and the two oldest girls.



Georgie is the Australian model turned wonderful mother. Side note - I included Georgie's parents the lovely Nigel and Sara Moss as characters in TWA - the Australian couple who sold back pieces of the fallen space station to wealthy americans. Our next generation instantly got a whole lot taller and better looking. Georgie married my oldest, Luke



Who is the bad ass world traveler who has now just published Lebanon Red:



I highly recommend his book, which is getting excellent reviews:  
[https://www.amazon.com/Lebanon-Red-Luke-McCaffrey-ebook/dp/B09Y2BS5L3/ref=cm\\_cr\\_arp\\_d\\_product\\_top?ie=UTF8#customerReviews](https://www.amazon.com/Lebanon-Red-Luke-McCaffrey-ebook/dp/B09Y2BS5L3/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8#customerReviews)

Given that Luke has three weddings to pay for, I want him to sell millions of copies and maybe get a movie deal for the O'Hara Poit franchise (have you noticed the price of weddings these days?). Here's a better shot of the two oldest girls.





There, that should do it.  
By the time I wrote AAA, Georgie, was pregnant with Stella.



Now as cute as Stella is, even with chocolate ice cream all over her frock, she is Godzilla by nature. She literally just plows through life, and if you are not smart enough to get out of her way, she bowls right over you. Just ask her older sisters. My small dog, Jeter, who bravely walks through the legs of Claire and Honey, runs and hides from Stella.

So when the time came to write KMAG, I knew I had to work her into the story line. Given the pivotal roles her sisters and cousin played in the earlier books, I knew her role had to be major, or, when I was old and frail, she would probably find me in whatever nursing home my children ultimately secreted me in and torture me on a daily basis until I tossed myself out a window.

The Stella character that appears in KMAG, who turns out to be the ultimate bad ass, is nowhere near the bad ass that her real counterpart is. Stella also returns with her fictional brother, Apollo

(I'm hoping my youngest, Mark -- and his lovely wife Sara (Go NYPD Blue) -- have a son someday), in Finding Jimmy Moran (street date April 13, 2023). I'm hoping to reunite all the grandkids' characters in the final installment of this series - Where The Ley Lines Meet - which I will write next spring.

As an aside, my Toyota RAV 4, which also features prominently in The Claire Trilogy, is also named Stella, but I wouldn't share that with my granddaughter, and I don't refer to my car by her first name in Stella's presence, or she may lift it over her head and toss it a few miles away into Carter (Crater was an intentional change) Lake.

Anyway, there you have it. My real legacy isn't my writing, it's my children and their children. And if I had never put word to paper, I would still die happy tomorrow knowing they are going to move my family forward into the future. Watch out world (and Universe)!

Well, it's Sunday, but no day of rest for the wicked.

I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and a bit of self-torture to get through.

Then some more chores and maybe a visit to Luke and Georgie's for a gathering.

I hope you fine, five readers get out there today and grab the last of the summer season with both hands.

And make today another great one.



# Love Comes Knocking

September 3, 2022



That's Claire peeking through my back door yesterday, waiting for me to notice her standing patiently. She is not always patient. She often calls out to me with these guttural sounds that I've come to understand as her patterns of speech. She's very vocal if I keep her waiting for anything. As soon as I appear in her sight line she lets into me. If I'm off on one side of the house watering the trees and she's on the other across the yard at the side paddock and she sees me, she starts vocalizing. She doesn't bray like a mule or whinny like a horse, she makes these sounds that start at the back of her tongue and are forced out almost like coughs with different

lengths and cadences, depending on what she is attempting to get across. I have heard similar vocalizations from chimpanzees. I've come to distinguish and recognize "I'm waiting here," "Hurry up!" "Stop ignoring me," and "It's about time." When she stands outside my window she has a specific "I see you in there," vocalization.

Then there is the softer "thanks," or "I luv ya" that often comes with a nuzzle or a nibble once I've seen to her needs.

If the sounds don't work, Claire will knock with her thunderous hooves. She'll knock on the cement outside the back door or on the metal gates when she wants them open. If I'm chopping in the kitchen and listening to music, she'll convert her knocking into dancing to the beat of the music that's playing. It's different than her stomping, she'll actually raise her front hooves and swing them back and forth, switching from one foot to the other synching perfectly with the music playing. It really is quite cute.

I cannot seem to post videos on this page but if you check out my "About" page on this site you can catch one of Claire Dancing.

Anyway, I will always respond to Claire's calls or her knocks. She deserves that kind of attention at all times. Because she always brings love with her. Always.

Well today I have a lot of chores and chopping to complete. That means lots of Claire following me around and getting in the way of things, and that's just fine.

I hope to get to one last review of FJM at some point this weekend before sending it off to BRW.

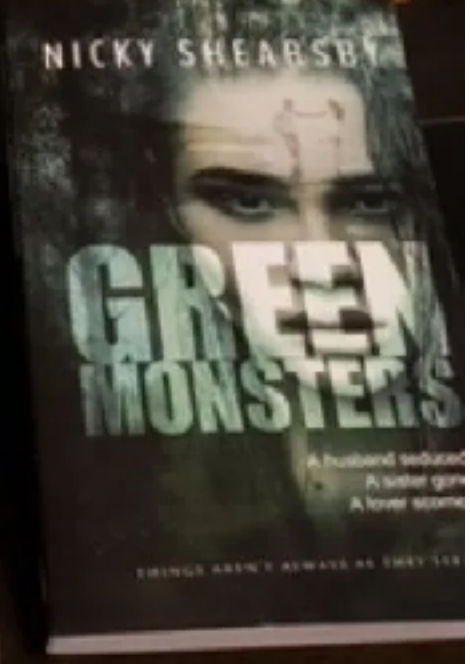
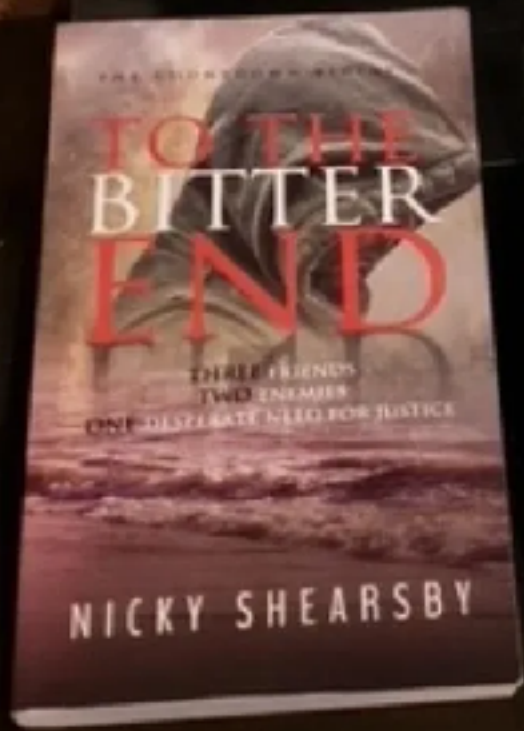
But before I get there, I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and the Hamster Wheel to weep over.

You fine, five readers get out and enjoy your days. See some friends or family. Enjoy the last of the summer warmth. Read a book on a nice outdoor chair or bench.

But most of all, have a great day.

# Latest Addition To The MOS Shelf - Thank You Nicky Shearsby

September 2, 2022



Lonnie Bell, the magnanimous manager of Mike O'Shay's, was thrilled to inform me yesterday that the long awaited copies of two books of the excellent British writer, Nicky Shearsby, had arrived after their long and arduous journey from across the pond. They immediately took their place on the MOS Literary Bookshelf with such other foreign luminaries like Colin Broderick (although he is now a US Citizen), Jupiter Rose, Don O'Connor, and Terry Melia. We also have domestic authors like Christy Cooper Burnett and S Kay Murphy. Oh yeah, must not forget my son, Luke McCaffrey. And Nicky was kind enough to inscribe both copies:



And this is how legends like the MOS Literary Bookshelf are formed, a few books at a time.

If any one or more of my fine, five readers are published (traditional or self) authors and are willing to join the shelf, just send those books (inscribed to Lonnie Bell as simply as Nicky did above) addressed to:

## Mike O'Shays Restaurant & Ale House

512 Main St, Longmont, CO 80501

1 (303) 772-0252

You can check out the place at *mikeoshays.com*

Thank you Nicky, we are honored by your company.

I'm sure the bookshelf's resident curator, Kyle Dooley, cannot wait to give them a read. Thank you Kyle.

I have my own copies sitting on top of my TBR pile.

Each addition to the shelf is thrilling. Lonnie has promised that he will expand the bookshelf as needed. Thank you Lonnie.

Well here we are again, facing the Labor Day Weekend. I hope all of my fine, five readers have exciting plans to see off the summer in style.

And if you find a free moment, pick up a book, any book, and temporarily escape into another world. Great for the mind and soul.

Well, I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and a date with a Treadmill that hates me.

You fine, five readers sneak out of work early and really enjoy yourselves this weekend.

But most of all, make today a great one.

# Smokey

September 1, 2022



Love cats. They really do have humanity's number. They expect and appreciate service, but show their appreciation on their own terms. Smokey, above, likes to show his/her appreciation by leaving dead rodents under my kitchen window. Personally, I could do without the sacrifices. Very Old Testament.

But I do like looking out that window as Smokey makes an appearance at different points during the day, just to watch him/her eat, or curl up in a ball in the high grass under Jack the Spruce.

After most naps Smokey will sit on that wooden beam and sharpen his/her claws, before setting out on his/her rounds.

Part of me wants to bring Smokey inside and protect him/her from the dangers out there. There are a lot of larger predators, day and night. There are dangerous roads to cross. But Smokey has made it clear that he/she is a feral cat, and must have his/her freedom.

So, I will make sure that the heating pad works in Smokey's bomb shelter, so he/she always has a warm place to retreat to, that there is always fresh wet/dry food and clean water in his/her dishes, and that he/she will always have that cuddle in the morning. And then say a little prayer when Smokey wanders away on his/her daily rounds. Because Smokey is living his/her life on his/her terms. Well August is behind us, and the breeze now carries an autumn scent. But summer is not quite over.

With that in mind, you fine five readers must head into this last weekend with all of the excitement and gusto you can manifest. Spend your Thursday finalizing plans with your friends and family, sneak out of the office a little early tomorrow, start to make this weekend's memories.

Take lots of photos. They do capture the moment.

Now I have a kitty to cuddle, rounds to make and the wheel to torture myself on.

And let's not forget the recycling.

Finally, make today a great one. You deserve it.