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Southern California Writer's Association August 2022

- **President Larry Porricelli's Message**
- **August's Featured Event: John C. Hall at the Regency San Juan Capistrano Theater on August 20, 10 a.m.**
- **Hump Day: Resuming on August 11. Every Wednesday 10 a.m. on SCWA's Facebook Group page.**
- **Debby's Room: Continuing in August on Wednesdays 10:20 a.m. on the SCWA Facebook Group page, on the Rooms tab**
- **Highlights: Gary Phillips *Hot Takes on Crafting Pitches That Sell***



Have you subscribed?

Check out our fancy new URL for the YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

President's Message for August 2022 from Larry Porricelli

What's Happening in Fiction?

I read and heard discussion on various media and from several authors and publishers about what is currently hot in fiction genres and put this together for you. Most of our novels fit into one or more of these genre categories.

Historical: *Bridgerton* brought historical storytelling to the forefront, and with the fresh spin, such as *Bridgerton* had, it has been a winner in its two seasons so far. Additionally, there is a trend toward utilizing modern dialogue in the setting as long as all else is historically accurate. The spin and diversity make the novel a good item for an agent to peruse.

Romance: Romance is forever a sales leader, and current-time and paranormal romance are the sizzling markets right now. Diversity is the key here in race and sexuality for characters, as long as you aren't writing about a trauma in coming out, as that has been done many times before.

Suspense/thriller: Suspense remains very popular and always sells well, with large leaps in true crime-based novels and cozy mysteries. Readers have always loved solving mysteries, and this is the age of conspiracy so what better idea to use as a theme for your novel! Whether it's action or mystery or intellect or grit, suspense is always a winner.

Contemporary & realistic fiction: Dramatic family epics and issue driven stories are the staple of this genre. However, this time in history is a good time for lighthearted and comedic changeups. Readers and agents alike are craving escapism and happier times. (Aren't we all?)

Science fiction/fantasy: Escape from the current world is a hot ticket at the moment and becoming part of a fantastic adventure is what many readers are looking to do. However, the prime objective is to be different, very, very different, as so many fantasy tales are currently about kingdoms and quests, and anything similar will be hard to attract interest.

Intriguingly, bleak novels of dystopian worlds are selling. Readers are looking for that big escape even in stories about worlds far worse than their own. Of course, COVID-drama is overwhelming, and you may want to forget that issue and find something far grimmer, like Grandma getting run over by a reindeer.

Paranormal: If you can come up with previously unknown mythologies and obscure cultural traditions that lend themselves to story, the supernatural is making a big show. Previously we have seen so many ghosts, fairies, vampires, and the like, but clever spins on little-known tales is hitting big.

Do Not Be Trendy: Don't be trendy. The market moves quickly and your idea may be over before it begins. Stay up with what is current but don't make a trend for the sake of trend your focus, it will get no looks, unless you are the first to catch the trend and have your novel finished before it's over. Make your story your own, and trends are merely a tool for use for the moment.

But fear not! Do not run about pulling at your hair and yelling "Woe is me" around your house. If your story does not fit in any of these genres, the answer is—so what? Create your own!

Larry Porricelli, President SCWA



Visit the Southern California Writer's Association Website Today

<https://www.southernwriters.org/>

- **Join SCWA or renew your membership**
- **Sample the books written and published by SCWA members**
- **Get to know our members: Explore member profiles**
- **Dig into our Newsletter Archive for highlights of our speakers and events**



Have you binged on SCWA's YouTube videos?

- **We love sharing our content!**
- **SCWA Writers Online is FREE to all with over 100 Hump Day interviews with bestselling authors led by Maddie Margarita**
- **See SCWA's workshops and videos of our featured speakers from our monthly meetings**

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>



SCWA Events This Month: August 2022

- SCWA Featured Monthly Guest, John C. Hall, August 20, 2022, at 10 a.m. PT in person at the Regency San Juan Capistrano Theater. Register at: <https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- SCWA VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: Every Friday at 4:30 p.m. PT. Join us with your funny stories and libations for good news and good cheer. New members showing up weekly. Sign up on our website and we'll email you a link and password. <https://www.southernwriters.org/>
- SCWA HUMP DAY BOOK TOUR: Hump Day will return on August 11. And check out the ones you have missed on SCWA's YouTube channel: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/southernwriters>
- Debby's Room: Continuing through August. Every Wednesday at 10:20 a.m. PT. Join **Debby Putman** and **Dot Caffrey** for casual conversation about the writing craft and anything that you wish to bring for discussion. Click on the Rooms tab for Debby's Room on the SCWA Facebook page.

Have you missed an SCWA event? We will upload replays as they are edited and ready on SCWA's YouTube channel at:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SCWAWritersOnline>

Featured Monthly Speaker: August 20, 2022 John C. Hall

Hot Takes on Crafting Pitches That Sell



John C. Hall is a film, television, and theatrical producer as well as a published author. Most recently, he served as Executive Vice President of Distribution & Marketing at Universal Pictures. His tenure in entertainment has seen him working on the marketing and distribution campaigns for over 375 theatrical releases, including major franchise titles, Oscar® winners, and dozens of mega blockbusters.

Currently, Hall is a producer on several feature films including the fictional corporate heist black comedy, *E: The Not So True Enron Story*; the female driven psychological thriller, *Killer*; and a wedding comedy, *The Token Groomsman*, which he co-wrote based on his original story idea. Additionally, he is a producer on several short films and theatrical Broadway productions

When: Saturday, August 20, 2022

Time: 10:00 am PDT

Where: Regency Theater, (Adjacent to the San Juan Capistrano Train Station)
26762 Verdugo Street, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Cost: VIP Admission: Members \$25.00

VIP Admission: Nonmembers \$35.00

Seating is limited. No walk-ins.

Pre-Register by 9:00 a.m. Friday August 19 at

[https:// www.southerncafwriters.org](https://www.southerncafwriters.org)

VIP Admission includes: Continental breakfast, networking, speaker, and light lunch, plus a private link to a recording of the meeting.

Doors open at 9:30 for light breakfast and networking. Meeting starts promptly at 10 a.m.

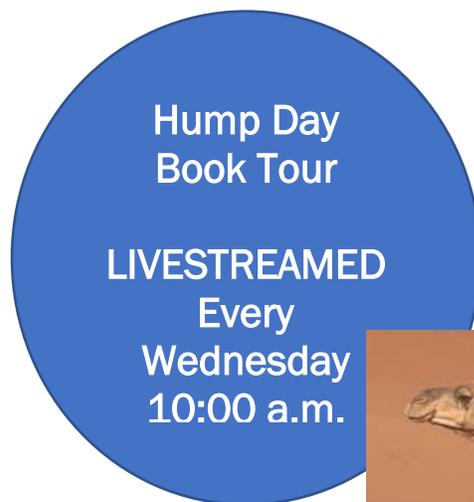
For those who can't join us in person, sign up for:

Zoom \$15.00 Speaker only: 10:15 to 11:00 a.m.

Deadline: You must preregister by 9:00 a.m. Friday, August 19, 2022.

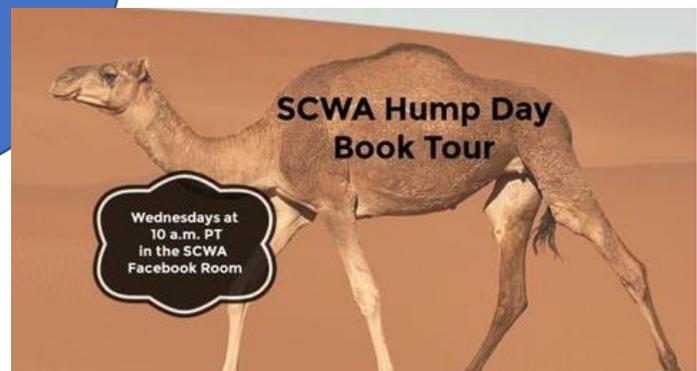
Your safety and health are important to us.
We welcome vaccinated members and guests.

For information about SCWA and membership please go to
<https://www.southerncalwriters.org/>



Returning on August 11.

Join us every Wednesday at 10 a.m.



Hump Day episodes stream on SCWA's Facebook page.

Look for our SCWA group on Facebook. Scroll through the posts for the most recent guests. When we are LIVE, click on the Events tab to join us!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southerncalwriters/events>



LIT UP!

A Conversation with Orange County Readers and Writers; a monthly salon with authors reading and discussing their book hosted by Maddie Tighe Margarita

New authors—new works—new worlds. Find your next favorite author or become a new fan. LIT UP Orange County is currently accepting submissions from authors interested in sharing their work with Orange County readers and writers. Submissions should be fiction or memoir, 6-8 double-spaced pages, and engage our audience. Interested writers please contact @MadelineTigheMargarita for more details!

HIGHLIGHTS: July 2022 Gary Phillips Writing Immersive Historical Fiction



“Like You Were There Writing Immersive Historical Fiction”

Growing up in South-Central Los Angeles with a mother who was a librarian, Gary Phillips grew up reading avidly and always wanted to write. In addition, he paid close attention to what was happening all around him, especially regarding race, politics, and police abuse issues. During a bad spell when he “got fired from several jobs,” his mother suggested he write. While

working then at another day job, he took an extension course in novel writing. His final exam: "Write the first fifty pages of your novel."

Phillips's thirty years of writing since include detective novels, historical mysteries, science fiction, westerns, comics, articles, graphic novels, and a streaming series along with editing several anthologies including *The Obama Inheritance—Fifteen Stories of Conspiracy Noir* that won a 2018 Anthony Award. Somewhere in there, he squeezed in a B.A. in Design from Cal State Los Angeles.

To write "**immersive historical fiction**," Phillips himself has always been immersed in public life: "a graveyard shift security guard, a printer, a union organizer, co-director of the Multicultural Collaborative (a nonprofit set-up to improve race relations after the '92 Los Angeles riots) and as political director of a city council campaign," [from <https://lunchticket.org/gary-phillips>]. Among others he also worked for the Rebuild LA community organization.

One entrepreneurial endeavor of Phillips and five others was to start a small press enterprise named West Coast Crime in the Pacific Northwest. Although the company ran only from 1992-1993 [the new print-on-demand was big competition], this little publisher got its books into Costco. Also, some of their books were picked up and published by the bigger presses.

Phillips's debut novel in 1994 was *Violent Spring*, named as one of the essential crime novels of Los Angeles. The protagonist is L.A. Private Investigator Ivan Monk dealing with the real 1992 disastrous uproar about the beating of Rodney King. Phillips's newest novel, *One Shot Harry*, follows African-American Harry Ingram, a freelance forensic photographer for Black newspapers who is seeking justice for a friend. Harry Ingram is based on a real photographer of that time, Harry Adams. Right now, Phillips is writing his second Harry Ingram novel which will start in the middle of the Watts riot/rebellion of August 1965.

Thus, Gary Phillips often writes about real public characters but creates some bad characters in the story. He has his own library about real events, conditions, uproars, etc., about life in Los Angeles and Black life in other parts of the U. S. When asked, "Where do you research?" he answered, "Old books—about people standing on corners wanting work." He added, "Central L.A. Library is a good resource. I trust old books more than stuff on the Internet about the L A. Police Department, and others."

Our speaker read aloud a selection from *One Shot Harry*. When researching for that novel, Phillips viewed many of Harry Adams's photographs in museums. When he had a lot of information, he wondered how he was going "to pull these elements together." So, he wrote a biography for Harry Ingram that included shellshock/combat fatigue that equaled PTSD [Not clear if that is

true for H. Adams.] An old army buddy, Ben Tinsley shows up but dies mysteriously. This “inciting incident” gets Harry “going about something basically wrong, with psychological layers and situational layers.”

Phillips said you have to give the character motivation to move forward. “What woman would he meet?” This is during the scare of Los Angeles in 1963 in South Central L.A. at the time when William Parker was the Chief of Police. “You have to weave all these details in as the story moves on the stuff in people’s psyches.” “Cynical and burned out, Harry Adams continues.

“Your research helps the verisimilitude of your novel—the voices from these time periods—of the people who lived then. (One time Phillips referred to his research of the Harlem Renaissance period, around 1928, as his “half-ass research.”)

Our speaker was asked, “How do you know which real characters to use?” His answer was “You’re going to find out more than you’re going to need.” [Evidently, a researcher can discover numerous interesting ones to choose from.]

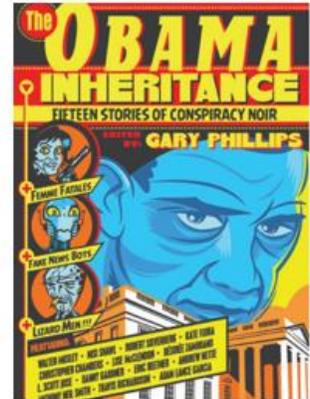
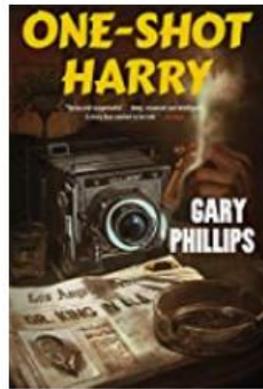
Phillips’s system is to outline his story and then deviate when he needs to. “How do you know when your book is finished?” someone asked. “When I say it is, damn it.” He then explained: “I can only write so often and so much, and I’m entertained. If I don’t have it by the fourth or fifth time, then I don’t have it. You can second-guess yourself too much. At some point, you know, I’m going to let this thing go.”

An attendee asked, “How do you use an agent, small press or big publishers? There are problems with all of them.” Answer: “The more you can interact with those people at meetings, etc., the better. Like at writers’ conferences, especially when you have agent presentations. That’s much better than sending in blind.”

Another attendee, calling herself “a Black lady in Orange County,” stated to Phillips “History tends to eliminate Black people.” Phillips told her to go to the history of Orange County and then write about Blacks here in Orange County. “Your experience will be valuable.”

Glenda Brown Rynn, Reporter

grynn@cox.net



RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

How to Leave a Review for Your Friends' Books

- Log in to your Amazon account
- Go to the products page, then select the book
- Scroll down to the Customer Reviews section and click On “Write a Customer Review”
- Rate the book
- Write your review and “submit”
- You’ll see: “Thanks for your review”

How do you find your way through the ocean of resources available online for writers like us? Check out this sampling of what we have found to be of interest. Links are included so you will be able to investigate further.

Are you afraid of scams and rip-offs when you consider publishing your book? Writers need never go it alone with a watchdog like Writer Beware to have your back.

Writer Beware's mission is to track, expose, and raise awareness of scams and other questionable activities in and around the publishing industry.



After many years on the Blogger platform, we have finally transitioned to WordPress, which offers much greater flexibility in terms of design, control, and ease of use.

We also have a new, easy to remember web address: www.writerbeware.blog.

5 Freakishly Helpful Amazon Tricks Every Author Should Use (2022)
From Shayla Raquel:

<https://www.shaylaraquel.com/blog/amazontricks?fbclid>



LitNuts was created to share the “Best of the Indies” with booklovers.

- Subscribers get a free newsletter featuring only indie books.
- Authors and publishers get an affordable way to share their work with engaged readers.

<https://litnuts.com/> LitNuts promotes *only* books from independent presses and authors. Details on its website:

<https://litnuts.com/pages/authors-and-publishers>



Benefits of SCWA Membership

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME!

- ❖ **Active members receive up to 60% off admission to SCWA meetings.**
- ❖ **Members are eligible for a free 30-minute consultation from book shepherd Sharon Goldinger on any publishing contract.**
- ❖ **Discounts are available for active SCWA members for registration for the La Jolla Writer's Conference and for early registration for the Southern California Writers' Conference.**
- ❖ **Access to professional network of publishing, business consultants and editors.**
- ❖ **Participation in SCWA marketing platforms on southerncalwriters.org and SCWA social media platforms.**
- ❖ **SCWA Member's Only group on Facebook where we rewind and replay recent featured guests and their presentations.**

SCWA Board of Directors

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The SCWA communication sites should only be used for dialogues related to the craft of writing. Non-writing related topics should be done via other forms of personal communication. Please review the content disclaimer located in the newsletter via the SCWA website www.southernwriters.org or on the About page of the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA does not endorse individual opinions placed of any of its sites.

The SCWA receives information on various services, writing contests, and events. As a courtesy, we will forward the information to our members. Unless otherwise indicated, the SCWA does not discourage, encourage, or recommend any of the services, contests, or events. Many of these services, contests and events cost money; therefore, we recommend that you evaluate the opportunities based on your individual situation and interest. Because of our membership email protection policy, please do not forward information to the general membership directly. **We request that all members forward any information to the SCWA President for approval and forwarding to the membership.**

SCWA members wishing to share appropriate writing-related information and resources are welcome to do so via the SCWA Facebook page. The SCWA Board members and Newsletter Editor will determine the information to be contained in the SCWA on-line newsletter, which is primarily used for official SCWA information.