

The Purloined Newsletter



A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

Volume 20, Issue 2 – February 2008

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Capital Crime Writers is an organization of writers and editors working in the mystery field, and readers who love the genre.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss writing and crime, with the exception of July and August when meetings are suspended for the summer.

Membership is
\$30 per year,
\$15 corresponding.

Meetings are held in Room 156 at the Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street.

There is a meet and greet from 7:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., prior to every meeting.

CCW Program Committee Announcements

**Next Meeting:
Wednesday February 20th* 2008**

Characters with Character

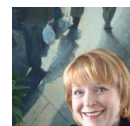
Come to the February meeting and hear our very own all-star panel talk about how to build interesting and believable characters. **Tom Curran, Barbara Fradkin** and **Mary Jane Maffini** will tell us about how they create characters for their novels, the essence of their principal protagonists, and the role of sidekicks. This is a session you won't want to miss.



Thomas Rendell Curran



Barbara Fradkin



Mary Jane Maffini

***Please note that due to other commitments the Library and Archives Canada is not available to us on our usual meeting date. The February meeting will take place on the 3rd Wednesday instead of our usual 2nd Wednesday.**

**Your Program Committee
Ken Gibson, Bev Panasky and Deborah Gyapong**

From the Chair – Brenda Chapman

RCMP Sgt. Chaghan Garvey proved to be a captivating speaker who really likes his work catching the bad guy – he also made me very, very nervous about using my debit card or leaving my mailbox unattended. I'm also extremely pleased that Sgt. Garvey is working *for* us and not *agin*.

CCW is flourishing with over 70 members, a dynamic website and a busy executive working behind the scenes. I'd like to thank everyone for all their hard work, including our members who are contributing to The Purloined Newsletter, attending meetings or providing information and feedback through the website. Our goal is to strengthen the connections within our membership and to provide support to each member, no matter the stage in their writing career or their interest in mysteries.

We are accepting short stories for the Audrey Jessup contest and details are on the website. The contest will close April 1st with the shortlist announced at the end of April and the presentations at our June Meeting. The prizes are increasing and we would like to thank Linda Wiken and Prime Crime at 891 Bank Street and The Book Stop at 4-1224 Place d'Orleans Drive for their generous support.

So, into February, the month of hearts and cabin fever – two factors that could result in fodder for a good murder manuscript. Nothing like a little love and time on one's hands to get the creative juices churning.



Brenda

The CCW Executive

Chair – Brenda Chapman
Chair@capitalcrimewriters.com

VP – Susan Gates
vp@capitalcrimewriters.com

Past Chair – Barbara Fradkin
pastchair@capitalcrimewriters.com

Treasurer – Rachel Pitcher
Treasurer@capitalcrimewriters.com

Programs – Ken Gibson, Bev Panasky & Deborah Gyapong
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2008 List of Banished Words:

Tired of hearing "sweet" or "post 9-11"? Take a look at: <http://www.issu.edu/banished/current.php> for this year's no-no's.

This year, in a gesture of humanitarian relief, the committee restores "truthiness," banned on last year's list, to formal use. This comes after late-night hosts were thrown under the bus and rendered speechless by a nationwide professional writers' strike. The silence is deafening.

Editor's Notes – Katherine Hobbs



Welcome to the February edition of The Purloined. It's the shortest month of the year -- which by virtue of its 29 days helps us get through the winter faster, doesn't it? ☺

However to my mind making February even more exciting than the quick ride it provides through winter, and the chocolate and roses on Valentine's Day (I wish!), is the new Family Day holiday. Imagine an extra day off during the long stretch between New Years

and Easter. And, it's to celebrate family – and maybe do a little skating on the second longest skating rink in the world. (Boo Winnipeg)

CCW celebrates its family as well this month. To begin with our "family" of members is growing – over 70 now. The February 20 meeting will see members of our CCW "family" in a panel discussing characters. In this month's edition we have our CCW "family" members contributing: Sherrill Wark, Denis St-Jean, Paul Sadler and Linda Wiken. So a big shout out to the little month of February and Family Day.

Katherine

Web Resources



Check out Duotrope's Digest, <http://duotrope.com/index.aspx> a database of over 2050 current markets for short fiction, poetry, and novels/collections. Offers free services to writers and editors, including a free online submissions tracker. They usually make several updates per day, and we check all the listings at least twice a month to ensure the most up-to-date database possible.

Please check the Members Only section of the website www.CapitalCrimewriters.com for information on contests and events.

Where's your website?

By Guy Mercier

Don't have a website up yet and don't think you need one? Think again. Websites are an excellent way of promoting and providing up-to-date information to the public, media, publishers, colleagues, potential employers, and avid readers about yourself, your activities, and your accomplishments. It's your best communication vehicle to quickly provide information to all visitors that come to your site. Unlike print material, web content can be changed easily at anytime.

So what's important? First, keeping your site fresh and up-to-date. Repeat visitors want to see new information. You are more likely to lose repeat visitors if your website does not change or never has updates. Websites that are not kept up-to-date run the risk of containing broken links or out-dated information. Make it a habit to go through your site regularly to check for any broken external links or out-dated information.

Don't clutter your site with unnecessary graphics and visuals. Visitors come to your site to get information. You will frustrate your visitors if they can't find the information they are looking for easily. Besides, your visitors are more interested in learning more about you than if you have pretty graphics.

Don't be afraid of changing your website. It's an electronic document. It can be changed at any time to better reflect all your visitors' needs.

Ensure your website is grammatically correct and spelling error free. Proof, proof, and proof again. Then get a friend to proofread it for you. A site free from errors will portray a more professional and that will reflect on you. As they say, "You only have one chance at making a good impression when you meet someone for the first time." Think of your website the same way. A new visitor should leave your site with a good understanding of who you are and what you are providing or offering to all your visitors.

Try to organize your site in a simple orderly fashion. Make information easily accessible and visible to your visitors.

Since December 2007, the CCW site has been averaging about 750 hits a month. That's an impressive amount. Especially since we haven't been promoting or advertising our site. If I use those website statistics as an example to calculate the potential number of visitors a year, it would average to be 9,000 hits a year. What does this mean to you, the CCW members? It means potentially reaching 9,000 people who may not have already heard about you.

I encourage all CCW members to provide me with a profile description along with any support graphics of any published books you have in circulation. This promotion will also give visitors an idea of the caliber of talent and knowledge within the CCW membership. Please don't hesitate to contact me to get your profile up.

The Facts

An estimated 7.9 million (64%) of the 12.3 million Canadian households had at least one member who used the Internet regularly in 2003, either from home, work, school, a public library or another location. The highest rates of use were in British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta where roughly 6 out of every 10 households were connected to the Internet at home. (1)

Let me know if you have any interest in a workshop that will show you examples of good and bad websites. I can provide you with technical information that is rarely provided by other web developers to help you make an informed decision as to which style of web pages you'd like created. Websites are generally developed in two basic formats: single; or frameset html pages. There are distinct benefits and pitfalls for either website formats.

And for a quick no-obligation quote to get your website designed and developed, please contact me at gmgraphics@gmail.com. I give a discounted rate to CCW members.

**Your CCW webmaster,
Guy Mercier**

Guy Mercier is a graphic designer and multimedia developer. He was grandfathered into the Association of Registered Graphic Designers of Ontario in 1999. He has been in the graphic arts industry for 30 years.

(1) Statistic Canada, <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/040708/d040708a.htm>



Update from Membership – Darlene Cole

I'm happy to report that we now have 74 Capital Crime Writer members. I encourage you to invite fellow writers, editors and readers who love the genre to join because as you know, "mystery loves company".

If you do know someone who wants to join you can refer them to the website for all the details required. You may have noticed the **JOIN CCW** link on www.capitalcrimewriters.com -- if you click on the **JOIN CCW** link it is possible to fill out the membership form on-line and submit it.

Guy Mercier is currently looking into adding a paypal feature so memberships can be paid for on line for those preferring that option to sending a cheque. We'll keep you updated as to its progress. Please email me at secretary@capitalcrimewriters.com if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks, Darlene

Forensic Corner: B is for Blood Spatter; The bloody truth behind crime scene analysis.

By Katherine Hobbs

CCW members may recall the meeting with the Ottawa police detective who presented us with a slide show from a murder scene at the Four Winds Apartment complex. The topic: Blood evidence. I've never forgotten the crime scene photos he showed us; the arc of blood on the wall behind the sofa where the victim was first struck; the bloody handprints smeared down the walls in the hallway as the victim tried to stop himself being forced into the bathroom; and finally the victim's legs lying in a pool of blood on the tile floor of the bathroom. It was more than sufficient first-hand experience for many of us with weak-stomachs to learn that blood spatter can tell a huge story of what happened at a crime scene.

Obviously there are people that are not in the least bit grossed out by blood, and look forward to working in the field of blood pattern analysis. (And check out television's Dexter series on Showtime. Dexter works for the police as a blood spatter expert, and in his spare time he is a serial killer.) Shows like CSI have

made crime investigation popular, and more people have entered the field. But while some have Ph.D's in the sciences and a lifetime of experience, others are working analysing blood spatter at crime scenes after just a one-week course. In the U.S. anyone with a 40-hour training

"It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories instead of theories to suit facts."

Sherlock Holmes, A Scandal in Bohemia, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

course in blood pattern analysis can be established as an expert to give court testimony. By contrast, in Canada, analysts are required to undergo advanced training and become an understudy for a year before qualifying as an expert.

Some believe forensic testimony should be restricted to scientists who work in labs, and others believe that police officers who know the way around a crime scene should be considered experts. In any event blood spatter evidence is generally restricted almost exclusively to major murder cases. Since blood spatter can tell so much about what took place at the scene of a crime, perhaps it should be given more attention.

Definition of blood from

Wikipedia: Blood is a tissue that is circulated within the body to assist other parts of the body. This connective tissue has specialized cells that allow it to carry out its complex functions. For a healthy person, approximately 8% of their total weight is blood. For a 70 kg individual, this equates to 5.6 litres.



Types of Blood Spatter:

The following outlines the types of blood spatter the crime scene analyst may use to determine what events occurred; when, and in what sequence they occurred; who was, or was not, there; and what did not occur:

Shadowing and ghosting: This is when the blood doesn't strike an object because there is an intervening object in the way. A void space may be created by anything that blocks the blood from falling on the surface where it would otherwise have landed. The object creating the void may be the victim, the attacker's body, or a piece of furniture that was moved in order to stage the scene.

Note: Locard's Principle of Exchange states that whenever two objects come into contact, some of the matter of each object is transferred to the other. Locard's principle has become a cardinal principle of crime scene analysis and reconstruction. If a person enters a crime scene and leaves, he or she leaves something of him or herself at the scene and takes something from the scene with him or her. In many cases, the void is what the attacker leaves, and the blood spatter that would have filled the void is what he or she takes away from the scene.

Cast off stains are found at crime scenes where blunt or sharp instruments such as an axe, knife or club were used. Cast-off blood is flung off the weapon as a result of centrifugal force as the weapon is swung back over the attacker's head. Repeated swings of a weapon will cause blood to spatter in a linear fashion – either oval or elliptical in shape as the weapon is being swung through an arc, becoming more round as it strikes at a 90 degree angle over the attacker's head.



Point of impact/origin: The point of impact is the point at which some object strikes a bloody source. The point of origin is a 3 dimensional area in space where a bloody object is struck by some other object creating a blood splatter

Transfer Pattern: When something bloody is placed on a surface some form of recognizable shape is produced. You can sometimes see the features of a bloody item when it has come into contact with surfaces that are unstained, making it useful to identify that object. For example a knife put down on a counter and later picked up will leave some shape or an outline of the knife as the blood transfers over onto that surface.

Arterial Spurting creates large patterns. When an artery is broken by some wound, blood is leaving under pressure. It creates a distinctive blood pattern when that blood hits a surface such as a wall at a crime scene. The heart is a strong pump and it will push the blood out with tremendous force. Arterial blood graphically displays the pumping of the left ventricle of the heart in squirted arcs. As the ventricle contracts, the blood is squirted out of the artery like water from a water pistol. It starts with a low pressure that increases and then decreases, causing the arcing pulse that results in the distinctive blood pattern. Arterial blood spatter does not lead far because the bleeder loses blood volume quickly and goes into shock or dies.

Arterial blood pattern may be confused with cast-off blood patterns as the bleeder may still be under attack while bleeding arterially and may sustain further bleeding wounds or may be bleeding from previous wounds. The arcs are commonly accompanied by bloody hand prints and other forms of transfer blood such as swipe and wipe. The bleeder may fall against the blood spatter and smear the pattern (wipe) or smear blood from his or her body or clothing onto the surface (swipe).

Swipes and wipes are ways in which blood is put on to a surface. A wipe is when something that is not bloodstained wipes through an already existing blood stain. A swipe is when a bloody object is moved along and across an unbloody surface.



Expiratory Blood is a high velocity blood pattern expelled out of an airway or passageway as a result of a cough or a sneeze. The velocity breaks the blood up into very tiny droplets, sometimes referred to as mist, and it is sprayed in a cloud. These tiny droplets of blood spatter propelled into the air by an explosive force are also created by gunshots, explosives and by industrial machinery. These droplets travel the least distance of other blood spatter because of the resistance of the air against their small mass. In gunshot wounds, the area beside the wound may be showered in a mist of blood spatter and may contain pieces of tissue, but areas further away may not have any blood spatter on them.

Read more about blood spatter...

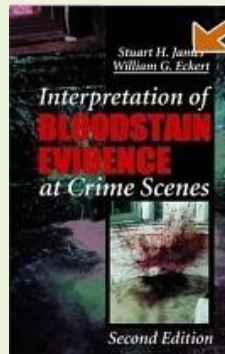
On the Internet:

<http://www.bloodspatter.com/BPATutorial.htm>

<http://www.sho.com/site/dexter/home.do>

www.bloodspatter.com/bloodspatter.pdf

Or in a book:



Stuart H. James, William G. Eckert, *Interpretation of Bloodstain Evidence at Crime Scenes*, 2nd ed. (Boca Raton, FL: CFC Press, 1999)



Tom Bevel, Ross M. Gardner, *Bloodstain Pattern Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2002)

Major Publishing Trends in Canada

By Paul Sadler

Christopher Smith of the Collected Works Book Shop gave a talk in at the Canadian Author's Association meeting in January on major trends in publishing, particularly for Canada. In his presentation, he identified three main trends: technology, growth areas, and profits for writers.

The first trend he identified was the biggest – the impact of technology. He noted that literacy rates (at least according to U.S. statistics) are going down at an alarming rate, but suggested that part of the explanation is that there are many different things competing for people's attention, such as the internet. However, writers can turn this trend back on itself by using the internet to get your book out there.

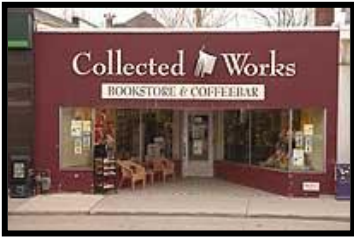


One example of how writers can use technology is through self-publishing. Whereas it used to be only vanity presses that handled "self-publishing", now almost 40% of new small press titles are in this category. This translates to just over \$50 million a year in trade for self-published authors. Christopher's store, Collected Works, will carry self-published. They do it on consignment, with a ninety-business-day timeframe for them to carry the book. They normally take about six copies, and will put them put them face out or a position on table. After ninety days, they reassess – if no sales, they return the books; if some are sold, they might re-stock.

A second example of using technology is the growing list of writers who have their own websites or blogs. Many of the writers put part of their text there (as PDF or pod-cast) to hook readers. Some writers that are doing this successfully include Ken Oppel (a children's writer) and Daniel Handler (author of the Lemony Snickett series). It should be noted that these "writers" sites are in addition to whatever the publisher may have of their own too. While many people at the core of publishing are older and resistant to change, others are seeing it as a way to get exposure by using as many angles as possible. This could include links to FaceBook, YouTube, MySpace, etc. Christopher suggested that it was almost like going back to the way bookselling was 500 years ago. If you wanted to publish, you found backers and subscribers and raised the money to print the book. The only difference now is that it may not be in paper, but something completely virtual.

A third example related to technology is the growth of e-book readers and audio books. While e-book readers (such as Amazon's new Kindle) are getting better, and even coming close to rendering near-HDTV image quality without flickering, they are still not huge sellers. Many readers, including Christopher, do not want to curl up with a digital reader, but for other uses, it depends more on what you are doing. For example, if you are using it in a professional setting, for research, or non-fiction, it is incredibly useful to be able to flip back and forth, set bookmarks, etc. Often the usefulness is tied to the own user's level of comfort with technology. Audio books on CD are growing in the US, but as they are good for long commutes, the only place they sell well in Canada is Toronto. It is particularly attractive to listen to authors like Timothy Findlay and Robertson Davies, who were both actors before they were writers. But, regardless of the impact of technology, books are such a perfect medium and will always be around. A second trend that Christopher identified was the three main genres of growth. The biggest in terms of sales are books that deal with religious or spiritual messages (such as The Da Vinci Code or The Secret). The second growing area is travelogues. Finally, memoirs are growing in sales, particularly those that have an exotic or spiritual subject matter (such as The Celestine Prophecy).

Related to the growth areas is a recognition that fiction sales have been progressively sluggish, and sales are shifting. Whereas it used to be that fiction (novels, poetry, literary, etc.) made up 70% of sales, non-



fiction now accounts for almost a 50/50 split with fiction. Creative non-fiction is one of the biggest growth areas (such as the travel and memoirs areas mentioned above).

With these shifts, even trade publishers are having a hard time with marketing. Booknet Canada tracks sales from most bookstores in the country, and they have found that even if a book is on the CTV morning show, it could equate to less than a 1% change in sales. The problem is that media tends to capitalize on something the audience is already interested in – areas that are topical, or reflect a trend. So, the best form of promotion is still word of mouth. One of the best things someone can do is get someone in a bookstore to read the book, in order to give an honest buzz. However, the book must still be a good fit with the store and the specific staff to get that buzz.

Finally, the last trend is an ongoing issue: profitability for writers. If your book is lucky enough to sell, and it sells for \$10.00, approximately \$4.00 goes to the book store and maybe \$1 or \$2 to the writer (depending on your deal). This means that if the writer is to make any money, they need to help sell their book. In this regard, Christopher had some suggested tips and resources:

- Use independent booksellers instead of trying to go through corporate structure of Chapters;
- Use Canadian Bookseller's Association (<http://www.cbabook.org>) list of over 500 reputable bookstores to promote your book by sending them the title, author, ISBN, description, price, terms of sale, website if you have one, and availability for events or readings;
- Look up bookstores in the publication "BookTrade in Canada" (which you can buy for \$200.00, or use a library copy);
- Use a publisher if you have one (benefits include no upfront costs for cover artwork, they have an established network, can help place your book in the right stores, etc.);
- Milk your local connections (i.e. give copies as gifts to people in stores that you frequent) or try a hook with an established organization in your community (related to your subject matter); and,
- Accept that a best seller in Canada is 5000 books sold across the country, not the millions and millions of copies from your dreams.

It isn't an easy road for writers. If you are in the writing and publishing industry, you do it because you love it, not for the money.

♪ Ever wonder how to do this? ♪

or this ¶ ? or this ♥ ? or these ¢ € £ ? or even Garçon ?

See the chart at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windows_Alt_keycodes You have to use the numeric keypad (not the top row) ... the chart is a bit hard to understand, e.g., hold down ALT, press 1, 4 then release ALT to get ♪

Sometimes you need a leading 0 -- like for ¢ it's ALT+0162

Justice Served

By Denis St-Jean

The men and women who have gathered on the top floor of the historic Public Ledger Building on Locust Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, come from many parts of the world, yet they have a number of things in common. For one, they are all well-known and respected in criminal justice circles. They are currently working with, or retired from, the FBI, RCMP, Interpol, Scotland yard, the Sûreté, or other law enforcement agencies around the globe. Many are private detectives; others are attorneys. Every one is an expert in forensic sciences.

As they wait to be served their sumptuous luncheon, we notice another shared aspect among them: each proudly wears a small blue white and red rosette pin that identifies her or him as a Vidocq Society Member, or V.S.M.

Except for law professionals and crime buffs, very few people have ever heard of this exclusive organization. It was founded in 1990 by a former FBI special agent, a forensic psychologist, and a forensic reconstructionist. As the Society's website describes it, "V.S.M.'s evaluate, investigate, refocus, revivify and solve the unsolved deaths officially brought before them". Quite a statement; and what makes it even more remarkable is that these experts, whose combined experience totals several hundred years, do it all for free.

It's not easy to become a member of the Society. You must be sponsored by existing members, and, by decree, there can be no more than eighty-two men and women in the group. There is always a long waiting list, which prompted the Society to eventually create an "associate" category. It at present consists of about seventy approved associates. They may attend the monthly meetings, but can't vote on procedures.

Since they come from many countries – twelve, altogether (see list at the end) – and some are retired, Vidocqians (that's what they call themselves) have no law enforcement authority. They act simply as advisors – catalysts, if you will. And because they don't want to tread on any toes, they only handle cold cases, those that have flummoxed local authorities for years. They must tread a fine line, for some law officers can resent what they consider interference in their jurisdiction. In such cases, the Society usually opts for public anonymity.

But many law officials have welcomed the Society's assistance, and as the Vidocqians finish their meal, an invited guest, a police chief, steps up to the podium to present them with an unsolved murder. The pictures flashed on the screen behind him, and the descriptions of the case, are graphic.

The Deborah Lynn Wilson murder was typical. Her savagely beaten and strangled barefoot body was found in a basement hallway on the campus of Drexel University in 1984. Despite all their efforts, local authorities were unable to come up with a motive or a suspect. Eventually, the case was taken off the active list.

Finally, after eight years, members of the Society were asked for their input. They came up with a simple, but pivotal suggestion: since the victim was found barefoot, perhaps the murderer had a fetish. Armed with this new clue, local investigators checked the records of the university staff. They discovered that a campus security guard had been court-martialed years before for stealing women's sneakers. In 1995, the guard was found guilty of Wilson's murder.

The Society is non-profit and funds are limited. Only a fraction of the cases presented to members can be considered, so a protocol has been established. The focus is on unsolved homicides, not missing person cases. And the victim can't have been involved in "high risk activities", such as drug dealing. In addition,

they will consider only cases brought to them by a law enforcement professional or a relative of the victim.

The Society's name honors Eugène François Vidocq, a brilliant nineteenth-century Frenchman who developed a number of police procedures still used today.

Vidocq led, to say the least, an adventurous life. He was at times a bandit, soldier, prisoner, and escapee (at least four times). This eventually led him to become out of necessity a police informant, disguising himself so effectively that he was once recruited by criminals to kill himself!

Finally, he suggested the formation of a plainclothes unit for the Paris police, with him, of course, as its director. This was the birth of the Sûreté Nationale. Through all this he also was a notorious philanderer. He died in 1857 at age eighty-two – whence the magic number of Vidocqians. He would be proud of the work done by the Society that bears his name.

If you'd like more information about the Vidocq Society, go to their Website at: www.vidocq.org.

Countries currently represented: Canada, Egypt, England, Ethiopia, France, India, Italy, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Uruguay, and U.S.A.

The year in books

The Nov. 26 edition of Newsweek included a 4,700-word advertisement--um, cover story--about the Kindle, Amazon's handheld reading device, titled "The Future of Reading." What the magazine really meant, though, was plastered across the cover: "Books Aren't Dead: They're just going digital."

For more info check out: <http://www.citypaper.com/columns/story.asp?id=14962>

Note: Excerpted From City Paper On-line.

Raincoast Books to ditch publishing arm

At least one Canadian author says she feels "cut adrift" after Raincoast Books, the West Coast company that brought the blockbuster Harry Potter series to Canadian readers, announced Monday its imminent departure from the publishing business.

The Vancouver-based company is halting its publishing program and announced other cost-cutting measures, putting the blame on the strong Canadian dollar and the resulting detrimental effect on the book retail industry.

The 15 books set for release this spring will be the final slate from Raincoast, which largely counted West Coast and children's book authors in its publishing stable.

More: <http://www.cbc.ca/arts/books/story/2008/01/08/raincoast-cut-publish.html>

Identity Theft – January Meeting Overview

By Paul Sadler

RCMP Sgt. Chaghan Garvey was the guest at the January meeting of Capital Crime, and spoke to us about identity theft. A nineteen-year veteran of the RCMP, he used to be with the fraud section, but has recently been seconded to the proceeds of crime division (where they focus on forfeiture of criminal assets to the Crown – or, as he put it, “dangling the criminals by their ankles and shaking them until everything falls out of their pockets!”). Sgt. Garvey spoke to us in his personal capacity, giving a candid summary of the aspects of identity theft. Sgt. Garvey has always had a passion for business and money, and as a kid, was always interested in hearing about scams or get-rich-quick schemes. In 2002, he got his MBA from Queens to help in his career progression.

First and foremost, Sgt. Garvey explained how identity theft is not really “theft” at all, since there is nothing to steal, but rather is a form of fraud. Instead, this fraud is really about an advantage someone takes for themselves or disadvantages someone else by impersonating someone else. Merely having the information isn’t a problem – lots of people have access to other people’s information. The problem is when someone takes the next step to commit a crime using that information. This is where Sgt. Garvey’s team comes in. In terms of general structure, there are 10 people in their unit, combining officers from RCMP, Sûreté du Québec, Ottawa Police Services, Gatineau Police, Canadian Revenue Agency, a Crown attorney, and their own forensics accountant. In addition, they sometimes work quite closely with FinTrac (the Financial Tracking Centre of Canada, a quasi-independent government organization tasked with combating money laundering) and the Canadian Border Services Agency.



Sgt. Garvey shakes hands with CCW member Denis St-Jean. Also pictured are Doug Shone and Deborah Gyapong.

To the average person, getting someone else’s information might seem like the hard part. In fact, it is often relatively easy because people will give it to you. A lot of it starts with e-mail solicitations. For example, there is a well-known yet still effective scam for someone to e-mail spam to thousands of people saying they are a foreign national from Nigeria, London, Amsterdam, etc. and they need help to move a large sum of money (\$10-15 million) to a North American bank account. And in return for you setting up the account, they’ll give you 10% -- a million dollars for you, just for helping them. PT Barnum’s famous quote is apt – “There is a sucker born every minute”. (From the perspective of the scammer, many of them feel nothing but contempt for the victims – that it is the victim’s fault for being so stupid as to fall for the scam. The scammers can often relate to another PT Barnum quote: “Never give a sucker an even break.”). So, some suckers fall for it and offer to help set up the account, handing over their information at the same time.

Of course, what often happens is the account requires a healthy upfront deposit by you. Perhaps \$25,000. If you go for it, and deposit the money, it’s gone almost instantly. If you don’t go for it, all is not lost –

they'll offer to advance you twice the amount by cheque, at no risk to you. With no risk, more suckers step up and say "If it's not my money, how can I lose?". Yet lose they will. Once they deposit a corporate cheque, perhaps with \$25K in their account and \$25K in the other account, the second \$25K is withdrawn immediately by the scammers. However, they still think they're ahead as they have \$25K for themselves. But they cashed what turns out to be a phony cheque. It might take a month, it might take two. But eventually it will be rejected, and then the bank will ask for their \$50K back because it was counterfeit. The \$50K risk is all on the sucker, and \$25K of it is gone. Or more, if they spent some of their \$25K too.

Even though these scams are known, it is hard to combat it. First, the bank likely would clear the cheque as you have a reliable credit history, everything seems kosher, and the cheque looks like a real cheque. Often it is a real cheque – printed via any number of companies who will print whatever you tell them to print. So, a clearinghouse will let it pass, and it won't get rejected until someone in Accounts Payable at the company says it is counterfeit. Some electronic counter-measures are being implemented, but there's little way to tell it isn't a real cheque until the company detects it.

But even if the sucker doesn't open the account, yet still coughed up personal information (date of birth, mother's maiden name, etc.), the scammers can apply for credit cards, instant credit, various loans with the information given. They can even have fake ID created that matches your name – if you search fake ID in Google, one of the first sites that comes up is <http://www.hackcanada.com>, which has a complete how-to-guide for producing fake IDs yourself. Complete with fancy embossing. Perhaps even better than some of the originals produced by government.

Finally, even if you are careful, someone could still get your information – simply by re-routing your mail to a new address, or scooping credit card offers out of your mailbox. Most houses do not have lockable mailboxes, making them easy targets for thieves.

There are a number of frustrations that police officers face in dealing with fraud cases. First, there are hundreds of incidents, and only enough resources to pursue 1 in 10 cases. Second, banks are almost co-conspirators in the crime – while they have ways to reduce the ease of the scams, the restrictions would also limit their ability to offer easy credit to people. As a result, the banks do a cost-benefit analysis and accept a certain degree of fraud as a cost of doing business. Third, technology has advanced so quickly that a fraudster could buy a laptop at Future Shop and some basic materials from Best Buy, and have the tools needed to convert a hotel room key to a credit card. Or fake caller ID on a phone to make it appear they are calling from your house to order things over the phone. Fourth, for every counter-measure implemented, there are costs associated. Biometrics are touted as a possible magic bullet, but who would control the fingerprint information once collected? What do you do if a credit bureau like Equifax is compromised and all your data stolen? Fifth, there are some IDs in Canada (such as Social Insurance Number cards, or Canadian Citizenship cards) which are incredibly easy to fake, making it even easier for scammers.



However, the biggest frustrations are ones that are common to many criminal investigations – challenges in proving the case, getting a conviction, and obtaining a sufficient sentence for the convicted. In the case of identity fraud, proving the case can be difficult. Not only is it possible that a victim might not know for years after their data was stolen (perhaps when they apply for a loan themselves and are rejected), but there is often no physical evidence or even a crime scene. Unlike murder or assault where there is a visible body or bruise, identity fraud can be virtual. Equally, investigators must not only prove that the

scammer impersonated someone else, but that the "someone else" is a real live person that exists i.e. that someone real was impersonated, not just that the scammer used a fictitious name. Even going to trial to get a conviction can often be difficult simply based on the cost-benefit analysis of the investigation, likelihood of conviction, time involved for a trial or the investigation itself, etc. Finally, sentences are often extremely light. Hundreds may be arrested, few are convicted, and if convicted, receive only short sentences. It is even possible that a jail sentence (such as three months) might be shorter than the time it took to investigate the scam.

Sgt. Garvey outlined an example of a highly-public scam, that of Larry Godsend from Nigeria. Godsend used a small team of scammers to commit fraud with the identity of 1200 people. He used a buddy making minimum wage selling insurance to steal personal information from credit card files in Montreal, and then he applied for credit cards using the stolen information and the addresses of houses in Ottawa that had open mailboxes. Once the credit cards were due to arrive, he simply followed the mailman from house to house plucking out the cards after the mailman dropped them off. He would then use the cards himself or through a buddy to buy various items and sell them off for cash. Because some of the cards were in the names of women, he picked up women at bars, became intimate with them to gain their confidence, and then got them to use the other cards too. In the end, he got caught at a department store using a fraudulently obtained card simply because he didn't realize the name on the card was that of a woman, not a man. In the end, he was deported as it was cheaper than prosecuting him or putting him in jail in Canada. However, the police had a difficult time trying to figure out whether or not to prosecute the women – they were both accomplices as well as victims.



While this scam was fairly sophisticated, it also required a number of co-conspirators. Another scam that can be done by one person could be something as simple as jamming an ATM machine using thread and some cardboard, and then entering the foyer when someone's card gets stuck. The scammer tells them to enter their PIN number a couple of times to clear it, and when it doesn't clear, tells them to deal with it on Monday. Once the victim leaves, as there is nothing they can apparently do, the scammer pulls the thread and cardboard out and has a nice card to use right away along with the PIN number they just watched the victim use. Fortunately, some of these easy scams are carried out by relatively stupid people who leave forensics evidence behind, such as fingerprints.

However, other scams are carried out daily at other locations. For example, restaurants are prime locations for potential thievery, as patrons routinely hand over their credit cards to servers who disappear with the card, and who could easily be copying the information. Equally, debit machines at gas stations can have pinhole cameras and VCR time stamps to watch you enter your PIN code, or even a rubber overlap that goes over the machine to register your data.

Many of the identity scams still require a lot of cooperation amongst various people – people who can steal the numbers, someone who can perhaps create fake cards, others who can make IDs, etc. As such, it is a prime business opportunity for organized crime due to the level of complexity and the need for a team. Some of the units even operate almost like a business model of cooperation amongst business associates, while others might look more like a terrorist cell. Such cases are not accidental in their similarities – a high portion of terrorism is funded by proceeds from frauds. Finally, in other cases, the organized crime operates with a high degree of sophistication – they have already figured out ways to counter the so-called next-generation "smart cards".

Member Profile: Sherrill Wark

What type of mystery do you write?

I'm more crime than mystery; more thriller than crime; more horror than thriller. I think the basic difference between these genres is the body-count. I started out in the horror genre where my heart will probably remain forever, but I'm not a faithful mistress as I write in many genres. On the back burner is an historical novel sitting at 25,000 words. Oh, and a completed children's picture book, *sans* pictures, which received lots of compliments but "sorry, we don't do three-to-six age group picture books here."

The first novel I wrote was a supernatural horror, GRAVEN IMAGES. In the early to mid-'90s, I shipped it around, and I must say I was very lucky to receive mostly written replies, some of which were quite encouraging, but there were no takers. While "Images" was making the rounds, I wrote the first draft of my second novel, SKIN EATER, which is more of a "medical thriller" for want of a label. In my "spare time," I wrote and sold some non-fiction and humour pieces to a national dog magazine. I also started the sequel to GRAVEN IMAGES, THE SOUL EATERS which is more science fiction than anything else — think *The Omega Man* in Outer Darkness.

Then Real Life got in the way and I had to pack away all my creative projects until a couple of years ago when I moved back to Ottawa.

The reason the historical novel is on the back burner is that I started it in mid-2006, but when I got my previous projects reorganized, I put my foot down and told myself to pile everything in my in-basket — oldest on the top.

For example, I had gotten down to my last battered copy of my self-published (1982) book of poetry, *Mostly of Love and the Perils Thereof*, so decided to republish it, adding a few extra poems I'd written since, under the title *Mostly of Love and the Perils Thereof: The Sequel*. That was one project down. A thin one, but one out of the way, nonetheless.

Why screenplays?

I had always visualized GRAVEN IMAGES, SKIN EATER, and THE SOUL EATERS as movies anyway, so why not write them myself? I've been a movie buff since I saw my first one in 1952 at the age of eight. (In case you're curious, it was *Against All Flags*, with Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland.) This was way before anybody in my little Ottawa Valley town had heard of television. Movies were miracles! Since July 2007, two screenwriting workshops and seven screenwriting instruction books later, I am hard at it, and loving every minute. GRAVEN IMAGES turned out to be too complicated for a beginner's screenplay, so I'm on to the next one in the list, and eager to get it out of the way so I can get going on THE SOUL EATERS. Then maybe I can add something else to the bottom of the pile.

Why crime/thrillers/horror? What is it that you like about the fields?

When I was four years old, my father joined the Ontario Provincial Police. (He eventually became a small town Police Chief.) It didn't take me all that long to learn that if I sat very, very quietly at the kitchen table, and never, never asked any questions, I could collect the most amazing information. I was bathed in the fallout of police procedure, obscure laws, and ambulance humour. I grew up in the fifties and sixties when "alien invasion/mind control" movies [read anti-communist propaganda] were in their heyday. I had just turned nineteen when President Kennedy was shot. Then the hippy culture and the New Age way of thinking landed on planet Earth and turned the whole world upside down. You know, horror isn't so much about scaring people or grossing them out. Good horror premises are symbols for what frightens us in our own times. In the books and in the movies, the monster is destroyed. At least it should be. This gives us a cathartic release from subconscious fears.

How old were you when you started writing?

We didn't have a lot of money when I was a young child — I don't think many did after the War — so books were rare; my father used to make up my bedtime stories. I guess I followed suit. I was published at fifteen when I worked in a summer job as a cub reporter for a local weekly newspaper. I was the neighbourhood "playwright" as a kid; and had a pivotal role in student-produced entertainments in high school. Throughout high school, I had poetry published in both of the town weeklies.

Did you keep a journal?

As in diary? Yes. Until my kid sister got hold of it.

Did you write poetry as a teen?

Reams.

What do you like to read?

I suppose it's a hazard of my chosen field, but I can't seem to read for pleasure anymore. While reading even the most entrancing book, if I come across a wonderful turn of phrase, or a plot twist that's unique, I have to step out of the enchantment and exclaim: "Hey. I like the way s/he did that."

Who are your favourite authors?

I have ninety-nine percent of Stephen King's books. I don't even read the dust jacket when I purchase a James Patterson, or a John Grisham book. Likewise for Dean Koontz, Robin Cook, Patricia Cornwell, or Peter Straub. But I often choose books by unknowns just because I think the story sounds interesting. I'm lucky that my sister-in-law doesn't like to keep books in the house for very long. Both she and my brother are avid and eclectic readers, and I get the cast-offs. I've discovered some real gems like *Ursula*, *Under* by Ingrid Hill and John Mulligan's *Shopping Cart Soldiers*.

Favourite TV program?

I try not to miss the *Law & Orders* and the *CSIs*. *Mythbusters* is a valuable resource for writers of any genre, not to mention hilariously funny and entertaining.

Anyone you would love to have dinner with — dead or alive?

Alive would provide a much more pleasant ambience than dead I would think — even for morbid me — so for a dinner companion, I think I'd choose The Dalai Lama.

What would you ask him?

I would ask if he ever wondered if they made a mistake when they decided that he was the 14th Reincarnation of the Dalai Lama.

What words of wisdom do you live by — your motto, your creed?

One side of me lives by the words from *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran: "Do everything as though it were for your beloved." The other side of me leans toward Catherine Aird's sage advice: "If you can't be a good example then you'll just have to be a horrible warning." I've been hoeing my own row for a long time; when you do that, you make mistakes sometimes. Luckily, I'm usually a fast learner. And I like to share.

Any interests other than writing?

I owned/bred show dogs — Rottweilers — for nearly twenty years. Any excuse to put off writing, eh? Sadly, the door to that interesting, fulfilling, creative career closed in 2005. But my energies are now pretty much devoted to writing, and providing writing-related services to my clients in my new business. In the past, I had way too many interests which distracted me from writing. Remember the "horrible warning" I mentioned?

Do you live by the pen? Or what is your day job?

On June 25, 2007, I started Crowe Creations, a document preparation service which includes design, typesetting, editing, research, proofreading, and reading services. I was a typesetter for twenty years, so I didn't just pull this one out of a hat. I'm hoping to increase my clientele this year.

Any resolutions for the new year?

I try to make resolutions on the go. For example, a frequent resolution is: "Memo to self: Don't ever do *that* again!" or "Memo to self: Let's do *that* again."

What did you do in 2007 that you'd never done before?

I attended a weekend writer's conference. It was the 86th Annual Canadian Authors Association Conference. I'm a member, their newsletter editor, and I'm on the Executive as V-P Communications.

What date from 2007 will remain etched upon your memory, and why?

I have to say there was no one particular day that stood out. Well, maybe. Something "unpleasant" *did* happen in my personal life, but after a rocky start, the whole year seemed to turn into a non-stop stream of really wonderful things happening. To borrow from Kahlil Gibran again, and to paraphrase him: "If nothing bad ever happens to you, how can you tell if things are good?"

Strangest moment of the past year?

Strangest moment? To the question "Occupation?" being able to answer "Writer" without feeling like I'm lying.

Top news stories that caught your eye?

Dare I admit that the "Paris Hilton goes to jail" and the "Paris Hilton gets out of jail" stories are the ones that intrigued me the most? First of all, I think the woman is a brilliant media-manipulator and may well end up just as wealthy as her grandpappy. My first thoughts were: "How did she manage to get sent to jail? How clever." But when she was released because she "couldn't take it anymore" I was blown completely away by the power this woman holds. She'd be another person I'd like to have dinner with. The question I'd ask her? "How would you like to be my agent?"



Book Review

**by Linda Wiken of
Prime Crime Book Store
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Sunny Dreams by Alison Preston

Baby Sunny Palmer is kidnapped from her carriage in downtown Winnipeg 1925. Eleven years later, two drifters looking for post-depression work help unravel the mystery. Preston builds the tension while involving the reader in the day-to-day lives and thoughts of the Palmer family and friends. Not your typical mystery, but a well-written read.