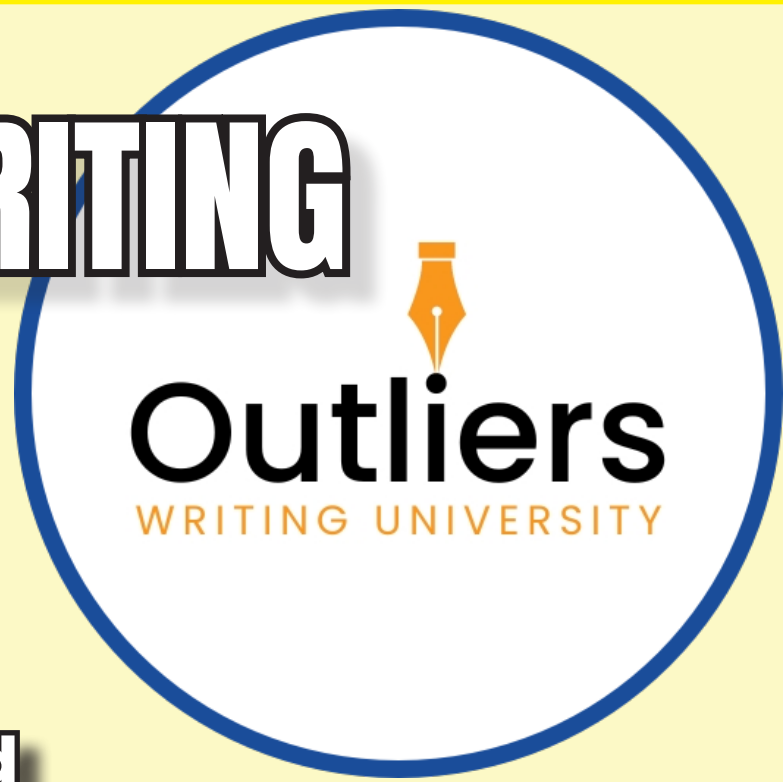


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- **OUTLIERS Publishing**
- **NEW Column-Dr. Katherine Ramsland's Psychology & Writing**
- **SOCIAL Media Tips For Writers**
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Four of today's top writers in the military/espionage/political thriller genre discuss their books, their processes, and how their experiences as veterans influence their work. Panel members are bestselling authors [Brad Taylor](#), [Simon Gervais](#), [Brian Andrews](#), and [Jeff Wilson](#) who will take you into the action, with [Don Bentley](#) moderating.

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Dr. Katherine  
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I've Never Killed a Man? Research  
101 -  
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### STAY TUNED...

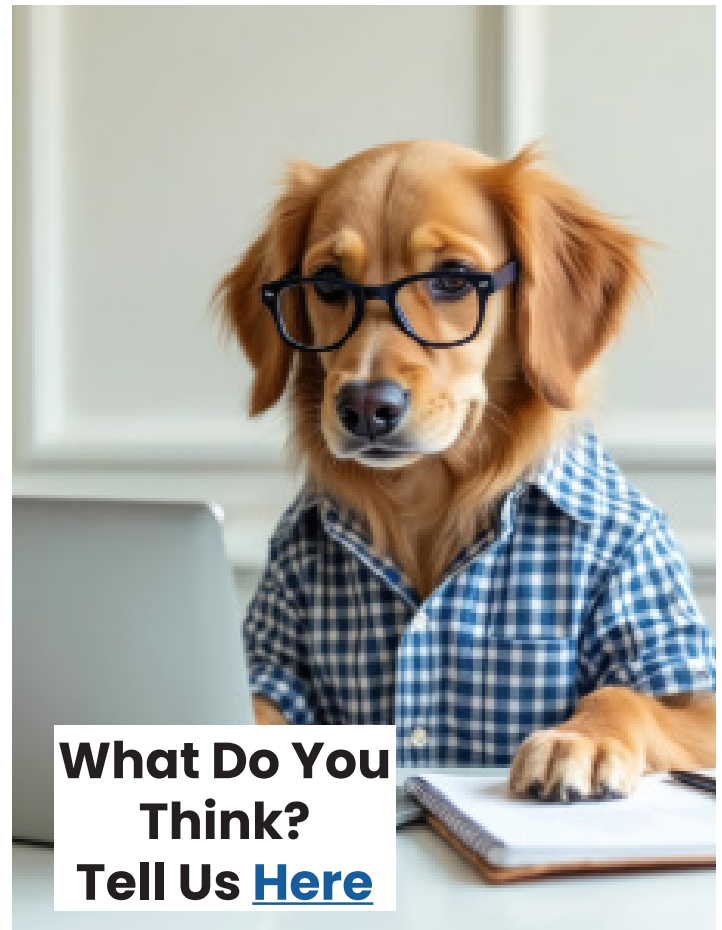
11/18/2025 - Alex Finlay - So You've Written a Novel? 10 Things Bestselling Authors Do to Make Their Manuscripts Sing - [Register Here](#)

12/02/2025 - Hank Phillippi Ryan - Secrets of the Three-Act Structure - [Register Here](#)

12/16/2025 - Steven James - The Subtleties of Voice and Point of View - [Register Here](#)

**Have you missed any classes you'd like to watch?**

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## OUTLIERS PUBLISHING COMPANY



Outliers Writing University has merged with Suspense Publishing to create **OUTLIERS PUBLISHING COMPANY**. Outliers Publishing Company will launch several imprints, including **OUTLIERS•SUSPENSE PUBLISHING** (publishing suspense and thriller genres) and **OUTLIERS PRESS** (publishing nonfiction with an emphasis on writing education). We will expand the types of genres as we move forward.

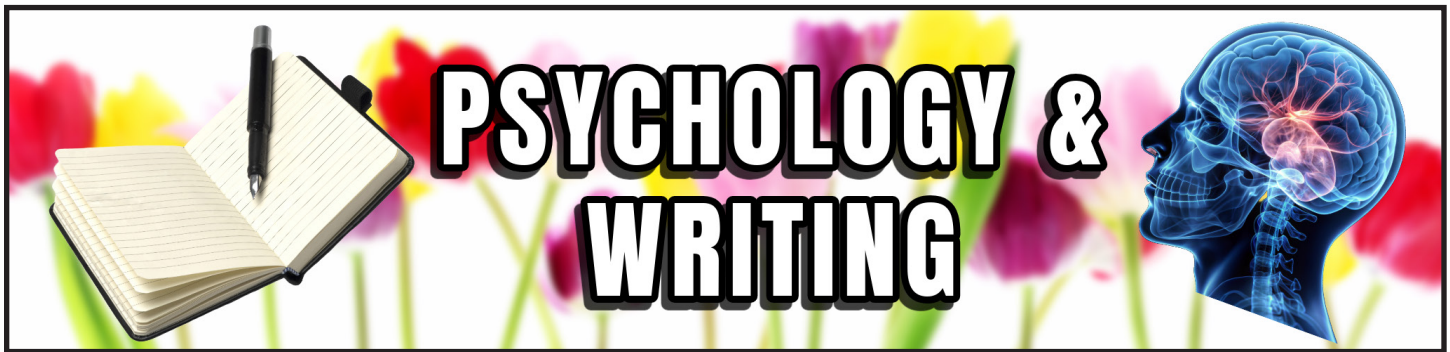
### **OUTLIERS IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS:**

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## Psychology and Writing: How Place Exposes Character

By [Katherine Ramsland, Ph.D.](#)

Whether crime writing involves fiction or fact, writers might treat the location as just a way to orient readers: It took place here. However, the ways in which different people experience a place—especially the same place—can enhance your character development, tension, and pace. A wooded place might be scary to some, a birder's paradise for others, a means of escape, or a spot for a body dump site.

Authors who use location for greater dimension can benefit from psychological concepts in geographic profiling (GP), an aspect of behavioral profiling that analyzes data from an offender's point of view.

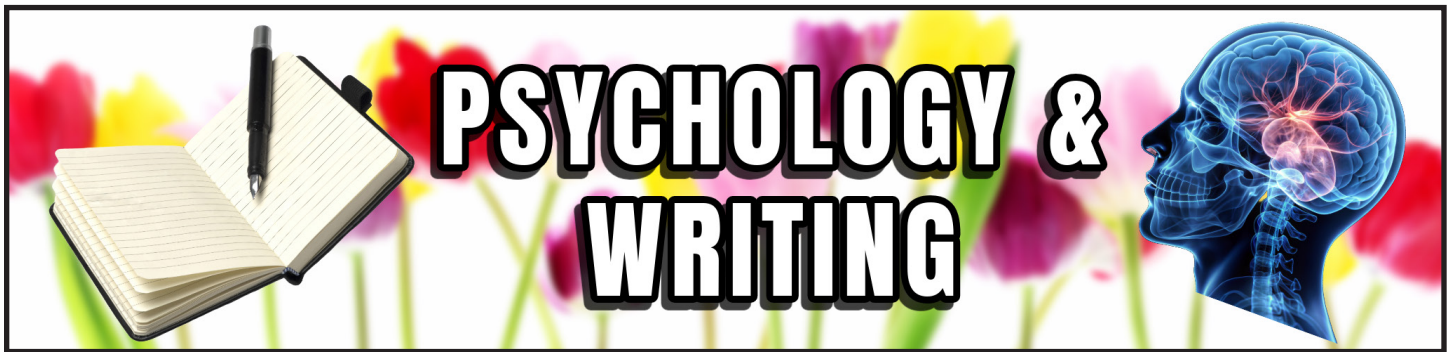
For example, serial strangler Roger Kibbe knew which stretch of I-5 in California offered stranded drivers few resources. He turned it into a trap. He'd troll this remote part of the interstate looking for a woman that caught his attention. Once he picked a victim, he drove ahead, parked on the side of the road, and pretended to need help. The woman usually stopped, to her peril.

Where offenders choose routes, select victims, and commit crimes reveals their habits and methods. The Monon High Bridge killer, Richard Allen, seemed comfortable on a bridge with unstable

footing. Living minutes away by car, he knew the area, including who hiked there and where he could commit a crime undetected. In 2017, he arrived on foot, followed Libby German and Abby Williams onto the bridge, and ordered them "down the hill" to his hidden spot, where he killed them.

A key concept in GP is the psychological comfort zone, where offenders feel safe. Profilers try to determine what the offenders generally do in the designated area, i.e., what it means to them. If it's outside, they might hunt, hike, or fish. If it's in an inhabited area, they might reside, visit relatives, or work there. How would they view it in terms of predatory activity? Where in this location would victims be most vulnerable? Where can the offender take them, and how? What geographic feature might hinder the plan?

Dr. Kim Rossmo, Director of the Center for Geospatial Intelligence and Investigation at Texas State University, created Criminal Geographic Targeting (CGT) software based on the concept of mental maps. Different individuals have different perceptions of a location, and their approach to it (or avoidance of it) defines their mental map. Like physical maps, mental maps crystalize specific features, but they're more personal. The



places where offenders work, shop, hang out, and recreate define both their comfort zone and “crime awareness space.” They know where the opportunities are.

They also have predatory patterns. Rossmo identified four: a hunter searches in his comfort zone, a poacher travels to outlying territory, a troller is mostly opportunistic, and a trapper lures victims to a specific place. (There are also mixed types.)

Building a profile for a criminal incident—who would do this?—with GP queries focuses on distance and travel time, time of day, weather and geographical features around the body dumpsites (for murders), amount of time between incidents (if several are linked), and likely approach to the victims. GP can estimate the offender’s degree of criminal sophistication, evidence of planning, risk tolerance, and even some eccentricities.

For a series of linked crimes, investigators seek to identify the zone of jeopardy. They feed incident location data into GP software, along with relevant geographical markers from physical maps (roads, bridges, rivers, canyons, boundaries). This generates a 3-D image that shows the offenders’ approximate area of operation—where they strike most and least often. It also identifies features they might exploit or avoid.

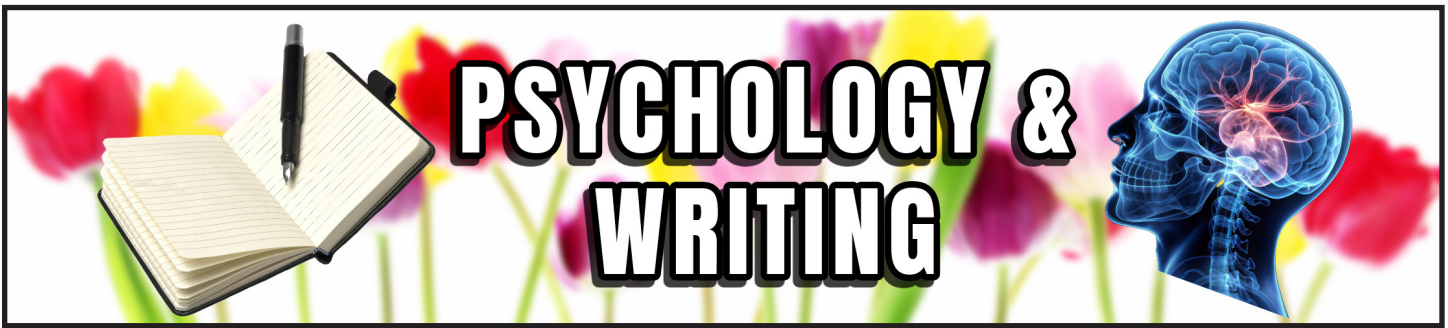
British geographic profiler David Canter

researched three components of place perception: actions, concepts and forms. “If we are to understand people’s responses to places and their actions within them,” Canter says, “it is necessary to understand what (and how) they think.” The meaning of a place, he states, is defined by the action exerted, which derives from an offender’s assessment of location features: If I’m afraid to drive through a tunnel or wish to avoid toll cameras, I’ll take a longer way around. If I seek a remote area, I’ll avoid where people gather.

Criminal profilers form hypotheses about these perceptions to identify behavioral patterns and make predictions. “Our understanding of the situation,” Canter notes, “may be thought of as producing, or at least influencing, our behavior.” Profilers examine how offenders view potential escape routes, physical hindrances, and location-based reasons for their choices. For example, Dennis Rader, the BTK killer in Wichita, KS, looked for specific features associated with homes he intended to enter, including their easy access to the interstate. Kim Rossmo once noted that a series of rapes in a one-square-mile area were all committed in houses that lacked curtains.

A book that offers writers ways to integrate this psychological information is *The Writer’s Guide to Active Setting* by Mary Buckham. She demonstrates how to use setting to enhance characters’ emotional sense of their location. If a female



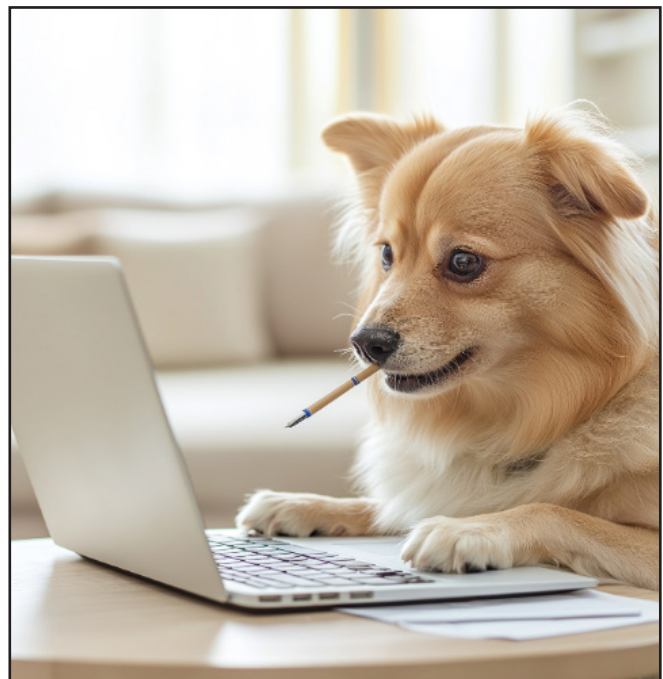
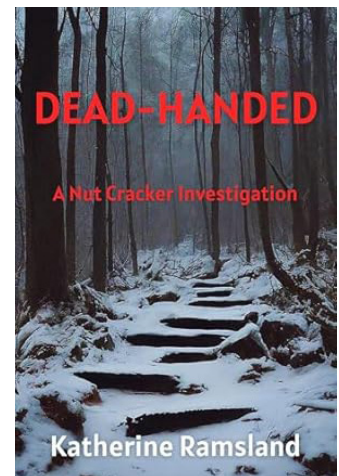


character enters the zone of jeopardy, for example, she might feel vulnerable or scared; she might also feel thrilled or empowered. If she's the killer, she'll evaluate this area for how it facilitates or thwarts her plan.

Location can be a powerful frame for story. Use its nuances.

Thanks for reading this column. If there's an aspect of psychology or criminology you'd like to ask me about, please send your question or suggestion.

**Dr. Katherine Ramsland**, professor emerita, teaches forensic psychology and behavioral criminology in the graduate program at DeSales University. She has appeared as an expert on more than 250 crime documentaries and was an executive producer on *Murder House Flip*, A&E's *Confession of a Serial killer: BTK*, and ID's *The Serial Killer's Apprentice*. The author of more than 1,800 articles and 73 books, including *I Scream Man*, *The Serial Killer's Apprentice* and *How to Catch a Killer*, she pens a regular blog for *Psychology Today*. She has also published a fiction series based on a forensic psychologist, Annie Hunter, who consults on death investigations. **Dead-Handed** is her most recent novel.



## Social Media Tips For Writers

### Twitter (X) & Threads for Writers: Networking & Visibility

By Magen Mintchev

Platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram's Threads remain goldmines for real-time connection, thought leadership, and growing your presence in the writing community. If you're a writer who loves words (which you obviously are), these platforms were practically made for you.

Here's how to use them effectively without getting overwhelmed or lost in the noise.

#### 1. Join the Conversation, Don't Just Broadcast

These platforms are designed for dialogue. Posting alone won't get you far. The real magic comes from joining threads, replying to others, and building conversations. Jump into chats about publishing trends, writing struggles, or even a trending hashtag like #AmWriting or #WriterLife.

Think of it like walking into a writer's conference where everyone's mid-conversation, you don't need a megaphone, you need to add value.

#### 2. Share More Than Updates

Share micro-thoughts that show your personality, process, and perspective. Here are a few post types that work well:

- Writing tips or insights ("Short chapters can trick readers into thinking they're flying through your book. Use it wisely.")
- Funny or relatable writer moments ("Just spent 3 hours naming a side character who dies on page 4.")
- Snippets from your WIP
- Book recommendations in your genre
- Industry commentary (e.g., your thoughts on AI in publishing, author advances, etc.)

Your voice is your brand. These short-form platforms are the perfect place to refine and share it.

#### 3. Create Mini Threads with Purpose

A well-structured thread (especially on X) can drive incredible reach and engagement. Think of each post in your thread as a line in a story, one that encourages the reader to keep scrolling. Some thread ideas:

- "5 things I wish I knew before self-publishing"



## Social Media Tips For Writers

- “A behind-the-scenes look at how I plot a thriller”
- “The best advice I’ve ever received as a writer (and how I actually used it)”

Start strong, deliver value, and end with a call to action: “Which of these tips did you need today?”

### 4. Be Generous With Support

If you want more engagement, give it first. Share and comment on other writers’ posts. Celebrate their wins. Recommend their books. These platforms thrive on reciprocity. Writers who lift others up are the ones people remember and follow. You’ll also build meaningful relationships that can lead to blurbs, beta readers, newsletter swaps, and future collaborations.

### 5. Don’t Stress Over Growth

X and Threads aren’t about going viral, they’re about being visible. You don’t need 10,000 followers to make an impact. A few hundred engaged, like-minded writers and readers are more valuable than a crowd who never interacts. Remember that.

### Final Thought

If you’re a writer, you already have the most important tool for social media success: your words. Use them to connect, spark

conversation, and carve out your space.

Pick one platform—X or Threads—and commit to showing up at least 2-3 times a week. Once you get used to one platform, try incorporating the other one later on. You’ll be amazed at the connections that follow.

Instagram: @socialwithmagen & @bonechillingbooks

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**We're thrilled to be partnering with KILLER NASHVILLE and BOUCHERCON! Come join us!**

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Join Outliers at **Bouchercon in New Orleans, September 3 – 7**. Outliers will have a media room for all three days. We will be conducting informational roundtables on topics such as Your Career and Social Media, etc. And we will be recording interviews for our podcasts. **We want to interview you!** We'll also host two panels. Let us know that you're attending so we can include you in the programming. [Send us an email here](#).

On **SATURDAY**, join Outliers in the **Hospitality Suite** from 1:00–5:00 pm for snacks, beverages, and great conversation. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!** Come see old friends and make new ones. More info to follow as we get closer.

If you'd like to register for **Killer Nashville** [click here](#), and for **Bouchercon**, [click here](#).





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Fun interviews with best-selling authors. Recent guests include Jeffery Deaver & Isabella Maldonado, Anthony Horowitz, Reed Farrel Coleman, Laurie R. King, Tori Eldridge, Charlaine Harris, John Connolly, Don Bentley, Linwood Barclay, Zoe Sharp, and Mark Cameron. **Upcoming guests include James Rollins, Joe Finder, JD Barker, Allison Brennan, Thomas Perry, and many others.**

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The secret to keeping your readers engrossed in the story is no secret at all—keep the foremost unmet desires in their minds, draw them close to the protagonist, and make them care so much about him that they cannot look away. Then, draw the story to a satisfying close as the transformation of the situation or the protagonist's life becomes clear.

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## The Murder Machine

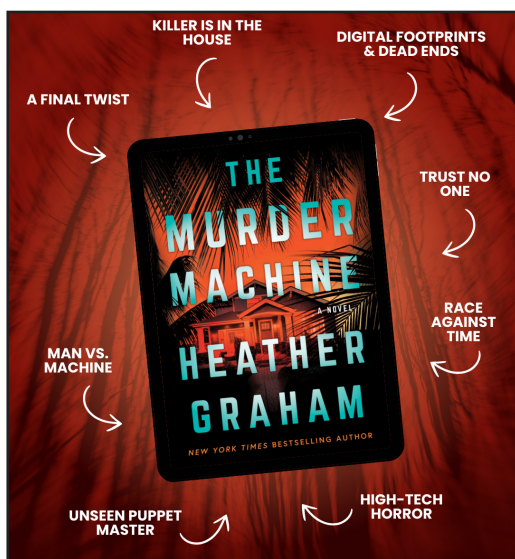
**A Futuristic Thriller of Murderous Artificial Intelligence in a Smart Home**

**By Heather Graham**

**Release date: April 29, 2025**

Artificial intelligence meets genuine murderous intent.

This state-of-the-art smart home has everything: a next-generation entertainment system, an ultramodern kitchen where every appliance is online and even a personal AI to control it all. Standing above its owner's lifeless body, FBI agent Jude Mackenzie is faced with the daunting task of discovering how the woman was killed by her own home. How do you catch a murderer that doesn't leave any fingerprints? [Buy it here.](#)





## South of Nowhere

A Colter Shaw Novel - Book 5

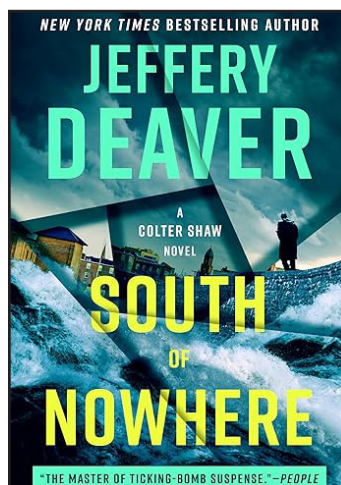
By Jeffery Deaver

Release date: May 6, 2025

The *New York Times* bestselling master of suspense returns to his beloved series, adapted for TV (CBS's *Tracker*, starring Justin Hartley) as reward seeker Colter Shaw races against the clock to save a flooding town from a full-fledged disaster, where the culprit lurks in plain sight.

When a levee collapses in Hinowah, a small town in Northern California, Colter Shaw is brought on by his sister, Dorion, a disaster response specialist, to help locate a family swept away by the raging water, with mere hours to survive.

But after a surprise attack along the river obstructs Colter's urgent search, the siblings are forced to consider a new reality: Is the levee at risk of failing from natural causes, or is someone sabotaging it? Colter and Dorion must race against a ticking clock to uncover the truth and save the citizens before the village washes out completely, destroying everything and everyone in its path. [Buy it here.](#)







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### **350 WRITING SECRETS TO ELEVATE YOUR STORYTELLING AND TRANSFORM YOUR NOVEL**

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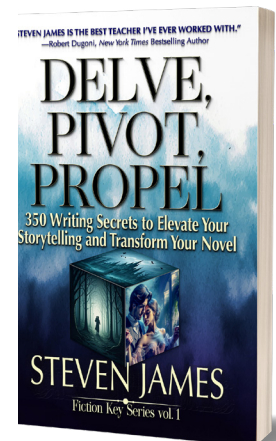
Released December 3, 2024

Unlock the secrets to powerful storytelling with DELVE, PIVOT, PROPEL, the groundbreaking resource from award-winning novelist Steven James. After decades of teaching fiction writing intensives and addressing countless questions from aspiring authors, James finally distills his insights into this essential guide for novelists at every level.

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- Why conflict does not equal tension, difficulty does not equal dilemma, and structure does not equal story.
- 5 reasons why readers keep flipping pages (and which one to always avoid!).



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Going to Sleuthfest in St. Petersburg, FL, May 15-18? If so, be sure not to miss Katherine Ramsland, Ph.D., who is the Forensic Guest of Honor.

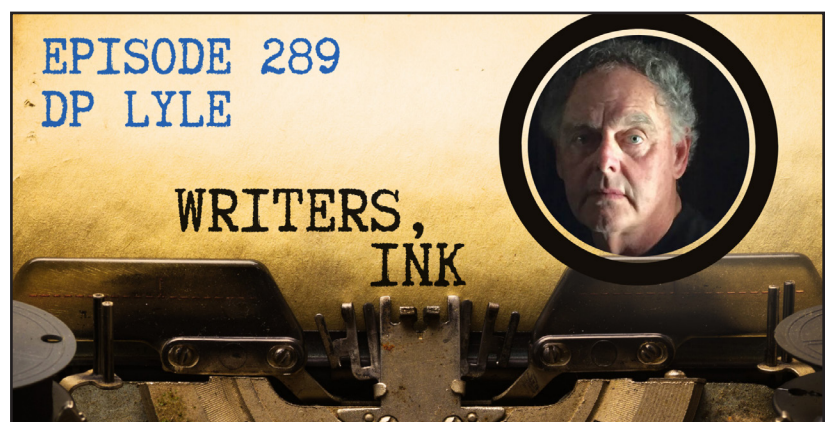


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JD Wolfe survived the orphanage with a butterknife and a bad attitude. Now she's twenty-one, running her first case—and stuck with an annoying ghost who's been haunting her since childhood.

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"Haunted by a Broken Oath" is sharp, snarky, and suspenseful—perfect for fans of gritty female leads, twisty mysteries, and a touch of the paranormal.

Dee Armstrong writes knee-melting romance and mind-bending mystery with a twist of snark and a splash of the supernatural. A storyteller with sharp prose and a soft heart, she's the author of *Visions of Emerald*, *Sleepwalking with Ruby*, *Haunted by Amethyst*, and the upcoming JD Wolfe series. She believes in tough heroines, complicated heroes, and ghosts who seriously need boundaries. Visit her at [www.DeeArmstrong.com](http://www.DeeArmstrong.com) or follow her on social media @DeeArmstrongAuthor for sneak peeks, behind-the-scenes chaos, and the occasional ghost story.







## NEWS AROUND TOWN

### New Article in the Killer Nashville Newsletter

Check out D.P. Lyle, M.D.'s article **THE MYTH OF THE UNTRACEABLE POISON** in the [Killer Nashville Newsletter](#).

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To become what they are today, virtually every company had to overcome challenges—sometimes, things that seemed like a brick wall between them and success. Walt Disney created his first successful character (no—not a mouse), only to lose him to his distributor. Steve Jobs was fired by the executive he recruited to lead Apple. Lee Iacocca had to lead Chrysler out of bankruptcy. And all became stronger as a result. What was the challenge that strengthened you?

#### **... Your Epiphany**

What was your “Eureka!”—your “aha” moment? Kohler, a Midwestern manufacturer of cast and forged agricultural implements, mentioned in their one-page catalog that their enameled hog scalders “... when furnished with four legs will serve as a bathtub.” That

was all it took to make the company's name synonymous with high-quality plumbing components. More than a century ago, hundreds of automakers produced cars that were nothing more than unreliable playthings for wealthy customers; Henry Ford resolved to create a reliable automobile that a working family could afford. What was your leap?

#### **... Your Values**

People are attracted to high-quality products, offered by organizations they admire. When customers choose a supplier, a track record of ethical business practices, community responsibility and caring about others can often be the deciding factor. In the 1980s, when hundreds of brands offered clothing and equipment for the outdoor recreation boom, Patagonia pledged to dedicate one percent of sales revenue or ten percent of profits—whichever was greater—to environmental causes, and paid employees to work fulltime with pro-conservation nonprofits. What do you do that your customers admire?

#### **... Your Heroes**

Your people are the heart, soul and face of your company. They are who your customers



## NEWS AROUND TOWN

think of when they hear your name. From the C-suite, to the sales team, to the shop floor, those people—and their stories—constitute the character of your organization. More than anything else, people are the beating heart of your company's saga: the living evidence of its integrity. What heroes live within your company?

... Your Dreams

Thriving companies do not settle for the status quo. Staying significant and remaining relevant involves vision, plans and goals. What are yours, and what stories do you have as evidence of this? Your people, your patrons and your prospects want to hear them.

Click [here to register](#) or learn more about the [Storytelling Keys Leadership Summit](#)



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## A Bit of Writing Wisdom

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

**- Mark Twain**



## Book It! Reviews

### **Into the Gray Zone**

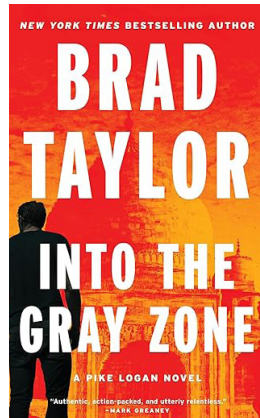
By [Brad Taylor](#)

It's hard to believe that "Into the Gray Zone" is the 19th story in this wildly popular military-political thriller series. Action and authenticity are the hallmarks of each of these novels. The latter is due to author retired Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel Brad Taylor's long military career and his involvement with the elite Delta Force. He knows of what he writes.

As does his creation, special forces and task force operative Pike Logan, a multifaceted, highly-skilled, and engaging character. This story takes the reader to India where Pike thwarts an attack on a seemingly routine meeting between the CIA and India's intelligence service. As Pike digs deeper into this event, he uncovers a broad and deep conspiracy designed to employ various terrorist groups to destabilize the economy of India, and possibly the world. A truly fast-paced and engaging novel and an excellent addition to the series.

[Buy it here.](#)

Reviewed by [D.P. Lyle, M.D.](#), award-winning author of the Jake Longly and Cain/Harper thriller series



### **Cold Burn**

By [A.J. Landau](#) (Jon Land & Jeffrey Ayers)

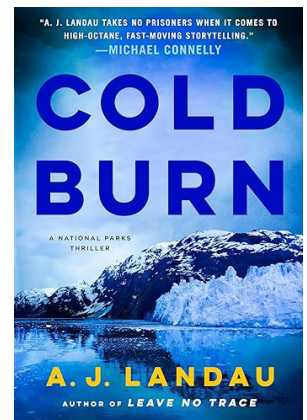
"Cold Burn" is a fun and fast-paced story from the writing duo known as A.J. Landau. This represents the second story in their popular National Parks Thriller series, after 2024's "Leave No Trace." We are again submerged in the worlds of National Park Service investigator Michael Walker and FBI investigator Gina Delgado. But here, two seemingly unrelated crimes in locations as disparate as possible keep the reader engaged, asking what could possibly happen next? What every good thriller strives for.

A group of researchers uncover a frozen woolly mammoth in Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park, only to later be found dead themselves. Why? How? Thousands of miles away, in Florida's Everglades National Park, the murder of an environmental science intern draws Delgado into the case.

How could these murders possibly be linked? The unraveling of that mystery drives this story and makes readers madly flip the pages until the solution comes to light. Entertaining and then some.

[Buy it here.](#)

Reviewed by [D.P. Lyle, M.D.](#)





## *Everything We Thought Was True*

By [Lisa Montanaro](#)

What would it be like to live a lie? Every day. What would you lose if you lived your truth? What about the ones you love? This is the subject in author Lisa Montanaro's debut novel, "Everything We Thought Was True"—a love letter to her family.

Lena Antinori is an LA civil rights attorney. She fiercely fights discrimination, especially involving the LGBTQ community. But she has a secret she'd rather stay buried.

When Lena was thirteen, she discovered her father, Frank, was gay, and her mother, Teresa, knew. She didn't understand how that could be. Then, years later, when her parents divorced, her mother refused to acknowledge Frank's sexual orientation. To protect their Italian Catholic family, Teresa insisted she, Lena, and Lena's brother, Anthony, keep the truth a secret.

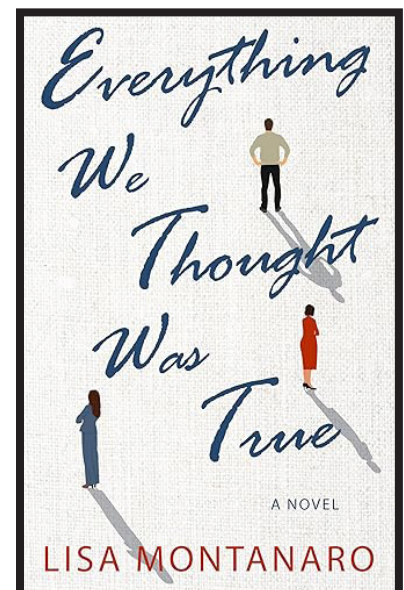
Her father regrets that to free himself, he had to hurt the ones he loved the most.

Now, Frank plans to marry his partner, and he's asked Lena to plan the wedding. She thought she'd made peace with her

dad's truth years ago, but she learns she still has unresolved feelings about the shame and fear that plagued her family, and she's not sure how she'll get through it.

Adding a layer of realism, Montanaro writes from her personal experiences. Beautifully written and poignantly descriptive of the pain of betrayal, confusion, fear, and being stuck in the middle, Montanaro's message is simple: everyone deserves to live their best life, but sometimes it comes with a price. [Buy it here.](#)

Reviewed by  
[K.L. Romo](#)



## Conference Scene

**Pikes Peak Writing Conference**, Colorado Springs, Colorado, May 2-4, 2025

**The 2025 Washington Writers Conference**, Rockville, Maryland, May 2-3, 2025

**Sleuthfest**, St. Petersburg, Florida, May 15 - 18

**SWA 2025 Writers Conference**, St. Simon's Island, Georgia, June 6-10, 2025

**ShortCon**, Alexandria, Virginia, June 7, 2025

**ThrillerFest XX**, New York City, June 17-21, 2025

**Romance Writers of America Annual Conference**, Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, July 16-19, 2025

**Writers Digest Annual Conference**, Baltimore, Maryland, July 24-27, 2025

**Killer Nashville**, Nashville, Tennessee, August 21-25, 2025

**Bouchercon**, New Orleans, Louisiana, September 3 - 7, 2025

**Author Nation 25**, Las Vegas, Nevada, November 3 - 7, 2025

**Kauai Writers Conference**, Lihue, Kauai, November 17-19, 2025



## And... One More Thing...

### Use Nonverbals To Add Dimension To Your Scene

By Dr. Katherine Ramsland

At “The Write Stuff” conference, editor and author Tiffany Yates Martin discussed using “nonverbals” to add more dimension to our scenes. She explained that a vast amount of communication can occur beyond the dialogue. Demeanor, expression, body language, silences, and gestures, when used effectively, can provide a vivid sense of the characters and their interactions. To demonstrate, she played a clip from a 1999 film, *A Walk on the Moon*. However, the sound system failed. Although this frustrated her, the mishap ended up supporting her point just as forcefully (if not more so) than if we’d heard the dialogue. In the story, Marty has learned that his son had been hurt but that “Blouse,” a man his mother knows, has helped him. Marty’s aware that his wife is having an affair with the blouse salesman, but he also owes the man for his assistance. The scene features Marty entering a room where his son, daughter, wife, and nemesis are gathered. The dialogue is minimal, but the facial tensions, averted eyes, sidelong glances, stiff postures, and tight mannerisms speak loud and clear. However, this is a film. Actors can

show all of this. Writers must effectively capture these evocative behaviors in words. To assist with this, I’d recommend *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer’s Guide to Character Expression*, by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi. It’s loaded with suggestions for how to convey emotions via physical expressions, mental responses, and internal sensations. The authors also warn you about cliches. After listening to Tiffany and watching the scenes she used, I plan to watch a few more scenes in films with the sound off.

- [Dr. Katherine Ramsland](#)

