

The Journal, 2018

The Journal, Monday, January 1

[January 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Streaks really do have immense power. When one's been going for awhile, it's actually a struggle to break it. I broke this one after 714 days. It took on a life of its own, and there were many days when the only thing I wrote was this Journal.

That seems a good thing on the surface — as in, at least I was writing — but there were times when posting the Journal to avoid breaking the streak took precedence over writing fiction. And that is not a good thing.

For that reason, I plan not to post this Journal every day like I did before. I don't want to risk creating a streak with it. In fact, I'm posting today mostly to tell you that. Well, and to show you I got off to a good start with my writing. I hope you did as well.

I have three big stories I want to tell. I mentioned the first two before:

one that will be an off-to-the-side spin-off of the short story “Going Back,” and

one that will continue (probably as-is) the short story “Beats All,” albeit with a different title.

But the one I'm working on today is something I've wanted to do for years. The characters in this story are not new to me. They tie into and continue from a series of short stories I wrote way back in the 1990s.

Suffice it to say it's special and odd, a mixture of two genres that I have never seen mixed before. And I'm very excited because I think this will be the “origin” novel that introduces a new, very unique series.

I haven't thought much about this story for the past few months, yet I woke up this morning with it on my mind. Still, as I prepared my first cup of coffee, I wasn't sure what I'd write today.

But when I sat down in the Hovel over a second cup and opened my writing ‘puter for the first time in a long time, the characters of this particular story surged through my fingers. Just under 1200 new words flowed onto the page, literally without me thinking about it. That's a good start.

Then I took a break, moved back up to the house, and came here to write this.

Anyway, I will definitely post a new edition of the Journal each time I make significant progress or finish a new work, whether a short story, a poem, or a novella or novel. I'll also post when I see something important that I want to pass along. I hope it continues to help.

I might post on every writing day, but don't hold me to that. The fiction has to take precedence. Either way, I won't be keeping track of any sort of streak with the Journal this time.

Very strange. I just realized, because I'm working from a series of short stories from roughly a hundred years ago, most of my new words today will be words I add while I'm cycling through the stories.

For anyone new to the term, "cycle" means to read through something that's already written, but with your fingers on the keyboard. This is very different from a revision or a rewrite or an edit because the conscious mind is not involved.

How do you tell the difference? The conscious, critical mind is always negative. That sentence isn't the right structure. That's the wrong word or the wrong spelling. That paragraph is too long (or too short). All negative things that you want to "fix."

When you cycle through, you aren't actively "looking" for anything. You're just reading, allowing the characters to live their story. From time to time, one will show you a new or different part of a scene or say something new or even introduce a new character.

The storyline might even take off in a whole new direction. All of that comes through your subconscious creative mind. But if your subconscious urges you to add something to the story, you do so.

I'm reading through six stories today, not always in order. As I read, I allow myself to touch them here and there. During my second writing session of the morning, as I was cycling, I stopped, then skipped ahead and started a new chapter because the character wouldn't wait.

What wonderful fun!

I barely made my daily count today. Spending some time with my wife since it's a day off. Still, I didn't want to just toss the whole day since it's the first day.

I'm very happy with today's word count, considering most of it was written while cycling. Much slower going than writing without having to make things fit.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See the “Smashwords 2017 Year in Review and 2018 Preview” at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2017/12/smashwords-2017-year-in-review-and-2018.html>.

Fiction Words: 2689

Nonfiction Words: 830 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3519

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347

Total fiction words for the month..... 2689

Total fiction words for the year..... 2689

Total nonfiction words for the month... 830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 830

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 3519

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, January 2

[January 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, my goals remain the same (on average, 2500 words of new fiction per day), but I’ve become all right about not writing for a day or two now and then.

Part of that is a result of looking back on what I’ve done. I’m not willing to rest on my accomplishments, but I’m comfortable with them. So now it’s okay to set and reset my priorities.

Due to several factors in my life, on most days writing is still Priority One. But on days when my wife is here or family members are visiting or I’m heading out for fun with my friend, writing slips to Priority Two.

There is no Priority Three. Or rather, everything else is lumped together in that level.

Back to referencing Dean today with a short but very important post. See “Of Interest” below. I was pleased to find that my mental attitude on the topic runs pretty much parallel with his.

My next goal will be to accept, without coming unhinged, that it’s all right to not write at all for a week or two or three.

We’ll see on that one. My recent layoff still feels as if it lasted for years. In reality, my last major publication (a novel) was on October 13.

The new book is going well. In a half-hour first session this morning I added almost 600 words to the beginning of The Origin Novel.

I’ve noticed too since I returned to using my dedicated writing ‘puter, where I write doesn’t make as much difference as writing on the same computer. Odd, but very cool.

Yesterday and today, I wrote in the Hovel, in my office (both my big desk and my little desk) and at my outside desk.

No matter where I was, the words seemed to flow. Of course, that’s while I’m here by myself. When others are around (if I’m writing) I’ll probably hold myself to my outside desk or the Hovel.

Still, it’s a pretty cool discovery.

Okay, in a few other sessions, I’ve added over 2600 words to the novel so far today.

I’m out for a walk now, then maybe back to it.

Back from the walk a little after 2:30, and I’m not going to push it. I made my daily count, so that’s enough. I know this one’s going to take awhile, plus I’m still cycling, so it’s all good.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See “A Few Words About Starting” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/a-few-words-about-starting/>. Once again, this makes me feel like maybe Dean is living in my closet.

See “The Most Significant Events...” at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/indie-authors-2017/>.

Just for grins, see the article on workplace jargon at <https://theconversation.com/13-ye-olde-phrases-that-would-be-far-better-in-the-workplace-89012>.

Fiction Words: 2636

Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3096

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347

Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983

Total fiction words for the month..... 2689

Total fiction words for the year..... 5325

Total nonfiction words for the month... 830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 1290

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 6615

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alliance of Independent Authors](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, January 3](#)

[January 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm constantly amazed at the variations among writer experiences.

In that regard, there are several informative comments on Dean's post from yesterday. You can see those at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-few-words-about-starting/#comments>. I was gratified to see that a couple of commenters on Dean's post took away some of the same things I got out of it. Amazing. We aren't quite as insulated and alone as we sometimes believe we are.

I also get an occasional blog post from a young writer named J.R. Murdock. You can see his latest at <https://jrmurdock.com/2018/01/02/looking-back-moving-forward/>.

Like some of the folks who commented on Dean's post, J.R. experienced a major life event, the near loss of his job. J.M. Ney-Grimm, an experienced professional fantasy writer who commented on Dean's post, lost her mother in October. Those are massive life rolls.

In the case of J.R., I exceeded his word count goal although I fell far short of my own annual goal. (I wrote 75% of the 12 novels I planned to write in 2017, but only 60% of my extended goal (15 novels). Yet I wrote only 41% of the overall annual word-count goal I hoped to reach.

Yet J.R. reached almost 74% of his own annual word count goal.

What does all of this mean? Only that goals, discipline, and life rolls are very personal things. I've always believed in comparing myself to others as a way of stretching myself. Dean has been the dangling carrot to my mule for years.

But the only truly valid comparison (the excused absence granted by life rolls aside) is comparing your own production with your own realistically set goals.

J.R. set a much lower goal than mine last year, and he missed it, though in my book at 74% he did pretty well. Especially considering that he has a stressful full-time job, still has children at home, and lives in Southern California, which perhaps holds the crown for the most attractive-annoyance distractions per capita. I applaud the guy, and I'm pulling for him.

I'm always surprised a little, in a good way, at the energy pouring out of the new starts we make at major junctions, like the recent beginning of the new year.

You saw that same thing recently from me (<http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-friday-december-29/>), despite my cynicism regarding the way humans think about Time. I'd like to hear about your writing goals too, if you have time to add a comment below.

Despite rolling out at 3 a.m., I didn't get started on the novel today until 9 a.m. That's fine, in keeping with my new, more-relaxed attitude toward writing.

My daily word count goal drives me to the computer, but once I'm there I trust that I'll get the words I need. So driven and relaxed. The best of both worlds.

In the first two sessions (still cycling) I added just over 1200 words in the Hovel. Up to the house for early lunch and to spend a little time with the baby (my cat).

I went back to play. I didn't really think I'd hit the word count goal today, but I actually exceeded it. Man that feels good!

Back soon.

Of Interest

See John Gilstrap's "Note to Copy Editor" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/01/note-to-copy-editor.html>.

Some of the other posts at The Kill Zone blog might be of interest and/or useful to you as well: <https://killzoneblog.com/>.

See Dean's "I'm Back Writing As Well" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/im-back-writing-as-well/>.

See "The Kindle for Nonfiction Already..." at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/01/02/kindle-non-fiction-already-exists-might-not-recognize-not-book/>. Excellent, insightful article.

Kevin Tumlinson, who is a major mover at Draft2Digital, is also a good thriller writer and a podcaster, among many other talents. Check out his site at <http://kevintumlinson.com/>. He also personally answers his own email.

Fiction Words: 3189
Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 3809

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172

Total fiction words for the month..... 8514
Total fiction words for the year..... 8514
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 1910
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 10424

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [Kevin Tumlinson](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, January 4](#)

[January 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Dean accidentally deleted his post from yesterday. He wrote over it, he said in today's post. So if you go there looking for it, you won't find it. There wasn't a lot to it anyway.

I got up a little late this morning, and still didn't start on the novel until 9. An hour later, I had just over 1000 words. So a good start on the day.

A break, then to the post office, then a slightly early lunch.

Damp (in the air), chilly and heavily overcast here today, so the babies are staying inside mostly.

Well, I got my word count today (still cycling) but not much over. Still, it's all good.

Still wondering whether any of you set any specific writing goals with the advent of the year. Comments welcome.

Back soon.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, see "The Big Five (2017 in Review)" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/the-big-five-2017-in-review/>.

See also "Pseudonymous litigation..." at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/pseudonymous-litigation-and-alleged-skulduggery-in-the-world-of-romance-novelists/>.

And see "Paying to Play: On Submission Fees in Poetry Publishing" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/paying-to-play-on-submission-fees-in-poetry-publishing/>. The article is even longer than the link, but it's very much worth reading.

Fiction Words: 2525

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2725

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347

Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983

Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172

Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697

Total fiction words for the month..... 11039

Total fiction words for the year..... 11039

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2110

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 2110
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 13149

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, January 5](#)

[January 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A few of you who shared your writing goals with me either in the comments or via email. Thanks! I like knowing what other writers are doing and how they do it.

Okay, so I'm gonna talk about goals again. As always, this is just me tossing in my two cents, nothing more.

If you have a weekly or monthly goal, remember it gets easier if you divide it by five or six or seven and break it down to a daily goal. You can't always eat an elephant or even a good-sized cow, but you can almost always take a few bites.

I wish I'd realized all this back when I had a weekly goal of writing one short story per week (like at least one of you is doing now). Almost every week, the deadline snuck up on me.

One week I even wrote a short story titled "Deadline" and posted it to my free story of the week blog with maybe an hour to spare. (grin)

The thing is, "short story" is an abstract measurement. That's why it was able to sneak up on me almost every week. It doesn't consist of a particular word count.

But had I broken even that goal down into daily bites, it would have gone a lot more smoothly and I probably would have written a lot more stories. Using a daily goal would enable me to see my progress, and that's almost always a good thing.

Most of my short stories are around 3,000 to 4,000 words. If I had it to do over again, I'd set a daily goal of 1000 words per day (that's only one hour, or two half-hours, or four quarter-hours). I'd have easily written 7000 words in most weeks, so two short stories.

Of course, you can also set the daily goal to a time limit (one hour, or a half-hour, or whatever) or to a lesser or greater word count. Whatever's comfortable for you.

I no longer use a weekly goal myself because I see no reason to let an elephant into the room in the first place. That's just me and my rabid fear of elephants. (grin)

As it stands, my daily goal is 2500 words. But that's the average I'd like to maintain over a year, so I might inch that up to 3000 per day soon.

If I do that, even with built-in (and life-roll) occasional days off, I should be able to hit the average. And if I squeak out another 240 words per day (on average), I'll hit a million words of new fiction this year.

That's an elephant too, of course, which is why it isn't a firm goal. It's just something I'd like to do at least once. (grin)

Weather, weather, weather. At the moment (shortly before sunrise), the prognosticators in Tucson, which is in the much warmer Sonoran Desert, say it's a balmy 41° in my little town of St. David.

In actuality, it's 32°. That tells me despite their prediction of 73° for the afternoon high, it might reach 64°.

I report all this to say I'm glad I have the Adobe Hovel, where the temp is currently around 50° and where, even on a 100° summer day, the temp won't get much over 80°. (grin)

Whew. I have to tell you, I wasn't sure I was going to get my word count today. I'll be glad when the cycling is finished so I can Just Write the all-new stuff.

The words I'm writing now are new, but I'm mostly enhancing scenes and things like that, so sometimes it's slow going.

Back soon.

Of Interest

Nothing today, really.

Fiction Words: 2609

Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3229

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306

Total fiction words for the month..... 13648
Total fiction words for the year..... 13648
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2730
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 2730
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 16378

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, January 6](#)

[January 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

To my regular readers, I decided this morning to post these Journal updates to my Facebook “fan” page at <https://www.facebook.com/AuthorStanbrough/>. So I’m gonna write a little intro here for newbies.

For those of you who are seeing this on Facebook, I’m a professional fiction writer. I have written 27 novels, 4 novellas, and over 180 short stories. This is an almost-daily Journal in which I update my progress on my current work in progress.

In this Journal I also talk about various writing and publishing topics as well as some of the day-to-day stuff of living life as a professional writer. Finally, there’s almost always an “Of Interest” section in which I link to items of interest I’ve seen around the web.

You can receive this Journal directly in your email by visiting the website at <http://hestanbrough.com> and clicking the Subscribe to the Journal tab.

If you're a writer, I encourage you to visit my main author website at <http://harveystanbrough.com>. You can subscribe there as well to a weekly post and browse dozens of great Writer Resources, get information on my books and short stories, and a great many other things. I hope to see you there!

Okay, back to our regularly scheduled programming. (grin)

Today was a planned day off. My bride and I will be doing an early spring cleaning of the casa today and probably tomorrow.

But in a first session this morning, I put down 800 very exciting words on the novel. So I'm pleased, especially as today was supposed to be a nonwriting day.

And I'm pretty sure I'll be able to sneak away for another break of an hour or so later today for another session. Who knows... I might actually make my word count today.

Well, I didn't, quite, but I'll take it, especially for a nonwriting day. (grin)

Back soon.

Of Interest

Dean posted the first of a planned 67 videos today in his Publish 67 challenge. Nothing too meaty, but you can check it out at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-67-challenge-book-one/>.

Fiction Words: 2455

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2805

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761

Total fiction words for the month..... 16103

Total fiction words for the year..... 16103

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3080

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 3080
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 19183

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, January 7](#)

[January 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow, strange day. I usually write a lot of what will become the day's Journal entry early, then add to it off and on through the day.

Today was supposed to be another nonwriting day, but it turned out about like yesterday did.

But with a unique twist.

I was working on my current work in progress when an idea sprang into my head. It was a morbid little thought, one more suited for my person Eric Stringer than for me. Or maybe even for my character, Charles Claymore Task. Charlie would love it.

Anyway, for about an hour, I abandoned the big WIP to start the second one. The first will result in at least two novels, and I hope several more. But that's all up to the characters.

The second, the one I started today, will result in a collection of short stories — a morbid collection of morbid stories, unless I miss my guess — called The Less-Relatable Tales of a Desperado. We shall see.

So I'm writing this at the (slightly early) end of my day. Oddly, I actually made my word count. Again, for what was to be a nonwriting day, not too bad.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See Linda Maye Adams' "Respecting the Writing, Respecting Yourself" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/01/07/respecting-the-writing-respecting-yourself/>.

On a somewhat related note, maybe, via The Passive Voice, see "Searching for the Self-Loathing Woman Writer" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/searching-for-the-self-loathing-woman-writer/>.

Fiction Words: 2645

Nonfiction Words: 240 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2885

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102

Writing of "The Storytellers," the first story in The Less-Relatable Tales of a Desperado

Day 1..... 1304 words. Total words to date..... 1304

Total fiction words for the month..... 18748
Total fiction words for the year..... 18748
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3320
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 3320
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 22068

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, January 8](#)

[January 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Be sure to see the “Of Interest” section today. There’s a lot of valuable information there.

I had to catch my breath this morning for a moment. A blogger named Ola Kowalczyk, on her website (Ebook Friendly), posted a “Worldwide Map of Copyright Term Length” and cited Wikipedia.

The map makes it appear that copyright law is changing in the US. (Don’t worry, it isn’t.)

Currently a copyright expires 70 years after the death of the author.

But according to the map she posted, beginning with works published in 2019, copyright will expire 95 years from the date of publication. (This is actually part of the current law for works created “under hire.”)

Naturally, I clicked the Wikipedia link beneath the photo. And I found that copyright law is NOT changing, that it’s still the life of the author plus 70 years.

So where’d Ms. Kowalczyk dig up the other graphic?

I scrolled down in the “File History” section on the Wikipedia article (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:World_copyright_terms.svg). The earliest image file — dated 23 July 2012 and posted by a user nicknamed “badseed” (f that gives you a clue) — is the one Ms. Kowalczyk chose to use.

The more important question is why Ms. Kowalczyk chose to post that particular image.

There are six images in the history. All but one, the earliest one, shows the correct information. It seems she wanted willfully to mislead people.

And that’s just annoying. Isn’t there enough trouble and fake news to go around in today’s world?

I started on the novel at around 9. I wrote around 600 words, then headed up to the house to tend to some laundry I’d started earlier.

As I finished folding one load and was putting the second into the dryer, my wife drove up. She brought news that my father’s youngest brother, who was 80 and in ill health for some time, passed away last evening.

A life roll. So the writing was put on hold for awhile as I contacted some others who would want to know.

My Uncle Bill served a stint in the National Guard. Afterward, he married his childhood sweetheart and served as a forest ranger for the US Forest Service.

He spent most of his life where he lived, in the beautiful Sacramento Mountains of New Mexico, but was also a firefighter who helped battle forest fires all over the United States. The guy was a hero in my book. He had a very unique, very dry sense of humor and he will be sorely missed.

I probably will have a few days off in the coming week, but for now, back to the novel.

Back soon.

Of Interest

Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch have come up with a series of “New Pop-Up Weekender Workshops.” They’re shorter and more intense than the usual online workshops but longer than the lectures. Read about them at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/new-pop-up-weekender-workshops/>.

Now for some freebies:

If you’ve considered signing up for Dean’s lecture on Pen Names, you can see the first video free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKanXRxyek>. Just over 11 minutes. This is a great lesson in the history of pen names and publishing overall.

There’s another excellent take on pen names by Michelle Campbell-Scott at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoILCDyN1OE>. Just over 17 minutes.

I urge you to check out Dean’s first lecture (free) on Being a Prolific Fiction Writer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MH1wz-YnFe0>. A little over 7 minutes.

Finally, if you do nothing else today, check out the first video of Dean’s best lecture (in my opinion), “Heinlein’s Rules” at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24K_YIhsYUY. It’s a little over 10 minutes and chock full of gems from about the 2 minute point.

You’ve heard me talk about Heinlein’s Rules, and you can get a free copy by clicking <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Heinleins-Business-Habits-Annotated.pdf>, but if you haven’t bought into it yet, I strongly advise you to purchase Dean’s lecture. It literally was the lecture that started me on my writing career.

There’s also an interesting article titled “Now Users Can Create Their Own...” at <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/3608965>.

Fiction Words: 2354

Nonfiction Words: 700 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3054

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
 Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
 Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
 Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
 Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
 Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
 Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
 Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
 Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456

Writing of “The Storytellers,” the first story in The Less-Relatable Tales of a Desperado

Day 1..... 1304 words. Total words to date..... 1304
 Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21102
 Total fiction words for the year..... 21102
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 4020
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 4020
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 25122

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
 Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
 Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, January 9](#)

[January 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, due to recent events, I’m shuffling my writing. For the first time I can remember, I have three works in progress: The Origin Novel (tentative title); “Storytellers,” the first short story of

an eventual collection that will be titled The Less-Relatable Tales of a Desperado; and Autobiography, another novel I started this morning.

The Origin Novel will continue as the primary work, occasionally but barely abated, because it's what I want to write. I've wanted to write it for several years, but realized that fact only recently.

The short story and the ensuing eventual collection is on the back burner for awhile. I suspect I'll finish it eventually because it's a Good Story, but not right now.

Autobiography is another novel that I'll write in two parts. The first part will be about the most significant person in my own life (fictionalized), the one who set my foundation. The second will be about me and my life from the time I joined the Marine Corps. I might add a third part about how it would go if I did it over again.

This morning I wrote a kind of structure, putting down facts that I'll expand later. I've never started like that before, but that's what it wanted.

Finally to the Hovel at around 8:30. I wrote a bit more on Autobiography, strictly because some thoughts occurred and I wanted to get them put down.

My friend came over and I went with him to inspect the well that feeds my house (the water pressure's been surging), then to help him throw a tarp over some hay.

Finally back to the Hovel and finally to The Origin Novel just before 10.

A few short sessions and a few phone calls later, and by 1:30 I had only slightly over 1000 words. So today will be a light day, of sorts. All told, I've already surpassed my dail goal, so I'm taking off the rest of the day to begin fresh tomorrow.

There probably won't be a Journal on Friday or Saturday and maybe Sunday this week as I'll be on the road.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See <http://www.sfwaworld.com/2018/01/infringement-alert/>.

Fiction Words: 3592

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3962

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456
Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650

Writing of Autobiography (tentative title)

Day 1..... 2398 words. Total words to date..... 2398

Writing of “The Storytellers,” the first story in The Less-Relatable Tales of a Desperado

Day 1..... 1304 words. Total words to date..... 1304
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 24694
Total fiction words for the year..... 24694
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4390
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 4390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 229084

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, January 10](#)

[January 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A personal good-news item that might be of some interest:

My wife and I have been married for almost 34 years. When we married, I brought three children to the mix and she brought one. We never used or allowed the term step-anything (son or daughter, brother or sister). We saw no reason to differentiate among the children. After all, the situation was no fault of theirs.

For various reasons, I was never able to adopt our eldest son, who was originally named Jason Griffith Smith. Also, Jason's maternal grandfather passed away a few years ago, and he was the last of the Griffith line.

Yesterday, I was suddenly made very glad that I had never adopted Jason. On his own and with our blessing, he changed his name, legally, to Jason Stanbrough Griffith.

In one masterful stroke, he both honored his dad's (my) last name and is now able to continue his grandfather's line.

As you might imagine, given the tragedy that occurred for our family only a few days ago, this rebirth of sorts was a refreshing lift to our spirits.

From the Wisdom From an Old Man department: Never drink lemonade you didn't squeeze yourself.

To the Hovel and the novel at around 9:15. Just under 1000 words in the first session, then a break to check on the babies.

Back to the Hovel later, and ended up with a pretty good day of writing.

I'm probably not going to work on Autobiography or the short story for awhile, so I've dropped them from the daily count below.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See "PRH Buys Rodale Books Assets" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/prh-buys-rodale-books-assets/>. Especially if you're still using or chasing a traditional publisher, you want to see this.

Fiction Words: 3297

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3597

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456
Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650
Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947

Total fiction words for the month..... 27991
Total fiction words for the year..... 27991
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 4690
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 32681

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, January 11](#)

[January 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Slow start to the day but a few great emails from friends. Thank you for those.

I frittered away the first few hours with nothing of any importance (other than those emails). I moved out to the Hovel at around 8:45. I wrote much of what appears below, then started on the novel at around 10.

Especially for the newer readers of this Journal, a bit about process today. I recommend those of you who have been with me for awhile read it too, though. I might say something you need to hear, or say it in the way you need to hear it.

This novel has an odd feeling to it. A couple of factors figure into that.

First, as many of you know, all novels write differently. That's to be expected since the characters and/or situations are different so they present differently from the beginning.

Second, much of this one is cycling, my method (adapted from Dean Wesley Smith) of revision. I hasten to add that cycling (or revision) is not the same as rewriting. I'll explain shortly.

Reading for pleasure and writing into the dark (which means without a predetermined plan because I don't want to bore myself to tears) have one major thing in common: both happen while the subconscious mind is at the forefront. The critical conscious mind is stilled for that time.

That's what makes cycling different from rewriting. Rewriting is done with input from the conscious mind, and as Ray Bradbury once said, nothing good in fiction ever came from the conscious mind.

So as I cycle through I'm Just Reading (reading for pleasure) and operating from my subconscious. I read on my computer screen, and allow my fingers to rest on the keyboard.

Occasionally as I read, a character says something different or new, or some new event occurs that I didn't see when I wrote the "first draft." So I add the new dialogue or the new event on the spot, then go back to reading. I don't think about it (conscious mind). I just type it and move along.

This is a wonderful way to revise because the entire process is based in the subconscious, creative mind. That's the distinction.

When I'm writing something brand new, I write for about an hour — maybe 900 to 1200 words — then take a break. When I come back from the break, I cycle through that 1000 words, often adding nothing at all, then continue to put new words on the page. And when I reach the last word, I'm finished and I move on to the next project.

The current novel is a little different because it's based on several short stories I wrote a very long time ago. I don't usually revisit what I've written — and even when this novel is finished I'll leave the short stories out there to continue making money — but this particular situation begged to be a novel.

So in this case, I started with the 32000+ words (see Brought Forward below) of the combined short stories. They are all thematically connected and sequential.

I started reading through them (cycling) for pleasure and allowed my subconscious to play as necessary. The 24000+ words I've added in the first ten days (see below) are all new words.

But because I'm cycling, the going is a little slow. I'm turning out an average of 2400 words per day. Normally in ten days I would have finished a novel. If I finish this one in 20 writing days (I only report writing days below) I'll be thrilled. If I finish this month, I will be happy.

Because I'm cycling through this one from the beginning, it's taking a little longer. I look very forward to emerging from the last original short story so I can once again set my subconscious free and let my fingers fly.

And I'm very glad you're all along for the ride. (grin)

If you enjoy these posts, please consider sharing them by either forwarding if you receive them via email subscription or, if you see them on Facebook, by clicking the Share button. Thanks!

By the way, I'm calling this (tentatively) The Origin Novel because I believe it will give birth to a new hero. Something I believe we could all use.

By 1 p.m., in two sessions, I had a little over 1300 words.

My wife is off this afternoon, so I'm gonna take the rest of the day. Some shopping, some packing for the trip.

There probably won't be a Journal tomorrow, Saturday or Sunday. I'll try to write while I'm on the road. If I do, I'll report numbers here the next time I post to the Journal.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See "Adventures" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/adventures/>.

Fiction Words: 1358

Nonfiction Words: 810 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2168

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347

Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983

Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172

Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697

Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306

Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761

Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102

Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456

Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650

Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947
Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305

Total fiction words for the month..... 29349
Total fiction words for the year..... 29349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 5480
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 34829

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR January 12, 2018*****

[The Journal, Saturday, January 13](#)

[January 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, leave it to fate for interesting stuff to happen while I'm on the road.

See (or listen to) "25 Book Promotion Tips" at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/01/25-book-promotion-tips.html>.

For ideas on how one writer's mind works, see Dean's "One More Adventure Day" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/one-more-adventure-day/>. It's very short, but interesting.

I wrote a little on the novel last night, but nothing to mention. More to keep my hand in than anything else, I think.

By the way, I now have books available in nine different bundles, ranging from SF to action-adventure to romance to westerns. To check out these incredible values (newest at the top) see <http://harveystanbrough.com/bundles>. Thanks for looking!

Today will be a drive up to look over my old early childhood stomping grounds, then the memorial service, then the drive back to Arizona. If all goes as planned, we'll (my son and I) will get back tonight and I'll be back writing tomorrow.

See you then.

Of Interest

See above.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 170 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 170

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456
Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650
Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947
Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 29349
Total fiction words for the year..... 29349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5650
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 5650
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 34999

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR January 14, 2018*****

The Journal, Monday, January 15

January 15, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I planned to make yesterday the the 12th writing day of the current novel. But I decided to take the day off. As it turns out, today will also be a day off.

I hope tomorrow will be the 12th writing day. The novel is going fine when I tend to it, but my recent life roll had a little larger impact than I expected.

And then there was a second one waiting when I got back from New Mexico. At least it was lesser in intensity, though no lesser in importance. Just things to take care of. You know the deal. Life always wins.

For folks newer to this Journal, all calendar days figure into the overall average. For example, thus far this year my average (arithmetic mean) yield has been a little less than 2000 words per day of new fiction.

But I only count actual writing days in the accounting below. The average for actual writing days is just under 3000 words per day. Either way, I'll take it.

I plan to be back up to speed tomorrow, but we'll see what the day brings.

See you then.

Of Interest

If you still would prefer a traditional publishing contract, there's hope for an actual Good contract. See Kris Rusch's "The Small Traditional Publishers (2017 in Review) 2" at <http://kriswrites.com/2018/01/10/business-musings-the-small-traditional-publishers-2017-in-review-2/>. Don't let the length scare you away.

Via The Passive Voice, if you use Facebook you might want to see "Media is collateral damage" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/media-is-collateral-damage/>.

See Anne R. Allen's "The One Thing That Will Kill Book Sales..." at <http://annerallen.com/2018/01/kill-book-sales-10-ways/>. (As with most things I find on Ms. Allen's site, I recommend you take this article with a hefty grain of salt, especially her points 5, 6 and 7.)

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 300

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456
Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650
Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947
Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 29349
Total fiction words for the year..... 29349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5950
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 5950
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 35299

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, January 16](#)

[January 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to report today. We had a quick trip to Sierra Vista to resolve the second life roll. Fortunately it turned out to be a much less eventful than it might have been.

I wrote early this morning for an hour or so, and then a bit more after we got home. Those numbers are displayed below. Feels good to be back to the novel.

See you then.

Of Interest

Linda Maye Adams posted “Perfectionism and Reading Fiction” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/01/15/perfectionism-and-reading-fiction/>. See what you think. I might tackle this topic myself in a day or two.

You might check out The Passive Voice at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/>. I saw nothing specifically to point out, but something there might interest you.

Dean’s posts recently have been very short in deference to his trip to Las Vegas. He’s back. You might want to browse the past few posts at <http://deanwesleysmith.com>.

Fiction Words: 2840

Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3000

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347

Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983

Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172

Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697

Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306

Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761

Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102

Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456

Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650

Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947

Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305

Day 12... 2840 words. Total words to date..... 61145

Total fiction words for the month..... 32189

Total fiction words for the year..... 32189

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6110

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6110

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 38299

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, January 17](#)

[January 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Out to the Hovel at around 5:30 this morning. For newcomers, the Adobe Hovel is a storage building about 200 feet from my house. The walls are earth and about three feet thick.

There's no Internet there, so it makes an excellent writing environment. In fact, I leave my writing 'puter out there most of the time on an ancient old folding card table.

I wrote for a session, then back to the house to check on things around 7. Back out for another session around 8:30, then back to the house at about 10. I'll do one more session later.

I'm still cycling through stories, but also adding a lot of new stuff in various places. The novel is shaping up nicely.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Dean's offering a new summer coast workshop. If you're interested, take a look at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-summer-coast-workshop/>.

Fiction Words: 2615

Nonfiction Words: 150 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2765

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347

Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983

Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172

Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697

Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306

Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761

Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456
Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650
Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947
Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305
Day 12... 2840 words. Total words to date..... 61145
Day 13... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 63760

Total fiction words for the month..... 34804
Total fiction words for the year..... 34804
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6260
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6260
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 41064

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, January 18](#)

[January 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Be sure to hit the “Of Interest” section below. There’s a lot there. It will seem overwhelming, but I read all of the info there in less than an hour. Either way, you don’t want to miss it.

Well, the water heater started leaking last night. One of those times I’m glad I’m renting instead of buying. The owners know us well and trust us, so we do pretty much anything we want to the house and the property, but when big expenses come up (like replacing a water heater) that’s on them. It’s all good.

I moved out to the Hovel a little early this morning at 5. I put down about 600 words then headed back up to the house to shower and spend some time with my wife before she heads off to work.

Still chilly here, in the low 20s overnight and with around 60 for a high, with a cold north wind that feels like it's blowing off a block of ice. I count my blessings though, that I'm here and not on the icy plains or in the refrigerator of the midwest.

Well, kind of a slow day for writing. I got one more good session, then helped the landlord install the new water heater, then ran back out to hammer away a little more. Not the day I'd hoped for, but I'll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

For a much more in-depth explanation of Dean's new coast workshop see "I Wasn't Clear" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/i-wasnt-clear/>.

See James Scott Bell's "What's the Deal on Dreams in Fiction?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/author/jimbell>.

See John Gilstrap's "Internal Monologue" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/01/internal-monologue.html>. I especially like this one because he talks in some detail about italicizing unspoken thought.

Then see Jordan Dane's "5 Key Ways to Balance Internal Monologue with Pitfalls to Avoid" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/01/16773.html>.

Finally (for The Kill Zone blog) see PJ Parrish's "The Agony and Ecstasy of Starting Over" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/01/the-agony-and-ecstasy-of-starting-over.html>.

See "How To Brief A Cover Designer" at <https://kobowritinglife.com/2018/01/16/how-to-brief-a-cover-designer/>.

As a resource, see the list of "The Book Designer" article categories at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/articles/>.

And strictly for nostalgia, see "Goin' by Fats' House" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/01/goin-by-fats-house.html>.

Fiction Words: 1857

Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2217

Writing of The Origin Novel (working title)

BF..... 32658 words.
Day 1..... 2689 words. Total words to date..... 35347
Day 2..... 2636 words. Total words to date..... 37983
Day 3..... 3189 words. Total words to date..... 41172
Day 4..... 2525 words. Total words to date..... 43697
Day 5..... 2609 words. Total words to date..... 46306
Day 6..... 2455 words. Total words to date..... 48761
Day 7..... 1341 words. Total words to date..... 50102
Day 8..... 2354 words. Total words to date..... 52456
Day 9..... 1194 words. Total words to date..... 53650
Day 10... 3297 words. Total words to date..... 56947
Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305
Day 12... 2840 words. Total words to date..... 61145
Day 13... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 63760
Day 14... 1857 words. Total words to date..... 65617

Total fiction words for the month..... 36661
Total fiction words for the year..... 36661
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6620
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6620
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 43281

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 27
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [Jordan Dane](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [PJ Parrish](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, January 19](#)

[January 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the ending of The Origin Novel snuck up on me this morning. I figured it would be at least a few more days, but I turned a corner and there it was.

It's now titled The Keeper of the Promise, with The Origin Novel as the subtitle.

As you know, much of the process on this one was me cycling back through stuff I'd already written. I started with five short stories. When the dust cleared, I had cut two complete short

stories that didn't figure into the novel (or did so only peripherally) plus about another 3,000 words.

Then I added another 33000 new words to round the story out into a novel.

Now, unlike my usual process, I'm going to sit on this one for a few days, then read over it again to make sure it all flows. (Because of all the stitching together.) I might add or cut another few words here and there, but for the main, it's finished.

This was an interesting exercise, but not one I'd like to repeat in the future. (grin)

Anyway, I already have an idea in mind for the next novel with all-new characters. But for the rest of today, I have household chores to catch up on, and then some reading.

With any luck, I'll be back tomorrow.

Of Interest

Nothing today that I could find, but I do encourage you to visit The Killzone Blog at <https://killzoneblog.com/> and Jordan Dane's website at <http://jordandane.com/>.

Fiction Words: 1042

Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1292

Writing of The Keeper of the Promise: The Origin Novel

BF..... 32658 words.

Day 11... 1358 words. Total words to date..... 58305

Day 12... 2840 words. Total words to date..... 61145

Day 13... 2615 words. Total words to date..... 63760

Day 14... 1857 words. Total words to date..... 65617

Day 15... 1042 words. Total words to date..... 66659 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 37703

Total fiction words for the year..... 37703

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6870

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6870

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 44573

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Jordan Dane](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, January 20

[January 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Another note on process. Despite the word count I posted earlier for **The Keeper of the Promise: The Origin Novel**, after omitting the two short stories I mentioned yesterday, and after a few thousand words of other cuts, the novel finally came in yesterday at 56620 words.

Last night as I glanced over it, I realized it was mostly complete and flows well. The one thing I didn't do was set up the protagonist as a series character with a lead-in to the next books. Not good, since I wrote the thing in the first place to lead into a series.

This morning in a quick session, I added a scant 453 words to the manuscript to plug that hole. Then I cut another 103 words. Now it is finished and off to my first reader.

Of Interest

See "Social Media Strategies for Authors" at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/01/social-media-strategies-for-authors.html>. I kind of wish they'd offer a print version, but I think this is a podcast.

See Dean's "Fun Idea From Vegas" (it's much more than it seems) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fun-idea-from-vegas/>.

And for just a little common sense in our Bizzaro nation, see "Buffalo Bill and the Indians" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/buffalo-bill-and-the-indians/>.

Fiction Words: 0453

Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 663

Writing of (working title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 381563

Total fiction words for the year..... 38156

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7080

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 7080

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 45236

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Smashwords](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR January 21-25 (inclusive), 2018*****

[The Journal, Friday, January 26](#)

[January 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. It's been an eventful week, and it isn't over yet. Mona and I both caught the creeping crud hyper-flu that's apparently going around in various parts of the US. I am a writer, so my first thought was Conspiracy.

But I was too weak to even think about writing (or holding my head up) and besides, The Stand was already written.

Got another copyediting job in late last week or early this week. (Thanks for the referral, Robert!)

I'm publishing this today only to let you know things finally SEEM to be clearing around the Stanbrough camp, and I hope to be back in full force (no idea what that means, but I've always liked the sound of it) by Monday.

Well, and to pass along a few interesting items. See you again on Monday, I hope.

Of Interest

See Dean's "Tip of the Week" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/tip-of-the-week/>.

Via The Passive Guy, see "New Author Earnings Report" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/01/new-author-earnings-report-2/>. I recommend you don't just skip to Dean's place to read the OP, but see PG's take on the whole thing.

And see “Walmart Now Kobo’s Retail Partner...” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/01/25/walmart-now-kobos-retail-partner-us-will-sell-kobo-ereaders-store/>. Very exciting.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 200

Writing of (working title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 38156
Total fiction words for the year..... 38156
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 7280
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 45436

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR January 27, 2018*****

[The Journal, Sunday, January 28](#)

[January 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I think we’re nearly over being ill. Other than this tiny bit of writing, I’ll spend the rest of the day doing nothing. The plan for tomorrow is to write and to work on the copyedit I received recently.

Awhile back I mentioned that I wish Mark Coker over at Smashwords would publish a print version of his podcasts for those of us who would rather read than listen.

Finally this morning I found he’s been doing that all along. You can find the Smart Author Podcast homepage at <https://www.smashwords.com/podcast>.

Once you're there, you'll see all the episodes listed down the page. To the right of each listing you'll see a link that reads "Show notes." Click that to view the written transcript of that episode.

The Book Marketing series begins with Episode 10.

I hope you've all been keeping up with Dean's site even in my absence. There's a lot going on over there.

At <http://deanwesleymith.com>, scroll down to look at the past several topics. I recommend reading his post titled "New Author Earnings Report" and the 43 (at the time) comments. Very revealing.

More importantly, if you want some ideas on how to make a living with your writing, see "Earnings" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/earnings/>.

Of Interest

See "Book Marketing – How to Earn Free Press Coverage" at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/01/how-to-earn-free-press-coverage.html>. IF YOU'D PREFER THE WRITTEN TRANSCRIPT, CLICK <https://www.smashwords.com/podcast/15>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 240 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 240

Writing of (working title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 38156
Total fiction words for the year..... 38156
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7520
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 7520
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 45676

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Smashwords](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR January 29, 2018*****

[The Journal, Tuesday, January 30](#)

[January 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I meant to post this yesterday. I really did, but there wasn't a lot to talk about. Mostly I worked on the copyedit yesterday, as I will today and tomorrow, and took care of a few household chores.

Well, the hits keep on coming. On the tail of losing a paternal uncle a few weeks ago, yesterday I lost another one. I am now officially the Old Man of the Stanbrough clan.

Clifford Jerry Stanbrough was a tin-can (destroyer) sailor, a gunner's mate, in the early 1950s. After that, he enjoyed a long career as a photographer, working with Lockheed-Martin before eventually retiring and going to work for his local police department as their photographer.

Cliff was also an excellent guitarist who taught me to play. His friends included the likes of Lefty Frizzell, Web Pierce and others. Bill Mauldin, who later became the cartoonist famous for Willie & Joe, was a childhood friend of Cliff and a few other paternal and maternal uncles. Cliff was a force of nature, always with a joke on his lips and a ready laugh. We will miss him.

Every so often, I read another article about how and why I should learn to dictate my stories and novels. According to its proponents, dictation, once learned, greatly enhances a writer's productivity, miraculously adds 4 to 6 hours of free time to the average 24-hour day, a quite possibly is a cure for the common cold.

I bought a good hand-held voice recorder back about the time MP3 files were first becoming a thing. Ten years ago? Fifteen? I set out to talk my stories while I was walking. Problem was, I didn't know what to say.

Over the years, each time I encountered another article regarding this miracle cure for various writers' maladies, I tried again, most often with the same results. Yesterday was no exception.

After reading the article in "Of Interest" below, again I pulled out my VR, dusted it off and made ready flash past my usual productivity.

Then I remembered I would need a way to turn the recording into text. 1) There are no free ways, other than manual transcription. 2) There is no guarantee that even the \$300 Dragon program will render the text as-spoken.

Oh. Well, okay then.

I'll still plan to carry my VR with me when I start walking again. If nothing else, at least it will be there Just In Case a story springs upon me in mid-step. I'll let you know how it works out.

With only one day left in January, and with the copyedit I'm working on nearing completion, and having almost extracted myself from this flu-thing, and with a trip to NM imminent, it will be a few days before I get back to fiction. See you then.

Of Interest

See "How To Use Dictation For A Healthier Writing Life" at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2018/01/10/healthy-writer-dictation-tips/>. Have you ever tried writing via dictation? What did you think?

See "The Indie Publishing Lesson" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/01/24/business-musings-the-indie-publishing-lesson-2017-in-review/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 500

Writing of (working title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 38156
Total fiction words for the year..... 38156
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8020
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 8020
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 46176

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Creative Penn](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR January 31, 2018*****

[The Journal, Thursday, February 1](#)

[February 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, here we go again. I was out in the Hovel poking around and found another short story that I've wanted, for awhile, to turn into a novel. The short story is titled "Going Back," and it was considerably larger than itself even when I first wrote it. I'm interested to see where it will go and to watch it develop.

As I glanced over it, the characters began speaking to me and my fingers began moving over the keyboard. Before I realized it I'd added over 1000 new words. Feels good when that happens.

I'll be interrupted in the writing of this WIP by a trip to New Mexico to attend a second memorial service in less than 30 days. But I plan to take my writing 'puter with me so it's available if I find time to write. I feel like I'm slowly returning to normal at least as a writer.

Still digging out from under the flu, the last vestiges of which seem to have settled in as a chest cold. That's okay. I can deal with that. Thanks for your ongoing kind wishes and support.

Once the life rolls settle down a bit and I work back into more of a routine with my writing again, I hope to begin publishing this Journal every day again. It's a habit that I'll have to re-develop.

Actually, I have to prep for the trip, so no more writing today. Back in a day or two or three.

See you then.

Of Interest

See "Indie Publishing: The Good Stuff (2017 in Review)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/01/31/business-musings-indie-publishing-the-good-stuff-2017-in-review/>. Toward the end of the article, she lists "gamechangers," programs etc. that changed the indie publishing experience for the better. I recommend it.

Over at the Killzone Blog the various writers there have been posting "first page critiques" recently. I seldom read them and I don't report on them specifically here, but you might want to check it out at <https://killzoneblog.com/>.

I check Dean's site every day. There's some small stuff going on over there, though nothing specific to point to. You might check it out at <http://deanwesleysmith.com>.

Fiction Words: 1285

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1635

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985

Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270

Total fiction words for the month..... 1285

Total fiction words for the year..... 39441

Total nonfiction words for the month... 350

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 8370

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 47811

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR February 2, 3, 4, 5, 2018*****

[The Journal, Tuesday, February 6](#)

[February 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Mostly today I'm posting this Journal to pass along the "Of Interest" section below.

We got home on Sunday around one p.m. It was good to settle in without scenery flashing past the car windows. Of course, there were little chores to do, mostly unpacking, etc.

On Monday, I was up early and actually wrote a little on the current WIP, but not enough to really talk about. Just a little cycling, during which I added only a couple hundred words.

My wife headed back to her job, and I suppose I could have spent a lot more time with the story. Instead I spent the balance of the day taking care of household chores and getting reacquainted with my little cat girl.

I'd explained before we left that we'd have to be gone for a few days. I speak to her as if she were a little six year old human, and she seems to understand. But she was still a little annoyed for an hour or so.

Still, every time I sat down at my desk, she would jump up and walk between me and the computer, raising her little head for a kiss on her way by. Sweet girl.

Once the chores were done, I was all but worn out, so I sat down and started another Jack Higgins novel. Wow. What a writer that guy is.

Probably, today will be another day of rest. I'm playing it by ear. One day soon I'll sit down and start writing again, and things will flow as they did before. But for now, no rush.

See you in a day or two.

Of Interest

Smashwords has updated their book marketing guide, and it's free. Get it at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/02/65-book-marketing-ideas.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 300X

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 1285
Total fiction words for the year..... 39441
Total nonfiction words for the month... 650
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 8670
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 48111

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

The Journal, Wednesday, February 7

February 7, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Not sure what I'll do today for writing, other than this. We'll see. In the meantime, Dean and Kris have come up with two new workshops. See "Of Interest" below.

As it turned out, I wrote a blog post for HarveyStanbrough.com. Almost a thousand words. Some of you will like it. It's titled "The Use of Italics, Revisited." I moved the other pre-posted ones out, so the new one will post next Tuesday.

Well, also as it turned out, today I finished cycling through the short story that I'm turning into a novel. It took about two hours (so two sessions) and in that time I added a little over 1100 words.

Not too bad for cycling. When I return to the WIP in a day or two, I should be able to get back up to speed. Very interested to see where this is going to go.

See you in a day or two.

Of Interest

Check out "Two Brand New Workshops and Special Offer" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/two-brand-new-workshops-and-special-offer/>.

See "Avoid Burnout With Strategic Breaks" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/avoiding-burnout-with-strategic-breaks.html>.

Just for fun, see "What Did That Sign Say?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/what-did-that-sign-say.html>.

Fiction Words: 1120

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (200 Journal, 980 Blog)

So total words for the day: 2300

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985

Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270

Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405

Total fiction words for the year..... 40561

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 9850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 50411

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, February 8

[February 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Good stuff in “Of Interest” again today.

Well, mostly a day off today. Mona will be at work this morning. While she’s doing that I’ll be working on a copyedit of her recent memoir. That will probably take up the morning and part of tomorrow.

Otherwise, I’ll spend an hour or two reading today.

Then this afternoon we’re going to Sierra Vista for a combination of shopping and just getting away for a few hours.

Of Interest

See “Eight Ways to Tell if Your Author Site Has Been Hacked” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/02/07/eight-ways-tell-author-site-hacked/>.

There’s a cute video re Dean’s new Kickstarter campaign. See “We Have Liftoff... North by Northwest Kickstarter” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/we-have-liftoff-north-by-northwest-kickstarter/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 120 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 120

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405
Total fiction words for the year..... 40561
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1950
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 9970
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 50531

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, February 9](#)

[February 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, another good “Of Interest” section today.

Today will probably be another non-(fiction) writing day for me. I’ll work on the copyedit I started yesterday on my wife’s memoir, and then I’ll probably round out the day by reading. Still resting up from January, I think.

Topic: About Publishing and Publishers

A young writer got in touch with me earlier today to ask my recommendation on publishing. She mentioned that she was “talking to a publishing company that is a subsidiary of Hay House.”

I didn’t look up the company, but a little bell went off in my mind. I believe Hay House is one of the companies that charges writers an up-front fee to publish their work. If they don’t, their “subsidiaries” almost certainly do.

I told her, and I will tell you (again), “I recommend indie publishing 100%. You can pay someone to design a cover and do the eformatting (and/or layout for paper publication), but after that you don’t pay anyone anything and your royalties belong only to you.”

For an overall guide to indie publishing (self-publishing), click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Quick-Guide-to-Self-Publishing-FAQs.pdf>. This is a good little book, and it's free.

And if you'd like a by-the-numbers crash course on digital publishing, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/DPubV2X.pdf>. This one is a little outdated (and it's also free), but it will teach you how to format and submit your work to various distributors.

Some writers are still in the agent chase, though I will never understand why. Hiring an agent is tantamount to giving the guy who cuts your grass once every two weeks 15% ownership of your home.

If you're still seeking a "traditional" publisher and aren't wild about negotiating contracts, I recommend finding a good intellectual property rights lawyer and paying him or her to negotiate the contract for you.

Better yet, learn copyright and do it yourself, perhaps with an IP attorney in the wings to advise you.

Either way, I will never advocate paying any company up front to publish your work. Period. A few that spring to mind are Booklocker, Wheatmark, AuthorHouse, etc.

And before you sign ANY contract, READ IT or better yet, have your IP attorney read it. Giving any publisher "all rights" (print, electronic, etc.) to your work for the life of the copyright is just foolish, even for what appears to be a good advance.

Just ask yourself, what is your intellectual property (your copyright on a story or novel) worth to you over your life plus 75 years?

Now, a personal example: if a traditional publisher wanted one of my novels, even all rights for the life of the copyright, and wanted to pay me say \$250,000.00 up front, I *might* be interested. But no amount short of that. And that would be only for the one novel. And that's just me.

That's the amount that would pique my interest, and signing that contract would leave me with 28 other novels to sell.

You'll have to set your own price based on your own needs.

Back in a day or two.

Of Interest

Check out Dean's post, "Flying In the Face of Common Knowledge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/flying-in-the-face-of-common-knowledge/>.

See Kris Rusch's post on "Confidential Business Information" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/02/07/business-musings-confidential-business-information/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 520

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405
Total fiction words for the year..... 40561
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2470
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 10490
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 51051

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [self-publishing](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, February 10](#)

[February 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. You know I recommend using Draft2Digital as one of your ebook distributors. Part of the reason is the smooth user interface on their website. Another (big) reason is that they are teamed with Books2Read to provide a Universal Link for your book.

Ostensibly, this means you can post that Universal Link on your website, Facebook or wherever. When would-be readers click the link, it shows them all the stores where your book is available. They they can click on the link for their favorite store to buy your book.

All well and good, mostly.

Purely by accident, I found out this morning that the Universal Link for one of my books led to only one retailer, and a minor one at that.

At first I thought I'd have to manually add each retailer myself, a very time-consuming process.

Then I saw a "Rescan Now" button. I pressed that and it rescanned and added stores it had missed before.

Still, I have over 200 publications. So I have an email in to Books2Read asking whether there's a way to do a bulk scan. I doubt there is, but I'm hopeful.

Anyway, if you use Draft2Digital as one of your distributors, be sure to check your universal links from time to time.

Because Dean's considering buying books from indie publishers for his North by Northwest bookstore, I'm standing up the website for StoneThread Publishing again. I'll spend most of the day on that.

Probably my author site will remain pretty much as-is, with all the novels, etc. there as well. And even though my short story collections will be featured at StoneThread, the individual short stories themselves will be only at my main site.

You can see the StoneThread Publishing site at <http://stonethreadpublishing.com>. And like most publishers who sell direct, STP will offer discounts.

Back in a day or two.

Of Interest

See "Top Five DIY Book Layout Mistakes" at <https://booklife.com/create/art-design/06/28/2015/top-five-diy-book-layout-mistakes.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 340 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 340

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405
Total fiction words for the year..... 40561
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 10830
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 51391

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [StoneThread Publishing](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR February 11 2018*****

[The Journal, Monday, February 12](#)

[February 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

My excellent first reader, Kenneth Flowers (krf1952@gmail.com) got my 28th novel back to me via email yesterday with his feedback. I'm such a fortunate guy.

He said he looks forward to the sequels, which served to remind me I wanted to write some sequels, that Keeper of the Promise was only the origin novel for a series. (grin) So there's that. At the moment I'm deep in an SF novel, and then I hope to take a shot at writing a thriller. But sequels. Yes.

I spent most of yesterday working on the StoneThread Publishing website and reading another thriller by Jack Higgins. The guy's a master of the genre. Wow.

Today I'll be going over Keeper of the Promise to apply Kenneth's few recommended changes. I've also decided to change all unspoken thought in this novel to italics. For this one, it just makes sense. And then the balance of the day, I'll probably work on StoneThread Publishing again. Should have it finished in a few more hours.

By the way, if you aren't subscribed to the Pro Writers blog over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#), be sure to check the post tomorrow. It's all about the italics thing.

Change of plans. My wife agreed to listen as I read Keeper of the Promise to her. I can make any adjustments as I do that. It'll take a week, an hour or two per evening, but it frees up my time now to do other things.

Also, as I mentioned above, I still have some work to do on StoneThread Publishing too, but it's nothing essential, so I thought I might get some writing done on my WIP.

Change 2: When I got out to the Hovel, Microsoft gave me a Gates Suppository in the form of a major update on my writing 'puter. Truly annoying. You can go back and undo any update they add, but you can't simply deny them the update in the first place.

By the time the updates were finished, I was out of sorts. I jotted down a few words that I don't want to lose (for the WIP), then turned back to another Jack Higgins novel and read.

Back in a day or two.

Of Interest

See "Stuff That Takes Readers Out of a Story" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/stuff-that-takes-readers-out-of-a-story.html#comment-59228>.

Via The Passive Voice, for fun, see "Top Ten Peeves of Creative Writing Teachers," a guest post by Melodie Campbell on Anne R. Allen's website at <http://annerallen.com/2018/02/top-ten-peeves-of-creative-writing-teachers/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 430 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 430

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405
Total fiction words for the year..... 40561
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3240
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 11260
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 51821

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, February 13](#)

[February 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not sure what's going on in my head currently. I have to slow down, I know that much. Probably today I'll try to finish getting StoneThread Publishing up to par, and then do the necessary things to publish my previous novel.

I gave up on the notion of reading it to my wife. We're both too tired in the evenings for that sort of thing.

When I do return to writing, well, I'm kind of losing interest in my WIP, The Age Exchange. Not really, but sort of.

The thing is, I'm itching to write a true thriller. I love writing action and convoluted story lines, and thrillers are mostly non-stop action and convoluted story lines.

So that itch has morphed into a possible desire to make The Age Exchange an SF thriller, which would be really cool. But to do that, I have to let the basic premise boil around in my head for at least a few more days.

In the interim, if another thriller crops up, I might set aside the WIP and come back to it after I write what would then be the new WIP.

I have two ideas for thriller series at the moment (plus the one-off that would be The Age Exchange).

One began with "what would I do if I could do it over" thought re my own life, and the other has to do with the sequels I mentioned yesterday.

Not sure which of those (or perhaps something else entirely) I'll write when I start again, but I do know for now it's important to slow down, do things that are necessary. Those include getting StoneThread Publishing done, then designing a cover, formatting and publishing Keeper of the Promise.

I plan to keep publishing this Journal every day too even through this brief non(fiction)-writing period, so we'll see.

Well, as of noon-thirty all I've done is read through Keeper of the Promise. About a third of the way through, converting the necessary text to italics, etc. After I finish that (probably tomorrow) I'll move on to StoneThread Publishing and put that behind me.

Okay, so I'm gonna go ahead and post this and get on with it.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Latest Trends In Cover Design: Think Pink?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/the-latest-trends-in-cover-design-think-pink.html>. Remember, these are suggestions, not ironclad rules. (grin)

Linda Maye Adams touched on something that's been bugging my obstinate self for awhile in "Apologizing for What's in Our Stories?" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/02/12/apologizing-for-whats-in-our-stories/>.

For some great humor, see "I Am the Very Model of a New York Times Contrarian" at <http://amp.slate.com/culture/2018/02/i-am-the-very-model-of-a-new-york-times-contrarian.html>. I was amazed to find this on Slate.

If you're a Harry Potter fan (I'm not) you might enjoy "Infographic: Getting from A to B like Harry Potter" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/02/12/infographic-getting-b-like-harry-potter/>.

To see the value of a regular schedule, see "Still Having Sleep Issues" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/still-having-sleep-issues/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 480

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405
Total fiction words for the year..... 40561
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3720

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 11740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 52301

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, February 14](#)

[February 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy St. Valentine's Day!

Well, I'm learning a lot about writing thrillers from reading Jack Higgins and Lee Child. But I'm all about cutting learning curves (mine and other's) so this morning I also signed up for Dean's "Writing Thrillers" online workshop.

It's a classic workshop, meaning no homework, but it's also half-price at only \$150. Six weeks of instruction, and I'll get through it in a week or so. Probably I'll work on that whenever I need a break from prepping my latest novel for publication or working on the StoneThread Publishing website.

Another good thing about Dean's having moved his workshops to Teachable.com is that once you buy one, you can revisit it whenever you like and as many times as you like. Great value.

I don't mean for this to sound like an advertisement. It's just that if you want to invest in your writing, his workshops are a great way to go.

To the degree that I'm able, I'll review the workshop for you re its value once I'm finished with it.

I worked on my previous novel (reading over it) until around 1 p.m., then decided to listen to the first week of videos in the Thriller workshop.

That took only about a half-hour, so I listened to the second week too. Already well worth the money.

Then back to the reading of the novel. Very cool. I even came up with a couple of ideas for sequels. (grin)

If I may ask a favor, if you enjoy this Journal and/or my Pro Writers blog over on the big site, would you spread the word to your writer friends? Maybe even mention it in a meeting if you're in one of those groups? Much appreciated.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

OMG. See "Hollow Point Bullets & Other Stuff" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/hollow-point-bullets-other-stuff.html>. And thanks to John Gilstrap for this excellent article.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 320

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985
Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270
Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2405
Total fiction words for the year..... 40561
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 12060
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 52621

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, February 15](#)

[February 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I realized today, I've been writing fiction over the past few days. Not a lot, relatively speaking, but as I read over my previous novel, I've added to it. A lot.

I finished my journey over the novel this morning and it's much better for it. That's because I never allowed the conscious mind to intervene.

I added 3895 words to it (that is now reflected in the fiction totals below), but I also realized a few things that will be important for at least the first sequel. (grin)

I call this effort a revision. It was something more than cycling, or it was cycling through the entire novel.

I still don't advocate "rewriting" although that's that's the term that some will apply to my efforts over the past few days. I don't even advocate re-reading anything you've written, although I made an exception in this case.

This story, you will remember, began as a series of short stories. The first pass was to combine those into a novel. Then I sent it to my first reader.

He found only a handful of recommendations (8) to make, and none of them had to do with content (per my instructions).

This last pass was to round out the story into a novel. I added a great deal of depth of description, always from the POV character's viewpoint and including the POV character's opinion of the setting.

I don't foresee ever having to use this method again, but for this particular novel, it was right.

Especially if you don't have a first reader, I DO still advocate (strongly) reading your finished work aloud. As you do, allow your fingers to rest on the keyboard, and when a character tells you to include something, do it.

But remember, that's always done as a function of the subconscious, creative mind.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

Check out John Gilstrap's YouTube channel, "A Writer's View of Writing and Publishing" at <https://www.youtube.com/c/authorjohngilstrap>.

His website is interesting too, at <http://www.johngilstrap.com/>. He's also one of the bloggers at the KillZone blog.

Fiction Words: 3895 (novel revision over the past week)

Nonfiction Words: 340 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4235

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985

Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270

Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 6300

Total fiction words for the year..... 44456

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4040

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 12400

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 56856

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, February 16](#)

[February 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

My apology in advance for the long post. I promise, it's worthwhile.

After I signed off yesterday I listened to a few more videos from the "Writing Thrillers" workshop. Good stuff.

Today I'll probably finish the workshop, then work on some new book pages for StoneThread Publishing. Eventually, each major book we publish will have its own page.

The pages for the novels and short story collections (or most of them) are finished. I only need to add a few of those and then code a new page for each nonfiction book.

But back to the workshop for a moment.

I already know a lot of what I'm hearing in the Thriller workshop, but reminders are good too. And I knew hardly any of it a year or two ago. Yet I thought my writing was good. More on that in the tied-in topic below.

I finished the workshop around 1 p.m. All I can say is Wow. I didn't think anything could unseat Dean's "How to Write Science Fiction" workshop for the sheer number of writing gems and excellent insight and advice.

But this "Writing Thrillers" workshop completely eclipses it. I recommend it highly.

I'll spend the rest of the day working on the StoneThread Publishing website. I might write a bit tomorrow early. Then it's a few days off for a camping trip near a thousands-of-years-old pueblcito.

I won't post while I'm gone, obviously, and I'm not going to worry about pre-posting anything. Just be sure to check the KillZone blog and Dean's blog, and I'll see you again on Monday or Tuesday.

All of this workshop stuff reminds me again of the woman who emailed me a year or so ago asking for a critique of her work.

After some back and forth (I generally don't offer critiques), I read her story. It was only six pages.

I invested some time (free) and offered a constructive critique in the form of a series of short questions in imbedded comments scattered over the first couple of pages of her manuscript.

Topic: Character, Setting, and Grounding the Reader

In the opening of any story (scene, etc.) you must hook the reader and take them to depth. That means within the first 200 – 500 words, the reader should connect with the POV character in some way AND be firmly grounded in the setting. More on that later.

The story I was to critique opened with a husband on an exercise bike in the living room of their home. His wife came in and they started talking. The conversation went on for three pages.

At no time did I learn what the husband or wife looked like or what they were wearing. I have no idea whether they were young or older, trim or heavy, wet or dry.

I didn't know anything about the setting except that there was an exercise bike of some sort in the living room and the guy was sitting on it as they talked.

I have no idea what other furniture, if any, was in the living room, whether there were any windows or doors or a fireplace, or whether there was anything on the walls.

(No, wait. As the story opened, the wife DID "walk into" the living room and saw her husband on the exercise bike, so there must have been at least one door.)

But I don't know whether she came in from outside or from the kitchen. If there was a kitchen.

I don't know whether the floor covering was carpet, hardwood or tinfoil. Or even whether there was a floor. I have no idea whether it was day or night. There were no clues.

I have no idea why the exercise bike was in the living room, though I kind of assumed he was watching TV as he pedaled. But I have no idea whether there was a TV in the room either. Or a potted plant. Or whether he pedaled, for that matter. There was no movement.

I have no idea whether the temperature in the house was warm or cool. I didn't hear an air conditioner or fan running, or the exercise bike, for that matter.

The only sounds were the disembodied voices of the characters. There was no sense of setting, no sensation of movement, even on the exercise bike. It was talking heads on a white background, minus the actual heads.

So I made a few suggestions, posed as brief questions like "What's he look like? What's she wearing? Can you describe the room?" etc. I explained about grounding the reader, and so on.

In her quick reply, the author wrote only, "I'll take this under advisement."

Oh. Well, good for you.

She also told me that "usually critiquers make a point of finding something good to say."

Umm, I'm pretty sure she had me confused with her mother. Liking something unconditionally is Mom's job. Mine is to write and, to a lesser degree, to attempt to pass along what I know.

Okay, to that end...

Folks, when you open a story, you MUST pull the reader to depth quickly.

Spend 200 to 500 words naming and describing the POV character and allowing that character to provide his/her opinion of the setting.

And remember that opinion MUST be filtered through the POV character's physical senses. After all, the story comes from the character, not the writer.

As a quick example, say the setting is a formal library in a mansion and the deceased owner had a habit of smoking a pipe filled with black cherry tobacco while he read.

The reader doesn't care whether you, the writer, think the room stinks or is aromatic. But what the POV character thinks about the room reveals part of who he/she is and enables the reader to connect.

When any given POV character encounters the smell, one might wrinkle her nose and frown or say something snarky. Another might smile slightly and think of her father, who also smoked a pipe.

In that opening 200 to 500 words, invoke all five of the POV character's physical senses and let him use those to provide his opinion of the setting.

The lighting is dim or bright (happy or glaring, etc.); the wingback chair, which is covered in human skin, is repulsive or interesting or even enticing; the paneled walls evoke a warm, comfortable feeling or are closing in. You get the idea.

This technique, this opening, will both reveal part of the POV character's character and enable the reader to see, hear, taste, smell and feel the setting. It will pull the reader into the POV character's head.

And your reader will be firmly hooked. THEN you can allow the plot to advance, get into the action and so on without risking losing the reader's interest.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Radish Fiction" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/radish-fiction-a-new-income-source-for-writers-plus-changes-to-amazon-kindle-worlds.html>. There's a bunch of stuff about Amazon Kindle Worlds first, but you can scroll down to Radish Fiction. It's worth the short read, and it has nothing to do with radishes. (grin)

See "Hugh Howey: Self-publishing is the future — and great for writers" at https://www.salon.com/2013/04/04/hugh_howey_self_publishing_is_the_future_and_great_for_writers/.

Dean has upped the ante on his new Kickstarter. See "North by Northwest Kickstarter Getting New Rewards" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/north-by-northwest-kickstarter-getting-new-rewards/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX (novel revision over the past week)

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1180

Writing of **The Age Exchange** (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985

Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270

Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 6300

Total fiction words for the year..... 44456

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5560

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 13580

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 58036

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, February 19](#)

[February 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

There's a lot of good stuff in "Of Interest" today, and this is a long post. Steel yourself.

Well, my buddy and I got back a day early from camping. Actually, as rain clouds closed in, we climbed a hill, took a look at the horizon in all directions, and decided the better part of valor at the moment was retreat. (grin)

So we hobbled back down to the campsite, packed up and hauled a... Um, I mean, departed the area.

Sure enough, all the way back heavy rainclouds followed the Gila, west to east, off to our north. And we had been camped along the Gila, teetering only about 500 feet above it on a rock. So....

Strangely enough, my buddy wrote a blogette (his term) about fear — not the fear of being caught in a precarious position perched on a ledge high above the Gila River in strong winds — but about fear in writing.

But his take was positive, on using fear to your advantage in writing. Basically, if you DON'T fear what you're writing, if you don't stretch yourself, you might get into a rut and get bored. I couldn't agree more.

Here's a look at another kind of fear. The kind that seems to paralyze writers once they've written. We've all faced it.

Topic: Fear of Rejection

Wow. I am depressed.

Well, not really. But had I not finally understood awhile back that I can only advise, and that I can't afford mentally or emotionally to tie my advice to a given outcome, wow would I be depressed.

I edited a novel for a client in February 2006. Then I edited a rewrite of a couple chapters in April 2006 for the same novel.

This morning, TWELVE YEARS after the initial edit, the guy announced on Facebook that the novel "is going to be submitted for publishing." Then he named a target date and added that the target date was subject to change.

I. Was. Floored.

Of course, I did my best at my current skill level as an editor twelve years ago to help the writer ensure his manuscript wouldn't end up in a slush pile. Today it would be a different edit. Today I'd talk more about cliffhangers and openings and grounding the reader.

But I did my best. And I never dreamed that manuscript would still be in a drawer somewhere waiting to be "submitted" or published 12 years later.

There was very little electronic publishing 12 years ago, and very few ebooks. Very few ebook companies or ebook publishers.

In fact, my own massive poetry collection, *Lessons for a Barren Population* (<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B004USLSKO>), was the first full-length poetry collection published as an ebook. That was in 1998 or 1999. It was a runner up in the Frankfurt Ebook Awards at the Frankfurt Book Fair. But I digress.

Anyway, the keywords in the writer's announcement are "going to be" and "submitted." The former is a fear-based phrase. As my mama used to say, "Going-to never did anything."

“Going to be” is just a fear-based way to put off something that could easily have been done, in this case, 12 years ago.

This is a classic case of the overpowering fear the critical mind can generate. And the kibosh it can put on a writing career.

To my knowledge, this writer has written only this one novel and a few short stories.

Even if he wanted to go with an agent and/or traditional publishing, he could as easily have submitted the manuscript as early as 2006.

Having held off on that for whatever reason (fear of rejection) he still might have easily self-published his novel in 2011 via Smashwords and/or around the same time with Kindle Digital Publishing.

Okay, so in practical terms, think of how much money that book might have made over the past 12 years, or in the alternative, as a self-published book in the past 7 years.

It’s none of my business. And certainly not the way I RUN my business. I’m no businessman, frankly, but I know the customers can’t buy your products (your books) if they aren’t published and available.

With many writers, the thinking goes, “If I put out a book before it’s ready, readers won’t like it.”

My response is, “Well, you don’t know, do you?” And you’ll never know until you publish the thing.

One more note on this... the only way you get better in this art form (as in all other art forms) is Practice.

Had my editing client published his book (or at least submitted it) back in 2006 and moved on to the next one, how many books could he have had out by now?

Even at only one per year (a snail’s pace) he could have announced the submission or publication of his 12th novel this morning. Instead of his first.

And at even 70,000 words per novel (the first was just under 70,000), today he would have 840,000 words of practice writing novels instead of... well, 70,000 words.

At one novel every six months, he’d have announced the publication or submission of his 24th novel this morning. And he’d have written 1,680,000 words of practice. In all probability, he would have been a Stage 4 writer. Sigh.

So the point? If you’re allowing “going to be” to keep you from doing something, please, my friends, shove that thought aside and get on with it.

No writing today, other than this. Reading, relaxing, getting ready for tomorrow.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Better Book Descriptions in 3 Easy Steps” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/better-book-descriptions-in-3-easy-steps.html>.

See “Want to Sell More Books? WRITE More Books!” at <https://www.indiesunlimited.com/2018/02/13/want-to-sell-more-books-write-more-books/>.
Hmm. Someone I know has been saying this for years.

Take a look at Dean Wesley Smith’s offer for “Lifetime Subscriptions to Workshops and Lectures” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lifetime-subscriptions-to-workshops-and-lectures/>. This is a great value.

I also recommend “A Bunch of Stuff” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-bunch-of-stuff/>.

See Linda Maye Adams “Filling the bucket of learning” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/02/19/filling-the-bucket-of-learning/>.

See “Fun Reading Time” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fun-reading-time/>. He’s looking for input on a couple of new workshop proposals. You might want to check the comments too.

Fiction Words: XXXX (novel revision over the past week)

Nonfiction Words: 1020 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1020

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985

Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270

Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 6300

Total fiction words for the year..... 44456

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6580

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 14600

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 59056

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, February 20

[February 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

After an intentional day off yesterday, I'm slowly getting back into the swing of things today.

I started the day by finishing the copyedit of Mona's memoir. She hasn't come up with a title yet. When she does, and when it's published, I'll announce it here.

Today I'll write a bit of fiction. By the end of the day, I should know whether I'm in the mood to continue with The Age Exchange or move on to something else and save The Age Exchange for later. I won't just toss it out completely.

As one item in the "Of Interest" below, Kristine Kathryn Rusch makes some good points re mentors when she stays on point. That's why I listed it.

Because of some other sections of her post (specifically re her bias concerning "white males," a group of which her husband and I both are members), I take this opportunity to state unequivocally that I have never met her.

Furthermore, I personally have done nothing as far as I know to "offend" her, other than that bothersome breathing-in-and-out thing I do, of which all us white males are guilty. And for that, of course, I apologize profusely. (grin) Bless her heart.

Actually, I didn't write anything on The Age Exchange today. Didn't even look at it.

A short story idea occurred to me, so I sat down to write that. But I think maybe I was a little more drained from recent events than I thought. I got almost 2000 words, but decided to leave the rest for tomorrow.

So I'll go ahead and get this posted.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Some Reasons To Avoid Traditional Publishing” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-reasons-to-avoid-traditional-publishing/>. Dean gave me permission to cross-post this one over on the big blog. That will happen in early April.

For fun, see “Your Story’s Character’s Life As A Six Word Story” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/your-characters-life-as-a-six-word-story.html>.

See “Business Musings: Mentors, Inspiration, and The Future” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/02/14/business-musings-mentors-inspiration-and-the-future/>.

Fiction Words: 1893

Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2193

Writing of “LOL” (short story)

Day 1..... 1893 words. Total words to date..... 1893

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of The Age Exchange (novel, working title)

Brought forward..... 6985

Day 1..... 1285 words. Total words to date..... 8270

Day 2..... 1120 words. Total words to date..... 9390

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8193

Total fiction words for the year..... 46349

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6910

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 14930

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 61279

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, February 21](#)

[February 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, a day of writing today I hope. Feeling a bit better I think, and not so much domestic stuff on my plate today. Just checking the PO later. I have a book coming in (grin).

I'll also have to spend some time with the kitten today. With the weather we've been having (extended rain and now ice cold) she hasn't gotten to go outside much, and she is definitely a love-it-outside kind of a girl.

She has that nice fur coat, but I've yet to find any gloves that will fit her, so I worry about her little pads getting too cold. And of course, sugar melts in the rain, so....

The KillZone Blog often has a First Page Critique, and they're done by different professional writers.

I usually don't mention those here even in the "Of Interest" section because they aren't my cuppa whatever, but I can understand how they might help some folks, if you're bent toward learning that way.

I recommend you sign up for an RSS subscription at <https://killzoneblog.com/> and check it out. At "free" the price is pretty good.

Well, plans change. The house heater's making a strange sound, so I'll make myself available to the landlord when he comes over to check it. And later I have to go shopping for food.

Also decided today to set aside The Age Exchange. I'm just not excited about it at the moment, so I'll wait until I am.

And the short story I started yesterday really isn't. It's basically a scene of dark humor. Setting it aside too.

I need to get back to writing novels. So the next "Writing of" thing you see below will be a novel title. In a day or two. Today? Back to reading and learning.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

Wow. See “More Misc. Stuff Once Again” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/more-misc-stuff-once-again/>. And check out my comment there. Can’t say it often enough.

To go directly to the Kickstarter for Dean’s North by Northwest bookstore, click <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/403649867/north-by-northwest-bookstore>.

See “A long time ago” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/02/a-long-time-ago/>. Raymond Chandler’s words. This will almost certainly give you an aha moment.

See “From Watchmen to Catch-22: can TV tackle ‘unfilmable’ books?” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/02/from-watchmen-to-catch-22-can-tv-tackle-unfilmable-books/>. I love TPG’s extensive take on Milton.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 390 (Journal) 920 (main blog)
So total words for the day: 1310

Writing of
Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8193
Total fiction words for the year..... 46349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8220
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 16240
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 62589

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, February 22](#)

[February 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I probably shouldn’t post anything today. Prepare for a slight rant.

So, any former PC users out there who now use Apple computers?

I'm in the midst of enduring the umpteenth (this year) "update" from Microsoft. Like all their other updates since the inception of Windows 10, this one is mandatory.

I'm not good with that. I'm not good with being told some faceless company wants to update MY property and there's nothing I can do about it. I guess I just don't care for suppositories.

I don't like people who do things to me that I don't want them to do, then smile smugly and say it's for my own good.

So if you Apple users can tell me you don't endure suppositories from The Almighty Businessman on High (whoever the Apple version of Bill Gates is now), I'm gonna make the switch.

I'm just annoyed. Too annoyed. I'm not gonna put up with it anymore.

Is making the switch a hassle? Yes. Is it worth it? If I get the responses I suspect I'll get, ohdeargawd YES.

So talk to me, Apple users. Especially if you have previous experience with a PC. Gimme your comparison notes. Teach the old dog a new trick or two.

Until I make the switch, I'll transfer everything back to my HP (the writing 'puter) where I can disable the trackpad manually.

So no writing today, beyond this. I have only a half-day on Thursdays anyway, and I'll be spending the rest of the morning dealing with this issue. Grrrrrr

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Podcast and Cool Video" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/podcast-and-cool-video/>.

And strictly for fun, see "Actors Who Served: Hollywood Stars Who Are Military Veterans" at <https://www.moviefone.com/2011/04/12/actors-who-served-in-military/>.

Also for fun, I used a Facebook note to send an open letter to Bill Gates, not that it will make the slightest difference. You should be able to see that at <https://www.facebook.com/notes/harvey-stanbrough/an-open-letter-to-bill-gates/1733139333390947/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 310 (Journal) 410 (Letter to Bill Gates)

So total words for the day: 720

Writing of
Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8193
Total fiction words for the year..... 46349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8940
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 16960
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 63309

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, February 23](#)

[February 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The saga continues. I looked over several Mac laptops and frankly, they were all well out of my range currently.

So I finally contacted Lenovo to see whether there was a way to manually disable the trackpad, since Bill The Godfaddah Gates decided I can no longer disable it through Windows. (Actually, if Gates knew what some mindless moron did, he probably would fire the guy.)

The tech said to disable the trackpad, I had to either press fn+f6 or just f6. One of those would work, he said.

Neither one worked.

Then he said then obviously it was a hardware failure. He recommended I take it to Best Buy to get it repaired.

So let me get this straight: the trackpad DOES work even though I don't want it to, but it "fails" by not being able to be turned off.

Fine. Got it.

Thing is, I don't want the trackpad anyway. Why should I pay to have it repaired just so I can turn it off. 😊

So I flipped over the computer, whipped out my set of jeweler's screwdrivers, and took a shot of whiskey. Then I opened the back of the computer and poked around until I found a cable that was conveniently marked with a TP (TrackPad) tag. I unplugged it, then folded it back out of the way.

(Thanks to my granddaughter Amber for suggesting I unplug the thing. I've done that before but didn't think of it this time until she brought it up.)

Guess what? No more trackpad. YAY! Now maybe I can get back to more enjoyable things. Like poking myself in the eye with a stick. Or maybe even writing.

For now, the writing 'puter goes back to the Hovel and the Lenovo resumes its place in my office.

I recently copyedited a long novel for a guy. When I emailed him recently to ask about the balance owed, he wrote the reasons the payment was delayed and asked for a couple of weeks' extension.

Then he wrote something that shocked me: "Anyway, I can't publish this novel without your consent as you are my copy editor."

Folks, that's just flat wrong. No matter who you hire to copyedit or do a cover or formatting or whatever, that person can never require you to get their permission to publish. Just so you know, neither can they require you to include their name as co-author or editor or cover designer or any of that nonsense.

In fact, I specifically tell my clients that if they reject more than 10% of my suggested edits, they are not allowed to tell others I copyedited their work. To do so wouldn't be fair to me or to the reader.

If any service provider tries this with you, then NO (resoundingly) and find someone honest to deal with.

For a great deal more on this sort of thing, see the first item in "Of Interest" below.

No writing today, probably, other than this. Today I'm putting my little two-computer world back together now that I rectified my problem with a pair of pliers and a large hammer. We'll see what happens tomorrow.

See you then.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Editorial Encroachment” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/02/21/20734/>.

Just in case you’re interested in supporting Dean’s North by Northwest Kickstarter, check out “Five Days Left” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/five-days-left/>. The guy’s helped me so much I try to support him in any way I can.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 570
So total words for the day: 570

Writing of
Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8193
Total fiction words for the year..... 46349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9510
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 17530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 63879

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

*****NOTHING FOR February 24, 2018*****

[The Journal, Sunday, February 25](#)

[February 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I basically took a day off yesterday. There really was nothing to report, and not even anything to shove into the “Of Interest” section.

Today’s a little different, but only a little, at least thus far. Good stuff in “Of Interest.”

I'm a little mired, but in a kind of good way. I have at least two fresh novels I could be writing — one SF and one probably Mystery — but a new genre in which I want to write keeps sticking in my mind.

Only thing is, I'm not quite ready yet to write in that genre, and I won't be ready until I've read a bit more by masters in the field. So I've been reading a lot.

I know, in theory, I should be able to write in one genre while reading in another, say a few hours per day doing each.

But I guess I'm not wired that way. When I get hold of something I'm like that dog with a bone. I just wanna keep gnawing at it until I'm finished, then move on to whatever else. So I might actually be at the beginning of another hiatus.

I don't really think so, though. Tossed into the same broiling pot is the notion that I like to finish what I start. Also, both the novels I mentioned above have been tugging on me lately, one a little more strongly than the other.

So more than likely I'll go back to work soon on one of those. Knowing me, I'll go head-down-butt-in-the-air until I'm finished with it.

Who knows? Not me. We'll see what happens.

Okay, as the day "ended" at around 4:30 I realized I'd just finished reading the 8th thriller novel in about two weeks.

With an expansive Lee Child collection making its way to me from Texas, apparently via one-legged burro, it will be awhile before I can read anymore, so I hope to get back to writing tomorrow.

See you then.

Of Interest

If you enjoy good science fiction or science fantasy, I encourage you to visit the website of Mildred Clingerman and consider buying her book *The Clingerman Files* at <https://mildredclingerman.com>. Ms. Clingerman was a major voice in *F&SF Magazine* back in the day.

See Dean's "Three Days Left" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/three-days-left-2/>. If you're interested in ANY of his online workshops, you can get one online workshop and one classic workshop (a total value of \$450) for only a \$250 pledge. This is a great value, folks.

See “Get Some Blood Pumping in Your Prose” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/get-some-blood-pumping-in-your-prose.html>. (This is a first-page critique, but a worthwhile one in my view.)

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 450
So total words for the day: 450

Writing of
Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 8193
Total fiction words for the year..... 46349
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9960
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 17980
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 64329

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#),
[KillZone Blog](#), [Mildred Clingerman](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, February 26](#)

[February 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

In “Of Interest” today is an interesting article titled “Micro-Progress Your Novel.”

Despite the high-falutin’ title, the article is all about eating an elephant one bite at a time.

Instead of trying to “write a novel” (which the author of the post calls a “daunting prospect”), the idea is to set a series of smaller goals, like writing for a particular length of time (or number of words) per day or writing a scene. Or, I suppose, simply writing the next sentence.

Sound familiar?

Yeah, it sounds familiar to me too. But now that the process has a chic new cutting-edge name, complete with a noun used as a verb (“progress” your novel) maybe more folks will try it. (grin)

Sigh. Whatever works. Anyway, if they do try it, especially if in conjunction with setting smaller, more easily attainable goals, they

- learn to quiet their critical mind,
- come to understand that writing is play (not “work” or “drudgery” and not a calling from on high), and
- learn that writing, but not the particular story or novel is “important,”

maybe they’ll Just Write.

And when that happens, they’ll be amazed to learn that writing a novel isn’t a daunting prospect at all.

It’s actually a great deal of fun.

But all kidding aside, the article helped me too. It helped me to see past the end of my nose, to remember things I’ve known for a long time.

I even saw myself and my own “problem” in the fifth paragraph. And this morning, before I even started on this Journal entry, I started correcting my situation.

Last night I was watching a rerun of an old Peter Gunn episode. Really hokey. Not all that well-written, with a thin plot. The best part was the language the actors used.

I looked at my wife and said, “Y’know, I have a lot of things boiling around in my head right now, but I’d really like to write another PI/noir novel.”

Yes, I want to write a thriller series. Eventually. But I know I’m not ready for that yet, craft-wise. And I have an SF novel, expanded from a short story, waiting in the wings. And I have a crime/mystery thing likewise standing stage right twiddling its thumbs.

But I’d actually forgotten about the last PI/noir novel I started, I don’t know, maybe six months ago.

So this morning, I opened it, dusted it off, poured my main character a fresh drink of cheap whiskey, and started writing fiction again.

It was only around 11,000 words when I set it aside. So it’s still a brand-new story.

All I know right now is that it has a typical tough-guy PI who’s trying to make ends meet, a corrupt mayor and city attorney, gangsters, and a smokin’ hot blonde who’s a great deal more than she seems.

And my personal trademark as a writer will be there too — the reader will feel as if he’s in the scene with the characters as the action unfolds. (grin)

I’m sure looking forward to seeing where it goes.

Man, I’m like a kid with a shiny new toy.

Mostly today (among several other things) I cycled back through what I’d already written and touched the story here and there, adding a few hundred words.

Then I wrote a few new scenes. All in all, not a bad first day back.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Micro-Progress Your Novel” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/micro-progress-your-novel.html>. Now that it has a chic, left-sounding name, maybe folks will try it. (grin)

See “How to Collaborate Effectively with Other Indie Authors In Your Genre” at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/writing-how-to-collaborate-effectively-with-other-indie-authors-in-your-genre/>.

Fiction Words: 2008

Nonfiction Words: 610

So total words for the day: 2618

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Total fiction words for the month..... 10201

Total fiction words for the year..... 48357

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10570

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 18590

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 66947

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, February 27](#)

[February 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Guess it's a good thing I got off my fanny yesterday with only three days left in the month (two now). (grin) It's good to be writing again, playing with my little imaginary friends.

I have other things I have to get done today, but I plan to write as well.

Well, I ended up doing those other things instead of writing. I did write a little, but not enough to count.

And I remembered that my previous novel, *Keeper of the Promise*, was not yet published. Sigh. I actually forgot about it.

So I searched images, created a cover, wrote a promo document, and uploaded the thing to [Draft2Digital](#).

In so doing, I learned something very interesting: D2D now distributes to Amazon!

So from here on out I truly am a one-distributor guy.

I mentioned in the past that D2D hits all the major retailers, and I've never had so much as a single sale through the smaller ones to which Smashwords distributes. So I stopped using Smashwords.

If I ever go back to them, probably I'll distribute only to the Smashwords store itself. I have several novels I could add. Maybe I'll do that soon.

Now on to other things and (I hope) back to the novel in the morning.

See you then.

Of Interest

A final note about Dean's North by Northwest Bookstore Kickstarter. See "Gaining On The Second Stretch Goal. 44 Hours Left!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/gaining-on-the-second-stretch-goal-44-hours-left/>.

See “Google Changes Images Policy” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/02/google-changes-images-policy/>. You can click through from there, but I recommend the Passive Guy’s take because he adds several more resources.

Strictly for laughs, see “The Bad Sex Awards Are Back” (article by PJ Parrish) at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/02/yes-yes-oh-no-the-bad-sex-awards-are-back.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 290
So total words for the day: 290

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)
Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10201
Total fiction words for the year..... 48357
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10860
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 18880
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 67237

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, February 28](#)

[February 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, there y’go. Last day of the month. I’m pretty sure I won’t finish my novel today, so I guess I’ll miss putting one out in February. (grin)

Well, I won’t write a whole novel during February, but I published one yesterday. That’s the cover over there on the left. Came out okay, especially given that I’m considerably out of practice.

I rolled out early this morning for some reason, around 2 a.m. Of course, I checked Dean's site. At the time there were about 20 hours left in the [North by Northwest Kickstarter](#).

So I dropped in on my main blog and wrote a quick "flash notice." It went live at 8 a.m. I'll take it down early tomorrow morning and the usual weekly blog post will move back into its place.

Wow. I had a relatively good day of writing. Among doing a lot of other things around the house, I got three good writing sessions, so that was nice.

See you then.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, see "Sell More Books With These Critical Cover Rules" at <http://www.publetariat.com/2018/02/28/sell-more-books-with-these-critical-cover-rules/>.

See "Tech Tools for Authors #3: Automation" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/02/27/tech-tools-authors-3-automation/>.

From Linda Maye Adams, a link to 40 historic photos. Lots of story ideas there. See "Rare Photos Of History That Are Truly Incredible" at <http://www.historyinorbit.com/rare-photos-of-history-that-are-truly-incredible/>. You guys like challenges? Pick say 10 pictures from the collection and write a story based on each photo.

Fiction Words: 2948

Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal) 220 (Flash post)

So total words for the day: 3398

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964

Total fiction words for the month..... 13149

Total fiction words for the year..... 51305

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11310

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 193380

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 70635

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, March 1](#)

[March 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I realized early this morning I hadn't created a reverse outline for my WIP yet. So I started the day by doing that.

For those who don't know, a reverse outline is a reference tool. When I finish a chapter, I write a few notes about it (which characters are included, POV, what happens, any significant descriptions, etc.) on the reverse outline.

Later in the WIP, if I need to find something quickly, I can just glance at my reverse outline instead of searching endlessly through the WIP for the information. It saves a lot of time and confusion.

Had a great first session this morning with right at 1000 words.

While I was reaching back to my second previous novel, Loose Ends, to find a name that carries over into this one, I realized there was a major error in it. I'd changed the protagonist's last name from Talbot to Richards. However, I hadn't made the change throughout the manuscript.

For various reasons, it was easier and quicker to change the name back to Talbot. So I did that with a click of the mouse. Now I'll resubmit that manuscript to my distributors.

While I'm at it, I decided to redo the cover too. I wasn't pleased with the cover in the first place, so this is the perfect opportunity to fix that.

I messed up a couple of the equations on my production spreadsheet too, so the figures below are corrected now.

Well, a somewhat stunted writing day, but I'm happy with it.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

I urge you to read “Measuring Fair Use: The Four Factors” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/02/measuring-fair-use-the-four-factors/>. The Passive Guy cuts through a lot of gobbledygook.

Fiction Words: 1860

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2150

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964

Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824

Total fiction words for the month..... 1860

Total fiction words for the year..... 531655

Total nonfiction words for the month... 290

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 19910

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 78945

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, March 2](#)

[March 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. The last few mornings, I've been rolling outta the rack right at 2 a.m. no matter what time I went to bed. Those of you who've been around awhile will remember my usual time is between 3 and 4. My son and his family are coming in tomorrow. So with a weekend of visiting, I'm hoping to get a lot done early tomorrow morning.

It typically takes me an hour or so of slapping myself around with the Internet to wake up. Then I head out to the Hovel for my first session on my WIP.

While dinging around on the Internet this morning, I visited Crime Writer Sue Coletta's website at <https://www.suecoletta.com/>. It seems a great writers' resource. I recommend visiting.

Also, over at the Kill Zone blog this morning, Jordan Dane poses an interesting question: What three pieces of advice would you give your young writer self if you could?

She also answered it, and her answer kind'a made me sad. I had to keep repeating "Every writer is different." But frankly it didn't help much.

So I answered it too. (grin)

Good first session this morning with just over 1000 words, then back to the house to get ready for the day and start this Journal entry.

I ended up with three more good sessions for an overall pretty great writing day for me.

Note: If you're following my numbers below, I screwed up the spreadsheet again. Finally got it fixed today.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

You crime/suspense writers, see "10 Ways to Murder Your Lover" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/10-ways-to-murder-your-lover/>. Yeah, I'm gonna subscribe to this blog.

Still at Sue Coletta's site, also see "How To Get Away With Murder" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/how-to-get-away-with-murder-you-dont-want-to-miss-this/>. I also recommend scrolling down the right sidebar to see the Top Posts & Pages.

For fun, see "What Writing Advice Would You Give to Your Younger Writing Self?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/what-writing-advice-would-you-give-to-your-younger-writing-self.html>. Play, have fun.

Fiction Words: 4054

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4344

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016
Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964
Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... 21878

Total fiction words for the month..... 5914
Total fiction words for the year..... 57219
Total nonfiction words for the month... 580
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 19910
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 84569

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Jordan Dane](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, March 3](#)

[March 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

It's almost noon, and so far, surprisingly, I've had a pretty good writing day.

That's the result of getting up very late (almost 6), some visiting, a couple of outside chores and a couple of good sessions of writing.

So that's not too bad, considering.

Now off for lunch, then maybe more writing afterward. The novel's really flowing, though at just over 24,000 words I still have no clue where it's going. But the character are sure having a good time getting there. (grin)

If I happen to write anymore today, I'll report the numbers tomorrow.

See you then.

Of Interest

See “Crime Writers’ Resource” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/crime-writers-resource/>. And don’t be short sighted. Even if you don’t write “crime,” you can use some of these in any genre.

Over at the Kill Zone blog, see “Sources of Inspiration” by Mark Alpert at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/sources-of-inspiration.html>.

Fiction Words: 2250

Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2410

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964

Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824

Day 4..... 4054 words. Total words to date..... 21878

Day 5..... 2250 words. Total words to date..... 24128

Total fiction words for the month..... 8164

Total fiction words for the year..... 59469

Total nonfiction words for the month... 740

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20070

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 86819

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Crime Writer Sue Coletta](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, March 4

[March 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, in a great first session this morning, I got a little over 1300 words. Now I’ll be visiting until the kids leave, then maybe more writing. Anyway, I’m happy with the day’s production so far.

Topic: Learning

Yeah, I know we've talked about this before, but today I'm coming at it from another angle.

Usually I recommend reading an author's works. Then, if he or she does something you really like, take that author's advice on how to do it.

Of course, most authors don't also offer instruction. Dean Wesley Smith and I are two of the few who do.

You can still learn just by reading the author's work for pleasure. Then, when a particular work or technique grabs you, go back and re-read the work (or at least those passages) and figure out how the writer did what he did to blow you away.

This is exactly what I'm currently doing with some of the Jack Higgins novels. Especially those set in (or referencing) World War II.

Unfortunately, Jack Higgins doesn't offer instruction. I'd be the first one signed up.

Just like I'm often signed up for Dean's workshops and lectures.

Even though, aside from some of his science fiction stories, I'm not a major fan of Dean's work. Just not my cuppa tea.

His thrillers, for example, leave me flat. BUT (I hasten to add) the guy teaches an invaluable workshop on How to Write Thrillers. Likewise, his mysteries are pretty good but not (in my personal estimation) excellent. Still, he teaches a dynamite workshop on How to Write Mysteries.

And that's kind'a where I'm going with this brief essay on Learning. Your personal take on a writer's work (you like it or you don't) has no bearing on whether the knows what he's doing. Maybe he knows what is necessary but is a bit lacking in application. That seems a relatively common situation.

Knowing something is one thing. Knowing how to apply it effectively is another.

Both DWS and James Scott Bell have made their living from their books. That's good enough for me. I don't care for James Scott Bell's work either, but some of his advice has proven invaluable. So even if you don't like their work, you'd be silly to pass up the opportunity to learn from them.

Of course, that knife slices both ways. I've tried to read a few of Patterson's books too. Couldn't stomach them. On the other hand, I've also explored a couple of his "courses." Couldn't stomach them either.

Or rather, I read right through the surface descriptions. They're overpriced, and they contain basically the same information being hawked on every street corner by every non fiction-writing, retired English teacher out there.

So keep an open mind. If you've learned anything from me, I'm grateful. If you enjoy my work, I'm even gratefuller. (grin)

But don't pass up the opportunity to learn from folks like Thriller Writers James Scott Bell or Dean Wesley Smith, Crime Writer Sue Coletta, or any of the dozens of others who share their knowledge. Even if they themselves don't apply it in their work quite as well as they teach it.

Nope, no more writing today. R&R from the grandkids' visit. (grin)

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "How Should a Character Say Nothing?" by James Scott Bell at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/how-should-a-character-say-nothing.html>. Even if you think you know the answer, read this. It's interesting. I also recommend reading the comments.

Fiction Words: 1373

Nonfiction Words: 570 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1943

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964

Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824

Day 4..... 4054 words. Total words to date..... 21878

Day 5..... 2250 words. Total words to date..... 24128

Day 6..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... 25501

Total fiction words for the month..... 9537

Total fiction words for the year..... 60842

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1310

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20640

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 88192

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, March 5](#)

[March 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Got a good early morning session of around 700 words this morning, then went up to the house for a shower and to fix and eat breakfast.

I don't make a big meal really often for breakfast, but this morning it was hashbrowns, scrambled eggs, toast and country fried steak with gravy. Nomnomnom.

I can only say I wish I'd eaten more slowly so I could enjoy it longer. (grin)

Be sure to check out "Of Interest" today and visit Dean's site. And if you're at all interested, leave a comment. Please.

Had two more good sessions before 1 p.m. today. Already around 3000 words and with more time left on the day. Woohoo!

Okay, one more good session and now I'm off to check the PO.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Great Fun and a Nifty New Idea" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-fun-and-a-nifty-new-idea/>.

Fiction Words: 3983

Nonfiction Words: 140 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4123

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964

Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824
Day 4..... 4054 words. Total words to date..... 21878
Day 5..... 2250 words. Total words to date..... 24128
Day 6..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... 25501
Day 7..... 3983 words. Total words to date..... 29484

Total fiction words for the month..... 13520
Total fiction words for the year..... 64825
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20780
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 92175

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, March 6](#)

[March 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

It's so cool to be able to see your own process evolving.

Looking back over some of my Journal entries, I notice I used to mostly fritter away a lot of the morning and did most of my writing in the afternoon. Mostly under pressure to get my word count done back when I had a daily goal.

But for the past while, I've started writing within an hour or so after I get out of bed. Of course, it helps having something to write (grin), especially when it's flowing as well as my current WIP is flowing.

As I write this, it's almost 11 a.m. and I already have over 3000 new words on the story. Much of the rest of the morning I spent revising my reverse outline, even moving a chapter or two to places where they fit the timeline better.

I think I'm kind of getting into a "get your writing done early and everything else is gravy" kind of routine. Whatever it is, I like it.

Well, I ran out of steam at around 2:45.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Fell Asleep” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fell-asleep/>.

Fiction Words: 4256

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4456

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016

Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964

Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824

Day 4..... 4054 words. Total words to date..... 21878

Day 5..... 2250 words. Total words to date..... 24128

Day 6..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... 25501

Day 7..... 3983 words. Total words to date..... 29484

Day 8..... 4256 words. Total words to date..... 33740

Total fiction words for the month..... 17776

Total fiction words for the year..... 69081

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1650

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20980

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 96431

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 28

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, March 7](#)

[March 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Oof. Woke up out of sorts this morning. As a result, I didn't start on the story until late. This almost always happens as I get near the end of a novel, long or short.

This will be a short novel. (If you'd like to see my definitions of various fiction lengths, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I'd be happy to send it to you.)

The numbers below include things I've cut as I cycled back each day. The novel will probably come in (published) at around 33,000 words.

I think I have only two or three more scenes to write. We'll see what happens through the day.

Well, better than I thought. I finished the novel at 1:30 with around 2600 words. So it's all good.

Topic: Reverse Outline

Just for grins, I did a word count on my reverse outline for this novel: 1650 words. Of course, those aren't counted below in either fiction or nonfiction.

This thing saved me more than once.

It's just a little Notepad (text) document. At the top, under NAMES I listed all the characters' names and which chapter each one's description appeared in.

Below that, under PLACES, I listed all the major settings in the book and, again which chapter the description appeared in.

You ground the reader in part with a good description of the setting through the POV character's physical senses and that character's opinion. When the setting pops up again later in the book you have to ground the reader again so where to find the original description and which character is the POV at that point is good to know.

Then I listed the chapters. There are currently 28. That might change as I read through it over the next day or two. Some of the chapters seemed a little long to me, so we'll see.

With each chapter entry, I started with an abbreviated form of the hook and opening, briefly described what happened in that chapter (past tense because I'd already written the chapter), then ended with the cliffhanger that I hope will keep the reader turning pages. (grin)

So that's one form of reverse outline in case you'd like to try it.

I'll probably take off tomorrow and figure out what I want to write next. With all the days remaining in March, I have a real shot at writing another novel this month. (grin)

If I don't write tomorrow, I probably won't file a new edition of the Journal.

Be back soon.

Of Interest

See "Write an Essay, Win a Bookstore" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/03/06/write-essay-win-bookstore/>.

If you've ever thought about writing serialized fiction, take a look at <https://www.radishfiction.com/writer.html#apply>. Be patient. It's a process.

See "John Grisham's 8 Do's And Don'ts For Popular Fiction" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/john-grishams-8-dos-and-donts-for-popular-fiction/>.

For fun, see "Just how monstrous is the Sun's 'Flakensteins' story?" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/just-how-monstrous-is-the-suns-flakensteins-story/>.

Fiction Words: 2687

Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3107

Writing of Pulp 6 (working title)

Brought forward..... 11,008 words

Day 1..... 2008 words. Total words to date..... 13016
Day 2..... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 15964
Day 3..... 1860 words. Total words to date..... 17824
Day 4..... 4054 words. Total words to date..... 21878
Day 5..... 2250 words. Total words to date..... 24128
Day 6..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... 25501
Day 7..... 3983 words. Total words to date..... 29484
Day 8..... 4256 words. Total words to date..... 33740
Day 9..... 2687 words. Total words to date..... 36427 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 20463

Total fiction words for the year..... 71768

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 21400

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 99118

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Radish](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, March 8

[March 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No writing today. In fact, over yesterday and today, when my wife is home after work, I'm reading my latest novel to her aloud. Amazing some of the little things I'm finding and correcting as I go.

For goodness' sake, READ YOUR WORK ALOUD.

I'm also formatting and proofing my wife's recently finished memoir of her childhood, titled A WonderFull Life. Great fun, and well into our 33rd year of wedded bliss, I'm learning things I didn't know. (grin)

I chatted via email with my friend Robert Sadler earlier today, and the matter of Heinlein's Rules came up. As a result, I copied (word for word) the last bit of an essay Heinlein wrote in which those rules, which he called "business habits," first appeared.

I thought I'd share that here with you. The paragraphing, every word, and the italics are original to the author.

Topic: The Original Heinlein's Rules

The whole essay is in a little book titled *Of Worlds Beyond: The Science of Science Fiction Writing* (c. 1947 Fantasy Press), edited by Lloyd Arthur Eshbach. It has essays by Robert A. Heinlein, John Taine, Jack Williamson, A. E. van Vogt, L. Sprague de Camp, Edward E. Smith and John W. Campbell.

When Dean first mentioned the book a couple of years ago, i searched and found a first edition for about \$35.

Fascinating little book.

Toward the end of a 7-page essay titled “On the Writing of Speculative Fiction,” Heinlein wrote

“I’m told that these articles are supposed to be some use to the reader. I have a guilty feeling that all of the above may have been more for my amusement than for your edification. Therefore I shall chuck in as a bonus a group of practical, tested rules which, if followed meticulously, will prove rewarding to any writer.

“I shall assumed that you can tpe, that you know the accepted commercial format or can be trusted to look it up and follow it, and that you always use new ribbons and clean type. Also, that you can spell and punctuate and can use grammar well enough to get by. These things are merely the word-carpenter’s sharp tools. He must add to them these business habits:

“1. You must write.

“2. You must finish what you write.

“3. You must remain from rewriting except to editorial order.*

“4. You must put it on the market.

“5. You must keep it on the market until sold.

“The above five rules really have more to do with how to write speculative fiction** than anything said above them. But they are amazingly hard to follow—which is why there are so few professional writers and so many aspirants, and which is why I am not afraid to give away the racket! But, if you will follow them, it matters not how you write, you will find some editor somewhere, so unwary or so desperate for copy as to buy the worst old dog you, or I, or anybody else, can throw at him.”

I love his smug sense of humor. (grin) Now a few notes from yours truly:

*In later years, to Rule 3, Harlan Ellison added “And only if you agree.”

**I wish Heinlein had omitted “speculative” and just wrote “fiction.” I can’t tell you how many times young writers refuse even to read these five business habits because they “don’t write science fiction.”

Finally, if you’d like a copy of the annotated (by me) rules, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Heinleins-Business-Habits-Annotated.pdf>. It will download a PDF file directly to you.

Be back soon.

Of Interest

See “Insider’s Guide Webinar Workshops” at <http://deanwesleysmith.com/>.

See “Re-reading your work” (especially #1 in light of my topic on Reverse Outlines from yesterday) at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/re-reading-your-work.html>.

See “When A Thing Becomes a Motif” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/when-a-thing-becomes-a-motif.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 600

Writing of (working title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 20463
Total fiction words for the year..... 71768
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 22000
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 99118

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#),
[KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, March 9](#)

[March 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, one more day on Pulp 6, which is now called Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Troubled Actress. That’s the cover over on the left.

I read it aloud over the past two days to my wife, and during that process I heard some fat that needed to be trimmed.

So I’m going to make another pass at it, strictly to trim anything that’s unnecessary.

I don’t usually do this, but it’s all part of the learning process. I’ll still be reading over it in creative mind, but anytime my subconscious tugs on me with that “too much” feeling, I’ll look that section over and trim the fat.

I should say too that most of the fat trimming will come during the first third of the novel. I might get away with trimming only the first few chapters. I think I'll know when I glop up out of the fat and wade onto shore. (grin)

I finished the read through and fat trimming by about 10:30, did the cover (FREE photo courtesy of Alonso Moreno at Unsplash at <https://unsplash.com/>) and published the thing.

This is a combination PI-noir-mystery with a little thriller thrown in at the second half of the book. (grin)

It should be a quick read. And I'm feeling generous.

If any of you would like it, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and let me know whether you'd like it in Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF. I'll send it right out.

The offer is good for the weekend, so before Monday please.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch, on being a storyteller, wrote, "Other people have to deal with the realities they're given. I get to change mine, almost every day." I like that.

But there's a lot that I don't like, frankly, in her blog post referenced in "Of Interest" today.

For example, there's "After 9/11, I had to evaluate what a career in fiction meant to me. It ... took me a long time to remember that fiction's escape was just as important as running into those buildings."

Ugh. Writing fiction is just as important as putting your life in jeopardy to save the lives of others? Really?

And there's a segment on Oprah, who, in my personal opinion, is a self-serving hypocrite. I can't stand her and her "look at what I did for so and so" approach to life. Or that fact that she'd surrounded by gun-wielding bodyguards even at anti-gun rallies.

But there's some good in the post too. That's why I decided to reference it and share it in today's Journal.

The first part, where she talks about the Anthology Workshop that just ended, is sort of enlightening. And the post is especially perceptive in the section that begins with "When ebooks broke publishing open...".

Anyway, you can access the whole thing below. Some of you will like what I didn't like. And that's fine. That's part of what the folks who run into buildings ensure for the rest of us.

I wrote all of the stuff above, then almost forgot to post today's Journal. (grin)

Be back soon.

Of Interest

See Dean's "Hit an Exhaustion Wall" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/hit-an-exhaustion-wall/>. More info on the Webinar classes if you scroll down.

See "Storytelling Universes" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/03/07/business-musings-storytelling-universes/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 530

Writing of (working title)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 20463
Total fiction words for the year..... 71768
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 22530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 102318

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, March 10](#)

[March 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I wasn't really expecting to write today. But as it happens, I started my next novel. Makes me feel kind'a good.

Now that I established who Stern Talbot is in the one I just published, I was thinking of writing a series of those. Not right now, of course.

You know. Stern Talbot, P.I.: The Case of the

This morning I went out to the Hovel, ostensibly to write, but I fully expected to spend an hour or so doing little or nothing. Maybe looking over some old story starts and seeing whether anything grabbed my interest.

For example, I really want to write the novelization of “Going Back” (The Age Exchange). I started that last month, but it fizzled.

This morning I realized it fizzled because, at this point, it was about one event and had only one POV. In other words, it was perfect for a short story, but not so much for a novel. At least not yet.

Anyway, I stumbled across a cover photo I’ve saved for awhile. As soon as I glanced at it, a line sprang into my head. I opened a new Word doc, typed that line, and it kept running. Pure writing into the dark.

It will be Pulp 7, a look back to when our hero was still a detective with the force. The title will be Stern Talbot, P.I.—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary. (grin)

In one long session, interrupted only by a brief break for nature, I put down around 1500 words before around 9:30. Then up to the house to hit the PO, publish Mona’s memoir and do some other stuff.

Now it’s noon-thirty and I’m headed back to the novel. See you later.

Well, this time I spent an hour and a half in the Hovel. And (go figure), the first half-hour I spent playing cards. But then I started on the novel again. It’s ripping right along.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Do yourself a favor and read “Love Unexpected” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/love-unexpected/>. Who knew the guy was so funny?

Not much else out there today.

Fiction Words: 3207

Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3567

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207

Total fiction words for the month..... 23670
Total fiction words for the year..... 74975
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3560
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 22890
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 105885

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, March 11](#)

[March 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Out to the Hovel a little early today, this being Sunday.

I spent some waking-up time just playing Spider, then started on the novel at around 3:15. An hour later, I had my first 1000 words of the day.

Took a very brief break, basically standing up and stretching a bit, then back at it. I'll do one more session, then up to the house for a few minutes.

Had a couple more good sessions and got a little over 3000 words by 10. Up to the house for a break.

My wife's working on the annual plague (taxes) today so I'll head back to the Hovel after lunch and try to get one more session today. (grin)

The novel's moving right along whenever I'm able to give it some time.

Nope. For a few reasons, I didn't get back to the novel today.

Topic: An Inadvertent Lesson

One of my friends, a trusted reader, emailed me about the novel I just published. She wrote, “Interesting! Kind of a slow development piece, eh?”

I think I read “slow” and my brain locked up. I pretty much panicked. (Yes, even with as many novels as I’ve written and published.)

If she thought the story was slow, maybe there was too much description. I thought that earlier. If you remember, I mentioned in this Journal a few days ago that I was doing one more read-over to tighten it up.

Well, in my panic, I read over the first few chapters again today. I got rid of around 460 words, mostly from Chapter 1 where the guy’s describing his office. (His office is the setting of a major action scene so the description has to be there, but not to such a degree.)

But I finally realized what I was doing and calmed down. I won’t redistribute a new version of the novel with those words cut out.

I like pulling the reader into the story. I like grounding him/her so deep that he or she can’t escape. At least not without a struggle. (grin)

But my friend was right. The story DID “develop” slowly, and that was intentional. It’s very psychological, with the protagonist striving to figure things out, not only the whats and the whos but the whys and what he can do to set things right.

I stuffed it full of as much tension as I thought it could hold (most often through psychological suspense), and that does take time to develop.

But I also spent the first few chapters (1-4, I think) setting the protagonist’s office, his past, his mood, his worry over his business (a PI noir trope), etc.

Was that necessary? Well, all but 460 words of it.

But in my initial panic, I forgot a few major rule of writing, some that I’ve actually taught. I thought I’d take this opportunity to remind you of them as well:

Rule 1: Despite current writing class wisdom, you don’t have to suspend the reader’s sense of disbelief. Readers suspend their own sense of disbelief. All you have to do is not buy it back. (This is a balancing act. Give them enough to pull them into the story, but not enough to make them yawn.)

Rule 2: The opening sells the current book. The end sells the next one, but if the reader is bored and doesn’t get to the end... well, there y’go. As I said, it’s a balancing act.

Rule 3: What one reader dislikes, another will love (and vice versa).

Oh, and Rule 4: You can't be there to explain things about your book to most readers. So do your best to have nothing to explain. And then let it go.

Trust what you write, publish it and go on to the next one. It's called practice.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Please see "RIP Kate" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/rip-kate/>.

Fiction Words: 3079

Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3729

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years

The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207

Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286

Total fiction words for the month..... 26749

Total fiction words for the year..... 78054

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4210

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 23540

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 109614

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, March 12](#)

[March 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Headed out to the Hovel again. Started by cycling back through the stuff I wrote yesterday, then moved into new stuff. All in all, around 800 new words in the first session.

Up to the house to eat breakfast and get some laundry started.

I put an announcement on Facebook, too, that StoneThread Publishing's been busy of late.

In addition to the latest Stern Talbot P.I. book, we also just published *A WonderFull Life*, a memoir. It's by my wife. The Amazon link is <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07BDFXJ4Q>. The universal link is <https://www.books2read.com/u/3nOarR>. Just in case.

Of course, your best bet for any of our books is to buy directly through [StoneThread Publishing](#) because we give discounts. (grin)

When I awoke, I thought I'd have a really great day of writing.

I got a fairly good first session (see above), then did some other stuff, wrestled with my 4-Runner for awhile (it's an '87 and showing its age), etc. I wrote to my wife,

“Yep, me an' it, we're a good match. We both start rough an' cough some, an' we both smoke a little.” (grin)

When I went back to the Hovel finally, I just really wasn't in the mood. I played cards, looked over some other stuff, and finally looked in my mental mirror. “Get over yourself, Harvey. At least write a *little* more.”

So I did.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Writing Streak Still Going... Barely” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-streak-still-going-barely/>. A great lesson (or reminder) here.

See “All Stories Have Legs” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/all-stories-have-legs.html>.

For some interesting reading, see “What Is It Like to Live Alone on an Island for 30 Years?” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/live-alone-italian-island-30-years>.

Fiction Words: 3870

Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4100

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156

Total fiction words for the month..... 30619
Total fiction words for the year..... 81924
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 23770
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 113714

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#),
[KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, March 13](#)

[March 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

For the past three years, I've considered taking Dean's Anthology Workshop. It's live, on the Oregon Coast. It's \$650 plus hotel expenses, plus travel. So not cheap (at least for me).

But I'm still considering it.

Now, though, a recent attendee — and one who has attended the thing SIX times — has decided to blog about the experience.

In a series of blog posts, best-selling dark fantasy author (and now editor) Ron Collins is going to dissect Dean's Anthology Workshop. If you've ever even thought about taking that workshop (on the coast) this will be an important series of posts to read.

He posted his first "overall" entry today. Dean references it in his own blog post. I've listed both of them in "Of Interest" below.

I noticed I've slipped into the habit of making an early entry here, kind of a what I expect will happen on the day, and then a late one, detailing what actually happened.

That seems like a good format to me, since I'm trying to share the ups and downs of the writing experience. (In my private world, I pretend you get as much from my notes as from the "Of Interest" section I keep tossing out there.)

To that end, this morning I headed out to the Hovel early, spent some time waking up, then started on the novel.

And somewhere along the line I realized I'd mentioned a victim's "father-in-law" earlier in the book, then in a later chapter had a detective trying to find out who her "father" (not father-in-law) was.

Oops. And the problem is compounded because learning a father-in-law's name wouldn't be nearly as difficult as learning a father's name.

Sigh. Such a small mistake, but one I have to fix, obviously. But there are tons of ripples. Frankly, it would almost be easier to prove her father and her father-in-law are the same guy than it will be to fix this.

But I'll get through it. So that's what I expect today. I expect to have to trudge through stuff I've already written, without, I hope, having to throw away too much.

When I first noticed the problem, I got an overall sense that at the end of the day the problem will be in the past and I'll be back in the flow and moving ahead with the story.

I hope that's how it works out. We'll see. I'll consider the day a success if, at the end of the day, I have a clean story I can start with tomorrow.

Well, a pretty good net gain today. A LOT more, actually, than I thought I'd get, all things considered. But I probably put in 5 or 6 hours to get those new words. A LOT of shifting things around, etc.

And in the end, I still have a little more to clean up tomorrow before I can get back up to clear flying on this thing.

But I'll take it.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Dean's "Nifty View On Two Weeks Ago" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/nifty-view-on-two-weeks-ago/>.

See “Face the Strange, The Adventures of a First-time Editor” at <http://typosphere.com/2018/03/10/face-the-strange-the-adventures-of-a-first-time-editor/>.

See “Why Young Readers Need Real Books” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/why-young-readers-need-real-books/>. Be sure to read The Passive Guy’s comments. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2481

Nonfiction Words: 540 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3021

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years

The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637

Total fiction words for the month..... 33100
Total fiction words for the year..... 84405
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4980
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 24310
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 116735

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ron Collins](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Typosphere](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, March 14

[March 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I got a late start this morning. Just kind of a blah day. I almost called this a day off, after which I would have spent the day doing nothing.

I finally made it to the novel at around 9:30. In the first session, I got right at 1000 words. About a third of that was to finish correcting the problem held over from yesterday.

So the novel's tracking right along again now. Then up to the house for a break and to write this stuff.

One of my short story collections is part of a new bundle, SHORT FLIGHTS (OF THE IMAGINATION).

The collection in that one is S,F&H (for science fiction, fantasy and horror). You can read about the bundle at <http://harveystanbrough.com/bundles/>.

Additionally, the curator posted an interview with me on her website. I've listed it in the "Of Interest" section below.

Okay, back to the novel for awhile.

From Dashiell Hammett, via The Passive Guy: "It's sometimes better to pretend I don't hear the sound of somebody in the nearby woods with a shotgun."

Got two more good sessions today. The novel is running. I'm a fortunate feller.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

To see a brief interview about writing with Yoors Trooly, check out <http://www.sherrydramsey.com/?p=3801>.

See "The Voice Once Again" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-voice-once-again/>.

See "Take Cover!" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/take-cover.html>.

Fiction Words: 3164

Nonfiction Words: 220 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3384

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207

Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286

Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156

Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801

Total fiction words for the month..... 36264
Total fiction words for the year..... 87569
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 24530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 120119

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, March 15 \(The Ides of March\)](#)

[March 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, another slow start to the day. And chances are I'll have only a half-day today.

I meant to rise early (2-3) and get straight out to the Hovel and the novel. Uh, but that ain't what happened.

I decided to skip my waking-up ritual, so as it turned out I just sat and stared at my writing 'puter for awhile. Didn't even read over what I'd written yesterday, which is my usually start on the writing day.

So back up to the house for a bit to write this, check things around the web, etc. When I go back to the Hovel, I'll stop worrying about how much time I might or might not have and begin again.

The "Of Interest" section today is all about discoverability, the second most important thing to a writer (after turning out new work). Hint hint: if you aren't distributing through Draft2Digital yet, this is a great time to start.

Finally got back out to the Hovel at around 9 and got a first session done. Then up here for a break, then back to the Hovel.

Well, the day turned out all right. As I write this, I just finished the day's efforts on the novel. Ended up with three good sessions, about 1000 words each. I'll take it.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Oh goodness! Draft2Digital is offering major help with discoverability. See "Introducing Author Pages and Book Tabs!" at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/>. And these are NOT the same old author pages like you get at other places (ahem, Amazon.com).

From Linda Maye Adams, see "Website Updates" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/03/15/website-updates/>. She offers some good ideas and a couple of links that might be of interest.

And just in case you don't click through from Linda's post, see "Want More Readers...? Fix These 5 Website Mistakes" at <http://annerallen.com/2018/03/5-website-mistakes/>.

Fiction Words: 3140

Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3460

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941

Total fiction words for the month..... 39404
Total fiction words for the year..... 90709
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5520
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 24850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 123579

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Draft2Digital](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, March 16](#)

[March 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Sometimes I'm in such a foul mood, my only escape is into my fiction. There I can pal around with the people I like. And I can kill the ones I don't like.

Topic: Ongoing Learning

A couple of days ago, I started reading the second Jack Reacher book Lee Child ever wrote. And his first Jack Reacher book was also very his first novel and a New York Times bestseller.

That "bestseller" label doesn't always do it for me, but this is very good stuff.

The guy's an excellent writer. As opposed, say, to someone else who's also always on the bestseller lists only because he's a masterful marketer. Umm, even though his writing sucks canal water from all 50 states plus Puerto Rico.

Somehow that feels like cheating to me. THAT is "selling out" to the almighty buck.

To be clear, this isn't a matter of liking or not liking a writer's style. This is a matter of too many errors springing out of the page and shoving me out of a reading experience even though I'm not actively looking for them.

But Lee Child is an excellent writer, and I'm learning a great deal. Mostly I'm learning what do do, and a little what not to do.

I've found only two "what not to do" things thus far. The first, his repeated spelling of "Marines" in all lower case, I already knew. But that was only in his first book, and the rest of the writing (and the story) was so strong I was able to overlook it.

As a happy bonus, he corrected that error beginning with the second book.

As an instructional aside, the word Marine, unless you're using the synonym for "aquatic," is always capitalized. With all due respect for my fellow servicemen and women, a member of the Navy is not a Navy; he's a sailor. Likewise for a member of the Air Force (airman), Army (soldier) and Coast Guard (sailor or coast guardsman). But a member of the Marine Corps is a Marine.

But back to Lee Child and his friend, Jack Reacher... Of the “what to do” things, I’ve found some that I already know and use. That was useful to me anyway because his use of the same techniques validates my use of them.

- Like me, he gets deep inside the character’s head. Every word he puts on the page is filtered through the POV character’s senses and opinions of the setting, other characters, etc.
- Like me, while he’s inside the character’s head, he sometimes slows the action with a lot of psychological stuff. It’s called psychological suspense. I noticed that most often he employs this technique when he’s leading up to a fast-action scene. But the psychological stuff is still gripping and holds my interest because it describes, in minute detail, a heightened thought process.
- Like me, he sometimes also employs Film Director Sam Peckinpah’s method of meticulous visual description of an otherwise fast-action event. This also slows the action, sort of, while pulling the reader directly into the center of it. It puts the reader in the action in the place of the POV character. Usually that’s the good guy. Sometimes it’s the bad guy. It doesn’t bog down the action at all.
- Like me he sometimes drags the reader at breakneck speed through a fast-action scene that leaves the reader breathless. This usually occurs toward the end of a chapter. There will be a fast-action scene, then a short calming scene (usually no more than a 3- or 4-line paragraph), and then an absolutely shocking, usually psychological, cliffhanger.
- And like me, he employs the “team” concept. (This is one I’m still working on perfecting.) Jack Reacher forms a new team in each new adventure. Likewise, the main bad guy also has a team.

Interesting too, maybe, to note that the old saw about the protagonist being “an ordinary guy doing extraordinary things” applies in the Reacher series. Sort of.

Jack Reacher is most definitely not an ordinary guy, but the story seems always to open with him BEING an ordinary guy. He’s eating breakfast in a diner in a backwater Georgia town, for example. Or he’s strolling casually down the sidewalk in downtown Chicago.

Then stuff happens. As a quick result of stuff happening, he’s dragged into a situation he has no control over. It’s a life-threatening situation, and he has to fix it or die.

That seems to me a pretty good template for an opening. (grin)

Lee Child also does a few things that I recognize as techniques I want to learn. I won’t elaborate on those except to say this: they are techniques that create in the reader a particular effect I also want to create in a reader.

I’m tagging those pages. When I’ve finished the book I’ll go back and re-read those parts with an eye to how he does it.

Finally, earlier I mentioned I'd found two "what not to do" things. I already elaborated on the first because it was easy.

The second is that sometimes he OVER describes. I recognize those because I find it easy to skip over some of the writing.

Don't misunderstand. This doesn't happen very often. If it did, it would push me out of the story. So it's rare, but it happens.

- Sometimes he repeats information unnecessarily.
- Sometimes he goes into great depth describing a setting that doesn't need to be described in such depth because it doesn't play a major role in the story.

And those are also things I've begun to recognize in some of my own work.

For now, I take care of most of those when I cycle back at the beginning of each day's writing. I take care of the rest of them (or most of the rest of them) when I do a final read-through ALOUD after I've finished the work.

Lee Child has almost as many novels in the Reacher series as I have total. I was pleased to learn, in an article (see today's "Of Interest" section), that he writes the same way I do.

He doesn't outline. He doesn't do character sketches. He doesn't try to force his characters to do his will. In other words, he is not the Almighty Writer on High.

He just sits down and writes.

Me? Sigh. Today, not so much.

I got out to the Hovel late today. Then I wrote the stuff above and saved it to a flash drive. Then I took a break up at the house to transfer all of this to today's edition of the Journal.

After that I drove down to check the mail at the PO, then finally headed back to the Hovel at about 11. I didn't do much there, then went back to the house around 12:30 for lunch.

Then back to the Hovel again. But the mojo just wasn't there today. Over the next hour or so I got one session at a little over 1000 words. By then, I had decided I was going to spend the rest of the day doing other things.

I'm taking another look at my website and doing some other stuff. So short fiction writing day today.

With the weekend coming up, I might or might not be back tomorrow or Sunday. We'll see.

Back soon.

Of Interest

Wow, some major news from Kris Rusch. See “Best Laid Plans of Mice and Kittens” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/03/14/business-musings-best-laid-plans-of-mice-and-kittens/>.

WARNING! See “Updated: Simon & Schuster’s Vanity Press Launches Writing Contest to Exploit More Authors” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/03/15/simon-schusters-vanity-press-launches-nanowrimo-writing-contest-exploit-authors/>. Don’t fall for this crap, folks. Don’t pay someone to publish your book just because they promise to provide you with a lot of things you can get free on your own.

See “Setting Can Add Tension,” a pretty good first-page critique by Jordan Dane at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/first-page-critique-dancing-with-the-well-bred-devil.html>.

Fiction Words: 1145

Nonfiction Words: 1230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2375

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086

Total fiction words for the month..... 40459
Total fiction words for the year..... 91854
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 26080
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 125954

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Jack Reacher](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Lee Child](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, March 17](#)

[March 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Just a touch-up on yesterday's topic re Lee Child and his buddy, Jack Reacher....

It occurred to me last night that some of the (what I saw as) excess description and unnecessary repetition might well be the result of his publisher's prodding.

After all, the novel length guidelines we've heard about all our lives are the direct result of traditional publishers needing to make a price point. To hit a particular price point, they need a certain number of folios. They tell the agents, and the agents push the writers to fill a certain number of pages.

Many, many writers have padded stories on their agent's or publisher's "recommendation" to reach an artificial word/page count so the publishers could reach their price point.

Unless things have changed in the past 20 years or so, the minimum for a novel via traditional publishing is 80,000 words. They prefer 100,000 to 120,000.

Novellas, by definition, typically run from 20,000 to 50,000 words when you can find a publisher who'll touch oen. Yet anywhere else in the world, and even here in the States before traditional publishing stood up in the 1950s, 25,000 words or longer is considered a novel.

So just something to think about.

I did notice Lee Child's second book was MUCH shorter than his first and — so far, at least — without so much excess baggage. I also noticed the pages (the actual paper sheets) are slightly thicker. The font might even be slightly larger, though I haven't yet made that comparison.

I mention all of this because the books of my favorite (current) thriller writer, Jack Higgins, don't have any of that excess. No unnecessary description, no deep internal psychological stuff, etc. And his books move much more quickly.

I should also note that this is an apples-to-oranges comparison, since I've read only the first two novels Lee Child wrote and am comparing them with novels Higgins wrote after he was well-practiced.

Thus far I've had a bit of an odd day, writing wise.

I went out to the Hovel at a little after 3 expecting to play a game or two of cards to siphon my brain into working, then launch into the Stern Talbot WIP.

But as I sat down, an idea crawled up and grabbed me. I didn't even open a Word document. I opened Notepad and started writing the "introduction" for a new series.

It was more of a rationale than an introduction. It's nonfiction, and novels very rarely have introductions.

Likewise, this one might or might not end up in the first novel of the series. But it will end up either there or on a series-introduction page on my website. And it's intended for the first novel, so I'm counting it in the fiction total below.

Now for a brief break up to the house. Then we'll see what the rest of the day holds.

By the way, the Stern Talbot novel is NOT on hold and I don't plan to shove it to the back burner or anything like that.

If anything, this new idea creeping along my spine might cause me to press ahead with Talbot and finish the story sooner than I might have otherwise. So a win-win.

But I had to get the intro down. I'll try not to write the actual opening for the novel (and series) until later. But we'll see about that too. (grin)

I got only one good (long) session on the novel thus far for just under 1700 words. I think that will be it for today.

Back up to the house for a break and a few chores (helping with laundry, cleaning cat boxes, shaking rugs etc.), shopping, and watching The Crown with my wife. Great show.

Back soon.

Of Interest

For any who missed it yesterday, to see what Lee Child does, see "The man with no plot: how I watched Lee Child write a Jack Reacher novel" at <http://theconversation.com/the-man-with-no-plot-how-i-watched-lee-child-write-a-jack-reacher-novel-51220>.

Fiction Words: 2995

Nonfiction Words: 660 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3655

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207

Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286

Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156

Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 43544
Total fiction words for the year..... 94849
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 26740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 129609

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Lee Child](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, March 18](#)

[March 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, from the time I awoke this morning, I decided today would be a nonwriting day. My wife and I are in the midst of straightening, rearranging and cleaning our house, and it's actually kinda fun.

Also I felt a day off might help separate my WIP and my probable next WIP from each other in my mind. As I'm writing in the former, it's racing right along, no problem.

But bits and dregs of my probable next project keep squeezing out from between the polyps in my brain.

As I have only a few polyps left, I want to avoid stress on them. (I know they probably aren't actually "polyps," but they look kinda like polyps and that's one of my current favorite words to say. It just sounds neat: polyps.)

While I'm here, I thought I'd remind you that Kristine Kathryn Rusch offers a free short story of the week every Monday. Last week's story was "The Voodoo Project" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/03/12/free-fiction-monday-the-voodoo-project-2/>. If not, look around her site. If you're serious about writing (and particularly about writing short fiction), there are no better works to study than those of Kris.

Okay, so I'm off to see what the day has to offer. I hope your day is as perfect as you'd like it to be.

Back soon.

Of Interest

From Sunday, see "Can Slick Marketing Sell Bad Books?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/can-slick-marketing-sell-bad-books.html>. The answer is yes, but there are a couple of good resources in this article too.

For some truly great quotes from Raymond Chandler (talk about something that'll put you in the mood to write), see https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/1377.Raymond_Chandler?page=1.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 280 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 280

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 43544
Total fiction words for the year..... 94849
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7690

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 27020
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 129889

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, March 19](#)

[March 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No writing today. More on that (through gritted teeth) later.

Well, I simplified my website a bit, based on recommendations in the link I shared here a couple days ago.

No drop-down menus on the home page. Now when you click (for example) Mystery Novels, it takes you to a page full of mystery novel covers. Each cover links to its own page on the site.

They also recommended having only one row of menu items. I decided against that. I write in (so far) four different genres plus short fiction and poetry. So I decided to leave the major headings alone.

The top row is fiction and poetry. The bottom row is business and resources. So we'll see how that works for awhile.

I also didn't take all of their advice re the sidebar. But now all the links there either stay on my site or take the reader to another of my sites. (grin)

No writing today. I spent most of the day reacting to someone else's "emergency," which was caused by their complete lack of planning.

To use the king's vernacular, "We are not pleased."

Back soon.

Of Interest

See “One Question In A Poll Of College Students Crystallizes The Debate Over Free Speech” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/one-question-in-a-poll-of-college-students-crystallizes-the-debate-over-free-speech/>.

See “Spotlight on 5 Selected Links About Books” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/03/19/spotlight-on-5-selected-links-about-books/>.

If you learn from The Kill Zone blogs first-page critiques, you can find the lot at <https://killzoneblog.com/first-page-critiques-at-tkz>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 250

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 43544
Total fiction words for the year..... 94849
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7940
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 27270
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 130139

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [The](#)

[Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, March 20

[March 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Oh, if anyone wants to visit my site to see the changes in the menu that I mentioned yesterday, visit <http://HarveyStanbrough.com>. Sorry I didn't include the link yesterday. And thanks to my friend Robert (by the way, that's pronounced ro-BEAR as he is an honorary Acadian), for the gentle reminder. (grin)

I still have a little work to do in that regard. A few fixes to target pages to make them more negotiable. But no rush on that.

I learned yesterday that I have a new copyedit coming in, so I'll be splitting my time between earning money and finishing my WIP. Money. Ugh. Filthy lucre. Eating. Who needs it, am I right?

I suppose today I'll continue to deal with the problem I mentioned yesterday. But I won't allow myself to be trapped at the computer.

My characters are standing stage left and right, glaring at me. Their arms are crossed, they're frowning, their toes are tapping impatiently. Time to get back to the story and just write the next sentence.

Back and forth between writing and the office computer. Getting my exercise 200 feet at a time.

The story's moving along fine, albeit in roughly half-hour increments. Probably won't be a lot of writing today, but some at least.

More than I hoped for. I finally stopped for the day because I'm tired of walking. (grin)

Back soon.

Of Interest

If you have a website or are planning to get a website, read "Website Security is the Arizona Shark Repellent of the Internet" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/03/19/website-security-is-the-arizona-shark-repellent-of-the-internet/>.

Dean's back to form. See "Writers As Whiners" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writers-as-whiners/>.

See "Cutting The Commercial Cord" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/cutting-the-commercial-cord.html>.

The entirety of today's edition of The Passive Voice is very good. There's something there for pretty much everyone. Browse the entries dated 20 March 2018 at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/>. I particularly enjoyed TPG's comments on "YouTube, the Great Radicalizer" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/youtube-the-great-radicalizer/>.

Fiction Words: 2544

Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2864

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 46088
Total fiction words for the year..... 97393
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8260
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 27590
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 133003

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, March 21](#)

[March 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Out to the Hovel early but I didn't turn to the novel right away.

Instead I wrote a nonfiction piece that probably most of you will never see. Maybe more background for my next WIP, I don't know.

Then I worked on the current novel. After I had about 1600 words done, I headed out to check the PO at about 11, then back home.

I boiled some eggs a couple days ago, and I had the bright idea that I'd make some deviled eggs as a surprise for my wife. So I decided to do that.

The two lady cats came in and sat behind me at the kitchen counter. When I do those things with a spoon and bowls, they automatically assume I'm making tuna salad. And they demand their toll.

I disappointed them, but I couldn't handle it.

After I finished the deviled eggs, I pulled out a pack of tuna and began mixing up a batch of tuna salad.

Both ladies appeared again as if by magic.

I fed them and looked around to give some to the chihuahua too, but he was nowhere to be found, natch.

Of course, he came in sniffing the floor just after the ladies finished eating and disappeared.

I'd already mixed the remaining tuna with non-dog-edible other stuff, so I gave him a couple of peanut butter treats.

Then I received yet another email from a guy I created a website for over two years ago. There are things I can't make him understand. I finally contacted his web host and submitted a support ticket to get them to help him. If that doesn't work, I'll just have to wash my hands of the whole matter.

I thought about going back to work, but frankly I'm too annoyed.

Tomorrow I have a day of doctor appointments. I hope to get some writing done in the morning. If I do, I'll post an edition of the journal. If not, I won't.

Either way, I'll talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "There Are No Secrets" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/there-are-no-secrets/>.

See "Tough Love" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/tough-love.html> albeit with a grain of salt. You might find some good stuff there that you need.

Fiction Words: 1648

Nonfiction Words: 1430 (380, Journal) (1050, Essay)

So total words for the day: 3078

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 47736
Total fiction words for the year..... 99041
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 29020
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 136081

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, March 22](#)

[March 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the doc appointment was rescheduled by the office for next Tuesday. And I shed myself of the problem I've had for the past few days. So today I get to write.

I also have a few chores to do, so this will be one of those Keep Coming Back days. We'll see how it goes.

According to my friend Dan Baldwin, "*The Writer* has an article on 'How To Write A Book In 90 Days' in eight simple steps. First step – take a month to prepare." (grin)

Thanks for the tip, Dan.

Spent the wee hours of the morning dealing with the same stuff from yesterday. Finally reached my last alternative and that didn't work either.

So I wrote the guy a farewell email, complete with a few suggestions for where he might find technical help, then started adjusting my head back to writing.

Got one good writing session done, I don't know, maybe 1200 words, then up to the house to finish some laundry. I also added to this Journal entry. Now back to the Hovel.

Topic: How to Make Enemies and Annoy People

Note: In a slightly different form, I wrote this topic today primarily as a post for the big blog over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#). The recipients of that blog, not you, are the primary audience. (grin)

Way back in October of last year (and originally, probably three or four years before that) I published "Trust Your Professional." If you missed it, you can see the original post at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/trust-your-professional/>.

The whole point is that getting What You Want is much more important to You than it is to the person or persons from whom you're trying to get it. This is true in every case.

- That's why we strive to print neatly on job or loan applications.
- It's why we have our work proofread before we publish it.
- It's why we treat people with whom we interact with a modicum of professional courtesy.

For example, if you present poorly on a job application (or act like a jerk), the person doing the hiring simply smiles and moves on to the next applicant.

If readers don't like that your book is chock full of typos, they close it and move on to another novel by another author.

And if, in your ignorance, you're arrogant and condescending toward the person from whom you're trying to get *What You Want*, that person will either charge you an exorbitant fee — payable in advance — or simply say No.

You don't have to suck up to anybody. That isn't what I'm saying.

But neither should you begin by admitting that you have never so much as logged into any website (username + password), then launch into a lengthy explanation of what the professional "should do" in order to access the back end of a website that is currently inaccessible.

Nor should you continue after the professional has explained, to an exhaustive degree, that what you want him to do simply won't work.

You might also be ill-advised to claim that the professional "obviously doesn't understand how publishing works" when he mentions to you that you can delay a release date.

Especially when you're about to publish your third book, which you finished two years ago.

And especially when the professional in question has written and published (some traditional, now all independently)

- 30 novels,
- 4 novellas,
- 25 collections of short fiction,
- several poetry collections (one of which garnered a nomination for the National Book Award),
- and 15 or 16 nonfiction titles, one of which took 4th place at the BEA Book of the Year awards (Education category) and two of which are on the topic of publishing.

If you want to develop even a working relationship with another human being, you just don't do things like that.

In fact, when I'm seeking assistance from a professional, I have found it endlessly useful to shut up and listen.

But if you desire in your heart of hearts to make enemies and annoy people, well, carry on.

But don't call me. I'll be busy writing my next book.

See you again soon.

Of Interest

For a personable post, see “Research, The Internet, and Dated Books” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/03/21/business-musings-research-the-internet-and-dated-books/>.

See “The Novel Versus the Short Story” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/the-novel-versus-the-short-story/>.

This one struck a personal chord with me. See “Stop Looking For One War Story To Make Sense Of All Wars” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/stop-looking-for-one-war-story-to-make-sense-of-all-wars/>.

If you're still using Smashwords, they've made audio available now. See “Smashwords Enters Audiobook Market with Findaway Voices” at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/03/smashwords-audiobooks.html>.

Fiction Words: 2781

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3531

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934
Day 11... 2781 words. Total words to date..... 28715

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 50517
Total fiction words for the year..... 101822
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 29770
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 139612

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, March 23

[March 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the copyedit came in.

The plan was to copyedit the first few hours of the morning, then spend the rest of the day writing.

But some glitches occurred today that kept me from going onto my own writing. I went out to the Hovel a few times, but was always called away.

Finally I gave up on writing today and decided to focus on the copyedit.

As I was doing that, I decided since the weekend's coming up, I'll plan to work only on the edit tomorrow and Sunday too. That should finish it (early) and I can get back to my novel on Monday. And I'll still have six full days to finish it this month.

It doesn't really matter whether I finish it in this month, but that would be nice.

So that's where I am. Probably there won't be a Journal tomorrow or Sunday.

See you again soon.

Of Interest

Not much out there today. I can recommend you visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources/> and browse some of those. Some really good stuff there.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 180 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 180

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934
Day 11... 2781 words. Total words to date..... 28715
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 50517
Total fiction words for the year..... 101822
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10620
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 29950
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 139792

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, March 24](#)

[March 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I decided to post this today mostly to share the “Of Interest” section. Well, and to publish the following topic. This one will be on the big blog in May as well.

Topic: On Publishing, Indie-Publishing and Making a Name as a Published Author

I received another query today from a writer who’s interested in a copyedit. He also asked whether I would help him find an agent and a traditional publisher.

Uhh, no.

After I explained why I thought the agent chase and traditional publishing in general was not a good idea, he wrote in reponse

“About publication: I agree with you. However, I want not money but name as a published author which you know somebody does not get by self-publishing.”

Wow. Nope, I didn’t know that. (grin)

We have some new members to my (almost daily) Journal. For them, and for any who don’t know yet and are maybe still in the agent chase, here’s how I responded:

Before you commit to an agent and/or a traditional publisher, I recommend you read two books. If you do, at least you’ll be more knowledgeable before you talk to them:

Killing the Top Ten Sacred Cows of Publishing at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/0615959512/>
and

Killing the Top Ten Sacred Cows of Indie Publishing at
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1561466123/>.

The author of those two books (Dean Wesley Smith) has published well over 100 novels with traditional publishers. Today he publishes only independently (so he self-publishes).

He still wanted me to help him find an agent. I don’t do that, and I won’t. I never want to be responsible for someone else’s decision. Especially when it’s a bad decision. So I recommended he find that big Writers Digest book that WD publishes every other year or so that lists all the agents and traditional publishers. That’s as far as I can go, and I was shaking my head even as I wrote that.

Folks, you make a name as a published author by BEING a published author. How your work is published makes not one whit of difference.

And you maintain and build your name as a published author by writing and publishing more work.

I'm a published author. I'm currently nearing completion of my 30th novel. I also have 4 novellas, over 180 short stories, around 25 short story collections and a lot of other stuff.

I've done most of the short stories, all of the novels and novellas, and many of the nonfiction books since April 2014. Slightly less than four years ago. I started my first novel in mid-October of 2014. I don't write "fast." I just write. I put the hours in the chair.

Of course, only you can choose the road you will travel. I could give you dozens of reasons not to go with traditional publishing, but depending on your stage of development as a writer, it probably wouldn't register with you. That's why I recommend Dean's Killing the Sacred Cows books.

Anyway, no, I don't help anyone find an agent or a traditional publisher. It just doesn't make sense, for many reasons, in the new world of publishing.

But if that's what you want, I believe Writers' Digest still publishes a big book full of agents and publishers every year or two. I forget the name of it. I stopped looking around the year 2000. If you search for it online or in your library, you should be able to find it.

And good luck.

See you again soon.

Of Interest

See "How To Track Animals (or Humans)" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/how-to-track-animals-or-humans/>. I added this one to my Writers Resources page.

See "Book Clubs – The Human Touch in Marketing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/book-clubs-the-human-touch-in-marketing.html>. Some good points, and better than I thought it would be. Also this one includes some good references.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 580

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207

Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286

Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156

Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637

Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801

Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941

Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086

Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742

Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934
Day 11... 2781 words. Total words to date..... 28715
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 50517
Total fiction words for the year..... 101822
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 30530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 140372

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, March 26](#)

[March 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, it's Sunday as I write this, but I won't post it until Monday, after I've written something. I only opened the boilerplate today to add the first bit in "Of Interest." I'll add others (if any) tomorrow before I post.

Okay, now it's Monday morning. The first thing I did was revise my "The Original Heinlein's Rules" post (I added 450 words) and scheduled it for May 29 over on the big blog. When it pops up, I hope you'll read it. It's considerably different from when I posted it here back on March 9.

Editing this morning. I didn't quite finish the copyedit I'm working on. After that I hope to have the energy to return to my WIP. This edit's kind'a draining me.

Well, the best-laid plans.... The edit all but exhausted me. I finished it at around noon and planned to go back to the Hovel and write, but I just don't have it today.

Maybe tomorrow, though anything I get done will have to be done in the morning. So we'll see. I have two heard doctors. One is the plumber and one is the electrician. (grin) Appointment in Tucson tomorrow early afternoon with the electrician. All routine.

Anyway, I'll get this out and then I'm taking the rest of the day off.

See you again soon.

Of Interest

See James Scott Bell's "What Should I Expect From My First Novel?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/what-should-i-expect-from-my-first-novel.html>. I recommend reading with a salt shaker close at hand.

See "What Is Possible?" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/what-is-possible-2/>.

See "An Interview with Douglas Smith" at <http://www.sherrydramsey.com/?p=3844>. Very interesting.

Visit <http://www.smithwriter.com>. Hover over the For Writers tab and see what's available.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 710 (260, Journal) (450, big blog)

So total words for the day: 710

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934
Day 11... 2781 words. Total words to date..... 28715
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 50517

Total fiction words for the year..... 101822

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 31240
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 141082

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Doug Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, March 27](#)

[March 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to report today, other than a good early day of writing.

Between 4 and 8 with a few breaks I added a little over 3000 words to the novel. And the end is in sight.

Given another hour, I'd finish it this morning, but I have to go to Tucson for the doc appointment.

This will be a short novel. I should finish it tomorrow with what will probably be a light day of writing.

When I sat down this morning, I wanted it to be a good writing day but I honestly didn't have a clue where to start.

I took about a half-hour to read back over what I'd written recently (cycling). My characters changed one thing, added one extra line of dialogue, and I was off and running.

Sometimes that's how it happens. Just sayin'.

See you then.

Of Interest

See "Planning the Impossible" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/planning-the-impossible/>.

See “Writing About What You Know
— Even When It Hurts” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/writing-about-what-you-know-even-when-it-hurts.html>.

Fiction Words: 3322

Nonfiction Words: 180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3502

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934
Day 11... 2781 words. Total words to date..... 28715
Day 12... 3322 words. Total words to date..... 32037

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 53839
Total fiction words for the year..... 105144
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12800
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 32130
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 145294

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, March 28](#)

[March 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I spoke too soon. (grin) Yesterday I thought I saw the end of the WIP and figured I'd get there today.

Maybe I will, and maybe I won't. I'm still certain it's near. But as I cycled back over what I wrote yesterday, I cut about 2000 words. I also created a cover for this one, so that's done early. That's it on the left.

This wasn't conscious-mind stuff.

This was my characters (one good guy and one very bad guy) stopping dead still on the stage, staring out at me, and saying, "Uh... no."

So I started in again. Now I'm back to letting the characters lead me through. It's only right. After all, they're the ones living the story.

It'll get there later today. Or tomorrow. Or maybe the next day.

As it turned out, it'll be tomorrow. Novel number 30. (grin)

I got one good session this morning, and then three good sessions this afternoon.

One of the items in today's "Of Interest" section reminded me, I posted several blog posts on Microsoft Word for Writer over on the big blog awhile back. They might be a bit dated, but most of the information is still valid. See "Microsoft Word for Writers" at <http://harveystanbrough.com/microsoft-word-for-writers/>.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "How to Develop Buyer Personas Using Facebook Insights" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/how-to-develop-buyer-personas-using-facebook-insights/>.

Also from The Passive Voice, see "The Basics of Using Styles in MS Word" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/the-basics-of-using-styles-in-ms-word/>.

Fiction Words: 4152

Nonfiction Words: 240 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4392

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1..... 3207 words. Total words to date..... 3207
 Day 2..... 3079 words. Total words to date..... 6286
 Day 3..... 3870 words. Total words to date..... 10156
 Day 4..... 2481 words. Total words to date..... 12637
 Day 5..... 3164 words. Total words to date..... 15801
 Day 6..... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 18941
 Day 7..... 1145 words. Total words to date..... 20086
 Day 8..... 1656 words. Total words to date..... 21742
 Day 9..... 2544 words. Total words to date..... 24286
 Day 10... 1648 words. Total words to date..... 25934
 Day 11... 2781 words. Total words to date..... 28715
 Day 12... 3322 words. Total words to date..... 32037
 Day 13... 4152 words. Total words to date..... 36189

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 57991
 Total fiction words for the year..... 109296
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 13040
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 32370
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 149686

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2
 Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
 Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, March 29](#)

[March 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A lot of good links included today. The learning truly never ends.

I started the morning per usual, cycling back over what I wrote yesterday. As I went, I realized I'd left some sensory detail out of a few scenes at the beginning of chapters. That "grounding the reader" thing. It's important.

So why do I have to do that while cycling?

Well, I don't always. Most of the time I remember to ground the reader at the beginning of each major scene and chapter as I'm writing it.

But that's the value of cycling. Of being "unstuck in time" (as Dean calls it) in your novel.

The reader reads from the first word to the last. But the writer doesn't have to write it that way.

Again, cycling isn't something you do with the conscious mind. You just read through what you wrote the day before (or the session before) for pleasure. You let your fingers rest on the keyboard, and you allow your subconscious to add what needs to be added.

In the midst of a busy or harrowing experience, your mind records a lot of things that you don't really notice at the time. Later, when things calm down, you might remember or notice many things that you didn't notice at the time.

That's what cycling is. You're reading for pleasure, not critically. And in that more relaxed mode, the things you've learned kick in and your characters tug on your sleeve.

In the story, three hours ago you were in a brightly lit room, the curtains wide open, sunlight streaming through. The room is warm. You came to talk with the elderly man in the bed, and he's happy to oblige.

A few chapters later, events have led you back to the same room. But now things are different. The room is chilly. The curtains are tightly closed. The guy on the bed is dead. No pulse. Clammy skin.

Sensory clues to the setting, along with the POV character's opinion of that setting, pulls the reader deep into the scene, deep into the story.

Cycling... try it, you'll like it.

For a quick, free course on Writing Off into the Dark and Cycling, visit these posts:

1. <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/patience-is-a-virtue/>
2. <http://HarveyStanbrough.com/pro-writers/writing-off-into-the-dark-revisited/>
3. <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/how-does-cycling-fit-with-writing-off-into-the-dark/>

I also recommend “Scene and Chapter Breaks and Hooks” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/scene-and-chapter-breaks-and-hooks/> and the current post, “Character, Setting, and Grounding the Reader” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/character-setting-and-grounding-the-reader/>.

I might or might not write anymore fiction today, but probably not. So I’ll go ahead and post this early.

I don’t usually celebrate finishing a novel, but this is my 30th, so that feels a little like a milestone. (grin) I guess the next one will hit at 50, which I hope will be sometime next year.

Anyway, talk with you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Linda Maye Adams’ “The 1 Missing Tip for Finding Time to Write” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/03/29/the-1-missing-tip-for-finding-time-to-write/>. Very informative and there’s a bonus.

See “Settling In (A Process Blog)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/03/28/business-musings-settling-in-a-process-blog/>.

If you wonder at all about cremation, see <https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/health/a18923323/cremation/>.

Fiction Words: 1455

Nonfiction Words: 510 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1965

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Sliced-Up Secretary

Day 1.....	3207 words.	Total words to date.....	3207
Day 2.....	3079 words.	Total words to date.....	6286
Day 3.....	3870 words.	Total words to date.....	10156
Day 4.....	2481 words.	Total words to date.....	12637
Day 5.....	3164 words.	Total words to date.....	15801
Day 6.....	3140 words.	Total words to date.....	18941
Day 7.....	1145 words.	Total words to date.....	20086
Day 8.....	1656 words.	Total words to date.....	21742
Day 9.....	2544 words.	Total words to date.....	24286
Day 10...	1648 words.	Total words to date.....	25934
Day 11...	2781 words.	Total words to date.....	28715
Day 12...	3322 words.	Total words to date.....	32037
Day 13...	4152 words.	Total words to date.....	36189
Day 14...	1455 words.	Total words to date.....	37644 (done)

Writing of Novel 1, New Thriller Series

Day 1..... 1339 words. Total words to date..... 1339

Total fiction words for the month..... 59446

Total fiction words for the year..... 110751

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13550

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 32880

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 151651

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, March 30](#)

[March 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

This is a process post.

I started reading my latest novel to Mona yesterday morning. Reading aloud is the best possible way to proofread. The ears process words less quickly than the eyes, so you catch more stupid mistakes.

Also, this morning, I remembered there was one chapter (one I haven't read aloud yet) in which the two detectives are in the bullpen.

As they work on preliminary computer stuff for a few upcoming cases, the POV character relates an overview of two cases they've recently closed. One was a very odd suicide and the other was a previously unsolved cold case.

Each overview was roughly 600 words. Each overview was an excellent synopsis for a separate novel. Apparently, as I wrote this one, my subconscious was way ahead of me, already considering the next two books in the series.

This morning I recognized that and cut that chapter, about 1200 words.

I replaced those words with maybe three sentences, then combined those few sentences with the next chapter.

As a result, the whole book reads much more quickly and is much more fast-paced.

Frankly, I think I'm using this mystery series to practice a few techniques on my way to writing my first thriller series.

In a mystery, there is room for a slower pace in places. That leaves me room to focus more tightly on upping the pace in the action scenes.

I do that when I write. I do more of it when I cycle back, and then a bit more, if necessary, as I read it aloud after it's finished.

When the dust clears, I will have written a clean "first draft" beginning to end, and I will have published a fast-paced mystery with several thriller components. (grin)

I don't usually read or pay any attention to reviews, but I can hardly wait to read the reviews on this one.

My donors will get a copy of this novel automatically as a reward. But I've decided if any of you, my loyal Journal followers, would like a copy to see what the old man's up to, you need only send me an email to let me know.

Be sure to tell me whether you want it in Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF format. (Paper won't be available for probably two or three months.)

Short Rant: Censorship

Well, the C word is rearing its ugly head again. This time Radish, an app on which readers can read serialized fiction (and to whom I applied as a mystery writer), is bowing to the almighty Apple.

Who, even as they're barring erotica from their iBook store, are also airing programs that are a great deal more than sexually suggestive.

I have a problem with that.

I don't write erotica (by my definition), but that's exactly the problem. One person's erotica is another person's romance and another person's pornography.

That the reading public has to bow to Apple's (or anyone else's) definition of "erotica" is just wrong.

They, and we all, have the right to define the term any way they want.

But we don't have a right to force that definition on anyone else.

Started a new novel today. It will be the next in the Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years series: The Case of the Missing Body.

Great fun. (grin)

Anyway, talk with you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Radish Bans Erotica from Its Serial Fiction App” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/03/29/radish-bans-erotica-from-its-serial-fiction-app/>.

Just to check in with Dean, see “Headed Back To The Coast” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/headed-back-to-the-coast/>.

See “Microsoft Quietly Rolls Out Its E-bookstore” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2018/03/microsoft-quietly-rolls-out-its-e-bookstore/>.

Fiction Words: 2790

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3390

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Missing Body

Day 1..... 2790 words. Total words to date..... 2790

Total fiction words for the month..... 62236
Total fiction words for the year..... 113541
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 33480
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 155041

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, March 31

March 31, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I jumped ahead a bit and published my latest last night, distributing it via Draft2Digital. Then I sent the Kindle file to my donors and to a few relatives who've shown an interest.

This morning I sent it to Amazon and BundleRabbit. Finally, I created a new page for the book at HarveyStanbrough.com and then updated the Mystery Novels page on the same site. Then I did the same thing over at StoneThreadPublishing.com.

So a lot of admin stuff this morning thus far. I expect to get back to the new WIP sometime today. But it's the weekend, so I'm not pushing anything.

My first priority on weekends is to make myself available for things my wife might want to do. And then, of course, I allowed the early morning hours to slip away with admin tasks.

Still, I hope to get a couple of good sessions on the WIP.

Well, I wrote a little bit, mostly just cycling through what I wrote yesterday. Not counting anything today.

After that I got busy with some outside chores. But I'll turn in early tonight and be back at it early in the morning.

See you then.

Of Interest

Not much out there today. The topic of the Kill Zone blog, for example, is "Tell Us What Energizes and Exhausts You About Writing." Seriously? That's right up there with some of the Facebook foolishness like "What's your name on St. Patrick's Day?" or "Which sea monster would you be?" Anyway, if you want to see it, go to <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/03/tell-us-what-energizes-and-exhausts-you-about-writing.html>. There are also a couple of first page critiques there if you're into that.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 280 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 280

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Missing Body

Day 1..... 2790 words. Total words to date..... 2790
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 62236
Total fiction words for the year..... 113541
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14430
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 33760
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 155321

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, April 1](#)

[April 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Long post today.

Hope you had or are having a happy and uneventful April Fools Day and Easter. I'm finding if I can avoid the Smashwords blog on this day, I come through pretty much unscathed.

Mark Coker got me (and a great many others) two or three years ago when he used the Smashwords blog to announce that Amazon was doing something very harmful to writers.

They would soon announce they'd come up with an intelligent program that churned out novels, thereby negating the need for writers. Something like that. And yeah, I bought it.

I emailed him a few days later, ostensibly from my hospital bed, and explained I didn't appreciate his sense of so-called "humor." I explained that I had a heart condition, and his blog post had caused a traumatic event for me (that part was true) that resulted in a days-long stay in the hospital and several expensive tests (that part was a lie).

He emailed me back, apologizing profusely.

I wrote back, "Yeah, well, I lied. I'm a writer. It's what I do. April Fools." (grin)

A reader of this Journal sent me a very good question as a comment on the 30 March Journal. I responded there, but I'll expand my response as a topic here in a day or two.

Anytime any of you have questions or comments, please feel free to share them with me either in the comments section or via email.

On Dean Wesley Smith

Some folks probably wonder why I tend to hawk Dean Wesley Smith's writing workshops and lectures. There are two main reasons:

First, even though I knew quite a lot going in, I've never failed to learn something valuable from the workshops and lectures I've taken from him. To date, that's 11 workshops and 13 lectures.

The most valuable lecture was Lecture 1: Heinlein's Rules. I absolutely recommend it for all writers.

I won't talk about which workshops were more valuable for me because much depends on what you already know. Not what you think you know but what you actually know. If you'd like my opinion on one you're considering taking, email me privately.

The second reason requires a little explanation.

I have a workshop credit with him. I pledged and paid \$250 for his recent Kickstarter campaign to expand North by Northwest Books.

For that \$250, I received a workshop credit (worth \$300) plus a subscription to the electronic edition of Pulphouse Magazine.

There were two workshops I was interested in taking. I know quite a bit about both of them, but not everything. And as I said, I've never failed to learn from Dean's workshops.

So I emailed him early this morning and asked whether either of those workshops were going to be switched over to Classic (half-price at \$150) anytime soon. I figured if one were switched to Classic, I'd use the credit for the other one, then take the Classic workshop later.

Dean responded quickly, and with great news. He wrote, "Both will be switched to Classic later in the month after the March workshops are done. So by the end of the month." Then he added, "If you have a workshop credit, you can take two Classic workshops. (grin)"

Holy crap! I no longer have a choice to make. I can take both workshops for the single \$250 credit.

To be clear, I'll be getting \$600 worth of workshops (as they are currently listed) for \$250.

The thing is, the guy didn't have to tell me that. He could have let me use the credit for one workshop or the other, and then I'd have paid another \$150 for the other one sometime down the line.

So the guy's not only extremely knowledgeable and willing to share his knowledge, but he's honest to a fault. In this day, in our profession, having a knowledgeable mentor who's willing to share and honest is like hitting a golden trifecta.

And that's why I support him in every way possible.

Good writing day for me today.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Getting Ready To Start The Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/getting-ready-to-start-the-challenge/>. Some interesting process stuff, "triggers" you might not have thought about.

See "Pack More Punch in Your Prose" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/pack-more-punch-in-your-prose.html>.

See Linda Maye Adams' "Easter Eggs in Books" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/04/01/easter-eggs-in-books/>. Fun stuff.

Fiction Words: 2959

Nonfiction Words: 720 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3679

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Missing Body

Day 1..... 2790 words. Total words to date..... 2790

Day 2..... 2959 words. Total words to date..... 5749

Total fiction words for the month..... 2959

Total fiction words for the year..... 116500

Total nonfiction words for the month... 720

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 34480

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 158280

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, April 2](#)

[April 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I might as well let you in on a secret. In writing my current WIP, I'm doing something I've never done before. And actually, I'm doing something I don't enjoy. At all.

At less than 6,000 words in (as of yesterday) I already know most of the plot points and the satisfactory resolution of the novel. Ugh.

How in the world does anyone write from an outline? Seriously, I don't understand. If they already know the story beforehand, how are they not bored out of their mind as they put it on paper?

It seems to me that knowing every major plot point, every major twist and turn and even the ending, would force the writer to write from the conscious, critical mind just to keep to the outline. Again, OMG Ugh.

I mean, if they have a general idea of where the story's going, I get that. But to plan in advance the major plot points, to force a definition on each character, and to know even the ending? No wonder so many writers feel that writing is "drudgery."

I don't want to know those things, especially the ending. Knowing in advance what's going to happen is boring. That's exactly why I don't outline things before I write them.

Usually when too much of an idea occurs to me, I don't bother with writing it. So why am I writing this one?

I can't explain, really, except to say if I didn't write it there would be a hole in the series. Or maybe it's because the idea is so strong that it will remain in my head until I write it and publish it. So I'm going into this mostly to get it over with.

I believe those readers who enjoy this series will enjoy this story too. But it's difficult for me because I already know the story.

For this one, for the most part, for me, there's zero excitement. Why? Because I'm not racing through the story with my characters, my heart pounding with excitement as I try to keep up and record everything that's happening.

In this one, my characters and I are sitting in a quiet detective squad room and a couple of them are telling me the story. Then I have to translate the story into action, though I wasn't able to run through it with them as it happened.

Very weird. This might be the first time I've actually "worked" as a writer. I don't like it.

There's still some excitement involved as I write a necessary scene and the in-scene characters reveal a minor twist or turn. In fact, if a scene took off I'd gladly go along. But that won't happen on this one. I guess you could say I'm writing this one from a kind of outline, albeit under protest.

I'll get through it, though probably with a novella or very short novel (I already know the ending, after all), and then move on to the next WIP.

For this one, I made an exception. I won't say I'll never do it again, but I will say vehemently that I hope I do not.

Fairly good writing day today, especially given the circumstances.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Dean's "How To Write Thirty Stories In Thirty Days While Moving" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-to-write-thirty-stories-in-thirty-days-while-moving/>.

See Sue Coletta's "The Wagon Wheel of Suspense" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/the-wagon-wheel-of-suspense.html>.

Via The Passive Voice, see Nathan Branford's "A guide to social media for authors" at <https://blog.nathanbransford.com/2018/04/a-guide-to-social-media-for-authors>. This looks pretty good to me, and I suspect his ideas will be better than any I could give you on the topic.

Also via TPV, see "6 Top Ways for Indie Authors to Make Self-published Books More Discoverable and More Competitive on Amazon" at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/book-marketing-6-top-ways-for-indie-authors-to-make-self-published-books-more-discoverable-and-more-competitive-on-amazon/>.

Fiction Words: 3273

Nonfiction Words: 640 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3913

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Missing Body

Day 1..... 2790 words. Total words to date..... 2790

Day 2..... 2959 words. Total words to date..... 5749

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 6232

Total fiction words for the year..... 116500

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1360

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 35120

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 196673 (**Corrected**)

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, April 3](#)

[April 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the current WIP is going to be a novелlette or a novella. I don't usually write to a particular length, but I know this one won't get into the short-novel range.

Something occurred to me after I wrote yesterday's post.

Write This Down: The only real difference between a short story and a story of any other length is that a short story is about One Event. Not two, not a few and not several. One.

This story is about two cases, a new one and a cold case that all but mimics the new one, and it's about only a few major events. That's how I know it won't be more than a novella.

As I wrote yesterday, I knew the ending going in. There's a reason for that.

The idea came to me in whole cloth, complete with the satisfactory resolution of the case (the resolution, not the final conflict, is the ending), while I was writing the previous novel. It was part of the 1200 or so words I cut from the previous novel.

I could have left it in the previous novel as a matter of interest, but I wanted to develop it a bit. I wasn't thinking about the fact that I already knew the ending. So here we are.

No worries. I'm leaving to go camping on either Thursday or Friday, so the timing of this one is perfect. I should have finished it by then, so I'll be between major works during the camping trip.

I was going to post the first of a few Topics today, all spurred by a comment made on a post a few days ago. But I don't want this post to grow to an unmanageable size, so I'll post the first one tomorrow. (grin)

Had a good day of writing today. I'm nearing the final climax. That and the ending will come tomorrow. Probably no more than a couple thousand more words. At the moment, I'm just hoping the perp will do something stupid so the detectives can erase him out of hand and avoid a lengthy trial. (grin)

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Day Two of the April Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/day-two-of-the-april-challenge/>.

See "Facebook, She Just CAN Quit You" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/facebook-she-just-can-quit-you.html>.

And maybe saving the best for last, see "Art Crimes and Undercover Stings: My Chat with FBI Director (Ret.) Robert K. Wittman" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/art-crimes-chatting-with-fbi-director-robert-k-wittman/>.

Fiction Words: 5023

Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5423

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Missing Body

Day 1..... 2790 words. Total words to date..... 2790

Day 2..... 2959 words. Total words to date..... 5749

Day 3..... 3273 words. Total words to date..... 9022
Day 4..... 5023 words. Total words to date..... 14045

Total fiction words for the month..... 11255
Total fiction words for the year..... 124796
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1760
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 35520
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 202096

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 29
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 4
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, April 4

[April 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

All right. Well, I finished the novella this morning. I'll go over it one more time (reading aloud to myself) before I publish it, but the final word count will be very near what's posted below.

A few days ago, a subscriber asked in a comment about my after-writing process. Do I send my work to my first reader before I read it aloud? Do I print it before I read it aloud or read directly from the screen?

Just as importantly, the commenter wrote "I'm working on getting better writing a clean [first] draft...."

I was going to make this a single topic, but so much is implied in the questions that I decided to present it in two or three topics. That way I can cover it thoroughly without you having to pick through a b'jillion-word blog post.

I'll cover the first topic with two parts: A few general notes on reading aloud and then a sub-topic on how I apply the technique in my own writing process.

Topic: Reading Your Work Aloud

I've mentioned probably dozens of times over the years that reading your work aloud is a great way to proofread it. That remains the best proofreading advice I can give anyone.

Reading aloud is a slower process, and it gives you two modes of input simultaneously: hearing and sight. For that reason alone, you catch more mistakes and typos and rhythm breaks than you might if you were reading silently.

That third one — rhythm breaks — is probably the most important.

When you're reading aloud and discover the gap left by a missing word (most often with mine it's "the"), that's more because of the break in rhythm of the language than the sight of the missing word.

Reading Aloud in My Own Writing Process

For those of you who are able to dictate your stories to a recorder, I envy you. I can't do that. It would be counter-intuitive for me because I read aloud as part of the editing process.

If I dictated, reading aloud would become the writing process and the editing would be done with the keyboard. I've tried both, and (for me) I find it more valuable and time-efficient to do it the other way.

As you know, when I sit down in the Hovel to begin the day's writing, I start by "cycling back" through what I wrote the day before.

For more on cycling, visit <http://harveystanbrough.com>, scroll to the bottom, and click the Cycling tag.

Often, I read aloud as I cycle through, especially if a section feels even the slightest bit awkward or confusing.

Again, reading it aloud helps me discover where the glitches are in the rhythm. So when I'm finished, it rolls more easily off my (and I hope, the reader's mental) tongue.

On those occasions, of course, I read without an audience. But that's all right.

At that point, reading aloud is purely utilitarian. Most often, I don't let anyone into my work before it's finished.

Call it superstition. Occasionally when I've shared an opening or other section of an unfinished work, something puts me off the story and it falters and dies.

And that, as we say in the business, "Ain't good."

(Tomorrow, “Reading Aloud in My Own After-Writing Process”)

Tomorrow morning I’m heading out on a camping trip, probably 2-4 days.

I don’t want you to have to wait for this series of posts to continue, so I’m going to pre-post them here so the Journal will go out while I’m gone.

As always, feel free to comment. I’ll address the comments when I get back.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Dean’s “Day Three, Story Three” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/day-three-story-three/>.

I recommend checking the Kill Zone blog each day at <https://killzoneblog.com>. I’ll continue to do that when I get back, but if you’re checking too, you’re just that much ahead.

Fiction Words: 2701

Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3351

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI—The Early Years: The Case of the Missing Body

Day 1..... 2790 words. Total words to date..... 2790
Day 2..... 2959 words. Total words to date..... 5749
Day 3..... 3273 words. Total words to date..... 9022
Day 4..... 5023 words. Total words to date..... 14045
Day 5..... 2701 words. Total words to date..... 16746 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 13956
Total fiction words for the year..... 127497
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 36170
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 205447

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Thursday, April 5

[April 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

As you read this, I should be lounging somewhere along (well, above) the Gila River in the Lower Gila Box Wilderness.

As promised, I've posted the second topic below.

Yesterday I talked in general about reading your work aloud, then discussed reading aloud during my writing process. So today...

Topic: Reading Aloud in My Own After-Writing Process

If a work is shorter — say up to 45,000 words or so — I usually read it aloud. So short stories, novellas and short novels.

I can do that too by myself, but I find it more valuable to read to an audience. I'm more apt to use character-voice inflections and so on when I'm reading to someone else. I'm truly blessed that my wife, Mona, seems to enjoy serving as my audience.

I usually read for about an hour, then take a break of a few minutes, then come back and read some more. I'll get through a short story in one session. Longer works might take two or three days of three or four sessions each.

To answer another of the original questions, I don't print the work out and read from paper, then make notes as I go. I know others who do, and that's perfectly fine. It's all a matter of how you want to do it.

In fact, Dean talks often about printing a story or novel he's just finished and then laying it on the desk of his first reader, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who is also his wife and first reader.

For me it's both easier and more time-efficient to read directly from my laptop and make changes on the fly.

In fact, I read from the already-formatted copy on my laptop. Afterward, the work is as clean as it's going to get.

The work has already been formatted, the front matter and back matter added, and the cover created. So when I've finished reading it aloud, I usually take a break, then publish and distribute it.

You'll notice I didn't mention sending my work away to a copyeditor. I don't. But I do have a very strong grounding in word choice (good word choice is based on connotation as much as denotation), sentence structure, pacing and flow, paragraphing and so on.

I have a gift for the rhythms of the language. That combined with a pretty thorough knowledge of the factors in the paragraph above negate the need for a separate copyeditor.

I'm one of those odd ducks who loves telling a good story but who also has a passion for diagramming sentences. Go figure.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Be sure to check Dean's site. You never know when he'll drop a gem for you.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 460

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 13956
Total fiction words for the year..... 127497
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2870
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 36630
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 205907

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#)

The Journal, Friday, April 6

[April 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Again, as you read this, I should be lounging somewhere along (well, above) the Gila River in the Lower Gila Box Wilderness.

As promised, I've posted the third topic below.

Two days ago I talked in general about reading your work aloud, then discussed reading aloud during my writing process.

Yesterday, I discussed reading aloud in my own after-writing process. So today....

Topic: Using a First Reader vs. Reading Aloud

Of course, you can also do both: read aloud and send your work to a first reader, in either order.

I don't do both.

I mentioned earlier that when I've written a shorter work, which I define as anything less than around 45,000 words, I usually read the work aloud. When I do that, basically I'm serving as my own first reader.

But when I've written a longer work, anything longer than about 45,000 words, I usually send it to my first reader.

Dean Wesley Smith advocates using a first reader who doesn't require payment. Mine doesn't require payment, but I pay him anyway. The payment is to ensure his blunt honesty.

Kenneth Flowers (krf1952@gmail.com) is a high school classmate of mine. He isn't a fiction writer, but he's an avid reader. The guy's reading something all the time.

Most importantly, you want a first reader who doesn't blow a gasket over sentence fragments. In fiction, sentence fragments are a necessity, both in dialogue and, to a lesser degree, in narration.

A good first reader will read for pleasure, but with a notepad on his lap. His notes will have two parts.

In the first, he will note — by writing down a few exact words from the part he's reading — anyplace that confuses him or that he feels is lacking or that otherwise pushes him out of the story. In the second part of his note, he will explain briefly the problem as he sees it.

This might be something as simple as "John trudge toward the end of the alley," with the second part of the note reading something like "trudge should be trudged." (I often manage to omit the "d" at the end of what should be a past-tense word.)

Or the second part of his note might read “Where it reads ‘John trudged toward the alley,’ I can see John plainly [because of my description of John] but it’s after dark. Is there a street lamp or other illumination?”

Sure there is. But I omitted it. Great catch.

Or the second part might read, “Good description of John, but is he wearing a shirt?” or “John was wearing a black jacket when he got out of the cab at the end of the block but now the jacket is green.”

It’s important that he notes a few exact words from the troublesome text. That enables you to use the Microsoft Word Find utility to go directly to the section in question. From there you can make the necessary changes.

If you do use a first reader or copyeditor (or both), it’s important to note that you should make the recommended change only if you agree with it.

For example, when showing possession for a word that ends in S, you can do so either of two ways: “That’s Disraeli Jones’ house at the end of the block” is correct, as is “That’s Disraeli Jones’s house at the end of the block.”

If you prefer one way over the other, use it. The only caveat is that you must be consistent throughout the manuscript.

There can also be varying degrees of agreement.

The first reader points out that John’s jacket looks black as he steps out of the cab, but under the street light it looks green.

You might choose to change the color of the jacket. Or you might choose to add a sentence that explains why the color looks different. “The yellow glow of the street light revealed his jacket was green, except for the blood stain on the left shoulder.” Or you can just change the color of the jacket. Or do nothing at all.

Whether you print out a work on paper before you send it to your first reader is a matter to be decided between you.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Be sure to check Dean’s site. You never know when he’ll drop a gem for you.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 740 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 740

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 13956
Total fiction words for the year..... 127497
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3610
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 37370
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 206647

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 0
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#)

NOTHING FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018

[The Journal, Sunday, April 8](#)

[April 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Hmm. Somehow, I was thinking Friday's post was Saturday's post and hadn't gone out yet. So I amended Friday's post. Mark it up to a very good case of exhaustion. Anyway, we didn't get back until yesterday (Saturday) morning and then I didn't post a Journal.

Not a lot going on today. Weird. The morning of the second day of the camping trip, I was jonesing for writing. From now on when I go, I'll take my laptop along. Just in case.

But now I'm back, and this morning I didn't feel like writing. Since it's Sunday, I probably won't write today. I'll start fresh tomorrow. I figure write two or three more novels before I start my first thriller. It's a developing process.

I have the pacing down tight. I know cliffhangers and openings, and I know how to ground the reader (and to what level) in order to keep the novel progressing while keeping the reader deep in the story. What I'm missing currently is scope.

For a thriller, the scope has to be huge. Basically worldwide, or at least spanning the nation. Much depends on the situation. The more psychological suspense is involved, the smaller the physical scope can be, and vice versa.

But today will be a day of rest. I'll make a few additions/deletions/changes to the novella I just finished, then publish it and get it out to my donors. Otherwise, I probably won't do much that's even peripheral to writing.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

If you read nothing else about writing, see James Scott Bell's "Short Chapters and Lots of Dialogue" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/short-chapters-and-lots-of-dialogue.html>. The comments aren't bad either.

See "Story Seven and Moving" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/story-seven-and-moving/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 240 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 240

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 13956
Total fiction words for the year..... 127497
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3850
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 37610
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 206887

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#),
[KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, April 9](#)

[April 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I hope to get started on my next novel soon. Probably another noir mystery. We'll see what appeals to me.

Probably no writing today. An edit came in, though it's a re-read so it won't take more than two or three days. I don't like doing re-reads, but if the writer insists, I'll do it for half the price of the original edit. I don't personally recommend revising an edited manuscript, but when I'm wearing my copyeditor hat, the customer is always right.

In the meantime, my recent camping experience proved I can walk (rugged terrain) three miles without harming my back too much. Walking out here on a country road should be a snap.

So I'll head out for my first walk in a good while this morning shortly after dawn. My personal rule is I can walk if it's 50+ with no wind or 60+ with wind.

A couple years ago, I got to the point that my regular short walk was 5-6 miles. My regular long walk was 12 miles, and my medium was around 8. I'll stick with 3 for awhile to start. After that, we'll see.

Oof. Today was 2.8 miles and it took a little over 50 minutes. I'm gonna back my short walk off to 2 miles until I get used to it. We went nearly twice that far hiking while we were camping, but we were stopping frequently and weren't walking hard. So not quite the same thing.

I also worked on the website a little today. I created my own Patronage page for readers and writers. The rewards for the various levels of patronage are listed at <http://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

Well, I had another edit come in, a fairly lengthy one. I guess I'll get to see whether I can edit part of the day and write part of the day. The first few days will be all editing and no writing so I can get a feel for it. So if you don't hear from me for awhile, well, there y'go.

Back soon.

Of Interest

For a free SF novel from TOR, see "Tor.com's Free eBook of the Month for April is "All Systems Red" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/04/07/tor-coms-free-ebook-of-the-month-for-april-is-all-systems-red/>. The deadline is tonight at midnight, eastern time.

Please read The Passive Guy's comments on "Hybrid Publishing, Diversity of Voices Focus at IBPA Conference" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/?p=87702>.

From PsychWriter via The Passive Voice, see “Narcissistic Abuse And Codependence For Writers” at <https://psychwriter.com.au/2018/02/25/narcissistic-abuse-and-codependence-for-writers/>.

Dean’s still going on his challenge. See “Eight In Eight Days” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/eight-in-eight-days/>.

For interest or maybe to stir a story, see “Who Knew There Was a Plant Pathologist?” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/04/09/who-knew-there-was-a-plant-pathologist/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 450

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 13956
Total fiction words for the year..... 127497
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 38060
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 207227

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

Nothing on January 10

[The Journal, Wednesday, April 11](#)

[April 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Sorry I took off yesterday from posting the Journal. The first day of a copyedit is always the most difficult with the most concentrated effort. As a result, I totally spaced posting an edition of the Journal.

So to today... Well, I'm writing again.

The current copyedit is a long one. It will probably take me the better part of two weeks, and I didn't want to go that long without writing. In fact, on my recent two and a half-day camping trip, I was already jonesing to write on the morning of the second day.

So this morning I went out to the Hovel early. I messed around a little. Then an image popped into my mind, and a first line.

I opened a Word document, typed the line, and didn't look up for around 1300 words.

I should mention this is not another Stern Talbot PI noir mystery. It's some sort of action adventure thing, and it will be a novel. The implied scope demands that much.

The story has something to do with a world in which there is combat, search lights, safehouses, and people who are willing to help the wounded. Oh, and thus far, it takes place in Versailles, France.

I know the interior of the safehouse is shabby, and I know the appearance and approximate ages of the only two characters (currently), a man and a woman. I also have a strong sense of a multitude of other characters waiting in the wings.

Otherwise I have no idea what this is or what it will be. I'm strictly writing off into the dark, cycling as I go. As my friend Dan would say, I am in Hebben.

This is a bit of a departure, too, because it wasn't born from any idea I've had before. It just came trudging through the door and said "Write me."

Sometime later today, I'll return to the edit. I told the gentleman I'd turn it around in two weeks or less. My idea is to write until I find a place to leave a good jagged edge, a place that will be easy to continue writing tomorrow morning, then move over to the copyedit. And of course, I'll try to hit my unofficial daily goal of 3000 words.

Anyway, I'll detail out that writing/copyediting process here along with the other stuff I do.

I wrote for the first few hours of the day along with some other things I had to do and stopped at 10 a.m. with around 2100 words. Then I thought I'd better return to the edit for awhile.

I edited from 10 until 11, then went to the PO for a break, then edited until 1. When I did the math on the edit, I realized I was one-fifth of the way through it on only the second day of editing.

That made me feel more comfortable about switching off with my own writing. I like to get edits done and back to the client as quickly as possible, but I also have to feed my urge to write. So we'll see how that goes.

Ended the day with a cycling session and a little over 3000 words. Plus 20% finished with the copyedit. I'm a happy camper.

Back soon.

Of Interest

In a wake-up call for a slacker like me, see "Story Ten Done... Ten Days" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/story-ten-done-ten-days/>. And of course, check Tuesday's post while you're there.

See John Gilstrap's "The Truth About Silencers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/the-truth-about-silencers.html>.

For some writing opportunities, see Jeanne Gassman's blog at <https://jeannelyetgassman.blogspot.com/>. Note: Please read carefully. I haven't vetted these.

Fiction Words: 3081

Nonfiction Words: 610 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3691

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081

Total fiction words for the month..... 17037
Total fiction words for the year..... 130578
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 38670
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 211028

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Jeanne Gassman](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, April 12](#)

[April 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. I woke up right at 2:30, which has become my recent norm. But for various reasons I went back to sleep and didn't wake up again until 4.

Problem is, that throws off the whole day.

The ladies asked me to stay close so they could go out in the pre-dawn yard. So I didn't get to the Hovel, which means I didn't get to the novel.

One drawback to having a dedicated writing space and a dedicated writing computer is that when I don't get there, I don't write.

Then I spent a couple of hours, literally, getting up every 5 – 10 minutes to go out and shoo the noisy, aggravating, multiply cursed woodpeckers away from the hummingbird feeders.

By the way, if any of you know a way to get rid of woodpeckers per-ma-nent-ly, I'm all ears. I have no qualms (at all) about using lethal force on the things, but I can't use a gun because of the proximity to houses.

As it stands, one day I'm going to die outside my kitchen door, veins popping in my neck as I yell at the woodpeckers to "git." Then, of course, he'll come back and dine on my eyes, all the while screeching like a really pi-ed off banshee whose husband has done something dreadful, like, say, breating in and out.

So seriously, any advice would be appreciated. I don't want to hurt them. I just want to kill them so they won't bother me anymore.

At present, I'm on the verge of taking down the humer feeders until the evening, when I'm sitting outside and the WPs won't come around. But I really don't want to punish the hummers and the other birds who have the good sense to dine quietly.

Okay, so I've done nothing this morning but check online stuff and write this. I'm going to edit now (it's slightly after 7 a.m.) and at around 8:30 I hope to head out to the Hovel to write for awhile. Then I'll switch back and forth, probably in about 2-hour intervals, for the rest of the day. At least that's the plan.

Of course, I haven't run my plan across the woodpeckers' desk yet.

Only had a half-day today and other things to do. Still, I added to the novel.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See “Cozies vs. Cutesies” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/cozies-vs-cutesies.html>.

By the way, if you’re into reading really GOOD cozy mysteries, I strongly recommend Nora Barker. As just one example, you can see “Green Eyed Death” at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00J2I0OBQ/>.

See “Recalcitrant Muses and Sometimes Writing Misbehaves” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/04/12/recalcitrant-muses-and-sometimes-writing-misbehaves/>.

See “Tech Tools for Authors #5: Social Media” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/04/11/tech-tools-for-authors-5-social-media/>.

Fiction Words: 2217

Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2677

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081

Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298

Total fiction words for the month..... 19254

Total fiction words for the year..... 132795

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5370

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 39130

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 213706

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, April 13](#)

[April 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Sometimes it feels specifically like I make plans so I'll have something to change later.

Remember how I said a few days ago I was going to write in the early morning and then edit later in the day? Yeah. I worked on my WIP for a few minutes this morning, just enough to put my hand in.

Then I thought about the copyedit waiting on my business computer. My gut tied in a knot. The client was even good enough to prepay the balance for the edit.

Then, thankfully, I read Kris Rusch's current Business Musings article (first item in "Of Interest" today) and decided to slow down a little.

Kris's article is all about the wisdom of moderating the growth of a business. It's good advice, but that isn't my problem. The first sentence that really spoke to me (in context) was "It no longer feels chaotic." The other one was, "The question is balance."

I've been feeling the chaos lately. And does balance mean constantly walking a tightrope with a copyedit (conscious, critical mind) on one side and my WIP (creative subconscious mind) on the other?

No. Not anymore.

I thought about it.

I have no trouble putting off my writing for a couple days at a time when I go camping, right? And I put it off if I have to make an emergency trip. And sometimes I put it off for a day here and there when Mona and I want to go shopping or whatever.

The simple fact is, especially at this time of year (soon after winter), my business consists of being a writer AND a copyeditor. I have one in the computer at the moment and at least three others coming in soon.

But when I try to balance writing with completing a copyedit, the WIP becomes too important.

Working on the copyedit builds pressure to write, and I don't want that. I want to ENJOY writing while I'm writing. I don't want to worry about the copyedit that's waiting for me to hurry up and finish a scene so I can get back to it.

And that goes both ways. I also don't want to copyedit while I'm anxious to get back to the WIP.

So I've decided to split the two.

When I have a copyedit come in, I'm going to set my fun stuff aside and just go to work. I'm a good copyeditor. I have a talent for it. And when the work is finished, the WIP will still be there. Or another one will.

Of course, I still have all the other little things around the house to do too, but those just provide me with breaks either way, whether I'm writing or editing.

And as a writer, I'm pretty well grounded. I've met challenges and word counts and deadlines. I've written 5,000 words in a day, and I've written a novel in 10 days, maybe less.

At this point, at 65 years old, I have 30 novels and 5 novellas, all written in a period of 3 years and 6 months. So I'm confident the words aren't going to go away.

I'll continue to publish this Journal, especially if I find something good for the "Of Interest" section to pass along.

I'm just easing up on myself a little. I'd really like to still be doing all of this 20 years from now.

I didn't add enough to the WIP today to count the words, so I'll resume that with Day 3 when the smoke clears in a week or so.

Back soon.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, see "Business Musings: Bread and Cupcakes" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/04/11/business-musings-bread-and-cupcakes/>.

See J.M. Ney-Grimm's Writing Tips category at <http://jmney-grimm.com/category/behind-the-curtain/writing-tips-behind-the-curtain/>. There are three tips. After you've read the first, scroll to the bottom and click the other two. You'll see some things you've seen before, but sometimes variations help the information sink in.

I also recommend you drop by <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources> and browse awhile. Unless you've visited in the past few days, there's a lot there you haven't seen.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 610 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 610

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081
Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 19254
Total fiction words for the year..... 132795
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5980
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 39740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 214315

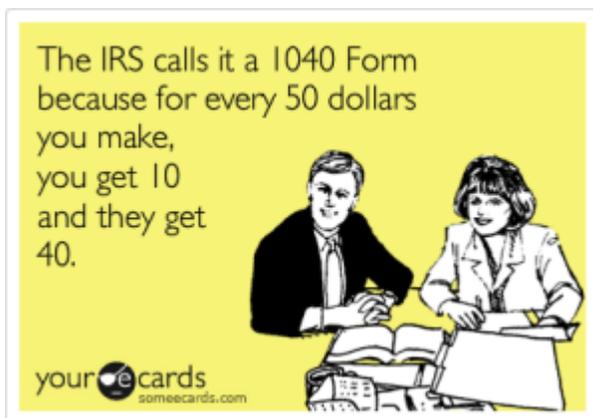
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, April 15](#)

[April 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,



Well, happy Shearing Day.

No fiction writing yesterday or today, as expected.

Yesterday I edited for a few hours in the early morning, then a little more later on.

I was going to publish an edition of this Journal yesterday, but I had nothing even for the “Of Interest” section so I didn’t.

This morning too I edited for a few hours. I should finish the edit over the next two days.

Back when I presented sessions at writers conferences and conventions and in private seminars, every now and then I'd hear some version of "Well, the reader will know what I mean."

Okay, for one thing, it isn't the reader's job to figure out what you're trying to say. It isn't her job to mentally correct your spelling or the images you present.

If you write, "His eyes shot across the room" and the reader bursts out laughing, that's your fault, not the reader's.

That sort of writing (we've all done it) is a sign of either ignorance or laziness. It means the writer either hasn't learned that part of the craft yet (so ignorance) or that she simply doesn't care enough to apply the craft (laziness).

The only solution for ignorance is to keep learning. There is nosolution for laziness.

What spurred this post? See James Scott Bell's article, "Don't Be Satisfied With Competence" in today's "Of Interest" section.

Well, Dean Wesley Smith broke his short streak. He's skipped the last two days in his effort to write 30 short stories in 30 days while moving.

The "while moving" part got the better of him. Of course, early on he said the challenge was to write 30 short stories in 30 days, but not necessarily one every day. So he can still meet the challenge. But I for one was sorry to see his streak end.

I might edit a little more today. More than likely I'll take care of some household chores, see whether Mona wants to do anything, and watch a little TV. In other words, other than what I've already done on the edit, a day off.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See "Don't Be Satisfied With Competence" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/dont-be-satisfied-with-competence.html>.

Catch up with Dean's last few posts. There are some good comments on "An Even Dozen" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/an-even-dozen/>.

Especially if you're a romance author (or want to be) see "The Billion-Dollar Romance Fiction Industry Has A Diversity Problem" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/?p=87857>. I recommend reading The Passive Guy's comments, then click through.

I personally found a gem in "The conventional view of mysteries" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/?p=87853>.

Not about writing, but see "There is no such thing as past or future" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/?p=87841>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 450

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081
Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 19254
Total fiction words for the year..... 132795
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6430
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 40190
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 214765

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, April 16](#)

[April 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I don't have a lot to report today, but a really good "Of Interest" section.

I was determined today to have less than 25% of the edit left to finish tomorrow. With that in mind, I leaned into it from around 4 a.m. until I stopped at around 3 p.m. So a good 11-hour day, with a few breaks here and there.

As I write this I have 15% of the edit left to do, so I should finish it tomorrow. Then, unless the gods frown on me. I should be able to return to my WIP. Woohoo!

I'm not listing Dean Wesley Smith's website very often while he's in the midst of his challenge and moving. But I do recommend you drop in now and then to glance over his posts. That's at <http://deanwesleysmith.com>.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "How To (Legally) Get Away With Murder" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/how-to-legally-get-away-with-murder.html>. This one probably will end up on my Writers Resources page.

Via The Digital Reader, see "The perfect crimes: why thrillers are leaving other books for dead" at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/apr/14/perfect-crime-fiction-bestsellers-whodunnits-thrillers-leave-rivals-for-dead>.

Via The Passive Voice, see "Kindle Previewer: New and (really!) Improved" at <https://jwmanus.wordpress.com/2018/04/16/kindle-previewer-new-and-really-improved/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 210

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081
Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 19254
Total fiction words for the year..... 132795
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6640
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 40400
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 214975

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, April 17](#)

[April 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I finished the edit at about 8 a.m. after a final few hours of editing. Then I ran over it again with Find & Replace just to double check on a couple of global changes, then ran a spell check. I finally sent it off at around 9:30 a.m.

I didn't plan to write today. I usually need to wind down after an edit, especially a lengthy one. I planned to start reading a novel today.

I'd heard of a really good crime author from James Scott Bell. The critics rave about this author (I won't mention his name), but he lost me after about 10 pages. The action just got REALLY slow and, for me, the novel bogged down.

So I thought I might as well head out to the Hovel and look over what I'd written on Versailles.

I started reading through it, but another idea came over me. So I opened a blank document, typed Pulp 9 at the top of the page, Stern Talbot, PI on the next line, and started typing.

Before I realized what was going on, I'd typed over 1900 words. Then I came up here for a break and to get my flash drive.

Pretty sure this is the one I'll return to in the morning, so Versailles is on the back burner for awhile. (grin) It's good to visit with Stern again.

Back soon.

Of Interest

I have a treat for you. To see Raymond Chandler's essay on "The Fine Art of Murder, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Raymond-Chandler-on-The-Fine-Art-of-Murder.pdf>. This will download a PDF document. (I reparagraphed this to make it easier to read. To see the original, see the link bear the top of the PDF document.) This is the essay in which he tells writers exactly who the protagonist in a detective novel should be. Enjoy.

Fiction Words: 1926

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2216

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Total fiction words for the month..... 21180

Total fiction words for the year..... 134721

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 40690

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 217191

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Raymond Chandler](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, April 18](#)

[April 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A long post today, so you might want to grab a beverage. (grin)

Topic: The Power of Streaks Revisited

I talked here awhile back about the power of streaks. A “streak” means repeatedly hitting a certain regularly scheduled goal without missing. When you miss, the streak ends.

For example, say you’re determined to write 1000 words per day every day. The more days you do that in a row, the more powerful the streak becomes because you won’t want to miss.

As a nice aside, and if you did do that for 100 days in a row (just over 3 months) you would have written a 100,000 word novel, or two mid-sized novels, or three or four short novels or a bunch of novellas and/or short stories.

But I digress.

It's true. A streak is very powerful, and for the most part, that's a good thing. The longer your streak goes, the more it drives you to keep it going. In that way, it feeds on itself and your word count (or number of published short stories or novels) climbs astronomically quite quickly.

But that's all the good stuff. It's time to acknowledge that there's also a dark side, a considerable downside, to streaks. The fact is, the streak is jealous. Once you break one, it's extremely difficult to get a new one going.

Sometime last February or March, a professional writer announced that he planned to write 30 stories in 30 days during the month of April.

The assumption, and he mentioned nothing to derail that assumption, was that his challenge would consist of at least one story per day, every day for 30 days. He'd done that before, but never while doing something as involved as moving his entire household from one state to another. That was the kicker, the big part of the challenge.

Then someone commented on one of his posts, asking whether he might write 30 stories in 30 days, but not necessarily a story every day. I doubt the commenter realized he was giving the writer a conscious-mind "out." But that's exactly what he did.

Unfortunately, the writer took it. He responded that if he decided to do that (and that "if" is what doomed his challenge), he'd try to put a story or two in the bank. In other words, he'd try to write more than one story on some days going in.

Only he didn't. He wrote 12 stories in a row, one per day, then broke the streak on Day 13. Then he missed Day 14. (When this happened to me, that second day was my "What's the use?" day.)

Then he wrote two more stories, one per day, and missed again on Day 17.

When I broke my streak of writing a story per week (at 72 weeks) I did the same thing. Missed a couple of weeks then wrote a story or two and finally gave it up.

Same thing when I tried to write one story per day for a month. I made it for only 7 or 8 days, then missed. At that point I told myself "Well, I could still write 30 stories in the month. I'd just have to double up on one day."

But it doesn't matter. It's like the old joke about women winning every argument. She wins because if the man says anything else, it's the beginning of a new argument. (grin)

It's the same with streaks, and that's the takeaway here: You can't miss a day and then keep going on the same streak. When you start again, it's Day 1 of a new streak. If you keep going.

So what happened in the professional writer's case?

In My Opinion, which has zero basis in fact (other than the numbers and my own past experience), he fed his critical mind just enough ammo to stop himself.

This particular writer knows better than anyone how powerful a streak can be. For that reason alone, I suspect he went into the challenge planning to write one story per day every day of the month.

But when someone offered him a slight safety net (he could write 30 stories in a month, but not one per day) he was tired and he took it.

He's still way ahead. If not for the challenge he wouldn't have written over 32,000 words in the first 12 days of the month. And if not for the sputtering restart, he wouldn't have written two more stories for a total of almost 37,000 words on the month.

My hat's off to the guy, maybe even moreso because I've seen critical voice slap him around a few times recently, and that means it doesn't only happen to me. Plus he's my mentor, so that adds a whole new twist.

I hope he finishes out the (slightly altered) challenge successfully. Problem is — again, IMHO — the alteration is what sabotaged the streak. I hope he finds a way to write the additional three stories while writing one story per day for the rest of the month.

Unfortunately, I don't think he will. But the guy is a warrior of the written word. I think he'll stagger to his feet and write one or two more stories, then miss another day and end it with an acknowledgment that he failed to success.

I hope I'm wrong.

Note: I wrote the above with the notion that it might be instructive for you. Please don't share any of it with Dean. Trust me, he doesn't need any negative input right now.

Rolled out late this morning at a little after 4. I knew from past experience trying to catch up with my usual schedule would only make things more hectic, so instead I got my coffee, settled in at the business computer, and screwed off for awhile. Including writing all of this.

Now it's a little after 8:30. For various reasons, my trip to the Hovel was delayed. But finally I'm headed out to work on one WIP or the other. (grin)

If you'd read what I've already written for either of these WIPs you'd know why I said I'm going to work on "one WIP or the other." It's a very nice problem to have.

One (Versailles) seems to be shaping up as a war novel, and it's very Hemingway-esque. The other one is a Stern Talbot, PI novel. It isn't anything-esque. It's just plain ol' me. Very different, but both are a ton of fun.

Well, it's the Stern Talbot novel. Added 1100 words in the first session, then up to the house for a break. (Frankly, I think my subconscious chose this one because it would be really cool to have finished my 31st novel by the end of April.)

I'd kind'a like to switch back and forth on the two WsIP, but the voices are just too different. Then again, y'never know. Like I said, it's a good problem to have.

Well, I kept allowing myself to be distracted and wound up with fewer words on the day than I would have liked. Then again, the story hasn't really taken off yet.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See "Another Miss... Down Three" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/another-miss-down-three/>. And bless his heart for baring his soul.

On a lighter note, see "In-Person Workshops Moving to Las Vegas!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/in-person-workshops-moving-to-las-vegas/>.

Fiction Words: 2884

Nonfiction Words: 1230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4114

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Total fiction words for the month..... 24064

Total fiction words for the year..... 137605

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8160

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 41920

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 221305

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Streaks](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, April 19](#)

[April 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Another very long post today. Get your beverage, settle in and enjoy.

Way back on January 7, I started a story called “The Storytellers.”

On the first trip to the Hovel this morning, I happened across it while looking for Versailles. An idea occurred to me last night, and I was going to apply it this morning.

Remember yesterday I mentioned I wished I could work on both of them (Versailles and Pulp 9) back and forth?

Be careful what you wish for.

Curious, I opened “The Storytellers” and glanced over it. As I read, naturally, I did a little cycling. Lo and behold, the thing took off.

So now I have three WsIP. I’m going to list them all below for awhile until one or the other becomes predominant. Whichever one I work on that day will be at the top. If I work on more than one... but at the moment, I don’t feel like that’s going to happen.

When I started “The Storytellers,” I was certain it was going to be a short story.

Now I think it’s going to be a hybrid. I think it’s going to be both a short story collection and a novel. And yes, I’ll publish it both ways. Or rather in all ways.

Each chapter will also be a stand-alone short story. Yet when they’re combined, they will form a novel, with each story taking up a chapter or two or three.

So there will be a novel and a short story collection. That’s two publications. Then there will be 8 or 10 or 15 short stories, each with its own cover, each a separate publication.

Obviously, I’m excited at the prospect.

Trouble is, I’m also excited at the prospect of writing Stern Talbot’s current story (Pulp 9) and the story of what happened in Versailles. Both of those will be novels as well.

So wish me luck, rub your lucky faux rabbit’s foot, mutter prayers, or whatever you have. I appreciate it.

When the smoke clears, I should have at least 33 novels, a new short story collection and in the vicinity of 200 short stories.

Topic: Have a Clue

This morning as I read a new post on a site I often reference here in the “Of Interest” section, I was reminded again of the preacher in the film “Oh God.” The problem was, the preacher was a hypocrite.

God (played by George Burns) said, “The guy ought to be selling Earth shoes.”

That sums up my philosophy about entirely too many so-called writing instructors.

I won’t reference the site today. Some of you probably will find it and read the offensive post anyway, and that’s fine, but if you do, please keep a HUGE container of salt close at hand. Other than the major faux pas I list below as an example, the article is rife with inaccuracies and flat-out wrong information.

If you know me at all, you know my number one irritant is people who go about teaching things of which they are ignorant. When I come across an example of this, I actually lose sleep. How much sleep I lose depends on how heavily the offense registers on my That’s Some Seriously Wrong Crap scale.

Why does this bother me so much?

Because I’m a writer and an editor and a writing instructor who DOES know what I’m talking about. If I don’t know something, I don’t teach it, period. And I’m conscientious about the reader (*your* reader) and the reading experience. They and you deserve no less from a writing instructor.

Now, to be clear, not knowing something about the language doesn’t mean you shouldn’t write. We’re all learning via the process of writing.

But it does mean, in spades, you should go to your doctor and have your mouth sewn shut rather than hold forth on the topic to other writers.

And as a writer who’s striving to improve your craft, when you hear something that doesn’t strike you as factual, you should question it. No matter the source. Yes, even me. I’ll gladly field questions.

The most memorable example of writers succumbing to bogus information arose while I was teaching a very basic writing seminar awhile back on the use and application of punctuation, including quotation marks.

One class member asked why I found it necessary to put quotation marks around dialogue.

“Because those two little ink ties before dialogue indicates to the reader that what she’s about to read is spoken aloud. And the two afterward mean the character stopped speaking.”

The student said, “But Cormac McCarthy doesn’t do it that way, so why should we?”

Seriously? In ONE of Cormac McCarthy's books he tried that. In millions or even billions of books, writers successfully used quotation marks around dialogue, yet she'd picked as an example of what to do the one book that didn't.

I gave up. I shrugged and said, "You're the writer. Do it however you like."

I wish I'd said, "What was the book about? Can you give me a synopsis?" Because I'd bet anything she couldn't. What she remembered wasn't the story, but the fact that the author hadn't used quotation marks.

I've also heard repeatedly, "But my writing instructor at Blah Blah Academy said...." I could give you examples, but the list is practically endless. Maybe I'll write a nonfiction book about it.

At any rate, the "writing instructor" was wrong. And I had to clean up the mess, and then defend myself for doing so.

This morning I ran across an example that was equally basic and equally egregious.

The writer-turned-wannabe-instructor put forth this group of words and called it a run-on sentence:

"Why does it have to be a fire crime, I hate fire crimes, Cam must remember that, he should have told me."

If you believe this group of words is a run-on sentence, Don't Tell Others. You're only showing your ignorance.

It isn't, by the way. It's a series of comma splices.

Neither is a run-on sentence a really long sentence, even if it's so long that it's difficult to comprehend.

A run-on sentence is any two or more independent clauses joined by nothing. In other words, they "run on" from one sentence to the next. No periods. No comma followed by a coordinating conjunction. No semicolon.

For the example to be a run-on sentence it would have to look like this:

"Why does it have to be a fire crime I hate fire crimes Cam must remember that he should have told me."

Now THAT is a run-on sentence.

A comma splice is the same thing with one important difference, hence the name. A comma splice is any two or more independent clauses that are joined only with commas.

Again, a period (or semicolon, but those aren't used much in fiction) in place of the comma in a comma splice would solve the problem. Or inserting the appropriate coordinating conjunction after the comma would correct it.

(The acronym FANBOYS is a convenient way to remember the coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.)

So if you fix the example, it might look like this:

“Why does it have to be a fire crime? I hate fire crimes. Cam must remember that, so he should have told me.”

I'm certain some of you are rolling your eyes, and I don't blame you. This stuff is basic. I understand that. But not everybody was in class that day, and of those who were, not everybody got it.

And to be sure you understand, as you're writing, you should NOT be thinking “Oh gosh, did I just write a comma splice?”

This is the stuff that most of us learned at some point in school. From there it seeped into your subconscious, and it comes out automatically as you write. You know, like enclosing dialogue in quotation marks or putting a period at the end of a sentence.

So it isn't necessary to allow your conscious mind into the writing process by “watching” for comma splices and run-on sentences as you write.

But if you're one of the unfortunates who missed class that day, well, that's why God created copyeditors.

A good copyeditor will correct the copy, but he'll also teach you as he goes. For one thing, he wants you to improve. For another, he wants to lessen his workload so he can more fully enjoy your story as he reads through it.

To see what I can do for you as a copyeditor, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/copyediting/>.

To see the 2nd edition of my book, Punctuation for Writers, click <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B004SBO8Z0> for Amazon or <http://www.handsandheart.info/telecharger/b004sbo8z0-punctuation-for-writers-english-edition>. Actually, I didn't know this listing existed until just now.

As for the professional writer who put her ignorance on display this morning? Well, she might or might not be a good writer, but she's no writing instructor. In that regard, she should be selling Earth shoes.

Well, I didn't get 3000 words today, but close. And The Storytellers is going strong.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See Linda Maye Adams' "Naming Names and Other Muse Misadventures" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/04/19/naming-names-and-other-muse-misadventures/>.

See "Had To Happen: I Committed Novel" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/had-to-happen/>.

Fiction Words: 2966

Nonfiction Words: 1420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4386

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081

Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 27030

Total fiction words for the year..... 140571

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9580

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 43340

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 225691

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, April 20](#)

[April 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. I have to admire Dean's tenacity. He started a challenge to write 30 stories in 30 days while moving.

But also, his wife, friend and life partner is physically hundreds of miles away. Even with the availability of phone calls and emails, not having the energy of that physical presence around has to be a trauma.

Plus he's giving up a beautiful home he's lived in for a very long time. That's a major trauma.

Plus his responsibilities at WMG Publishing, and the workshops, and the emails etc. etc. ad nauseam. And on top of all that, he added the challenge.

Today he's four stories down. Yet still he writes, "which means I need to write 15 stories in the next eleven days. I honestly think I can do that."

Well, of course he can. And I hope he does.

Topic: Let the Writer Beware

Recently, a writing friend sent me a link to an article that seems to indicate Scribd, a major subscription service, is not paying authors. To read the original article, see the first item in "Of Interest" below.

It's an interesting article. But we're all in charge of our own career to one degree or the other.

In the end, my only advice would be to not distribute to Scribd (or do), and to do a search and remove any of your works that are already there (or don't).

My friend wrote to Draft2Digital to ask them about Scribd. D2D wrote back, in part, that

"Scribd, like many eBook retailers, offers new subscribers a chance to read a book for free, as an enticement to subscribe to the service. The author does not receive a royalty for books read for free, unfortunately. But it may help to think of this as a bit of additional promotion, helping readers to discover your work, for the cost of one book."

Of course, that doesn't mean Scribd is paying writers (or paying them appropriately) for books that are *not* given away free. And I suspect that's the point of the original article.

I often find my own works on sites I've never heard of before. The most recent was only yesterday, when I found one of my most popular nonfiction titles at <http://www.handsandheart.info/telecharger/b004sbo8z0-punctuation-for-writers-english-edition>. Complete with other-language translations, no less.

Today, I'm looking into them.

But when I've found my works at other "small" sites I wasn't aware of, in every case eventually I learned they were subsidiaries of Amazon or Apple or Kobo or Barnes & Noble and that my sales were counted and royalties paid through those parent organizations.

Then the problem becomes accountability. How do I know the subsidiaries are reporting to the parent companies? How do I know the parent companies are reporting correct figures to me? How do I know someone somewhere isn't fudging numbers?

The fact is, I don't. Nor can I.

So finally, for the most part, I simply stopped worrying about it. I like to write, so that's my main focus. I entertain myself with my stories. Then, since I've already written the thing, well, I suppose I might as well publish it so other people can read it if they want.

That's how I actually look at it. That's why I teach writing, but not marketing or any of that. The most important thing I can tell you about "discoverability" is to write more works and get them out there. The more titles you have out, the easier it is for readers to find your work.

So back to the topic at hand.

I made the conscious decision to simply accept that some of my works would be sold or given away without my knowledge. You know, just like my paperbacks might be passed from one hand to another.

I've done the same thing myself. I recently bought a lot of 18 paperback Jack Reacher novels on ebay from the guy who'd bought them from the bookstore. Think Lee Child got a cut of the \$35 I paid the guy on ebay? Of course not.

But none of that means I'll continue to distribute to a major player (like Scribd) who is obviously not playing by the rules. I won't. But I'm loath to advise anyone else as to what they specifically should or should not do.

As my Psychology teacher once said, "Don't should on people." I think that's great advice.

In the first two sessions this morning, I finished the first short story in the The Storytellers with just over 2000 words. Now for a break and then back to start the second story.

This is making me rethink structure, too. I'm used to my chapters being around 1000 words. If each short story in this book is a chapter, then each chapter will be 3000 to 5000 words.

Each one is further broken into sections — like mini-chapters — but that's still something to think about. What matters is the reader's experience as he reads through this thing.

The individual short stories will stand alone, of course, but I also want the reader to be tempted to turn the page at the end of a chapter (story) and begin reading the next page just as in a normal novel.

I probably could have cleared 5000+ words today of fiction, but I found a good stopping place, so I did. A pretty good day.

Oh, and from now on, I'm only gonna light up (bold) the story/ies I worked on that day.

Back soon.

Of Interest

See "SCRIBD.COM – Is Copyright Infringement Their Business Model..." at <http://writersweekly.com/this-weeks-article/scribd-com-is-copyright-infringement-their-business-model-and-are-you-a-victim-too-by-wilfried-f-voss>. Note that WritersWeekly.com is a function of BookLocker, one of the subsidy publishers I regularly warn writers against. Still, that's no reflection on the author of the article or the validity of the topic.

See "Digging the Hole Deeper" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/digging-the-hole-deeper/>.

Coincidentally, see "Business Musings: Limitations" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/04/18/business-musings-limitations/>.

Fiction Words: 4475

Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5445

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081
Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 31505
Total fiction words for the year..... 145046
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 44310
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 231136

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, April 21](#)

[April 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, surprises happen. Last night not long after I'd gone to bed, my wife came in to say my son and his wife and three of my grandchildren were on their way down from Flagstaff for the weekend.

I got up and we got things ready. Still, I was determined to get up earlier than usual to get as much done on The Storytellers as possible. The story is really running.

The structure is interesting too, as it's developed. There's an introductory section, which is the beginning of the overall story that wraps the novel.

Then there's a story. After that, I shifted back to where the introduction left off and inserted an "Intermission," in which I returned to the overall story.

That led to another story, which will lead to another intermission after it ends. Very interesting, and the whole story flows just as if it has nothing better to do. (grin)

I actually challenged a friend (who is also a character in the overall story) to do the same thing, write his version of the same book with his own stories and “intermissions,” but I don’t know whether he’ll do that. We’ll see.

For now, in the first long session (and maybe the only one today) with only one short break, I wrote 1500 words. I’ll add a bit more while I finish a cigar, then head up to the house to see what’s what for the day.

Well, it’s after noon, so I’m not going to get anything else done in writing today. That’s all right. I hope to sack out early today and start early tomorrow morning.

See you then.

Of Interest

See “A Lot of Paint and a Story” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-lot-of-paint-and-a-story/>.

See “Hang On! First Page Critique: MANNAHATTA” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/hang-on-first-page-critique-mannahatta.html>.

Fiction Words: 1718

Nonfiction Words: 310 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2028

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745

Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081

Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	33223
Total fiction words for the year.....	146764
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10860
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	44620
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	233164
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, April 22](#)

[April 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm posting this very early today. The sun has almost come up. (grin)

Today will be a non-writing day, but some good items in "Of Interest" below.

After a very short night of sleep, I still managed to get out to the Hovel early, as I'd hoped I would. I continued the current story/chapter, then hit a snag and cycled back to repair it.

That took me almost to the beginning of that chapter, so I settled in and read through the whole thing, still cycling. I added a few hundred words, but not enough to count them as a separate writing day.

Today will be a day of cleaning and chores. I should be back in the full swing tomorrow.

See you then.

Of Interest

See "Editing is Dying, Grunting Soon to Follow" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/editing-is-dying-grunting-soon-to-follow.html>. Hilarious.

See "A Planned Miss" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-planned-miss/>.

Just a reminder that Kristine Kathryn Rusch, one of the world's foremost storytellers, posts a free short story every week on her site on Monday. You can find this week's story, "G-Men" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/04/16/free-fiction-monday-g-men/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 180 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 180

Writing of The Storytellers
Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081
Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 33223
Total fiction words for the year..... 146764
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 44800
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 233344

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, April 23](#)

[April 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, let's start today off with a

Topic: If You're a Writer and I'm a Reader, You Owe Me Something

There were a lot of good comments on James Scott Bell's "Editing is Dying, Grunting Soon to Follow" in the Kill Zone blog. You can find the post and the comments at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/editing-is-dying-grunting-soon-to-follow.html>.

Reading the comments was an eye-opening experience.

Someone, a writer no less, actually advocated for the spelling of "all right" as "alright," which, honestly, is just laziness.

It's the same reason some folks write "enuff" instead of "enough" or "no" instead of "know" (I'm not kidding) or "hiway" instead of "highway" or "till" instead of "'til" or "OK" instead of "okay." And there are a host of others.

But in every case, those misspellings (alright/enuff/hiway) or misuses (no/till) or unnecessary abbreviations (OK) are the result of laziness.

Yes, I know some of them are now taught in schools and included in the dictionary, depending on which dictionary you use. But their "common" use and eventual arrival in the dictionary were both precipitated on laziness.

At some point, it became easier for teachers and lexicographers to simply accept the error rather than correct it.

And yes, I understand the reader will know what you mean (sigh), but as I've often repeated over the years, deciphering what the writer is trying to say and mentally correcting the writer's grammar and syntax are not the reader's responsibility. Besides, more often than not, it shoves the reader out of your story.

On the other hand, it IS the responsibility of the writer to know and understand the tools of his trade, the more basic of which are spelling, grammar and syntax.

"But," someone will say, "isn't it all right to use 'alright' in dialogue to indicate dialect?"

No. It isn't. And as a copyeditor, I correct every instance of it, in or out of dialogue.

But before you don (not "dawn") your war paint, let me explain.

If your character speaks with the dialect of a particular region, maybe he'll say "a'right" (predominant in the northeast). I wouldn't correct that as a copyeditor or as a reader.

Or he might even say "a'ight." That pronunciation is predominant in some large inner cities. It's also predominant in the deep south, especially southern Louisiana (south of Interstate 10), and especially as part of "a'ight'en" (all right then). Nor would I correct either of those uses.

And no, I wouldn't correct the folks who wrote the immortal line for Jim Carrey in the Ace Ventura movies: "Alll ighty then!" Even if it had more than three Ls. (Although as a copyeditor I would make sure every instance of "Alll" in that utterance was spelled consistently.)

In some western settings (maybe), a character might even mutter "awright," especially (maybe) if he/she is blushing at the time.

And there are dozens, maybe even hundreds, of more examples of truncated, phonetic or otherwise altered spellings used to convey local or regional dialects and speech patterns that I wouldn't correct as a reader or as a copyeditor.

But there is no construction anywhere in which "alright" is all right.

Why? Because the pronunciation is the same either way.

Why risk annoying your reader with what amounts to a misspelling that doesn't make a difference in the pronunciation of the word?

I have similar grievances regarding constructions like "should of" or "could/would of" instead of "should've" or "should have." But in modern times, those misuses are based on ignorance (a lack of knowing better).

Those grievances are for the same reason I don't like "alright" though. They don't change the pronunciation of the construction.

Okay, there y'go. Discuss among (not "amongst") yourselves. And if you have what you believe is a valid argument, comment below or email me.

Rolled out way late this morning at just before 5. For that reason, I hung around the house until my wife left for work at 8:30.

After I finished breakfast and did a couple of chores, I headed for the Hovel at 9:30.

In the first two sessions, with maybe a 10-minute break in between, I got just over 2600 words and finished the second story in the novel.

Then another, slightly longer break. During that one I ate lunch, went to the PO, then came back and started a load of laundry. Then back to “work.” (grin)

It was a pretty good day.

See you then.

Of Interest

Via The Digital Reader, see “Author Newsletter vs. Author Blog” at <http://annerallen.com/2017/04/author-newsletter-vs-author-blog/>.

See “Story Seventeen” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/story-seventeen-2/>.

Fiction Words: 3825

Nonfiction Words: 710 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4535

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081
Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 37048
Total fiction words for the year..... 150589
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 45510
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 237879

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, April 24](#)

[April 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Great “Of Interest” section today. Don’t skip over Lee Lofland’s blog post just because maybe you aren’t a crime/police/detective writer. Using all the senses is a skill you need in ANY fiction.

Topic: Aging as Excuse

A young Marine Corps friend of mine recently posted on Facebook that he’s met 40 year olds who are old and 80 year olds who are young. I agree.

In fact, I commented there that “I still tell people I’m 26, but I was rode hard and put away wet. Plus I have 39 years’ experience at being 26, so I’m REALLY good at it.”

Truedat, as the kids say. Most of “acting your age” is a matter of attitude.

Then too, I’m reminded of all sorts of folks who’ve told me they “can’t” do one thing or another because they’re “too old.” These are probably the same folks who, a few decades ago, decried their inability to do certain things because they were “too young.” Or the wind was blowing. Or the sun was shining. Or it wasn’t.

But there ARE differences. You can do anything you want to do. It just might take a little longer. Or maybe you have to take a different tack.

Given general good health, the 40 year old who seems old hasn’t yet learned the concept. He isn’t aware yet of what’s coming. The 80 year old who seems young has experienced the concept, backed it into a corner and whipped its butt.

I’m between those two extremes in my mid-60s. Fortunately, I’ve encountered enough physical problems, though none of them have readily visual clues, that I too have learned the concept.

Some of those problems (we all have them) have gotten me down from time to time. But never far enough that I forgot we always have choices.

My ticker is on the blink. When I encounter something I think will help, I take it or do it. But otherwise, generally, I don't think of it. Nothing I can do about it anyway beyond the things I believe will help, so I don't worsen the problem by worrying about it.

I've also developed severe arthritis in my lower spine. Some days it renders me all but unable to walk. But other days, most days, it doesn't bother me at all. And there's nothing I can do about this problem save a risky surgery, so frankly I'd rather put up with the few off days.

Those are my two big problems.

But I'm a writer nowadays. I'm no longer expected or required to do things for which I used to be well-suited, like being a cop or working in the oil fields of New Mexico or driving a rig or being a Marine.

I'm no longer expected to lift heavy objects. Well, I AM a guy and I have a girl for whom I occasionally like to show off, so I still do that now and then. But I usually pre-lift it first while I'm alone so I don't make an utter fool of myself. (grin)

But again, the differences....

There was a time when I was instantly awake even after only 3 hours of sleep (one sleep cycle, for me). A sleep cycle is the time it takes your brain to go from Alpha (just below consciousness) then cycle down through Theta and Delta and back up through Theta to Alpha again.

Now I have to have two sleep cycles, and the cycle itself has increased to 3.5 hours. So I need 7 hours of sleep if I'm to function at a normal level. But even after all that, it takes me an hour or so to wake up. And I'm leaning more all the time toward the "or so" part of that equation.

So what?

What matters in life are the waking hours. Those are what bring us back to Choice. During our waking hours, we choose all through the day how to spend them.

And that's what finally leads this post to writing. Figure out how many words on average you write in an hour. Probably it will be 800 to 1200 WPH.

When you write 1000 words per hour, that's only 17 words per minute. That gives you a lot of time to stare off into space while you search mentally for "lichen" so you don't have to write "that grey-green or grey-blue stuff on rocks."

If you write only 300 or 400 or 600 words per hour and I were your writing coach, my first question would be "What in the world are you doing with your time?"

So do that. Figure out your WPH average and then how many hours or parts of hours you can dedicate to the chair each day. If you have a back like mine, get a good lumbar support (or a good chair, or both) or alternate standing and sitting.

Or don't. If you only want to write an hour a week, do that. But know that you have choices. Know that you have an attitude and occasionally it might need an adjustment. Then apply that attitude, regardless of your chronological age, and get back to living your life.

Or writing. Whatever.

Got out to the Hovel around 9, and in two sessions knocked out 1800 words. Then a break for the PO and all of that.

Yesterday I started reading the autobiography of Joseph Bonanno (yeah, that one, the godfather). In the introduction, he said if you're expecting one-dimensional stuff like you'd see in the movies, give the book to someone else, that this is the story of his life. His real life, with all the nuances, good and bad.

I'm in Heaven. This is exactly what I hoped it would be. Even the darkest antagonist has a good side, and even the purest protagonist has a dark side. I'm looking forward to reading more of it.

But not at the moment. I got back from the PO, saw it on my desk and picked it up. Then I remembered I need to at least finish the current intermission in my WIP and at least start the next story.

So I put the book down and wrote this stuff. Now it's back to having fun with my characters.

Well, a pretty good day. I'll take it.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

Anybody else out there write cops? You might consider registering for the Writers' Police Academy conference. See <http://www.writerspoliceacademy.com/conference/schedule/> for the schedule.

In the alternative (or maybe in addition) I recommend subscribing to Lee Lofland's blog, The Graveyard Shift at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-graveyard-shift-blog/>.

See Dean's "Backed Against The Challenge Wall" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/backed-against-the-challenge-wall/>. Incredible.

Via the Kill Zone blog, see "A Cop's Nighttime Melody: The Sounds of Graveyard Shift" at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-cops-nighttime-melody-the-sounds-of-graveyard-shift/>. Crime writer PJ Parrish calls this post "a master class in the power of using your senses, and finding the telling details, to make any scene or character come to life."

Fiction Words: 3328

Nonfiction Words: 1150 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4478

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745

Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463

Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228

Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556

Writing of Versailles (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3081 words. Total words to date..... 3081

Day 2..... 2217 words. Total words to date..... 5298

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Writing of Pulp 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 40376

Total fiction words for the year..... 153917

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12900

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 46660

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 242357

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Lee Lofland](#),

[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, April 25](#)

[April 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I guess I'm nothing if not an experimenter.

It would be more than easy for me to take a day off today and do nothing but read and maybe even nap.

I don't nap. And I don't mean as a general rule. I mean at all. I guard against it. I shudder at the thought. The inability to avoid napping, for me personally, will signal the beginning of old age.

Had a rough night. I doubt I got more than two hours' sleep in total. And I checked the clock every time I woke up, or had to get up. So I know I didn't sleep even a half-hour at a stretch.

I'm fine this morning physically, but I don't "feel" like doing my job. But professionals show up every day, right? It isn't like I'm contagious, and even if I were, it isn't like there's anyone in the Hovel but me.

So that's what I'm going to do. It should be an interesting experiment. I'll write, but I plan not to cycle back over anything until tomorrow. Then I'll revisit everything I wrote today.

I started the day at 2:30 because I was frustrated at the get-up/lie-down cycle I'd been going through.

I didn't bother with the Internet. Just made a mug of coffee, grabbed my thumb drive and headed out to the Hovel. Spent some time trying to de-grease my eyelids while playing Spider solitaire.

I did come up with another story idea for my novel. I'll write it when I finish the one I started yesterday (and the next intermission) but I can't say for sure where it'll appear in the book. Maybe next, maybe last. That's one of the joys of writing this sort of thing.

Oh, structurally there's been one massive change. Originally I thought the stories might all be interconnected, with one leading to the next and so on.

Instead, they're connected only by the intermissions, and in at least some cases, something that happens at the end of an intermission leads to (informs?) the next story.

Again, an experiment.

Back to the house for a break and to check the Internet. It's 4 a.m.

Well, I might need to lose sleep more often. I returned to the Hovel at 8:30 and started writing where I left off yesterday. I finished the third story, then started through an intermission.

I took a few very short breaks along the way, but at 11:30 I had written just over 3300 words. So at least I know the experiment was a success.

Now I'm off for a break, then maybe back to write some more. I'd like to finish the intermission today and start another story.

Well, I finished the Intermission, then skipped down and added to the Introduction. (Since I'm writing this novel for both writers and readers, it will have an introduction or maybe "writer's notes.")

And then my energy flagged. That's fine. I'll start the next story tomorrow morning.

Anyway, I ended up with over 3800 words on the day. I'll take it

Oh, you might notice I removed the other two WsIP from the accounting below. They aren't abandoned, just set aside for awhile.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Kris Rusch has a new short story up at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/04/23/free-fiction-monday-matilda/>.

See "Do Romance Authors Receive Worse Treatment from Publishers Than Anyone Else?" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/?p=88027>.

Fiction Words: 3899

Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4449

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455

Total fiction words for the month..... 44275

Total fiction words for the year..... 157816

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13450

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 47210
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 246806

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, April 25](#)

[April 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, another all but sleepless night, but due to my own stupidity. Something I ate, late, when I knew better.

Then I spent the first few hours deflecting a crapstorm. I won't go into it here, but I had to include that much as part of the accounting of the day.

Suffice it to say I'll be late getting out to the Hovel today. So we'll see how that goes.

Got to the Hovel around 9 and started a new story. Then I remembered something else I had to do up at the house, so I headed up there.

Well, I spent the majority of the morning fielding vociferous emails from a spoiled little girl who's actually in her mid-40s but going-on 15. Somehow she's come to imagine she's the General Manager of the Universe.

People like that are all the more reason to escape into writing fiction. She'll have a major role in an upcoming story.

I won't bore you with details of the morning, but there went most of the writing day. Thursday's only a half-day anyway.

By the way, somehow I didn't add yesterday's fiction total below. The numbers below are correct now.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Cadaver Dogs – The Nose Knows" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/cadaver-dogs-the-nose-knows.html>.

See "Another Story... Another Series" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/another-story-another-series/>.

Fiction Words: 1227

Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1437

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745

Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463

Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228

Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556

Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455

Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22682

Total fiction words for the month..... 45502

Total fiction words for the year..... 159043

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13600

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 47420

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 248243

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, April 27](#)

[April 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, when I started the current WIP, I thought I might finish it by the end of the month. The numbers added up about right. But it wasn't so much a goal as something I thought I would probably do. Now I don't think that's going to happen.

I had a couple of nights under the weather with very little sleep, and then a minor life roll reared it's ugly attitude yesterday. So my production's dropped.

I had a light writing day yesterday, and another one today. I'm so emotionally and mentally spent that I decided not to force it.

Oh, I came out to the Hovel and gave the story a little nudge, but a good writing day just wasn't in the cards.

Tomorrow and the next day are Saturday and Sunday, typically light days at best. Plus I'm expecting a visit from a friend tomorrow and then another one from another friend sometime in the coming week.

Of course, all of that's fine. The WIP will be there when I get back to it, and there are at least two more (maybe three) waiting in the wings. (One of the stories I wrote for this WIP wants to be a novel.)

When I started this novel/collection, I planned to write maybe 10 stories and 11 Intermissions. That would include the prologue to open the novel, an epilogue to wrap it, and an Intermission during which the storyline would return to the novel between every pair of short stories.

I was also thinking my "normal" short story is around 3,000 words. So with 10 stories at about 3000 words each and 11 intermissions totalling another 25-30,000 words, I figured this would wrap at 55,000 to 60,000 words.

But if I let it be what it wants to be, it's going to be a long one. Two of the three stories I've written thus far are 7,000 words each, and the other one is over 4,000 words.

When the writing's going well and Life leaves me alone, I'm knocking out one short story and two Intermissions every two days.

So I'm no longer even thinking about the end of the month as a target finishing date. I'm just going to let this thing run until it stops. Or until I have 10 stories. Whichever comes first.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "DNA Phenotyping Unmasks Golden State Killer" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/dna-phenotyping-unmasks-golden-state-killer/>. Amazing stuff.

See "Business Musings: Schedules and Structure" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/04/25/business-musings-schedules-and-structure/>.

Fiction Words: 1135

Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1555

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22682
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 46637
Total fiction words for the year..... 160178
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14060
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 47840
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 249798

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, April 28](#)

[April 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Long post today. Good "Of Interest" section too.

Well, another night of very little sleep for me. About 5 hours, waking up every hour to clear allergy symptoms. But every time I lay down again, the symptoms built up. Eventually I figured I might as well give up and head out to the Hovel to get some writing done.

So out to the Hovel at 2 a.m. I spent about an hour doing nothing, then added around 800 words to the story I started yesterday.

(I started another story two days ago, but it didn't feel right so I moved it to the end and started another one yesterday. Oddly enough, this one feels like a novel start too. That makes two so far.)

Up to the house for a break at 4.

After the break, I added another few hundred words before my brain locked up.

Topic: A Few Grains of Salt

I often advise writers to learn all they can from valid sources. Those, most often, are multi-published authors, ideally authors who write in your chosen genre.

I'm probably an odd bug because I write in several genres. So I count myself doubly fortunate that I stumbled across Dean Wesley Smith as my primary mentor.

But just as often, I also advise writers to take their lessons with a grain of salt. Don't believe something is right (or right for you) just because a well-published author does things a certain way or hands out certain kinds of advice.

Today I found a perfect case in point. A professional writer named Mark Alpert posted on the Kill Zone blog a list of 9 things you can do to make yourself a professional writer.

I agreed with many of his points. But I also disagreed with some of them. And some I strongly disagreed with, meaning I see them as not only too personal to his own process, but actually harmful.

A link to the original post is in the "Of Interest" section. What follows are a few grains of salt from yours truly.

Because he used bullet points instead of a numbered list, I reference his bullet points below with a keyword from each point:

Goals

No disagreement here, but consider figuring out how many words you can write in an hour and then how many hours you can write per day and per week. Establishing a goal for a week at a time makes it easier to fudge.

Advice and Instruction

I disagree vehemently with his advice to get constructive criticism of a work in progress from peers. If you want criticism, try to find someone who's much farther along the road than you are. Otherwise the blind leading the blind thing applies.

I fully agree with his advice to take courses (again, from knowledgeable, proven instructors) and to read the kind of thing you want to write.

Change Course

I agree with the basic premise, but again, not the critique group stuff. Nine times out of ten, other writers who are novices will tell you something isn't working strictly because it isn't the way they would have done it (though they won't say that's the reason).

Be Polite but Persistent

Well, yeah. And don't be afraid to take the bull by the horns and self-publish.

Network

Some good advice. Business cards? Not for novelists, but if you're freelancing articles or ghostwriting, sure. Business cards advertise your business. If you're a novelist or short story writer and insist on having business cards, I recommend you use them to advertise your website where the reader can learn about your books.

Writers conferences are a great place for peer discussions (not critiques) and a general sharing of knowledge.

Sweat the Details

Yep. "The reader will know what I mean" is nothing but a cop-out. Mr. Alpert writes, "A professional writer has respect for the language." I add, "And the reader."

Keep Promises

Yep, and to yourself too. Set your goals, then meet them.

Prepare for the Future

Good advice. The "platform" means a website, an Amazon author page, social media (maybe), a Goodreads account, etc. If you're self-published, create a website for your publisher too.

I was particularly interested in Mr. Alpert's upcoming trip to OKC to teach at the OWFI conference there. Back when I was teaching at a lot of conferences, OWFI was one of my regular invitations. Sigh.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "A Three Story Day!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-three-story-day/>.

See Mark Alpert's "How To Become A Professional Writer..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/how-to-become-a-professional-writer-in-nine-not-so-easy-steps.html>.

Fiction Words: 1108

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1868

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22682
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23817
Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24925

Total fiction words for the month..... 47745
Total fiction words for the year..... 161286
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14840
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 48600
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 251666

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, April 29](#)

[April 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm officially under the weather. I thought it was just allergies. By all accounts, the season is worse this year for some reason.

But mine's developed into a full-blown (no pun intended) head cold. I did get more sleep last night than I've had in the past few nights combined, but it was still spotty at best.

No writing today. I have one major chore that I can't put off (clearing some drain pipes) but otherwise I plan to rest and read today.

Some thoughts on the WIP.....

I have two short stories in the novel/collection WIP that are great as short stories but won't be anything else. Frankly, that's what I wanted and expected. I'd forgotten how much my subconscious prefers to write novels.

But it does. As a result, I have one short story in the novel/collection that wraps nicely as a short story but also consists of the first five or six chapters of a novel.

I have one short story that I started a few days ago and set aside to finish later. That one will wrap as a short story only, and that's fine. But it's one that I have to be in a particular mood to write (time period, setting, characters, etc. require it).

The one I started two days ago and added a little to yesterday, though... it's the opening for a novel, but no way is it going to wrap as a short story. If I force it, I'll lose the long story that it wants to be, so I won't do that. When it's finished, it will be a noir crime/detective novel with a female lead, my first.

So when I go back to the WIP (I hope that will be tomorrow) it will be to write a brand new short story and another intermission. Then I'll be about halfway home with the WIP.

I'll go ahead and post this (very) early so I don't forget later. Hope you all have a great day.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Incredibly, Dean continues to close-in on his challenge. See "Two Story Day" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/two-story-day/>. It still isn't the same as doing it in a single streak, but still, it's a pretty big deal.

If you're a crime/detective/intrigue/suspense writer you might want to visit <http://crimereads.com/> and see what they have to offer. You can also subscribe to their weekly CrimeReads Brief newsletter. It's free and very interesting.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 410

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22682
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23817
Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24925
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 47745
Total fiction words for the year..... 161286
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15250
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49010
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 252026

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, April 30](#)

[April 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm gonna end the month with a fizzle. No writing again today. Still a little under the weather this morning. I have to get through this bug, whatever it is.

In other news, I got an interesting email from a writer who said he'd sent for a first-page critique. I assume he sent it to the folks at Kill Zone blog. He wrote "judging from the list, I may hear from them in about two years."

If you're interested, read the brief instructions for submitting your first page at <https://killzoneblog.com/first-page-critiques-at-tkz>.

But if you have to wait a year or two (or even a few months) for your critique, what good is it really?

I mean, if it takes you two or three (or more) years to write a novel, then maybe it makes sense to wait that long for a critique.

But if you're writing continually, ummm No.

And that gave me an idea. I decided to offer first-page critiques too, and in real time, meaning a turnaround of a few days.

Those who take me up on this offer will basically be getting a personalized, one-on-one master's course in writing openings — which is to say, in hooking and grounding the reader — and with your own work as the example.

The most common comment I get on my own work is that the reader feels as if he or she is right there in the story. That's because I know how to pull them in and keep them in.

So now I'm offering a first-page critique — well, really it's an “opening” critique of up to 500 words — for \$25. Yeah, there's a nominal fee. On the other hand, you won't have to wait a year or longer for a reply.

In the first-page critique, I'll point out what works and what doesn't, and why. I'll imbed comments directly on the manuscript (off to the side) so you can connect my recommendations with the actual text.

This should be a really good learning experience. As I said, a master class.

If you're interested, send the first 500 words of your manuscript as an email attachment to me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. In the subject line, please put First Page Critique.

I prefer payment by PayPal, but you can also send a check.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's “Eavesdropping on Quora” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/04/eavesdropping-on-quora.html>.

Yesterday I recommended CrimeReads.com. To see (study) some incredibly great opening lines, see the Daily Thrill at <http://crimereads.com/category/daily-thrill/>.

See “The May Project and the Muse is Running in Circles” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/04/29/the-may-project-and-the-muse-is-running-in-circles/>.

Via The Digital Reader, see “How to Avoid Burnout as a Writer” at <https://deannacabinian.com/2018/03/24/how-to-avoid-burnout-as-a-writer-and-as-a-person/>.

See “Three More Stories Today” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/three-more-stories-today/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 460

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22682
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23817
Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24925
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 47745
Total fiction words for the year..... 161286
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49470
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 252536

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, May 1](#)

[May 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, day 3 or 4, still sick. I can literally feel the writing days and hours slipping away, and I have to tell you, it's annoying.

I went out to the Hovel this morning and managed about 500 words in two hours. That while alternately wiping my watering eyes, repeatedly blowing my nose, etc. Maddening. I'll wait to report those words when I'm back actually writing. Accomplishing a half-hour's work over a 2-hour period is not something to brag about.

So I'm gonna spend the balance of today like I spent much of yesterday, trying to be patient and rest so this crud will go away.

In the meantime, I'm taking care of a few things that aren't as involved as writing a story. I turned around my first ever first-page critique this morning, and yesterday I looked over a segment of a copyedit I did recently. I got both of those sent out.

Of course, that's all conscious-mind stuff, so interruptions really don't matter. It's all facts, and facts don't change when you're away for a few minutes or an hour.

On Facebook earlier today I saw the upteenth post from a good writer whose hawking a mystery she wrote. I feel bad for her. Never have I seen so plainly delineated the difference between a Writer and an Author.

A writer is a person who writes. An author is a person who has written.

When the writer finishes a project, s/he does what's necessary (per his/her own path to publication), then begins the next story.

When the author finishes a project, s/he hovers in place over the "accomplishment" and becomes a marketer.

Each time I see another post of that sort (which seems always in an online FB writers' group, as if a fiction writer attempting to sell fiction to other fiction writers is a good idea), I wonder how many more books that person could have written since s/he finished the one over which s/he's hovering.

Fortunately, no Author's (or other writer's) actions directly affect this writer's bottom line or time off, so it's only a matter of vague curiosity for occasional consideration.

Ugh. Due to a formula screwup, I have been reporting an erroneous combined total for fiction and nonfiction on the year. I think it's fixed now.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "MADE IT! 30 Stories in 30 Days" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/made-it-30-stories-in-30-days/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 350

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17556
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21455
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22682
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23817
Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24925
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 161286
Total nonfiction words for the month... 350
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49820
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 210836*

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, May 2](#)

[May 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Hmmm... The May 1 edition of the Journal didn't go out for some reason. My apologies. I posted it, but apparently MailChimp didn't disseminate it.

Of interest in yesterday's edition, possibly, I delineated the difference between the Writer and the Author, with a stellar example. You can see the post at <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-tuesday-may-1/>.

Anyway, this SNAFU with the Journal prompted me to make two major changes, as follows:

Of Interest Section — From now on, for an entry to make it into the “Of Interest” section it will have to pass two tests:

1. I believe it's valuable information, and
2. I believe it's something you might not otherwise see.

Frequency — I'll be posting new editions of the Journal less frequently. There's no reason to post one like yesterday's, for example.

I also thought about getting rid of a lot of the stats I've been carrying at the bottom of the Journal.

But I don't want to do that quite yet. I like seeing it there, even though my production for 2018 thus far is WAY down.

I added an Author Websites page to my main site. This morning I added several new links. To visit and see whether your favorite author is listed, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/author-websites/>.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “Lee Child on revenge, escape, and what Jack Reacher owes readers” at <http://crimereads.com/lee-child-the-emotional-contract-of-jack-reacher/>.

See other author interviews by Mark Rubinstein (an author himself) at <http://mark.markrubinstein-author.com/>.

See “A Wrap-Up Post...” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-wrap-up-post-on-the-challenge/>. If you don’t want to read the whole thing, scroll down to “So What Did I Learn” and stick with it. Some good stuff there. (Some really haughty crap too, but meh.)

Fiction Words: 6073 (I believe this is my personal best.)

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6363

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745

Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463

Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228

Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17616

Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21515

Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22742

Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985

Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058

Total fiction words for the month..... 6073

Total fiction words for the year..... 167359

Total nonfiction words for the month... 640

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 50110

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 217199

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Mark Rubinstein](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, May 3](#)

[May 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I saw that MailChimp added the May 1st post to the May 2nd post. Weird.

In his post today, Dean’s hawking a new writing-book bundle Kris put together. Even if you’re otherwise not interested, this one includes The Heinlein’s Rules lecture. That alone is worth the money for the bundle if you haven’t heard that lecture. Just sayin’. See <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-books-bundle-and-lecture/>.

Yesterday I reported writing over 6000 words of fiction in what was my personal biggest day ever.

This morning I went back and double checked. It was difficult for me to believe that total. Honestly, I felt fresh enough that with another short break, I probably could have written another thousand words.

But nope. The total was correct.

This morning I didn’t get out to the Hovel until around 8:30. Took a small break about an hour later, then a longer one around 10:30 to check the PO and put some gas in my truck.

Then back to the Hovel. I forgot Mona would be home early today, so when she got here I wrapped it up in the middle of another story. I also wrote what will be the first half of the Epilogue to the overall novel. So a pretty good day.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “On the Precipice…” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/on-the-precipice-what-new-things-are-you-doing-with-your-writing.html>. I mention this mostly for the information on Radish. But other subtopics might interest you as well.

See The Passive Guy’s take (Cultural Change And The Traditional Writer) on Kris Rusch’s post at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/?p=88200>.

Then, if you want, see “Business Musings: Cultural Changes” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/05/02/business-musings-cultural-change-and-the-traditional-writer/>.

Fiction Words: 3857

Nonfiction Words: 270 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4127

Writing of The Storytellers

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270

Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745

Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463

Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228

Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17616
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21515
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22742
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23877
Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985
Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058
Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915

Total fiction words for the month..... 9930
Total fiction words for the year..... 171216
Total nonfiction words for the month... 910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 50380
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 221326

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, May 4](#)

[May 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Draft2Digital, the distributor through which I distribute most of my books, is hosting a FREE webinar on May 10 on Marketing. This should be great advice for marketing both ebooks and paper books.

It will be presented by Kevin Tumlinson, who's a best-selling author in his own right and the marketing director for D2D. I urge you to sign up (registration is required for attendance) and attend.

To register for your free ticket(s), click <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-create-a-proper-marketing-plan-for-your-next-book-tickets-45685445397>.

I've decided to retitl The Storytellers. It's, uh... evolved. In a play on the syllable count in the song title "Like Desperados Waiting for a Train," I'll probably title it "Like Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train." ☺ We'll see. Maybe I'll get lucky and it'll evolve again.

To the Hovel at 9.

With many breaks, short and long, over 5 hours I put down almost 4000 words again today. I finished one story and part of another intermission. The book is racing along fine, both in short stories and in the novel that envelops them.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Returning to Analog: Typewriters, Notebooks, and the Art of Letter Writing" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/returning-to-analog-typewriters-notebooks-and-the-art-of-letter-writing/>.

See "In the #MeToo Moment, Publishers Turn to Morality Clauses" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/in-the-metoo-moment-publishers-turn-to-morality-clauses/>.

Fiction Words: 3767

Nonfiction Words: 220 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3987

Writing of Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train

Brought forward..... 1304

Day 2..... 2966 words. Total words to date..... 4270
Day 3..... 4475 words. Total words to date..... 8745
Day 4..... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 10463
Day 5..... 3825 words. Total words to date..... 14228
Day 6..... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 17616
Day 7..... 3899 words. Total words to date..... 21515
Day 8..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 22742
Day 9..... 1135 words. Total words to date..... 23877
Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985
Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058
Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915
Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682

Total fiction words for the month..... 13697

Total fiction words for the year..... 174983

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1130

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 50600

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 225313

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, May 6

[May 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Just nothing happening yesterday. Went to bed late, got up late, no writing, so a day off and no Journal.

This morning I rolled out late too. Got out to the Hovel at around 8:30, and played a few games of spider.

Then a name popped into my head. Ronald Jackson. Just a name and an image of a guy in a suit about to walk through his front door into his house.

I opened the novel, typed in Ronald Jackson, and kept typing. With one short break, by 11:40 I'd written "Excesses," the next short story in the novel. Kind of a psychological suspense horror thing.

Then, since I've cleared over 3000 words today, I told my bride the rest of the day is hers. (grin)

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Close Contact Gunshot Wounds: The 'Hole' Story" at <https://www.leelofland.com/close-contact-gunshot-wounds-the-hole-story/>. Great article.

See "Only the Dead Know Brooklyn" at <http://crimereads.com/only-the-dead-know-brooklyn/>.

See "Microchips and Shoe Leather: Gumshoeing in the Modern Era" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/microchips-and-shoe-leather-gumshoeing-in-the-modern-era/>.

Fiction Words: 3338

Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3498

Writing of Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train

Brought forward..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985

Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058

Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915

Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682

Day 14... 3338 words. Total words to date..... 42020

Total fiction words for the month..... 17035

Total fiction words for the year..... 178321

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1290

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 50760

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 228811

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, May 7](#)

[May 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The “Of Interest” section is huge today, and filled to the brim.

Rolled out a little late this morning, but not too bad. After my experience yesterday with writing a short story at what amounted to megaspeed for me, I look forward to what might happen today.

I started the day with a half-ton of reading. Everything in “Of Interest” plus a few similar items and side articles. Fascinating stuff.

The thing is, everything goes into the subconscious. Even if you don't write crime/detective/mystery novels, bits of what you read in these articles will bubble to the surface as you need it.

What I mean is, don't automatically skip the items in today's "Of Interest" just because you don't write tomes about murder.

That would be as silly as the statement of the writer who said she would never read (yeah, read!) Heinlein's Rules because she doesn't write science fiction.

I think I'll never forget that. Ignorance, whether intentional or unintentional, is still ignorance.

Oddly, I've found myself a little in arrears with regard to writing the "intermissions" that frame the the short stories that make up roughly four-fifths or so of the novel.

But I've already written the final "intermission" (so the epilogue). So at this point, I suspect I'll continue writing the remaining short stories. I would like to write four more for the novel. Then go I'll back and write the remaining intermissions to tie the stories together and lead to the epilogue.

Thus far this has been a very fun experience.

Out to the Hovel at 8, where I began by fleshing out a bit of this Journal entry. When I sat in the chair, I had zero idea what I would write today. No clue.

My bride called a little after 8. She had a minor emergency I had to go help her with. Then I did a few other necessities around the house, then finally returned to the Hovel around 9:30.

A title occurred to me this time: "Strappings of the Raggamuffin Man." We'll see where it goes. I'm expecting a short day today. My buddy plans to stop by shortly after noon for a visit.

By 10:15 I'd written the first 850 words and headed up to the house for a break and more ice water.

Well, more to do at the house than I remembered, so I didn't get back to the Hovel until 11.

The story is almost finished, not quite, but I cut the day off a little.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "Where Do You Find Inspiration?" (and be prepared to hear an eerie, very troubling tale) at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/where-do-you-find-inspiration.html>.

As an aside, see the first three-fourths of “Serial Killer Families: The Family Who Kills Together...” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/serial-killer-families/>.

As a second aside, see “Serial Killer Couples: Madness Shared by Two” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/serial-killer-couples/>.

As a THIRD aside, see “The Killing Fields Hold The Darkest Secrets” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/killing-fields/>.

See James Scott Bell’s “My Kind of Thriller” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/my-kind-of-thriller.html>.

Any steamy-romance writers out there? See “Cockygate: Faleena Hopkins Has Registered a Trademark...” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/05/05/cockygate-faleena-hopkins-has-registered-a-trademark-on-cocky-and-is-using-it-to-threaten-other-romance-authors/>. This is also a mini-crash course on trademark.

Via The Passive Voice, please see “Contract Red Flag Alert: Perpetual License for Derivative Rights” at <https://accrispin.blogspot.ca/2018/05/contract-red-flag-alert-perpetual.html>.

Fiction Words: 2817

Nonfiction Words: 540 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3357

Writing of Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train

Brought forward..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985

Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058

Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915

Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682

Day 14... 3338 words. Total words to date..... 42020

Day 15... 2817 words. Total words to date..... 44837

Total fiction words for the month..... 19852

Total fiction words for the year..... 181138

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 51300

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 232168

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, May 8](#)

[May 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, a lot of stuff in “Of Interest” today re crime novels and thrillers and Amazon and other things. Crime Writer Sue Coletta is an excellent resource.

First some admin stuff...

Happy birthday to my eldest daughter, Audrey. Today is her 44th.

Thanks to all of you who remain subscribed to this Journal because you find it interesting, motivational, or educational. I probably haven’t said it for awhile, but I do appreciate you.

When I was still in the USMC a lifetime ago, I overheard two much older guys talking about ways to stay young.

One of them said something that has stuck with me all these years. He looked at his friend and said, “You’re a jarhead (slang for a Marine). If you want to stay young, you have to have a place to report.”

He was right, of course. So thanks to all of you for giving me a place to report.

That being said, I realize your time is limited. If you find these emails less than valuable in some way, please click the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the page.

Finally to the Hovel at around 8:30, where I realized during a few games of solitaire that I didn’t have my water or my flash drive or my cell phone.

Back to the house, then back to the Hovel around 9:30 to begin finishing the story from yesterday.

A little over 1200 words in the first session, then up to the house to check on the babies.

I figured I would finish the story I started yesterday in maybe an hour this morning. The protagonist had other ideas.

She kept getting more and more interesting, and every time I thought I'd caught up with her she'd duck around another corner.

The story finally wrapped at around 5100 words (I thought it would wrap at around 3000). Then I took another break at the house, then went back to the Hovel and wrote another intermission. So I've almost caught up with myself (grin).

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "The Terrifying World of Serial Killers" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/the-terrifying-world-of-serial-killers/>.

For the 7 phases of a serial killing, see "The Serial Killer") at <https://www.suecoletta.com/the-serial-killer/>.

For the various kinds of serial killers, see "The Terrifying World of Serial Killers" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/the-terrifying-world-of-serial-killers/>.

See "What Is a Traditional Mystery?" (by the legendary Otto Penzler) at <http://crimereads.com/what-is-a-traditional-mystery/>.

See "The Dominance of Amazon..." at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-dominance-of-amazon-needs-to-be-addressed-but-it-is-far-more-attributable-to-natural-circumstances-than-it-is-anybodys-fault/>.

See "Talking About Lifetime Subscriptions" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/talking-about-lifetime-subscriptions/>.

Fiction Words: 3117

Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3517

Writing of Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train

Brought forward..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985

Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058

Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915

Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682

Day 14... 3338 words. Total words to date..... 42020

Day 15... 2817 words. Total words to date..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Total fiction words for the month..... 22969
Total fiction words for the year..... 184255
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2230
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 51700
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 235685

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, May 9](#)

[May 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I got up much closer to my normal time this morning, but frittered away much of the morning. I did do a little cycling and enjoyed that.

I also enjoyed wondering what I might write later today. Even made a couple of starts, but nothing stuck. It wasn't time yet. For whatever reason, today I'm just not feeling it. So day off today. I'll check out my window later to see whether the world ended (grin).

My little cat's been sneezing a lot lately, and she's listless. She's usually a tightly wound ball of pure energy, so I'm tending to her as best I can. And as much as she'll let me.

Mostly she just wants to sleep, and as that's where a lot of healing takes place, I try not to wake her. As long as I can see her little side rising and falling.

Anyway, I was first in the Hovel by 3:30. Back to the house around 5 for a little while, then back to the Hovel until around 6:30, when I came up for breakfast.

I did some reading while I was at the house (and checked on the kitten) then headed back to the Hovel at around 7:30. Messed around with a name that keeps coming to mind, but I don't see the character doing anything yet. So tomorrow, probably.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “Smashwords Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary” at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/05/smashwords-anniversary.html>.

See “Floating A Trial Balloon” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/floating-a-trial-balloon/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 250

Writing of Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train
Brought forward..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985
Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058
Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915
Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682
Day 14... 3338 words. Total words to date..... 42020
Day 15... 2817 words. Total words to date..... 44837
Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954
Day 17... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22969
Total fiction words for the year..... 184255
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 51950
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 235935

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, May 10](#)

[May 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A little rambling today...

This morning I rolled out closer to the time normal human beings get up. That might become the routine since the sun's coming up earlier now. Doing so enables me to ease my way into the day, spend some time with my wife in the morning and evening, and gives me more of a normal workday.

This is me trying to rationalize staying up later at night and getting up later in the morning. But it seems worthwhile, at least so far. We got rid of regular TV programming and the \$100+ per month we were paying for the privilege of being bombarded with commercials every several minutes.

Now, thanks to my bride, we have Netflix and Amazon Prime, so we can watch what we value without commercial interruption. It's wonderful.

Oh, and the kitten is feeling much better. My thanks to those of you who asked about her.

I actually received a speaking invitation from my friends at Panhandle Professional Writers in Amarillo Texas. I last spoke here twelve years ago, in June of 2006. Unfortunately, I can't attend, but it was still very nice of them to ask.

At one time, I traveled to and spoke at conferences all over the nation. At the height of the frenzy, I made 18 conferences in one year.

Sometimes I literally woke up wondering which city I was in. But regardless, it was heaven. I've always enjoyed sharing what I know. Being paid for that sharing really was the icing on the cake.

I only wish my knowledge about writing then, when I was able to travel long distances at what seemed a sustained rate of speed, was what it is now. (grin)

Of course, there are the audio lectures I recorded (<http://harveystanbrough.com/lecture-series/>). The two I most often recommend are Course 10 — Poetry Techniques for the Fictionist — and Course 11 — Writing Off Into the Dark.

But folks seem more drawn to video than audio. So I've considered making a series of YouTube videos with new lectures. I'm not too sure about that though. It seems time consuming, and time, as they say, is money.

And really, I'd rather spend my time writing the next story. (grin)

I've also decided to add my last 20 or so books to Smashwords, so I can at least offer them for sale in the Smashwords store.

My main distributor now is D2D, but I've sold quite a lot directly through the Smashwords store in the past. So I'll start that process this afternoon, though I almost physically tremble when I think of how clunky the Smashwords interface is.

Anyway, today is Thursday, so a half-day for me. So the plan was to write this morning, frantically. Then this afternoon I planned devote to admin stuff like uploading books to Smashwords.

I went to the Hovel at around 8:30, then did a little more on this Journal entry. Around 9:30 I went back up to the house to exchange coffee for water. While I was there I checked email and found a reminder that the live webinar on marketing starts this morning at 10.

So much for writing this morning. (grin) Maybe later, but maybe today will be another day “off,” at least from playing with my fictional friends.

See you soon.

Of Interest

To view the book-marketing video from the webinar, click <https://youtu.be/2XTd9NcgWWc>.

If you're interested in the ins and outs of fingerprinting (Knowledge Is Good), check out Lee Lofland's Graveyard Shift blog at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-graveyard-shift-blog/>.

The first two entries in the series are "... Fingerprinting from A-D" (<https://www.leelofland.com/eye-of-newt-and-toe-of-frog-and-fingerprinting-from-a-d/>) and "Fingerprinting: 'E' Before 'I'..." at <https://www.leelofland.com/fingerprinting-e-before-i-in-this-handy-guide/>.

To be sure you don't miss others in the series, I recommend subscribing.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 630

Writing of Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train
Brought forward..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985
Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058
Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915
Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682
Day 14... 3338 words. Total words to date..... 42020
Day 15... 2817 words. Total words to date..... 44837
Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954
Day 17... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22969
Total fiction words for the year..... 184255
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3110

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 52580
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 236565

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Draft2Digital](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, May 11](#)

[May 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. I woke up jonesing to get back to writing today.

The marketing webinar was great yesterday, but I'll have to go over it again. It was a ton of information, and they probably needed 3 or 4 hours (or longer) for a proper presentation. They flew through it, not even showing all the slides they'd prepared (but those are all included in the actual video). If you missed yesterday's Journal, the link to that video is <https://youtu.be/2XTd9NcgWWc>.

As an added bonus, you can download the slides they used in the video at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GC3CZUCVQqDN0P7iuLJ44qo9xpkXoqAK/view>. (When you get there, click the little down arrow at the top right of the page to download the file as PDF.)

Interesting to me that even in a webinar dedicated to marketing, both co-hosts reiterated that the best thing you can do to market your book is Write the Next Book.

I'm not personally big on marketing, mostly because I don't have a mind geared for business. For me, it's all a time trade-off. That being said, even I learned a few things I plan to investigate or try.

In today's "Of Interest" Dean announces the Vegas workshops all the way through 2018 and 2019. I'll do a little "thinking out loud" here that might help you with your own decision regarding those.

If my estimation is correct, attending one — including the workshop fee, hotel, meals and travel — will cost in the vicinity of \$2000 (two thousand dollars).

The workshops are \$750 each (the Kris and Dean show is \$500) and the hotel for a week at the discounted rate is around \$800.

Whether it's worth the cost is up to each individual. For example, if I had the disposable income, I would attend the Anthology workshop in a heartbeat.

I'd also love to see The Kris and Dean Show again (I saw a smaller version at a conference in the '90s) but for me the cost is prohibitive.

The Business Master Class probably also would be wonderful, but I'm not writing to make money now so much as to leave a legacy that might provide my grandchildren with income.

And then of course the value of the individual craft workshops (there are four) depends entirely on your level of interest in those genres and techniques.

Early this morning, intrigued by Otto Penzler's posts at CrimeReads, I found a few more. They're in "Of Interest" below. These are ostensibly for readers, but I found things of value to writers as well.

Out to the Hovel at around 9.

Wrote awhile, got a good start on a new story, should finish it tomorrow.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "How to Write the Perfect Mystery: Writing Advice from the Greats of Crime Fiction" at <http://crimereads.com/how-to-write-the-perfect-mystery/>. As part of this post, the compilers say "Take the wisdom in doses, chew it all over and use what works for you." No better advice was ever given.

See Elmore Leonard's "Making It Up as I Go Along" (writing into the dark, anyone?) at https://www.aarp.org/entertainment/books/info-06-2009/leonard_making_it_up.html.

See "James M. Cain, The Art of Fiction No. 69" (an interview) at <https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3474/james-m-cain-the-art-of-fiction-no-69-james-m-cain>

To continue from yesterday, see "Fingerprinting: A Journey From J-N" at <https://www.leelofland.com/fingerprinting-a-journey-from-j-n/>.

In another continuation, see Otto Penzler's "What Is a Thriller?" at <http://crimereads.com/what-is-a-thriller/>. (Though as a writer I found this post less than useful.)

Also see Otto Penzler's "What is a Crime Novel?" at <http://crimereads.com/what-is-a-crime-novel/>.

Also see Otto Penzler's "What is a Hard-Boiled Novel?" at <http://crimereads.com/what-is-a-hard-boiled-novel/>.

See "2019 Vegas Workshop Schedule" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/2019-vegas-workshop-schedule/>. This is a long post. I recommend reading it all if you're interested.

Fiction Words: 2680

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3280

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 23877

Day 10... 1108 words. Total words to date..... 24985

Day 11... 6073 words. Total words to date..... 31058

Day 12... 3857 words. Total words to date..... 34915

Day 13... 3767 words. Total words to date..... 38682

Day 14... 3338 words. Total words to date..... 42020

Day 15... 2817 words. Total words to date..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Total fiction words for the month..... 25649

Total fiction words for the year..... 186935

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3710

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 53180

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 239845

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Elmore Leonard](#), [James M. Cain](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Otto Penzler](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, May 12

[May 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, first, a happy Mother's Day (tomorrow) to all the moms out there. I hope it's a great day for you.

Well, it's getting too hot in the afternoon even to write out in the Hovel, so adjustments are coming.

For those new to the Journal, the Hovel is a rammed-earth structure, basically a cave, with walls that are three feet thick.

I have a box fan out there right now, and I bought a portable swamp cooler that works too, though I have no ready source of water out there for it. But both are noisy enough to wake the dead.

And waking the dead probably is all right for some of the characters in some of my books (grin), but not all of them. So I'll have to shift back to writing in the early morning or something. That or make the adjustment to write in the house (shudder). I guess we'll see.

Another Word or Two on Cycling

Dean's post today is good. It's all about cycling. It's a rant, but it's still worth reading. I wrote a response, as follows:

I usually write around 3000 words per day. 5000 is a good day. I cycle back with each scene, so around every 800 words. But at the end of the day, I hit Save and head for the house from my dedicated writing space. (You guys know that as the Hovel.)

The next morning, I sit down, put my fingers on the keyboard and cycle back to read the last scene from the previous day.

I'm reading as a reader (creative subconscious), not an editor, and I allow myself to touch the manuscript as the characters move me. That gets me back into the rhythms of the story, and when I get to the end, I type the next sentence that occurs to me and keep going.

So I guess my version of cycling is a hybrid of Dean's. But then, it would be. I learned it from him.

The main thing, as he says, is staying in creative voice.

If, as you read over what you've written, you're "looking for" or "finding things" that are "wrong," that is not cycling, it's rewriting. It's the critical voice, and almost every time you do it, it will harm your story.

Trust your subconscious, trust what you've learned in classes about sentence structure and grammar and syntax and all the rest, and Just Write.

Leave everything else to the able eyes of your copyeditor. As a writer, your only job is to write.

Here's a good rule of thumb for you: If you weren't dipped in the language at birth, and if you don't copyedit for others (for a fee), don't attempt to copyedit your own work either.

If you or someone you know is looking for a good copyeditor and a low rate (prime rib at lunch meat prices) see <http://harveystanbrough.com/copyediting/>.

Although I rolled out at around 3:30 this morning, for various reasons I didn't get out to the Hovel until 3 hours later.

So I started writing at 6:40. By 8 I'd written a little over 1200 words and finished the story I started yesterday. This is where I would normally take a break up to the house.

But today's Saturday and I have other things to do. So no more writing today.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Cycling and the Art of One Clean Draft" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/cycling-and-the-art-of-one-clean-draft/>.

Fiction Words: 1278

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1838

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Total fiction words for the month..... 26927

Total fiction words for the year..... 188213

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 53740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 241683

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, May 14](#)

[May 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm alive. Yesterday I took a much-needed "do (almost) nothing" day and basically did (almost) nothing.

I did blast through an online workshop. I visited the Internet a bit and we went to the grocery and I read. Otherwise I did nothing.

But I'm back. This morning I'll commute to the Hovel (about 200 feet from my house), coffee in hand, and write a short story. No idea what that will be at the moment.

Then this afternoon I'll work on a copyedit that came in. It's short. I hope I'll be able to finish it this afternoon or early evening.

Topic: Reviews (sigh)

I've all but given up on seeking reviews for my work.

I never did actively "seek" them, other than mentioning, now and then, that I would appreciate a review if a reader enjoyed one of my novels. I'd still appreciate it, I guess. If Amazon would let it stand.

But this morning I read Nick Hoffelder's article (see "Of Interest" below) and clicked a link in his article to see what the new algorithm engine ReviewMeta said about the very few reviews I do have on the first novel I ever wrote, Leaving Amarillo.

As a test, I keyed in the Amazon URL for Leaving Amarillo and found ReviewMeta had marked my reviews with a "warning."

To my undying anger and frustration, I found a “warning” label, meaning suspicious reviews/reviewers.

But I also found the very first review (a valid one, like all reviews of my books) that anyone left for me had been deleted by Amazon. That reviewer said my first effort, which took me 20 days to write from beginning to completion, was a great story that was very well plotted.

I’m not worried about myself. I’m self-actualized. I know my stories are good and my reviewers and reviews are clean.

But it begs the question: If a minor albeit prolific author like me who garners only a few reviews (if that) per book can be labeled as inviting fake reviews (I don’t), how harmful could Amazon’s (and ReviewMeta’s and Fakespot’s) bovine excrement algorithms be to authors with hundreds of reviews?

And much more importantly, how much of my time should I devote to getting valid, clean reviews when any of those “engines” is likely to pan them and when Amazon is likely to remove them arbitrarily anyway?

Screw it. All of this nonsense leads me back to the same two conclusions I always draw:

1. My time is much better spent writing than seeking reviews or other marketing activities; and
2. The best thing you can do to market your work is Write the Next Book.

Eventually the algorithms will be replaced by a fairer, more eyes-open system, though probably not in my lifetime.

And if I (you) keep writing and putting work out there, more readers will discover it.

To the Hovel around 9. Some hemming and hawing and false starts, and by 11:30 I’d written another short story with a little over 1600 words. Up to the house for a break.

Back to the Hovel around noon, when I found Bill Gates’ bunch was updating my writing computer.

Now my writing computer has the WiFi switch turned OFF. Plus I’m well out of range of ANY WiFi signal. Yet an update was ongoing.

Who the hell voted this guy General Manager of the Universe? Who the hell told him it’s his sole domain to decide what’s better for everyone else?

For my next trick, I'm going to take the back off my writing computer and removed the damned WiFi card. Maybe that'll keep Mr. Gates' damned hands in his own pockets for awhile. Or at least the hell out of mine.

No more writing today. I'll take what I have and go do a short copyedit waiting for me in the office.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Dangers of Not Trusting The Creative Voice" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/dangers-of-not-trusting-the-creative-voice/>. I've already asked Dean's permission to repost this as a guest post over on the big site in July.

See "Riding the Writer Roller-Coaster" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/riding-the-writer-roller-coaster.html>.

See "Authors Are Taking Friendly Fire in Amazon's War on Fake Reviews" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/05/12/authors-are-taking-friendly-fire-in-amazons-war-on-fake-reviews/>.

To check the status of reviews on your own books with ReviewMeta, click <https://reviewmeta.com/>.

Finally, if you'd like to hear Craig Ferguson and Robin Williams riffing on accents, watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvPxRyIWWX8>.

Fiction Words: 1687

Nonfiction Words: 730 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2417

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599

Total fiction words for the month..... 28614

Total fiction words for the year..... 189900

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5000

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 54470

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 241683

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, May 15](#)

[May 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Tom Wolfe once said, “I do novels a bit backward. I look for a situation, a milieu first, and then I wait to see who walks into it.” May he rest in peace.

Be sure to see today’s “Of Interest.” A lot of good stuff there.

Another copyedit came in, and from a writer for whom I’ve copyedited before. It’s great fun watching a writer improve at storytelling. I’m looking forward to the story. So I’ll be doing that for awhile in addition to finishing the novel/story collection.

Topic: An Update on Process

Writing my own current WIP has been an interesting process, mostly good and fun, some a little unnerving.

For about half of it, I was switching back and forth between the running narrative (ongoing story) of the novel and the short stories.

Then somewhere along the line I realized I was “unstuck in time.” In other words, I didn’t have to write it all in the same sequence the reader would read it.

I’ve written straight novels that way before, shuffling scenes and chapters around. But this is different because there’s one through-story punctuated or interspersed with other, mostly unrelated stories.

So in that way it’s a whole new thing for me.

I wrote a similar collection before in which I copied Hemingway’s formula. I started with a vignette, then went to a story, then a vignette, etc. There were 10 short stories, and when the reader read the vignettes as a single unit, those comprised another short story.

This is similar except that the short stories are an integral (but separate) part of the overall novel. And the genres of the short stories are all over the map. One storyteller chatting with another storyteller. So as I said, interesting but a little unnerving.

At the moment, I have one short story and two “intermissions” (novel segments) left to write.

So today is an admin day. I’ll spend the morning uploading those manuscripts I prepped a few days ago to Smashwords. Then I’ll (finally) create an author page on Draft2Digital. And this afternoon I’ll work on the copyedit for another writer.

That will get my own admin stuff out of my head, and tomorrow I’ll work toward finishing my WIP.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See the comments (and the post if you didn’t read it yesterday) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/dangers-of-not-trusting-the-creative-voice/#comments>.

Also see the comments (and post “Cycling and the Art of One Clean Draft”) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/cycling-and-the-art-of-one-clean-draft/#comments>. I especially like the house-flipper analogy at or near the end by commenter Janine.

See “Who Needs a Stinkin’ Search Warrant? The CDC’s Unique Police Powers” at <https://www.leelofland.com/who-needs-a-stinkin-search-warrant-the-cdcs-unique-police-powers/>.

See “Interesting Comments and Other Business” (mostly for the announcement of a fading writing bundle if you haven’t gotten it yet) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/interesting-comments-and-other-business/>.

See “...A Cozy Mystery Author’s Giving Away a Free Writer’s Police Academy Registration” at <https://www.leelofland.com/linda-lovely-why-a-cozy-mystery-authors-giving-away-a-free-writers-police-academy-registration/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 490

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)
Brought forward..... 44837
Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954
Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634
Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599
Day 20... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 28614
Total fiction words for the year..... 189900
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5490
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 54960
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 244590

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, May 16](#)

[May 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

First session today, I hit only a little over 1200 words. If I didn't have an edit to do, I might finish my WIP today, but I think I'll stick to the schedule of switching from one to the other.

One problem with writing my own stuff while I'm editing for someone else is that I'm tempted to stay in the chair longer than I should when I'm writing. I feel pressured (a little) to get as much writing done as I can.

That was the case this morning.

This morning I got to the Hovel at 8:30 and didn't leave it until 10:15. No break. In that time, I separated the novel "intermissions" from the rest of the stories so I could get a better sense of the flow.

Then I cycled back through the whole thing, allowing myself to touch it here and there as I went. Finally, I plugged all the updated intermissions back into the WIP.

When the smoke cleared, I have one intermission left to write, and then I have to write the last third or half of the final story and i'm done.

Some days ago I also wrote either an introduction or “writer’s notes” kind of thing, but I don’t know whether I’ll include it in the final collection.

The intro (or writer’s notes) contained a lot about the process of writing this odd duck, and I wrote it mostly for other writers. Can’t stop teaching, I guess. Or trying to.

I probably won’t know whether I’ll actually include it until just before I publish the thing.

Anyway, if I don’t finish the WIP today, I’ll finish it tomorrow.

On a break at the moment. Then one more session, then editing for the rest of the day. So we’ll see how it goes.

Well, I added around 500 more words in a short session, then up to the house to edit.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Lee Lofland’s “Fingerprinting: A Journey from O – R” at <https://www.leelofland.com/fingerprinting-a-journey-from-o-r/>.

Fiction Words: 1792

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2142

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599

Day 20... 1792 words. Total words to date..... 55391

Total fiction words for the month..... 30406

Total fiction words for the year..... 191692

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 55310

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 246732

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, May 17

[May 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Topic: How Do You Know You Won't Like It If You Don't Try It?

Parents? Sound familiar?

Well, we're in the same boat here.

I received a very congenial email from a friend and one time editing client that contained a link to an article titled "I Copied the Routines of Famous Writers and It Sucked."

As it turned out, the article was more humorous than serious. I've included the link (last) in "Of Interest" below. And just so you know, the author of the article is not a novelist. He's a columnist and/or contributor to several online magazines.

But just so you know, I did read the article. It was funny. And I learned that my own typical routine is similar to that of Honoré de Balzac, who allegedly "was a grade-A weirdo. He would go to bed around 6 PM, 'like the chickens,' and awake at 1 in the morning to start writing."

Oh. Well. Uh. I don't think that makes him a weirdo, does it? I think it makes him a guy who takes his sleep at a different time than the author does.

Anyway, I'm firm enough in what I know to be true that I'm not frightened of opposing viewpoints. But the primary thesis of the guy's article stopped me cold.

I discerned his thesis from a statement in the third paragraph of the article itself: "Writing is not an autonomic function of the subconscious brain. When the time comes to put words on the page, it is *work*."

Uh, no.

Folks, "work" is something that causes us, pretty much constantly, to rethink our priorities. It's the stuff that causes us to want to better ourselves and find a more enjoyable way to make a living. Hell, avoiding work is WHY I'm a writer, but it doesn't result from me being a writer.

The point of my friend's email was to point out to me that every writer is different, and that each writer must find what works best for him or her.

MY INFERENCE (not necessarily his intention) was that I'm preaching false gospel when I recommend learning to trust your subconscious and write off into the dark. (WITD means writing without an outline or any in-depth, preconceived notion of where the story's going or what the ending might be.)

But the thing is—and yes, I'm aware this is a news flash—*I wasn't born this way*. Seriously. I'm a converted sinner. I used to do all the same old crap most everyone else does. The same old crap that doesn't work. And like most everyone else, I sold almost nothing.

And even when I DID first read Heinlein's Rules, and later learned of "Writing Into the Dark," I was skeptical. Even hyper-skeptical.

But there was only one problem: It Made Sense.

So I decided to settle the matter once and for all. I would try it, that's all. I would do nothing but write into the dark. I would stifle my conscious mind and give my subconscious free reign, and I would do that for a period of three months. To me, that seemed a valid test.

I started on April 15, 2014. From then through July 15 of 2014, I turned out 19 short stories, two 5-story collections and a 10-story collection. And baby, I was hooked.

Why? Because it worked.

I'd never written better stories and I'd never had so much fun.

After a jag with short stories, I decided in October 2014 to write a novel. But I have to admit I was worried. Would WITD work for that too?

So I gave myself the same challenge. I figured it would take me at least 3 months to even get a good start on a novel anyway, so I settled on a 3-month challenge to write into the dark, this time on a novel.

That was on October 19, 20 or 21, 2014. I finished my first novel on November 11. And by January 21, I'd written THREE novels and a novella, 11 more short stories, and compiled one more 5-story collection.

So writing into the dark (and following Heinlien's Rules) worked for both short fiction and novels.

Now, the thing is, yes, I learned the technique from someone else, but I didn't just buy into it. I proved it to myself.

And y'know, looking back, I don't think Dean cared either way whether I'd buy into WITD. No skin off his nose, am I right?

And that's how I feel now. I know it works, and I'd love to see other writers find the sheer joy and fun I've found. But if they don't? Meh.

Today, I'm on the verge of completing my 31st novel. I also have 5 novellas and almost 200 short stories. All because I was willing to TRY something and either prove it to myself or not.

As my friend and Dean and I say, All writers are different. That's just a truism, period.

But among those who will become long-term successful fiction writers, it just means some are slower to catch on to trusting their subconscious than others are.

And of course, some won't even try. They're just too afraid of the unknown. They'll continue to outline and plot and grind out their 200 or 300 words per hour (or per day) and they'll tell everyone around them what "drudgery" writing is, what "hard work" it is.

And they'll be right. For them, it will be drudgery and hard work.

But for my money, they brought it on themselves.

To the Hovel late this morning. I wrote right at 2000 words, then called it a little early so I can get to the copyedit. I also have a few other things to do.

My son and his wife and children is coming down on Friday night. So I'll write again in the morning, but I'm not sure what I'll get done on Saturday or Sunday. Don't be too surprised if the Journal doesn't publish on those days.

See you soon.

Of Interest

DWS must be psychic. In light of what I wrote above (before I visited his website), see "The Reader Perception" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-reader-perception/>.

See more comments on "Dangers of Not Trusting The Creative Voice" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/dangers-of-not-trusting-the-creative-voice/#comments>.

And see more comments on "Cycling and the Art of One Clean Draft" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/cycling-and-the-art-of-one-clean-draft/#comments>.

See "I Copied the Routines of Famous Writers and It Sucked" at https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/wjpy8z/i-copied-the-routines-of-famous-writers-and-it-sucked.

Fiction Words: 1998

Nonfiction Words: 950 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2948

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599

Day 20... 1792 words. Total words to date..... 55391

Day 21... 1998 words. Total words to date..... 57389

Total fiction words for the month..... 30406

Total fiction words for the year..... 191692

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 55310

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 246732

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, May 18](#)

[May 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out a little after 3 this morning. I read until around 5, mostly on the Internet, mostly the stuff in “Of Interest” below, then wrote this edition of the Journal.

I think I could finish the novel this morning, but I’m going to leave it until Monday. I don’t want to risk leaving a paltry, ragged edge today of maybe less than a thousand words and then have to come back and finish on Monday.

I suspect I have another 3,000 to 5,000 words to the end. So given the choice, I’d rather leave the whole thing until Monday. And of course, I have the choice. (grin)

If I don't write today, I can also make a lot of headway on the copyedit, which is about halfway finished right now. I'll probably finish it completely over the weekend, especially if I work on it all day today.

Topic: Time is a Trade-Off

Folks often remind me that I'm able to write whenever I like, while they have a day job they must attend to in addition to their writing.

They see me as fortunate. I see them as fortunate, especially if in their 20s or 30s or 40s they've discovered and are following [Heinlein's Rules](#).

Most often the reminder comes in an oblique, non-confrontational way. Often they don't even realize they're making a comparison.

The common complaint is that they don't have time to write as much as they'd like because they have a day job. That's completely understandable, and I commiserate.

But if they write when they are able now, think of how far ahead they'll be in publications and practice when they are retired and have all the time in the world.

Some who are closer to my age and situation also say they don't have time to write as much as they'd like. In their case, it's because their time is divided among other interests.

That's also understandable, though it's more a matter of priorities than time. If other things are more important to you than writing, there's nothing wrong with that.

If I were to set up a comparison, I wouldn't make it about priorities. For me personally, aside from family matters, writing IS my number one priority.

Or maybe it's my number one priority even including family matters. Even when I'm doing other things, like family things or friend things, I'm usually thinking about writing or writing-related topics.

If I set up a comparison, I also wouldn't make it about responsibilities, e.g., the necessity of holding down an outside job. Been there, done that. And again, I didn't have the time-saving, time-valuing luxury of being aware of Heinlein's Rules.

So for me, neither responsibilities nor priorities form a basis for a valid comparison.

If I were to set up a comparison, the focus would be on time, period, and time management always involves a trade-off.

During the time you are able to set aside for writing, whether that's several hours every day or one hour per day or one hour per week or one hour per month, what do you actually do?

If you finish a 60,000 word novel in about 60 hours, does it matter whether it takes a week or a month or a year? Sixty hours is still 60 hours, no matter what the calendar says.

So whatever your writing “process,” it is dependent on application. And as a famous writer, maybe Hemingway, once said, the primary problem with application in the writing habit is applying the seat of your pants to the seat of your chair and your fingers to the keyboard.

If you actually write during the six hours (or one hour) per day (or week or month) you’ve set aside for writing, you will succeed. If you don’t, you won’t. It really is that simple.

Of course, there are certain requirements.

You can’t write a novel or a short story without writing scenes. You can’t write a scene without writing paragraphs. You can’t write a paragraph without writing sentences. And you can’t write a sentence without writing words.

Thinking or talking about writing is not writing. As a writer, you don’t get paid to do that. Rewriting or revising is not writing either. Again, as a writer, you don’t get paid to do that. Writing is putting new words on the page. As a writer, that’s what you’re paid to do.

So how best to spend your writing time? Well, the answer to that is up to you. And thank God. I’d hate to be responsible for your career as well as my own.

The only person I criticize as a result of my own comparison is myself. Realistically and not including breaks, I have, on average, four to five hours per day during which I can write.

So on average, I should be able to put out 4000 to 5000 words per writing day.

Yet on many writing days — in fact, on most of them — I simply don’t write 4,000 to 5,000 words. There’s always a Reason, but very seldom an Excuse.

And of course, Reason is a product of the critical mind. At my current age and situation, actual excuses (events that excuse me from the utter joy of writing) are the result of surprises.

Fortunately, I don’t have many of those.

I received an email from Kat McGee of Daring Creative Designs. I used her service for my print books and highly recommended her to others for layout and cover design.

Kat has had to shut down her business due to health concerns. If you pray, please consider this a call for prayers for Kat. Thanks.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “Product Focused vs Process Focused” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/product-focused-vs-process-focused/>.

Via The Digital Reader, see “Six Myths—And One Fact—About Traditional Publishing” at <https://medium.com/@stevenspatz4/six-myths-and-one-fact-about-traditional-publishing-b3309f70fcb8>.

Also via TDR, see “Infographic: The Indispensable Social Media Cheat Sheet” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/05/17/infographic-the-indispensable-social-media-cheat-sheet/>. I include this because it has handy size charts for adding photos without guessing.

A lot of great comments on “The Reader Perception” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/the-reader-perception/#comments>.

See “What Exactly is a Cozy Mystery?” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-exactly-is-a-cozy-mystery/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1030

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)
Brought forward..... 44837
Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954
Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634
Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912
Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599
Day 20... 1792 words. Total words to date..... 55391
Day 21... 1998 words. Total words to date..... 57389
Day 22... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 32404
Total fiction words for the year..... 193690
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7960
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 57430
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 250850

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, May 19](#)

[May 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) takes effect on May 25, 2018. It affects me because I have a few subscribers who live in EU nations.

There are half a boatload of requirements. I’m not going to worry about it too much, because everyone who reads this or my Pro Writers blog opted in to receive it.

So if you reside in the European Union and you would prefer not to receive this Journal or my ProWriters Blog, please either let me know or click the Unsubscribe button at the bottom of this email.

Thanks.

One of my sons is here this weekend so I probably won’t post a Journal tomorrow.

See you soon.

Of Interest

To download Stephen King’s new short story Laurie, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/stephenking-laurie.pdf>.

See “Some Reminders on This Friday” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-reminders-on-this-friday/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 140 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 140

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599

Day 20... 1792 words. Total words to date..... 55391

Day 21... 1998 words. Total words to date..... 57389
Day 22... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 32404
Total fiction words for the year..... 193690
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 57570
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 250990

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stephen King](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, May 21](#)

[May 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I almost posted this Journal yesterday, but only for the “Of Interest” section. And it isn’t time-sensitive, so I waited until today.

Had a great visit on Saturday and part of Sunday with my son Roy, Dana, Brandon, Lucas, and Joey (aka Fred, a linoleum salesman from Cincinnati). Thanks for dropping by, guys.

Rolled out at 3 this morning. The little girl and I were outside by 3:30, but an old owl screeched from somewhere closeby at a little before 4, so I ushered her back inside.

There are several good items in “Of Interest” today. Chief among them for bargain hunters, DWS is offering \$900 worth of online workshop credits for \$500. You can use them anytime, but the offer is for one week only. Take a look.

Topic: The Purpose (and Value) of the Conscious Mind

I talk a lot in this Journal about quieting the conscious, critical mind and allowing the subconscious free reign when you’re writing.

After all, the subconscious has been making up stories since before you even knew how to combine two longer lines with a shorter one to make a capital letter A. Even before you knew there was such a thing as an alphabet or a sentence.

It won't surprise you to know I stand by that truth. Whether or not you choose to believe it, the fact remains that it's a fact.

But of course, you still have a choice and it's purely yours to make. Every writer is different.

You can choose to don your robes and be the Almighty Writer on High, outlining a story to within an inch of its life, then controlling every aspect of your characters and forcing them to your will. This is the product of the conscious, critical mind. This is drudgery. This is work.

Or you can choose to put on your grungy clothes, roll off the edge of the trench, and run through the story with your characters, writing down what they say and do. This is the product of your subconscious mind. This is you having fun.

None of that isn't to say I advocate writing a sloppy "first draft." I don't.

Writing a sloppy first draft is self-defeating. It's like loading a wheelbarrow full of dirt, moving it partway toward where you actually want it, then dumping it so you can come back tomorrow and the next day and the next day, load it again and repeat the process.

But the conscious mind DOES have a valuable role to play in our functioning as writers: It enables us to learn.

We use the conscious, critical mind when we sit in classes and workshops and lectures. The conscious mind is where both the sponge of our hunger for knowledge and our BS Detector is located.

The latter, the BS Detector, if we're paying attention, keeps us from buying into pure nonsense, like the absolutes that some writing instructors toss around:

- Never use "had." It creates passive voice. (Um, no, it doesn't.)
- All adverbs are bad. (No. Like any other part of speech, some, but not all, are unnecessary.)
- Never use state-of-being verbs. They create passive voice. (Again, no, they don't.)

As an aside, passive voice is more accurately described as passive construction. It involves moving the responsibility for the action in the sentence from near the beginning to near the end.

"Roy kicked the ball" is active.

"The ball was kicked by Roy" is passive. What makes it passive is not the state-of-being verb was. It's that plus the prepositional phrase.

The former, the sponge of our hunger for knowledge, soaks up what is necessary regarding grammar and syntax and punctuation. It absorbs how and when to create cliffhangers and how to ground the reader and write openings. It sops up sentence structure and the uses of sentences and paragraphs of varying lengths.

The conscious mind is useful in learning which hot buttons readers of certain genres expect, and where and how to place those hot buttons.

So one primary function of the conscious mind is to learn. That's a very good function.

But another primary functions of the conscious mind is to protect us, more often than not, from ourselves. The conscious mind is what keeps us from walking out in traffic or leaning our hand on a hot stove.

And the conscious mind, once allowed (or, perish the thought, invited) into the actual writing process, wants us to do anything BUT finish our current WIP.

So celebrate the conscious mind for its ability to enable us to learn. In that regard, it is invaluable. Celebrate it even for its efforts to keep us from doing stupid things that would cause us physical harm.

But when it comes to writing, tell it to go sit in the corner and keep its thoughts to itself.

Then celebrate the subconscious for its ability to free up our creativity and let it flow onto the page.

I didn't go out to the Hovel until 8:30. From then until 10 in an extended session I finished the epilogue, which doubles as the last story in the novel. That was a quick 1700 words.

I took a break, then went back to the Hovel and started cycling through the novel itself. All of the stand-alone stories are finished, as is the epilogue, which does double duty as a stand-alone story and the cap of the novel.

I still need to fill out four or five intermissions too. So that's what I'm doing. I'm ignoring the stand-alone stories and cycling through only the overall story (the novel) which consists of the prologue and the intermissions.

As I'm doing that, I'm also changing the novel itself to a first-person narrative. It's more comfortable that way since it's told from one point of view. So as I cycle through I'm making those changes, which are only in the intermissions between the stories.

There. Adequately confused? (grin) I know I won't ever write one like this again.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “Time of Great Forgetting Special Offer” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/time-of-great-forgetting-special-offer/>. This is a GREAT offer if you want to learn the craft of writing or hone your skills.

See “How to Write an Eating Scene” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2016/07/how-to-write-eating-scene.html>.

Then see “Advanced Scene Technique: The Jump Cut” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/advanced-scene-technique-the-jump-cut.html>.

If you want to browse for awhile, you can find all of James Scott Bell’s Kill Zone blog posts at <https://killzoneblog.com/author/jimbell>.

Fiction Words: 3270

Nonfiction Words: 1060 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4330

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 44837

Day 16... 3117 words. Total words to date..... 47954

Day 17... 2680 words. Total words to date..... 50634

Day 18... 1278 words. Total words to date..... 51912

Day 19... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 53599

Day 20... 1792 words. Total words to date..... 55391

Day 21... 1998 words. Total words to date..... 57389

Day 22... 3270 words. Total words to date..... 60659

Total fiction words for the month..... 35674

Total fiction words for the year..... 196960

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9160

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 58630

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 255320

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 30

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 182

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, May 22

May 22, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Rolled out at 3:30 this morning and went straight to an online workshop. Finished that (6 weeks' worth) around 9:15.

Then I started my daily rounds of the Internet and putting this edition of the Journal together.

Finally out to the Hovel at 10:30.

I started cycling through the novel again from about the midway point, touching only the intermissions.

I took a break around 11:20, then again around 12:15. In the final session I wrote very little and only changed a few names, mostly with a global search. Today actually felt more like work than fun.

But it's finished.

Now sometime in the coming days I need to come up with 12 cover photos and design at least 12 covers, one for the novel, one for a 10-story collection, and one for each short story. (grin)

For the balance of the day, I'm going back to school in another workshop. (grin)

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Workshop Excitement" at <https://kriswrites.com/contact-kris/>. Some great observations in this one.

With a grain of salt, see "Dear Diary: I'm Dead. Will Anyone Care?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/dear-diary-im-dead-will-anyone-care.html>. As you read, remember that long passages of italics will wear on the reader. There were also a couple of other techniques she talked about that I recognized as those of a relatively novice writer. So take from the post what feels good to you and leave anything else behind.

Fiction Words: 1219

Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1469

Writing of A Storyteller (novel and short story collection)

Brought forward..... 55391

Day 21... 1998 words. Total words to date..... 57389
Day 22... 3270 words. Total words to date..... 60659
Day 23... 1219 words. Total words to date..... 61878 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 36893
Total fiction words for the year..... 198179
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 58880
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 256789

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 10
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 192

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, May 23](#)

[May 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy birthday to my dad. He would have been 90 years old today.

Taking the day “off” today for professional training. (grin)

Yesterday I completed the “Cliffhangers” classic workshop. Mostly I learned that I already know cliffhangers (and I thought I did).

That’s all right. The validation from a guy who has over three decades in the business and over 200 novels is more than worth the money. And besides, I DID pick up a few things I didn’t know and hadn’t considered. That felt like a bonus.

If you believe a cliffhanger is only a physical thing, I recommend this course. It is excellent.

Today, I’ll finish making my way through the Pacing classic workshop.

This one is packed full of information. And that’s my early assessment when I’m less than halfway through. Wow.

If anybody's interested, email me and I'll give you my rundown of the best online workshops for sheer amount of information.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See John Gilstrap's "Bad Guy Boot Camp Redux" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/bad-guy-boot-camp-redux.html>.

See "Why American Authors Don't Need to Worry About GDPR" at <http://www.authormedia.com/why-american-authors-dont-need-to-worry-about-gdpr/>.

See "The Dynamics of Time Travel in Fiction" at <https://novelconclusions.com/2015/10/21/the-dynamics-of-time-travel-in-fiction/>.

See "Character Tags in Fiction" at <https://novelconclusions.com/2013/10/27/character-tags-in-fiction-and-why-theyre-fantastic/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 210

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 36893
Total fiction words for the year..... 198179
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9620
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 59090
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 256999

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 192

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, May 24](#)

[May 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Only four days left on the Special Time of Great Forgetting Offer at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/long-day/> (and scroll down to the second bold headline).

I want to do this so badly I can barely stand it. Unfortunately, I've taken so many workshops there aren't 4 left (currently) that I want to take. My loss.

This is a great value and a great investment in yourself and your writing. \$900 worth of training for \$500. Check it out.

Out to the Hovel late at 8:30. I spent some time looking through some of the stuff I started when I was writing my previous novel.

Stories I started but that either didn't appeal to me at the time or that fizzled. I didn't find much to play with that grabbed me at the moment.

Then at about 9:30, a line popped into my head: "It wasn't the best night to dump a body." And I was off and writing.

Annnd then, not so much. I wrote a little over 1200 words before I realized I really just wasn't into it. I just don't want to write this story right now. It isn't fun.

I was going to break at 10:30, then come back and keep looking. But I have only a half-day today and some other things to do. So I'm gonna call this one done and start fresh tomorrow. Or maybe the next day.

See you soon.

Of Interest

You'll miss something wonderful if you don't read the third comment at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/got-two-new-workshops-live/#comments>.

See Debbie Burke's "Virtual Vigilantes" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/05/virtual-vigilantes-revenge-of-the-scambaiters.html>.

See "The Books We Want To Write" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/05/23/business-musings-the-books-we-want-to-write/>. I had to ignore the political stuff. I reference this one mostly to draw your attention to a book of essay she mentions titled Books To Die For. It's supposed to be chock full of writing tips from masters.

Fiction Words: 1227

Nonfiction Words: 310 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 310

Writing of Jimmy the Dope (story or novel, no idea)

Day 1..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 1227

Total fiction words for the month..... 38120

Total fiction words for the year..... 199406

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 59400

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 258536

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 0

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 192

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [DebbieBurke](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),

[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, May 25](#)

[May 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

To the writing in the Hovel at 9:30. I started Jimmy the Dope yesterday, so I figured I might as well finish it.

Still not much in the mood, but after I looked it over I felt a little more like writing it. Definitely a short story, though.

It doesn't feel like it wants to expand larger than one event, and that's fine. With the stand-alone short stories I wrote for my previous WIP, when this one's finished I'll have around 200 short stories. Okay, I just looked 193. All the numbers at the bottom are correct now.

I need to compile more of the stories in collections though. I haven't done that in awhile. Soon I'll need to dedicate some time to cover design and publishing. Sigh.

Right at noon I finished the story at just over 3900 words.

In other news, I'm thinking about transitioning my main website over to a pure writer's website.

If I do that, all the writer-stuff will continue on this Journal. The main website will contain only occasional blog posts. Maybe every other week.

Those posts will deal with my stories, novels, novellas and collections and any upcoming releases, sales, deals etc.

Maybe I'll talk about characters I particularly like, but it will be more reader oriented than writer oriented. I'd like to hear your thoughts on this.

Again, this Journal will continue, and all the writer-based stuff will be over here.

See you soon.

Of Interest

If you enjoy Kristine Kathryn Rusch's short stories, drop by <https://kriswrites.com/2018/05/21/free-fiction-monday-the-strangeness-of-the-day/>.

Fiction Words: 2737

Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2987

Writing of "Jimmy the Dope" (short story)

Day 1..... 1227 words. Total words to date..... 1227

Day 2..... 2737 words. Total words to date..... 3964 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 40857

Total fiction words for the year..... 202143

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 59650

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 261523

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

The Journal, Saturday, May 26

[May 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Still thinking of how to handle the two main websites, HarveyStanbrough.com and HESTanbrough.com.

For a moment, I even thought I might leave both sites as they are and add a twice-monthly post for readers to HarveyStanbrough.com. And keep up the weekly Pro Writers posts.

But that's a lot of work. And I already do a lot of work. (grin)

I also thought, very briefly, of moving this Journal back over there.

Been there, done that. And it didn't work well, especially given that this is a semi-daily blog.

Right now, I have weekly Pro Writers blog posts scheduled out through the middle of July. A new blog post goes live every Tuesday.

I also have 31 novels, 5 novellas, and 29 short story collections to talk about (promote). And all of that's in addition to 4 major poetry collections.

And of course, more novels and short story collections are still to come.

So here's what I'm thinking at the moment:

1. I'll adjust the scheduled release dates on the Pro Writers posts so they post every *other* week instead of every week.
2. Then I'll fill the blank spots that are left with a series of new posts aimed at readers. So those will come out every other week as well.
 - 2a. Each of those will summarize and promote a novel or a series or a short story collection.
 - 2b. During the week that post is live, readers will also be able to buy the subject publication at a discount.

Primarily, this will give me some breathing room to decide whether to eventually discontinue the Pro Writers blog on the main site and move it over here. And it would also enable me to do something for readers.

Whether you're reading this via email, on the website itself or via Facebook, I'd really like to hear your thoughts and opinions on all of this.

You can comment on this post at <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-saturday-may-26/> or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Today will be an admin day (covers, promo documents, etc.) combined with a trip to Sierra Vista to purchase a new filter for our ice maker. A disabled icemaker at this time of the year in southest Arizona is Not A Good Thing. (grin)

Tomorrow also will be an admin day for covers and so on. I have a novel and 11 short stories for which I don't even have cover art yet. Y'can't sell 'em if y'don't publish 'em.

See you soon.

Of Interest

There are some great comments on The Passive Voice re “Selling Out: Going Wide or Going Exclusive to Amazon” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/selling-out-going-wide-or-going-exclusive-to-amazon/>.

The pickings have been thin over at Dean's site recently. He and Kris are completing their move to Las Vegas. In today's brief placeholder post, he says he expects to be back to normal posting in the next few days.

In the meantime, a reminder: if you'd like to take advantage of his offer of \$900 worth of workshops for \$500, time's running out.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 500

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 40857
Total fiction words for the year..... 202143
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10680
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 60150
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 262023

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, May 27](#)

[May 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, summer is here. Not only temperature-wise but with the earlier sunrises. I like that. With the advent of earlier sunrises, my wife and I can get back to walking in the early morning.

We walk for time at the beginning. About 12 minutes out, then whatever time it takes to get back. Later, as I get in better shape and my weight starts to readjust a bit, we'll increase the time out.

I've written a lengthy two-part topic on Ebook Distribution. A comment I ran across on another blog set me off. I think I have a pretty good argument.

I won't do any fiction writing today. Other than this edition of the Journal, I'll continue with admin tasks from yesterday. I expect to be back to writing fiction tomorrow.

Topic: Distribution: Exclusivity vs. Going Wide, Part One

I've had questions recently regarding whether writers should "go wide" with electronic publishing and distribution or go exclusively with Amazon. There's also a great deal of talk about this topic on the Internet in various groups at various websites.

Today I'll add my two cents.

Ostensibly, when they talk about exclusivity, writers are talking about distributing only through Amazon's KDP Select program.

Now, you CAN distribute only to Barnes & Noble or Kobo or Apple or any other distributor that will allow direct uploads.

But writers who advocate distributing exclusively to Amazon's KDP Select program would never dream of distributing exclusively to any of the others. I've asked them, and they look at me as if I have two heads.

They would never consider distributing only to one of the other major e-tailers specifically because they don't want to cut out the millions of readers who prefer reading on Amazon's Kindle.

Well, and the money. The almighty buck. Of course, there's nothing wrong with wanting to make money with your writing (your business).

But where do you draw the line?

Unlike any of the other e-tailers, Amazon's KDP Select program REQUIRES exclusivity. And Amazon rewards writers who bow to that demand by giving them certain marketing perks that the rest of us don't get.

One relatively well-known writer, in a comment on a post on this topic in another venue, wrote that he uses KDP Select because "This is my living, so I follow the money." (I'm paraphrasing from memory.)

That's all well and good. Completely understandable. Again, we're in business to make money.

But let's put things in perspective.

Amazon, B&N, Kobo, Apple et al are booksellers. As such, they are your first customers. They vie for your attention, and they queue up to offer your books for sale to the second tier of customers, the buying public.

But YOU are the source of your product. YOU are the one who chooses where and how to publish.

And if you're an indy author, you also choose how to distribute your work. Distribution is solely your responsibility in this new world of publishing.

In many coffee shops in the 1950s, a similar thing happened.

Coffee shop owners made their living selling food and drink to customers. Like you, the owners were the source of their product. Like you they had to decide to whom they would sell.

Many of them refused to serve people of color. Why?

Well, some of them surely were narrow minded bigots. But many of them did so out of acquiescence to customer demands.

Many of their "white" customers made it plain that if the coffee shop owner served food and drink to people of color, the "whites" would stop coming in.

In other words, those customers demanded exclusivity.

Exactly like Amazon does today.

The owner of the coffee shop didn't want to cut off his main source of revenue, the "white" customers. So he made the conscious business decision to distribute food and drink exclusively to the "white" customers.

Today, many writers don't want to cut out their main source of revenue either, which they receive from the elephant among booksellers: Amazon. So those writers bow to Amazon's demands and distribute exclusively to Amazon.

All well and good, right?

After all, people of color in the 1950s still had the option of going to other coffee shops for their breakfast.

Just like readers today who choose to read some other eformat than .azw or .mobi can get their ebooks from booksellers other than Amazon.

Another writer commented on that same post that “Some writers erroneously make emotional decisions despite the fact they’re running a business” (again, paraphrasing from memory).

Yes. Exactly like the “emotional” decision that some coffee shop owners made back in the 1950s to go ahead and sell food and drink to all people regardless of skin color.

Only it wasn’t an emotional decision, folks. It was a rational, well-thought-out moral decision. And it still is.

When you choose to go exclusive with KDP Select, you’re telling those who might want to read your work on something other than the Kindle that you don’t care about them either way.

If they won’t fall into line and bow to Amazon’s demands too, then you’d rather not sell to them.

I’m sure a lot of writers will disagree with my take on this. That’s perfectly fine. Every writer is different, and how you choose to distribute your work is completely up to you.

If you choose to go exclusive with KDP Select, more power to you. You can even dress it up and convince yourself and maybe some others it’s only “good business.”

But don’t try to convince me.

Tomorrow, some alternatives to exclusivity.

See you soon.

Of Interest

Author Media is doing a series of post on author websites and buyers. You can view a video or read a transcript.

See “Author Website Visitor #1 – Curious Cathy” at <http://www.authormedia.com/author-website-visitor-1-curious-cathy/>.

See “Author Website Visitor #2 – Book Buying Betty” at <http://www.authormedia.com/author-website-visitor-2-book-buying-betty/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 980 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 980

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 40857
Total fiction words for the year..... 202143
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11660
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 61130
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 263003

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Author Media](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, May 29](#)

[May 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Hmmm. I was confused for a few minutes this morning, but I finally figured it out. I erroneously titled yesterday's post "Sunday, May 27" even though I wrote and posted it on Monday, May 28. Oh well.

I had planned to get back to writing fiction today, but I have more admin stuff to take care of so probably not.

And I'm in no rush.

Anyway, here's the second part of the topic I posted yesterday. If you didn't see the first part. I strongly recommend you [go back and read it](#).

Then I'll probably spend the balance of the day making some major changes on the big website over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

Topic: Distribution: Exclusivity vs. Going Wide, Part Two

I didn't say anything in part one of this post yesterday about publishing to paper. Of course, publishing to paper as well as ebooks is a good idea. If you can manage it, publishing to audiobooks is also a good idea.

I advocate making your work available in every format. The larger number of formats that are available, the larger your prospective audience. This is a fact. It won't go away just because someone chooses not to believe it.

So if you're like the one seminar attendee who said to me (seriously), "I *hate* ebooks! I'll never publish my work in any ebook format!" stop reading this. I've got nothing for you.

Although I have to say, that's a lot like owning a flooring store and refusing to sell wood laminate because you personally "hate" it and would never use it in your own home. Sigh.

Likewise, if you're a staunch defender of Amazon's KDP Select program, you can stop reading now.

But if you DON'T want to limit your prospective readership to paper, and if you AREN'T willing to knuckle under to Amazon's demands for exclusivity, read on.

This post is going to be all about how to "go wide" with distribution of ebooks.

If you want to go wide, and if you're looking for ease of distribution, you can upload to a distributor. Today, I'll talk about two of those distributors.

Just so you know, there are other distributors out there (for example, <http://xinxii.com/>). But the minuscule markets XinXii represents combined with the difficulty of their user interface keeps me from recommending them.

I plan to check out <https://www.vearsa.com/ebook-distribution/> and <https://www.bookbaby.com/ebook-distribution/> soon, but I haven't yet. You can find others by typing "ebook distributors" into your search engine.

Draft2Digital.com

For the moment my favorite distributor is Draft2Digital (<https://draft2digital.com>), hereafter referred to as D2D.

At present, I upload all of my works, long and short, to both D2D and Amazon. That's all of my novels, novellas, 5- and 10-story short story collections, and individual short stories.

D2D offers distribution to all the major e-tailers: Amazon, iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Playster, Scribd, Tolino, 24Symbols and OverDrive.

I say they “offer distribution” because you may choose to have them distribute to any of those retailers, or not.

For example, I never allow distribution of my works to Scribd. Just my personal preference. They’ve had a lot of problems with copyright infringement and those problems continue.

I also don’t check the Amazon radio button on D2D, strictly because I prefer to upload to Amazon myself. Again, just my personal preference.

D2D’s user interface is slick. It takes me about 3 minutes to list a book with them. That and the fact that they offer distribution to all the major players makes them my favorite distributor.

Oh, they also offer a universal link. One link that will take the reader to the bookseller of their choice. And you can even add to the universal link any booksellers that D2D does NOT distribute to. Cool, eh?

Of course, I have a promo doc prepared for each publication. It lists the title, author, a short description and keywords. So when I get to D2D or other distributors, I can copy/paste a lot of what they require.

Smashwords.com

For my major works (novels, novellas and short story collections) in addition to D2D and Amazon, I also upload to Smashwords (<https://smashwords.com>).

Smashwords is another distributor. They distribute to most of the same major e-tailers on D2D’s distribution list, but they also distribute to 8 or 9 extra markets, mostly European, that D2D doesn’t reach.

Unfortunately, the Smashwords user interface is clunky at best, which is why I use them for only my major works. Even with the same promo doc to draw from, it takes me ten minutes or more to distribute a book to Smashwords.

The difference between ten minutes at Smashwords and 3 minutes at D2D probably doesn’t sound like a lot. But when you have over 250 publications, the extra minutes quickly add up.

Just to share the numbers, I could upload all 250 publications to D2D in 12.5 hours. To upload the same 250 publications to Smashwords would take 41.66 hours. So....

So for my purposes, I distribute all of my works via D2D to the major e-tailers. Then via Smashwords, I also distribute my major works to Inktera (formerly Page Foundry), Baker & Taylor/Follett, Library Direct, Baker-Taylor Axis360, cloudLibrary, Gardners Extended Retail, Odilo, and Gardners Library.

Note: If you choose to distribute your work through more than one distributor, be sure to use only one distributor per venue. For example, because I use D2D for all the major e-tailers, over at Smashwords I check the “Do Not Distribute” button for those same e-tailers.

I should note that I haven’t made many sales in those extra Smashwords venues. However, if my books weren’t available there, I would negate the chance of EVER making a sale there.

What most attracts me to Smashwords is its in-house store. From the Smashwords store, readers can purchase any ebook and download it in any eformat: .epub, .mobi, .pdf, .lrf, .pdb, .txt or .html. In fact, once they pay for a work, they can download it in multiple formats. You can also run exclusive sales there, etc.

And that brings me full circle back to Part One of this post.

I will NEVER distribute exclusively to Amazon’s KDP Select precisely because I don’t want to automatically snub the millions of readers who prefer to read on some other format.

There are those who maintain that going exclusive with KDP Select is “good business.”

And granted, when you first launch a book, it might well be good business to go with KDP Select for the first 90 days. (Amazon requires exclusivity in 90-day bites. But caution: if you go to day 91, you have to leave your book enrolled until the end of the next 90-day period.)

That way you can take advantage of the Amazon marketing perks that they offer only to works enrolled in their program.

I might be convinced that particular situation would be good business. But only if after the first 90 days the writer pulled the work out of KDP Select and went wide with it. (I personally would never use KDP Select even for the first 90 days.)

To me, “good business” is making your work available to the widest possible audience in every possible format.

If I owned that flooring store I talked about above, I would sell every type of floor covering anyone might want.

More importantly, I would sell it to anyone who walked through the door wanting to buy.

But maybe that’s just me.

Well, I wrote a paltry 1500 words on a new story today, and I’m still not sure it’s going to go anywhere. I might return to it tomorrow, and I might move on to something else.

See you soon.

Of Interest

If you're still looking for an agent, see "Very Tempted..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/very-tempted/>. Dean talks about a recent major crime that took place in a major literary agency in New York.

Stop by and browse the Writer Resources at <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources/>. Chance are you'll find exactly what you've been looking for or wondering about.

Fiction Words: 1586

Nonfiction Words: 1250 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2836

Writing of Seduction (tentative title, novel)

Day 1..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 1586

Total fiction words for the month..... 42443
Total fiction words for the year..... 203729
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12910
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 62380
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 262993

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, May 30

[May 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Had a great walk this morning. Fourth day in a row. My wife agrees that we should walk every day that we can and then we'll take a day "off" only when the weather won't permit us to walk. But it doesn't rain here much, so....

Then again, we aren't going all that far yet either. Only a mile or so. Later we'll have to leave a little earlier on days when she has to go to work, but we'll figure that out.

There's about a 1/4 mile dirt road from the highway to our house. I can't stand it, so we drive to the PO in the center of our small town and walk along the highway from there.

So when we got back from our walk at around 7 I did nothing writerly until she left at around 8:30. I did finish another Lee Child Jack Reacher novel in the interim. The guy's addictive.

If there's one thing I've learned as a writer from reading Lee Child's Jack Reacher series, it's that it's all right to slow down. Take your time.

That doesn't mean I have to write fewer words per hour or per day. But it does mean I don't have to rush to get to the end of a book.

I'm putting that into practice in my current WIP, a novel tentatively titled Seduction. (I'm all but certain that won't be the title when it's finished.)

I AM actually writing fewer words per day at the moment, but I'm not worried about it. I don't doubt that I'll get back up to speed as I master this new "feeling," for it is more of a feeling than a technique. And it's a very good feeling.

See you soon.

Of Interest

If you haven't read it yet, or even if you have, see "The Man With No Plot: how I watched Lee Child write a Jack Reacher novel" at <https://theconversation.com/the-man-with-no-plot-how-i-watched-lee-child-write-a-jack-reacher-novel-51220>.

See Sue Coletta's "Writers, Have You Found Your Voice?" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/writers-have-you-found-your-voice/>.

See "Accountant embezzled \$3.4M from famed literary agency" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/accountant-embezzled-3-4m-from-famed-literary-agency/>.

And see "As BookExpo and New York Rights Fair Open: Warnings for Publishers" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/as-bookexpo-and-new-york-rights-fair-open-warnings-for-publishers/>.

Fiction Words: 1673

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2043

Writing of Seduction (tentative title, novel)

Day 1..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 1586
Day 2..... 1673 words. Total words to date..... 3259

Total fiction words for the month..... 44116
Total fiction words for the year..... 205402
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 62750
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 267882

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, May 31](#)

[May 31, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I keep hammering away at this. But as an instructor, I know some folks “get it” when they hear information one way, and some get it when they hear it another way or from another source.

With that in mind, see Kris Rusch’s “Business Musings: An Agent Nightmare Revealed” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/05/30/business-musings-an-agent-nightmare-revealed/>.

Yep. It’s so important I added it to the main body of the Journal. And shared it with several writer groups on FB.

Today should be a writing day, and it probably will be. It might be a percolation day.

A percolation day is a day when I allow a story to percolate in my mind.

I don’t “think” about it. I don’t give it any conscious thought at all. (That way lies madness.) I just leave it alone, let my subconscious have it. Let it boil around up there for awhile.

We’ll see.

Topic: Investing in Yourself, or Not

Recently, a correspondent and subscriber to this Journal emailed me. He wanted my recommendations on Dean's workshops, which of course I was happy to provide.

Learn and practice. Learn and practice. That should be every writer's mantra.

The gentleman also asked whether I would be recording anymore of my audio lectures. (You can see the lectures and their descriptions at <http://harveystanbrough.com/lecture-series/>.)

I realized later that I hadn't answered that particular question. Then I thought it might make a good topic, so I decided to answer it here.

The short answer is Nah, probably not.

Frankly, I can't remember the last time anyone signed up for one of my audio lectures. Even after I slashed the prices in half. I cut them to \$5 per audio session.

I offered the lectures directly via the link above and as part of a patronage package at <http://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

No takers.

Last month (April 2018) I even offered to send the codes for all of the lectures, free, to two writers (and editing clients) who need help.

One of those writers has published a few novels. The other has published a few short stories. Both would benefit immensely from even the most basic lectures.

But neither of them took me up on it. Yawn. Shrug. Business as usual.

I don't know. Maybe it's that old "implied value" thing. Maybe "free" implies subliminally that the courses are worthless. Maybe I should jack up the prices to, say, \$25 per audio session instead of \$5 per audio session.

Let's see... that would make the Dialogue course \$250 instead of \$50. Writing Off Into the Dark would cost \$225 instead of \$45. The least expensive course on the page would cost \$50 instead of \$10.

Yeah, that ain't gonna happen. For one thing, still nobody would buy them for whatever reason. For another, I'm in this at least partly to help other writers cut the learning curve. That's why the prices were reasonable in the first place.

So for the time being, I won't be recording anymore lectures. Too time consuming and too little return in the way of "Hey, good idea. This helped." Much less any actual money. (grin)

Of course, I'll leave up the ones that are already there. At least they're available in case anyone wants them. And I've already made the investment so leaving them up isn't costing me anything.

Please understand, though, this isn't a plea. I mean, there are only about 60 people who follow this Journal, and not all of them are even writers.

But if you ARE a writer, even if you don't learn from me, for goodness' sake (and for your own sake), learn from Someone. Dean. The Kill Zone blog. Crime Writer Sue Coletta. ANY national best seller who's willing to teach, whether through seminars, workshops, or just by dropping the occasional gem in an interview.

Learn and then practice what you've learned. Learn and practice. Learn and practice.

Got a couple of good writing sessions, did some cycling and some writing.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Last Day: Special Time of Great Forgetting Offer Extended..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/last-day/>.

Via CrimeReads, if you're into crime/detective/mafia fiction, check out "How Putin's Russia Became Mafia Heaven" at https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/gykvey/why-is-the-russian-mafia-vor-v-zakone-so-powerful-putin-trump.

Strictly for fun, see "A Model Privacy Policy Courtesy of XKCD" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-model-privacy-policy-courtesy-of-xkcd/>.

If you are the type of writer who likes to "create" characters in advance, Reedsy has come up with a nifty PDF guide you can download free at <https://blog.reedsy.com/character-profile/>. I won't ever use it, but that doesn't mean others shouldn't.

Fiction Words: 1562

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2322

Writing of Seduction (tentative title, novel)

Day 1..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 1586

Day 2..... 1673 words. Total words to date..... 3259

Day 3..... 1562 words. Total words to date..... 4821

Total fiction words for the month.....	45678
Total fiction words for the year.....	206964
Total nonfiction words for the month...	14040
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	63510
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	270204
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	4
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, June 1](#)

[June 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Short post today, which I'm sure you'll find a relief after some of my recent ones. (grin)

I had a good walk this morning. Otherwise I'm just writing today.

I haven't set aside the work tentatively titled Seduction quite yet, but I moved on to another one today.

Maybe I'll finish Seduction, maybe not. Not worried about it. It feels sluggish right now, and at the moment I just want to produce, get myself back on track with a routine.

The new one, Dread, is listed below.

New month, too, so I had to set up all my spreadsheet equations again. Hope I got them right this time so I don't have to correct something mid-month. (grin)

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “Author Website Visitor #3 – Reading Club Rhonda” at <http://www.authormedia.com/author-website-visitor-reading-club-rhonda/>. This is a video, but there’s also a transcript.

Then see “Author Website Visitor #5 – Impatient Irene” at <http://www.authormedia.com/author-website-visitor-4-impatient-irene/>.

See “The Many Deaths of a Fiction Writer” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/the-many-deaths-of-a-fiction-writer/>. I think maybe he stretched this one a bit, but it still has some good warnings and check-in points in it.

Fiction Words: 3391

Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3551

Writing of Dread (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391

Writing of Seduction (tentative title, novel)

Day 1..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 1586

Day 2..... 1673 words. Total words to date..... 3259

Day 3..... 1562 words. Total words to date..... 4821

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3391

Total fiction words for the year..... 210355

Total nonfiction words for the month... 160

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63670

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 273755

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorMedia](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, June 2](#)

[June 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Dean's post today (see "Of Interest" below) struck a chord with me. As a result, I added the topic below.

I encourage you to read both his post and the topic. Some folks get it one way, some another. And this is a very important topic.

Topic: "That" You Write vs. "What" You Write

In today's post (below), Dean Wesley Smith wrote "...all that matters is the writing, not the end product."

That seemingly innocuous statement is only one of the many truly major lessons I've learned from him and attempted to pass along.

To establish credentials for folks who are newer to the Journal, Dean Wesley Smith is a USA Today best selling novelist with over 200 novels to his credit. He has also written several hundred short stories, almost all of which sold and many of which won prestigious awards.

In other words, the guy knows what he's talking about. And he actually practices what he preaches. Because it works.

Because I listened to him, in the last 4 years I've written just fewer than 200 short stories, 31 novels and 5 novellas.

Now to the meat of the matter...

Beginning writers, regardless of age, have trouble separating "the writing" from "the end product": the short story, the novella, the novel, the series, etc.

And yet, separating the two concepts is essential if you want a career as a writer. By "essential," I mean if you separate them, you'll succeed. If you don't, you'll fail.

In this regard, I was no different from any other beginning writer when I started writing fiction at the age of 61.

It's true that I had a great grounding in the tools of the trade. I used to tell people I was dipped in the language at birth.

I'm good at grammar and syntax, for example. I know sentence structure right down to the bones and sinews. I know the types of clauses, what differentiates a phrase from a clause (a phrase has no verb), and the types of phrases and their uses.

I know what a comma splice is, and what a run-on sentence is. (Hint: it isn't just a really long sentence. "John hit the ball he ran the bases" is a run-on sentence. "John hit the ball, he ran the bases" is a comma splice.)

I even have a seemingly innate sense of when to alter sentence structure.

I know, for example, that characters usually don't speak in complete sentences. Unless the character's a librarian or an English teacher. In class. Fragments, folks. They use fragments. Like these.

I know all of that "conscious mind" stuff, and I'm glad. It's necessary to learn and know the conscious mind stuff.

Hell, I can even diagram a sentence with the best of them, and I actually enjoy doing that.

But Not When I'm Writing.

Enter Heinlein's Rules. Add to that one gem of wisdom I learned from Dean when I complained to him via email that I was "stuck" while writing a novel.

He responded with, "Happens to everybody, Harvey. Still happens to me. What you do is trust your subconscious and just write the next sentence."

Wow. Trust Your Subconscious and Just Write the Next Sentence.

He added, "Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Soon the story will be racing along again, often even before you realize you're no longer stuck."

He was right, as he usually is.

I started buying some of his lectures and then some of his online workshops.

They weren't about grammar and syntax and punctuation and sentence structure. I was glad because I already knew those things. (If you don't know them, you still need them.)

His lectures and workshops are about the craft of writing.

I learned a lot of things that I'd never even considered. Things I had seen at work in novels I'd read but hadn't recognized.

Note: ANY learning, in school or later in seminars and workshops or from books, is the domain of the conscious mind. Learn sentence structure or punctuation or the craft, then don't worry about it. What you learn with the conscious mind will filter back into the subconscious and come out through your fingers as you're writing.

A few months later I picked up another gem from Dean that clicked. It's stuck with me ever since:

The Writing Is What's Important.

Not the story. Not the novel. The writing.

If you make the writing important — if you make That You Write important — you will be successful.

Read that again. Make “that you write” important. Not “what you write.”

This is what Dean meant in his post when he wrote “...all that matters is the writing, not the end product.”

Make “that you write” important because writing is fun. It's an escape from the everyday world. Safeguard your escape time.

But DON'T make “what you write” important. The instant you make “what” you write important, it will become work. Work is not fun. Work is stressful and pressured. Not an escape. I don't even celebrate finishing a novel. I don't want to send the wrong message to my subconscious. I thrill at starting a new one though.

Learn with your conscious mind, then trust your subconscious to write your stories and novels.

The subconscious isn't about thinking or learning. The subconscious is all about having fun and storytelling.

After all, it's been telling stories since before you were even aware there was an alphabet.

So set aside that invaluable time to write. Make “that you write” important.

“What” you write will take care of itself.

No fiction writing today. It's Saturday.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Joe Hartlaub's “Communicating from Beyond the Grave” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/communicating-from-beyond-the-grave.html>.

Some great comments on Dean's "Many Deaths" post at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-many-deaths-of-a-fiction-writer/comment-page-1/>.

Also see "Only You Can Kill Your Writing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/only-you-can-kill-your-writing/>. From it I got my gem of the day: "[A]ll that matters is the writing, not the end product."

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1000 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1000

Writing of Dread (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3391
Total fiction words for the year..... 210355
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1160
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 64670
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 274755

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, June 4](#)

[June 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. Nothing but whole lot of nothing going on yesterday in a writerly way. Did a little work around the yard, did some reading, but very little else.

My business computer was all messed up (the last Lenovo I'll ever buy) so I spent a few hours messing with it. Finally got it working again, or at least limping along.

I did spend a little time online finding things for “Of Interest” and they’re below. Nothing time sensitive, so I figured it would keep until today.

Hence no Journal yesterday.

I stayed up too late on Sunday night, rolled out late as a result this morning, then allowed myself to be sucked into a meaningless discussion (in dumbed-down America) concerning ignorance and all its seemingly endless ramifications. Sigh.

Still managed a walk, though we just went into the open desert east of the house and walked around the 1 mile, uneven dirt path out there. Hurt my back, so I won’t be doing that again.

When we got back I got to work, which means I started poking through the usual websites looking for items for the “Of Interest” section. Found a couple and added them.

Then I opened a game of spider solitaire and tried very hard to forget I’d wasted over an hour earlier in the day on a person who probably wouldn’t give me the time of day if her middle finger was a watch. Ahh, the wonders of Facebook.

Then I came inside to write all this gibberish. Finally to the Hovel around 10.

I had three really good sessions today and knocked out over 3800 words. Feels good to be working my way back into a routine.

See you soon.

Of Interest

There are 16 more comments on Dean’s “Many Deaths” post at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-many-deaths-of-a-fiction-writer/#comments>. Many good, meaty comments there. Also, often I find new “resources” by clicking the linked name of a commenter. Few and far between, but they’re out there.

See James Scott Bell’s “Be Clear About WHO and WHERE in the Opening” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/be-clear-about-who-and-where-in-the-opening.html>. I would add, also be clear about the What. It doesn’t have to be “the” problem of the story/novel, but every opening should have a character with a problem (the what) in a setting.

See “Author Website Visitor #5 – Event Coordinator Evelyn” at <http://www.authormedia.com/author-website-visitor-5-event-coordinator-evelyn/>.

See Sue Coletta’s “Let Me Tell You a Story” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/let-me-tell-you-a-story-video.html>. (There’s a video but an annotated transcript below it.)

Fiction Words: 3827

Nonfiction Words: 390 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4217

Writing of Dread (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391

Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218

Total fiction words for the month..... 7218

Total fiction words for the year..... 214182

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1550

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 65070

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 278972

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorMedia](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, June 5

[June 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Looking forward to another good day of writing. The novel is running, and it's weird (for me).

It seems to be psychological suspense with a lot of police procedural mixed in. Meaning the final main genre probably will be police procedural. Well, unless it develops into a thriller. I'll have to see what happens with the scope.

I like the effects/ramifications of both of the PS and PP genres.

Both require minuscule, exacting and precise detail-detail-detail (but none of it boring, all of it tension-building) at the sub-molecular level. I love that stuff.

Both require intensity. Both require emotion, depth of setting, and no wasted words.

And I love a challenge. But that's where the weird part comes in.

Enter the protagonist: a female detective. Oh goodness.

She first sprang into my head the day after I finished my previous novel and eleven short stories. The novel was wrapped around ten short stories, and another one flipped out on its own.

She was dressed in black slacks, a waist-length jacket that matched both her hair and her slacks, and a white blouse with a tie that formed an inverted V just below the collar.

Her hands were curled into loose fists on her hips. That caused the jacket to hang open just enough that I could make out a Glock 19 on her waist. Next to it was a gold shield.

She looked directly up at me (and I'm only 5'8") and said, "Hey Hawvey, write me."

That isn't a typo. It's how she pronounced my name. Frankly, I don't even know how she *knew* my name.

And I said, "Yeah, I don't think so. You're not really in my comfort zone, so...."

But a couple of days later, after the first abandoned start on a story that just wouldn't fly, she was back.

Same outfit, but with blue slacks and jacket. Same pose. "C'mon, Hawvey, write me already."

I shook my head. "Huh uh. No."

After another failed start, she was back again.

Jeans and a silver-grey jacket this time, a similar blouse in light pink. Same pose. "What is your problem, dude? I thought you like a challenge. So can you handle it, or what?"

I settled back in my chair, stared at her.

Her blue eyes were focused, her gaze unwavering. "So?"

I sighed. "What's your name?"

"Marie LeGrand." She stuck out her right hand. "Good t'meet you."

I started to shake her hand. Then I realized she wasn't actually there yet. And I realized I wanted her to be there.

So I turned to the computer and typed Dread at the top of the page. Then I centered it because I'm anal that way.

Then I moved the cursor down and typed

A quiet creak.

That's all it took to wake Marie LeGrand.

And over 10,000 words later I haven't looked back. Or breathed very much. (grin)

I wish for you the same fun and excitement.

I wrote for three easy sessions today for just over 3000 words.

See you soon.

Of Interest

Oh goodness! See "Tossed Out A Book" at <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/>. If you're wondering, I agree with him.

See "Thrillers in Disguise: 10 Essential Literary Novels That Master Suspense" at <https://crimereads.com/thrillers-in-disguise/>.

Fiction Words: 3194

Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3614

Writing of Dread (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391

Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218

Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412

Total fiction words for the month..... 10412

Total fiction words for the year..... 217376

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1970

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 65480

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 282586

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the](#)

[writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, June 6

[June 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A very long post today.

First a topic for folks who have joined the Journal recently and/or haven't heard my spiel on punctuation as a tool before. Then one of the personal tidbits some of you like. This one is a fairly brief bit on everyday life as a writer (or anyone else) in southeast Arizona.

Topic: On Comma Use

Recently, a major writer with whom I usually agree on most things handed out some bad information. And by bad I mean harmful.

A writer commented that she doesn't know where to place commas. The major writer advised her to ignore what others think of her comma use and wrote, "If they are focused on commas, they really need a life."

Yeah, um, no. I mean, is anyone really "focused" on commas?

I don't think so.

The fact is, punctuation is just another writing tool. Knowledgeable writers use it to direct the reading of their work.

Each mark of punctuation creates a pause of a particular length. The length of that pause subliminally conveys a message to the reader.

The comma creates the briefest pause.

Think about it. You can't read THROUGH a comma. If you think that's bogus, try it. Find a newspaper and start reading articles.

When you encounter a comma that shouldn't be there, you'll stop (mentally), go back and remove the comma, then continue reading.

If you encounter one that should be there, your reading will continue (after the brief pause) uninterrupted.

The point is, the comma ALWAYS creates the pause. Whether the pause makes sense or feels right depends on its placement. But either way, you can't just read through it.

Even when I'm wearing my copyeditor hat, I'm not "focused" on commas. I'm not actively looking for them. I'm just reading.

I occasionally add a comma when I'm copyediting, but much more often I delete one. Because when a comma is in a "wrong" place, it pops out at me. Just like it pops out at you and everyone else.

And it pops out because it interrupts the reading. In other words, it shoves me out of the story.

So again, it isn't that the reader is looking for it. It's that the reader can't avoid it. The reader can't read through it as if it weren't there.

Will a single comma misuse send a reader packing? Probably not.

But if you use a comma erroneously once, you'll probably do so many times. You'll at least repeat the same erroneous use.

Like people who add a comma immediately after "but" because some moron somewhere taught them that was correct.

So if a reader stops reading your work because of commas, it isn't because he's "focused" on them or looking for them. It's because the comma placement interrupted the reading. And that's the writer's fault, not the reader's.

It's the writer's responsibility to learn the tools of the trade, and those tools include punctuation.

Can you break the "rules" after you learn them? Yes. Of course. Breaking the rules is often preferable, especially in fiction.

But the key is to break them intelligently and with purpose. The key is to break them in order to create a particular effect in the reader.

And to do that, you have to know them in the first place.

Several years ago I came up with five simple rules that, if you followed them, would make you "correct" (read "not interrupt the reading") over 90% of the time.

My comma rules first appeared in a handout I used when I taught grunt English in college. The handout was titled "The Rules as They Should Read." (grin) These rules later appeared in my book, [Punctuation for Writers \(2nd edition\)](#). This is excerpted directly from that book:

The Five Rules of Comma Use

1. Never place a comma between a subject and its verb or between a verb and its object. (Realize that a subject may have more than one verb and that a verb may have more than one object. See Chapter 7.)
2. When a subordinate clause introduces an independent clause, separate the two with a comma. (If you aren't sure about clauses, Rule #2 is an example of itself, as is this explanation. Also, see the discussion about clauses in Chapter 7.)
3. Do not use a comma to separate the clauses when a subordinate clause follows an independent clause. (In Rule #3, "Do not use a comma" is an independent clause and the remainder is a dependent clause. This rule, again, is an example of itself.)
4. Use a comma before the appropriate coordinating conjunction to join two related sentences. (The coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. Remember the acronym FANBOYS.) By the way, you very seldom need a comma after a coordinating conjunction.
5. Trite as it sounds, when you are in doubt about whether to use a comma, leave it out. Believe it or not, most comma problems arise from misuse of commas, not their omission.

There you go. Back with more on "bigger" punctuation tomorrow.

Remember the old Chinese curse, May you live in interesting times?

Today is one of those times.

I was on my way to the Hovel at about 8:40. Just outside my back door was a 5' rattlesnake. Right where my little girl usually lies. I walked right past him as he lay maybe a foot to my right.

When I got to the gate, I heard the insistent buzzing and hissing. Looked back, and saw him, his head raised about a foot off the concrete, looking at me.

Problem was, my little girl and the other cat and the chihuahua were just inside the back door, and the back door was open about a foot.

I circled around through the other gate, went through the front door and closed the back door, then grabbed my 9mm and went back out through the front door and around the house.

The only clear shot I had that would miss the house (I rent) was from 20 feet away next to my outside desk. (The distance is important to an old Jarhead.)

I aimed for his head, and I hit him with the first four rounds, but each one missed his head. Finally got his head with the fifth, which flipped him off the concrete porch.

Please understand, I believe the worst humans are the only animals deserving of being killed. And I despise killing anything, especially out here where everything's just trying to survive the heat. But I can't let it go when something's threatening my little girl.

After a time, I found a long stick, slipped it under the lifeless body of the snake, and carried it about a 1/4 mile east of my house to lay it in the shade of a creosote bush. A fitting final resting place.

Returned to the house, turned on a hose, cleaned up the blood, etc. Policed up my brass. Eventually lured the babies out of the bedroom, where they'd gone when the 9mm started coughing.

I spent some time on Facebook and with emails. Some folks are taking me up on the free book offer over on my big website.

I finally made a half-hearted move toward the novel at around noon, but decided in short order to let the rest of the day go. So no fiction today.

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Lost Lingo of New York City's Soda Jerks" at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/soda-jerk-slang>. One way to add some authenticity to your stories: add a soda fountain.

See "Author Website Visitor #6 – FANtasia" at <http://www.authormedia.com/author-website-visitor-6-fantasia/>.

See "Thrillers in Disguise: 10 Essential Literary Novels That Master Suspense" at <https://crimereads.com/thrillers-in-disguise/>.

See "Building a New Writing Office" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/building-a-new-writing-office/>. Nothing earth shattering, but maybe a few things to think about.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1310 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1310

Writing of Dread (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218

Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10412
Total fiction words for the year..... 217376
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 66790
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 283896

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [AuthorMedia](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#),
[the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, June 7](#)

[June 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, it's Thursday. That means I have a half-day. My wife and I decided we'd take one day off per week from walking, and we decided Thursday would be that day.

That way I can start writing early and go straight through (with short breaks) instead of using an hour of that time for a walk.

Still adjusting my way of doing things. I was determined to get up early this morning. But with the sun coming up earlier and going down later, it's more difficult to go to bed earlier.

And since we got rid of DirecTV and picked up Netflix and Amazon Prime, we can cherry pick quality television shows to watch in the early evening.

Frankly, I think I'd be fine without TV at all. But especially on days when my wife works, that's how we relax into our down time. So....

Today is our day off from walking. I rolled out just before 4, got all the preliminary stuff (Internet and the Journal) done by around 6:30.

So I'm going to try another experiment. I'm going to go into my office, shut the door most of the way and get back to the novel.

In my office, there are two desks. This "business" computer sits on my main desk. My writing 'puter sits on a smaller desk on the opposite wall.

Later, when the day heats up, I'll take the writing 'puter back to the Hovel and write out there for awhile. This should add almost 2 hours to my available writing time.

We'll see.

Well, things happen. I got busy with other things and blew off my "new time." That's all right. It takes time to work into a new routine. I ended up getting to the novel finally at almost 10 a.m.

I typed about a hundred new words, then hit a wall. So I cycled back, all the way to the beginning, and started reading through.

Up to speed again. Wrote around a thousand words before my wife got home at around 1:30. Then around 3 she went in for a nap, so I snuck back out to the Hovel and exited an hour later with a total of around 2400 words. All in all, a good day, especially given the slow start. (grin)

Back tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "How to Name Your Crime Novel" at <https://crimereads.com/how-to-name-your-crime-novel/>. An infographic. I recommend mixing and matching titles rather than sticking to your own initials.

See "Prisons of the Amazon: Deep in Brazil's Jungles, Private Prisons and Organized Crime" at <https://crimereads.com/prisons-of-the-amazon/>. There are dozens of good story ideas in this article, and ready-made research.

See "Business Musings: What It Feels Like To Have An Agent" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/06/06/business-musings-what-it-feels-like-to-have-an-agent/>.

Also, just a reminder that Kris Rusch offers a free story of the week every Monday at her site.

Fiction Words: 2456

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3056

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868

Total fiction words for the month..... 12868
Total fiction words for the year..... 219832
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3880
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 67390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 286952

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, June 8](#)

[June 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

This will almost be a topic on websites and what to do with them. Welcome to new subscribers.

In this golden era of indy publishing, there are no limits. You can have complete control of your writing career. IF you've managed to avoid the hordes of traditional and vanity publishers out there who only want to take your money.

But it does take a little work. It's important to have an author website, a place where fans can visit to learn about you and what you're doing.

It's also important, especially as you write more stories and novels and compile more collections, to have a separate publisher website.

I recommend WordPress.org. I do NOT recommend Blogger or WordPress.com or WIX or any of the others like that, mostly because they own the content. If you own a self-hosted WordPress.org site, it's yours.

I started this Journal a few years ago as a way of keeping track of my writing. Here, too, for a few very loyal fellow writers, I offer items of interest and a look at my life as a professional fiction writer. Those looks occasionally morph into topics that are designed to cut the learning curve for my fellow writers.

But I also have my main author website at HarveyStanbrough.com and a publisher website at StoneThreadPublishing.com.

I spent some of my nonwriting time yesterday going over the main website, mostly to clean up some invalid entries on my book pages.

That started when one astute reader pointed out that the book description was the same on two of my SF novels. So I quickly corrected that.

Then it kind of siphoned me in and I moved on to bigger things.

For example, a good while back I created a discount schedule on my publisher website. There, I offer titles at various discounts for readers who buy directly from StoneThread Publishing.

The discount is valid whether they buy one title or more than one title at a time. The discount increases with the number of titles they buy.

There are also bulk discounts available for booksellers. Both discount schedules include paper books (where available) and ebooks.

That's all well and good, even necessary, for the publisher website. But I also referenced the discount schedule on the book pages on my author website.

I'm keeping the discounts in place on the StoneThread Publishing website, though I still need to update them with new titles.

But I removed all references to the discount schedule from my author website. No need to muddy the waters.

What I've finally figured out is that if you choose to create one or more websites (or if you already have), it's important to determine two things: Who or what is the website about? And what is the website designed to do?

If you answer those questions first, everything else will go a lot more smoothly.

My author website is currently about me, my titles, and writing instruction. That's because I'm also a valid writing instructor and a copyeditor. It's designed to provide information about me, information about my titles, and instruction for other writers.

I'm currently transitioning it to also make it more fan friendly. Alternating blog posts will be about individual novels and the characters.

The other posts will still be writing instruction. But if I weren't an instructor, all my blog posts would be about my novels, novellas and collections and the characters that populate them.

The publisher website is all about the titles and the sale of those titles. It's designed for individual readers (first) and booksellers (second).

So give some thought to those two questions, and then build (or revise) your websites appropriately. I strongly recommend you do NOT pattern your author website after mine. There are many better examples than mine, including those of almost any big-name author out there.

For a publisher site, feel free to emulate StoneThread Publishing if you want. It's an excellent publisher website, barring a few improvements I still have to make.

Finally out to the Hovel at around 9 this morning. I wrote for awhile and was in Chapter 11 when I realized I couldn't remember a character name I needed. Then I realized I hadn't started a reverse outline for this novel yet.

So I went back and took an hour to do that, then took a break up at the house.

Back for another session of writing, a good session, then back to the house with the writing 'puter.

Did another session, then decided a little early to call it a day.

(Honestly, my copy of Reacher Said Nothing by Andy Martin came in, and I can't wait to plunge into it. grin)

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Big Secret Why Behind Everything so Far" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-big-secret-why-behind-everything-so-far/>. More on the massive agent scandal, this time from a writer directly harmed by it.

I also encourage you to swing by <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources/> and check the b'jillion writer resources I have listed there.

Fiction Words: 2197

Nonfiction Words: 840 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3037

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065

Total fiction words for the month..... 15065
Total fiction words for the year..... 222029
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4720
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 68230
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 289989

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Writer Resources](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, June 10](#)

[June 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Yesterday, I rolled out at 3 for a change. Felt good. I used the early morning for admin time. I was led to that by a good review of my 10-story collection *Mobster Tales* that I received via email yesterday.

When I went to add the review to the page for that book over at StoneThread Publishing, I realized I hadn't yet created a page for that book.

So I did that, then pasted the review in. You can see it at <http://stonethreadpublishing.com/mobster-tales/>.

Then the day fell apart. Just a lot of niggling problems that got me, well... let's say a tad annoyed. So no writing yesterday, and no Journal.

Today I'll work on my wife's computer to get it working right again. I'm no tech, but I can follow instructions and I can usually figure things out. I will mention Microsoft in my prayers. Remember that old Jimmy Dickens' song, "May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose"?

Yeah, like that.

I'm posting the Journal today to keep my hand in and so you can see the items in "Of Interest."

The first item might be one of the most important "Of Interest" items I've posted.

You can read the post for yourself. I'll just offer a few hints, then elaborate a little on each of them.

Topic: Learning from Other Writers

There is much to be learned in James Scott Bell's "Authors I Have Learned From: John D. MacDonald." The article is chock full of gems if you dig just a little.

To begin, there is much to be learned about "style."

According to Mr. Bell (and I agree), MacDonald started with a minimalist style that reached back to Hemingway via Cain, Hammett, Spillane and others.

(Note: This is style at the sentence level. Paragraphing and pacing [see below] are also informed by style. MacDonald did not take either of those from Hemingway et al. You'll find more on style in the second item in "Of Interest.")

Later MacDonald found a balance between minimalism and a slightly more expansive, descriptive style.

The only way to find your own style is to practice. One thing all styles have in common is that they can't be forced. Style simply emerges.

I particularly like Mr. Bell's admonition that "You don't want a style that calls so much attention to itself that's all the reader is thinking about." Style follows story, not the other way around.

As just one example, see the short excerpt from MacDonald's novel, *Darker Than Amber*.

And for goodness' sake, don't fall for the beginner nonsensical fear that reading other writers' works might affect your personal style. It definitely will. But that is something to be embraced, not shunned.

Also please don't be waylaid by genre. Just because you don't write in the genres MacDonald (or Bell) writes in doesn't mean you can't learn from them.

*There is also much to be learned about the use of the pronoun "it" and, by extension, the use of other pronouns without clear antecedents. (I recommend reading the excerpt from *Cancel All Our Vows* at least a few times.)*

I've always been careful about replacing "it" with a more exacting term that creates a less-vague, clearer picture in the reader's mind. Especially any instance of "it" that doesn't have a clear antecedent.

But there's a place for "it" even without a clear antecedent. I'm not saying MacDonald's use is always right or good, but that it's something to consider.

For example, treat MacDonald's excerpt as if it's your own. Can you replace any of the "it"s in MacDonald's excerpt?

There is also much to be learned about pacing. (Same recommendation as above.)

I can talk about this because the pacing in my own stories and novels has improved considerably. When I read aloud some of my earliest works, I get almost lost in the massive paragraphs and am generally bored to tears.

But when I hit the Return (Enter) key a little more often, even without changing a single word, the writing becomes vastly more interesting. It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of pacing and its impact not only on drawing the reader through the story but on readability.

For example, if the MacDonald excerpt I mentioned above were mine, I would turn it into eight paragraphs. Only three of them could be defined as "terse." Yet in every case, hitting the Enter key would add emphasis to an already exciting or dramatic (or both) phrase or sentence that was otherwise buried (along with its sense of drama) in the longer paragraph. (If anyone wants to talk about this in greater depth, email me. I'll share.)

That's how you draw readers through your books rather than allowing them to slow down — bog down — in a longer paragraph.

As you know, I don't usually revisit my own stories and books. BUT....

When I recently expanded a series of magic realism short stories (*Stories from the Cantina*, c. 2011) into a novel (*Keeper of the Promise*, February 2018), I applied new techniques I'd learned, especially pacing. The latter reads much more smoothly than any of the former, in or out of their collection.

There is something to be said about knowing and meeting with other professional writers. You'll see an enticing couple of paragraphs about MacDonald's exchange with a Pulitzer prize-winning author named MacKinlay Kantor.

I suggest you extrapolate from that exchange. What might you learn or how might you be personally challenged by the successes and accomplishments of other writers? What tidbits can you pick up? Sometimes your skill as a writer can take a giant leap ahead from the simple act of listening, or talking. The exchange and absorption and testing of ideas.

Finally, if you are or aspire to be a professional fiction writer....

There is much to be said about having or developing a work ethic. This is another of the gems I mined from Mr. Bell's article.

For me it was more of a reminder than a realization. One I thought I had nailed. In fact, I did have it nailed a year or so ago. But I've let it slide a bit. Those of you who've been around here awhile will remember that for a long time I was turning out at least 3000 words of publishable fiction per day.

In my own life, I apply one rule most often. "You either are or you are not." It works in almost any situation.

For example, I taught my children that "Upright is not a matter of degree. In each moment, you either are or you are not. Decide wisely."

But that goes to your chosen profession too.

You either show up and do the work or you don't. I have, but I haven't recently.

A famous female fiction writer whose name eludes me at the moment once said she showed up every day. On days when the words didn't come, she remained in her writer's chair during the allotted time anyway. As a result, most of the time the words came.

In my estimation, that's a good mindset to have.

According to Mr. Bell, MacDonald "wrote each day from morning till noon, had lunch, went back to work and knocked off at five for a martini and dinner. He took Sundays off."

Maybe with your other responsibilities that's a little much. But you can set aside whatever time you have available to set aside. The point is to make a schedule and then stick to it.

Absorbing and applying knowledge from these few lessons (and maybe you'll find others) is essential for the professional fiction writer. Add to them the ability to ground the reader in every opening and you're well on your way.

I hadn't meant to turn this into a full-blown topic, but somehow I did anyway. I hope you glean something useful from it.

Note: *Mr. Bell also mentions ThrillerFest XIII, which will be held July 10-14 at the Grand Hyatt in New York City. I don't often recommend "fests" (conventions), but if I could attend this one, I would. Just sayin'....*

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Authors I Have Learned From: John D. MacDonald” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/authors-i-have-learned-from-john-d-macdonald.html>.

See also James Scott Bell’s “The Great American Novel That Wasn’t” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2017/07/great-american-novel-that-wasnt.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1310 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1310

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 15065
Total fiction words for the year..... 222029
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6030
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 69540
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 291299

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pacing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Style](#), [the writing life](#), [Work Ethic](#)

The Journal, Monday, June 11

[June 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I hope you all read the Journal from yesterday. It might be the most informative one I’ve written. If you missed it, you can find it at <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-sunday-june-10/>.

One thing I mentioned yesterday is “Style follows story, not the other way around.”

If your stylistic choices call attention to themselves, change them back.

For example, the poet E.E. Cummings is as well known for writing in all lower case as much or more so than he is known for his poetry itself.

For another, many writers have asked me why they should have to set off dialogue with quotation marks “when Cormac McCarthy doesn’t.”

Because that affectation, more than the story, is what readers talk about. Oh my.

But don’t just take my word for it. From an Oprah Winfrey interview: “Speaking of writers who have imitated him [McCarthy himself] says, ‘You really have to be aware that there are no quotation marks, and write in such a way as to guide people as to who’s speaking.’ *Otherwise, confusion reigns.*” (Emphasis added.)

Umm, so why not just avoid that confusion by using quotation marks to “guide people as to who’s speaking” and what’s being spoken aloud? Duh. Why not WRITE and concentrate on telling a good story instead of concentrating on style?

The number one reason to use quotation marks to set off dialogue is that the purpose of quotation marks is to subliminally identify dialogue. Like using a period is the standard way to end a declarative sentence.

Another example comes from James Jones, author of *From Here to Eternity* and then the ill-fated *Some Came Running*. In that one, inexplicably, he chose as a matter of style to eschew ALL apostrophes in conjunctions.

So as James Scott Bell noted, *Some Came Running* was filled with lines like this:

“Ill probably never get another chance,” Dave had said, “but if I did, I still dont think Id take it. (From “The Great American Novel That Wasn’t” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2017/07/great-american-novel-that-wasnt.html>.)

I suppose the lesson here is clear: If you as a writer want readers to stand around the water cooler talking about how “cool” it was that you bucked convention with your “style,” go for it.

But if you want them to enjoy the story itself (and buy more of your books), consider sticking to the conventions.

A story-starter tip from Ray Bradbury: “List ten things you love, and ten things you hate. Then write about the former, and ‘kill’ the latter — also by writing about them. Do the same with your fears.”

Rolled out at about 3:30, wrote a lot of this Journal entry. Out for a walk from 6 – 6:30, then some down time. Today is the short day at my wife’s work so I need to get my writing done by about 1 p.m.

Out to the Adobe Hovel at 8:30, started writing a little before 9. Got about 1200 words by 10, then up to the house for a brief break.

Back to the Hovel at 10:30. I did some cycling to get a lengthy description right, and then wrote another 1600 words over the next hour and a half.

Heading for the house at 12:30. I’ll take today’s total and call it a good half-day. (grin)

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Controlled By Fear” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/controlled-by-fear/>. Please at least read the first comment by Céline Malgen. Excellent information.

See “Seven Tips From William Faulkner on How to Write Fiction” at http://www.openculture.com/2013/03/seven_tips_from_william_faulkner_on_how_to_write_fiction.html. I couldn’t begin to agree more strongly.

See “Seven Tips From Ernest Hemingway on How to Write Fiction” at http://www.openculture.com/2013/02/seven_tips_from_ernest_hemingway_on_how_to_write_fiction.html.

See “Ray Bradbury Gives 12 Pieces of Writing Advice to Young Authors (2001)” at http://www.openculture.com/2012/04/ray_bradbury_gives_12_pieces_of_writing_advice_to_young_authors_2001.html.

If you enjoy podcasts, you might check out “All Things Investigative” at <https://www.johnhoda.com/podcast-my-favorite-detective-stories/>. Apparently there will be an ongoing series.

Fiction Words: 2794

Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3414

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391

Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218

Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412

Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868

Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6650
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 69540
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 294713

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Ernest Hemingway](#), [John Hoda](#),
[OpenCulture](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [the writing life](#), [William Faulkner](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, June 12](#)

[June 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I almost didn't post a Journal entry today. Nothing in "Of Interest" today, and I didn't write any new fiction. But I wanted to share with you.

Wow. What a great day! Already! (It's about noon as I write this.)

It isn't a great day writing-wise, at least not yet. And if it ends either way, that'll be fine too. But it's a great day in the realm of serendipity.

Now understand, I'm in the middle (well, the first quarter or third) of a novel. The D.R.E.A.D. thing. Only I already know I'm going to change one character name when it's all said and done because I want to use that character name for a series character.

Anyway, the serendipity started when a fellow I've never heard from before emailed to request my novella, *Jobs Like That*. It's the one (if I remember correctly) that I wrote "in public" one scene at a time back when I had a dedicated site for that. Later, of course, I compiled it and published it.

I sent him the file free since I have that special going on right now. He said if he liked it, he would definitely be buying more of my books.

Okay. Good to hear, right? That's what I would hope.

But then a few individual fragments of previously fleeting thoughts got together and gelled in my mind.

If he likes it... so I pulled it out and read it again. Just as a reader. I liked it. A lot.

And I remembered that I'd originally written and posted it one scene at a time "in public." So it was born as a kind of serial.

And the main character struck me as a guy who could easily be a recurring series character. A Jack Reacher kind of guy, though I wrote the novella long before I'd read my first Jack Reacher book.

Then I remembered the "source novel" I wrote awhile back titled Keeper of the Promise. I don't want to give away too much, so suffice it to say that novel was to serve as the basis for a series.

Then (my thoughts roiling around) I thought of Smith's Monthly, the monthly magazine Dean Wesley Smith's been producing for awhile now.

And I thought again about new readers who are discovering my work and "if I like it..." And then I wondered whether they might like to have an alternative way to get my work. Kind on an ongoing sampler of genres, short and long stories, even poetry.

And that led back to Smith's Monthly where it soon morphed into "Wait a minute. I could do that too." (grin)

So now, smack in the middle of an ongoing work in progress, I have a new project. Or rather, a few new projects.

One is to produce my own monthly magazine. Unless I get a HUGE demand for paper, I'll make it electronic only in .mobi, .epub and .pdf. It will be available via subscription and through all the usual vendors on a per-issue basis.

Of course, it'll take a month or so of thought to be sure I get the format right. Whole novels or serials? How many short stories per issue? One genre per issue or a sampling of genres?

Another project is to write a sequel (or two or twelve) to Jobs Like That.

Another is to write a series around the new character I'm about to steal from my work in progress.

And I think there's one more project, but I can't think of it at the moment. (grin)

Can you tell I'm excited, or what? (grin) The new world of publishing is just a great time to be alive.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Sorry. Nothing today. Of course you could always click the Writer Resources tab on my website and browse.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 650

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 70810
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 295363

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Announcement](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, June 13](#)

[June 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, the light of a new day.

First, I'm not going to start a monthly magazine. At least not in the foreseeable future. To do so would make a LOT more work for me (layout, a cover, the intricacies of adding scalable covers for the stories and novels inside the magazine) and would give me only a hyper-minimal return on investment. Plus the time investment would be massive and ongoing.

So I'm not going to do it. Still, I'm glad the possibility was part of yesterday's thought process. It's been a long time since a stream of such provocative ideas passed through my brain-housing group. Felt good.

Today I'll get back to my WIP. There is a possibility I might abandon this one, or maybe compress it into a short story or novella. Then on to other things.

Topic: Openings Revisited

I've talked a lot about openings relatively recently both here and on the Pro Writers blog.

I've talked about the importance of openings not only at the beginning of a story, but also at the beginning of each chapter and each scene.

I've talked about the necessity and importance of grounding the reader by providing sensory detail through the opinions of the POV character.

I've talked about great opening sentences (hooks). I even have a book about those (See <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/43960>). You can't get it through Amazon because I reference other writers in it so they fear plagiarism. (grin) Go figure. But you can buy any eformat at Smashwords.

Yet somehow I managed to skip right over some of the plainest, best, truest advice any writer could ever receive regarding writing those opening sentences.

It's a bit of advice from Ernest Hemingway.

I've read it at least a few hundred times before, as each of you probably have. But somehow it didn't register earlier that he was talking specifically about writing an opening sentence.

The advice, as we most often see it presented, is "All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know."

But it's something he said as he was talking about how to begin a story. It was how to write the opening sentence.

Via an OpenCulture link I shared in "Of Interest" on June 11 (<http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-monday-june-11/>), in A Moveable Feast, Hemingway wrote

"Sometimes when I was starting a new story and I could not get it going ... I would stand and look out over the roofs of Paris and think, 'Do not worry. You have always written before and

you will write now. All you have to do is write one true sentence. Write the truest sentence that you know.’ So finally I would write one true sentence, and then go on from there. It was easy then because there was always one true sentence....”

The importance of this deceptively simple bit of advice didn’t strike me even when I read it a few days ago. It wasn’t until I was glancing over some of my own published work that the significance hit me.

In my novella [Jobs Like That](#), the opening sentence was exactly that: it was the truest sentence I knew in the moment. It wasn’t the only time, but it’s the one that most easily springs to mind.

And everything in the story — every sentence, every paragraph, every sensory image — emanated from and reflected that opening sentence.

The opening sentence (one sentence, one paragraph, 28 words) sets the tone for everything else in the book. It even served as a synopsis, a beacon to keep the rest of the story on course.

Finally, finally I realize the full impact of Hemingway’s statement.

Notice too that Hemingway doesn’t drag emotion into the mix. He doesn’t say the sentence has to be dramatic or dark or light or humorous or witty or angry or jocular or stoic. He says simply that it must be the truest sentence you know.

Of course, “truest” has many connotations. In my case it goes to mood (at the time) and character or event (if I have a character or event in mind for the story). But the many connotations of the word is exactly why the advice fits the broadest possible spectrum of fiction.

So I’m taking a vow. From this moment forward, I will never start another fictional work without first writing that one true sentence. The truest sentence I know.

I recommend you do the same.

Actually, today I made four different unsuccessful runs at D.R.E.A.D. and hit a stone wall at all of them. I’ll take another look at it tomorrow and we’ll see.

I’m not counting any fiction words written today. If D.R.E.A.D. continues, I’ll report those words next time.

See you tomorrow.

Of Interest

Wow. Nothing of interest to mention for the second day in a row. Maybe tomorrow.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 750

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8050
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 71560
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 296113

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Ernest Hemingway](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#),
[Writing Beginnings](#), [Writing Hooks](#), [Writing Openings](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, June 14](#)

[June 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I think I'm taking off a few days.

I just had a new copyedit come in, so I'm going to work on that. In the meantime, D.R.E.A.D. can rest while I decide whether to shoot it or hook it up to a resuscitation machine.

When I return to it, probably I'll backtrack to see whether I can find where it took a wrong turn. I've done that once already and didn't see a place where it went wrong, so maybe I'll have to set it aside for awhile and move on to something else. Hey, stuff happens.

I do have several other ideas to write so it isn't like I'll be out of a job. (grin)

I Need Reviews.

So I'm creating a Smashwords coupon for each of my major works of fiction. One for each novel, novella and short story collection.

In addition to being a major distributor, Smashwords is also an online bookstore.

But unlike the other online bookstores, once you purchase a book at Smashwords you can download it in ANY eformat you choose, including .mobi (Kindle), .epub (Nook and Apple) and .pdf.

The coupons are for 100% off, and I'm trading them for reviews.

The reviews should be honest, of course. The only thing I'll ask is that you post your review at Smashwords and at least one other place of your choice (B&N, Amazon, GoodReads, etc.). Of course, if you're so inclined, more places would be better for me. (grin)

Visit HarveyStanbrough.com, then click the tabs for Mystery Novels, Action-Adventure, SF or Western. Then email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com with your selection(s). I'll send you the coupon code(s) for the title(s) you select.

Then go to <https://smashwords.com>, find the title you want, and apply the coupon code during checkout. That's all there is to it.

There is no limit on the number of works you can download, read and review. You may email me to request one title or several. I'll send coupon codes for whatever you select.

No fiction writing today other than a couple of lines that occurred to me. I'll get back to it in a few days. Of course, I'll keep posting here as long as I have something of value to tell you.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Golden Donut Short Story Contest" at <https://www.leelofland.com/hurry-the-deadline-is-almost-here-golden-donut-200-word-short-story-contest/>.

See "Cozy Book Promotion: A Soft Sell in a Hard Business" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/cozy-book-promotion-a-soft-sell-in-a-hard-business.html>. The

author says this is only for traditionally published authors, but from what I saw that's nonsense. The same tips will work for indy published authors.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 410

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8460
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 71970
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 296523

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Announcement](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, June 15](#)

[June 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Just thought I'd mention, I emailed Dean Wesley Smith a few days ago for advice re something I was considering.

He responded right away, and his comments were very helpful.

So I sent back a thank you and didn't expect to hear from him again. After all, he's smack in the middle of a huge cross-country move. He's moving out of a 9-bedroom house on the Oregon coast and into a much smaller condo in Las Vegas.

So he's been packing all the stuff in Lincoln City, moved one truckload to Vegas, and several more truckloads to various other places (stores, etc.) in Oregon.

He's a busy guy.

Yet this morning I received another email from him on the same topic I originally asked about. Again the advice was sound, and again it was something I hadn't thought of.

Who goes the extra mile these days for other people? Almost nobody. But Dean Wesley Smith does. And all I can do is try to pay it forward.

Topic: How I Conduct a Copyedit (not an advertisement)

I've always liked the concept of "paying it forward." I've also always liked the concept of delivering more than is expected of me.

Dean's willingness to "pay it forward" only verifies for me that I'm on the right track in that regard.

In a copyedit, the writer is paying the copyeditor to check for

- punctuation, spelling and wrong-word usage;
- grammar and syntax, including obviously accidental shifts in verb tense;
- redundant narrative;
- consistency in hyphenation, numerals, fonts, and capitalization;
- consistency in character names, clothing, scene details, etc.;
- pacing and flow; and
- anything else that might confuse or otherwise interrupt the reader.

That's what a copyeditor does. That's what the writer is paying him to do.

But I'm also a writing instructor and a successful professional writer. So I kind'a stretch things a bit.

When writers hire me to copyedit their work, I most often copyedit a few pages. If they've grounded the reader in the setting in every opening, if they've included adequate sensory detail through the opinions of the POV character, and if they've provided good character descriptions when a character is first introduced, I do pretty much a straight copyedit.

But if they're lacking any of those elements (or a few others) and I think I can help, I toss in a little instruction via embedded comments.

Then I email them those first few pages and ask, “Would you like me to continue with the instruction (no extra charge), or should I do just a straight copyedit?”

You’d probably be surprised at the number of writers who write back and say I should continue with a straight copyedit.

Of course, I’m happy to do that. Frankly, it’s a lot less work for me.

But every now and then one writes back with something like “Yes, please. I’d prefer the instruction as well.” I’m ecstatic to have found a writer who’s hungry to learn. And of course, I’m happy to provide the instruction, even though it does take up more time.

Why?

Because that and these silly blogs are about the only ways I really have of paying it forward. Passing along what I know.

And sure, there’s a “feel good” ego-feed aspect to it too, but that’s an abstract concept. It’s nice in the moment, but otherwise it doesn’t really matter.

On the other hand, increased sales for a writer whose work is much improved is about as concrete as it gets.

And all in all, that’s a pretty good legacy.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “Where the ‘No Ending a Sentence With a Preposition’ Rule Comes From” (grin) at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/why-cant-you-end-a-sentence-with-a-preposition>.

See “An Open Letter to Jeff Bezos” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/an-open-letter-to-jeff-bezos-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 630

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391

Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218

Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412

Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9090
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 72600
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 297153

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [Copyediting](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, June 16](#)

[June 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I've gotten in the almost-habit of turning out one long story per month, novel or novella. I don't have a firm goal in that direction. It just sort of happens.

That hybrid-novel-wrapped-around-ten-short-stories I wrote last month kind of screwed me up, I think. The process was so back-and-forth, so unintuitive, it addled my widdle bwain. Even my subconscious is reeling.

But excuses aside, if I want to stay even close to turning out a long story every month, I need to get back on the stick.

I have another Stern Talbot P.I. story in mind. Those usually come in short at 40,000 to 50,000 words (easily able to finish it this month), so I guess I'll have to write an opening and see where it goes.

I still have the copyedit to finish, of course. And actually, although copyediting is work it's also almost as big a release for me as writing is. Especially when I know the writer is eager to learn.

So probably I'll stick only to the copyedit through the weekend, then start writing fresh on Monday morning. If I finish the Stern Talbot thing on or about 30 June, that will give me 6 novels in 6 months on the year and I'll be back on track.

After that I have some big things planned. And no, I'm still not sure where D.R.E.A.D. will fit into all of this. Stay tuned.

Still looking for readers/reviewers and still offering FREE any long fiction you might want to read.

Check the Mystery, Action-Adventure, SF and Western tabs at HarveyStanbrough.com, then email me with whatever title(s) you want.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Learned Helplessness" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/06/13/business-musings-learned-helplessness/>.

If you're still thinking of hiring an agent, see the COMMENTS on "What It Feels Like To Have An Agent" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/06/06/business-musings-what-it-feels-like-to-have-an-agent/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 320

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 72920
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 297473

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#)[Leave a comment](#)

No post on June 17 and 18, 2018

[The Journal, Tuesday, June 19](#)

[June 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. Not posting on Sunday was intentional, but yesterday just slipped away from me.

Had a good day on the edit yesterday. This morning I have to do a little real work, moving back a section of barbed-wire fence. Then a walk. Then back to the copyedit.

Topic: Safeguard Your Credibility, Part 3

A long while back, in two parts, I published a post titled Safeguard Your Credibility. If you missed those, [Here's the Original Post](#) and [Here's Part Two](#).

Both posts were all about not displaying ignorance. Yet the only way to avoid displaying ignorance is to eradicate it. And the only way to eradicate it is to learn and continue learning.

Of course, all of us are ignorant of some things. Nobody can be aware of everything.

But I suspect we can all agree that a professional should have an intimate knowledge of the tools of his/her trade.

Would you hire a carpenter who isn't quite sure of the difference between a "nail" and a "screw"? Would you have confidence in a mechanic who thought maybe the engine on your fuel-injected car is running erratically because of a problem with the carburetor?

Okay, how about buying a book from a writer who believes that section at the beginning of some books is a "forward"? That's tantamount to the aforementioned mechanic saying your flat tire will be fine if you only jack up the car and roll the tire over so the full part is on the bottom.

As professional writers (or professed writers or even aspiring writers) we cannot afford to be ignorant of our number one tool: the language.

And lest you think I'm being a bit snobbish about this, I do know whereof I speak.

A few years ago, [Stefan Kanfer](#), a very well known and accomplished professional writer, pointed out to me (while I was copyediting a novel for him!) that when a person is searching through a file folder full of papers he's "riffing," not "rifling."

I'd been saying and writing it wrong for around 62 years.

Thank goodness it was at least a somewhat obscure word and one that isn't a direct, intimate part of the writing profession itself. But the bottom line is, I Should Have Known. Barring that, I should have at least known enough to look it up.

Today, in preparation for this Journal entry, I read a post at Kill Zone blog. The post was written by a traditionally published professional writer.

It's an interesting post, but about one-third of the way through, the author wrote this attribution: "he recalls in the booklet's forward."

Wait. FORWARD? Seriously? And my next immediate thought was *Is that just a typo or does this PROFESSIONAL FICTION WRITER not understand the difference between "forward" and "foreword"?*

It can't really be a typo. The two words are too different. And it can't really be a slip-of-the-thought, wrong-word usage because the two words SOUND too different. It isn't like a to/too or waste/waist thing. It's more like the if/whether thing.

As you can probably tell, the error jerked me directly out of the post.

I DID go back and finish reading it. The post was too important to just let it go. But I was still annoyed that as a reader I was picked up and thrown out of a potential learning experience.

Fortunately for the author, I'd already bought one of her fiction books to read. For various reasons, it wasn't to my personal taste as a reader, so I'd already decided I won't be buying anymore.

But this is a whole other level. Often you can still learn valuable lessons about writing even from a writer whose fiction doesn't appeal to you personally.

That is not the case with a writer who professes to be a professional but doesn't know the difference between two such basic words. Now, unfortunately, I guarantee I'll take any writerly advice this author shares with a massive grain of salt.

And that's too bad.

Another good day on the edit today. I'll be back to writing in a day or two.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “We’re Lucky In Practice” (and the comments) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/were-lucky-in-practice/#comments>. Good stuff.

Strictly for info, see “July Through October Workshop Schedule Posted” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/july-through-october-workshop-schedule-posted/>.

See “Activate passive narrative—most of the time” at <http://writerunboxed.com/2009/09/17/activate-passive-narrative%E2%80%94most-of-the-time/>. Good explanation (with examples!) of passive voice.

If you go to paper (or want to) with your books, see “Amazon KDP Print or CreateSpace for Paperbacks? 2018 Update” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/amazon-kdp-print-or-createspace-for-paperbacks-2018-update/>.

See “Reading For Survival” by PJ Parrish at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/reading-for-survival.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 770 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 770

Writing of D.R.E.A.D. (novel)

Day 1..... 3391 words. Total words to date..... 3391
Day 2..... 3827 words. Total words to date..... 7218
Day 3..... 3194 words. Total words to date..... 10412
Day 4..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 12868
Day 5..... 2197 words. Total words to date..... 15065
Day 6..... 2794 words. Total words to date..... 17859
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 73690
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 298243

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, June 21](#)

[June 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, yesterday I spaced the Journal again. I think mostly it's because I've been editing instead of writing.

I'll finish the copyedit today, and soon things will get back to normal for at least awhile.

As a reward for your patience, here's a very long look at tag lines, their uses, and words that should never be used to introduce or carry dialogue.

Topic: Tag Line Verbs

Okay, first, to get us on the same page, what I call a "tag line" is what some call a "narrative beat." I guess there are other names for it too, but here's why I call it a tag line.

When characters are engaging in dialogue, there are two types of narrative that may accompany the dialogue. One is the tag line. The other, I call a brief descriptive narrative. They are distinctly different from each other.

Because this post is about tag lines, and because they require a more in-depth explanation, I'll define and describe the brief descriptive narrative first.

A brief descriptive narrative BOTH identifies the character who's about to speak AND enables the reader to see some sort of action. That action will indicate the character's mood, position or attitude.

"Sheila smiled" is a brief descriptive narrative. "Harry nodded" is a brief descriptive narrative. So are "John gestured toward the door," "Sue grinned and a mischeivous twinkle crept into her eyes," and "Jack flung open the door."

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. Notice that in every case, the brief descriptive narrative sentence makes perfect grammatical sense on its own.

In other words, it's a complete thought. A complete sentence. It isn't dependent on the dialogue to make sense.

Now for the tag line.

A tag line consists of a noun or pronoun plus a verb that indicates a form of utterance. Very few verbs indicate a form of utterance. The most common (and best to use to carry dialogue) is "said."

Others that are commonly used are "whispered," "mumbled" and "muttered." Some writers like using "asked" too, but the question mark at the end of a question pretty much lets the reader know the speaker "asked," yes?

Even though the tag line has both a subject and a verb, it doesn't make sense by itself. Because the verb is transitive (meaning it requires a direct object), it is dependent on the dialogue to make sense.

For that reason, the tag line is always (yes, *always*) attached to a line of dialogue, most often with a comma. It isn't separated with a period.

More to the point, note that the tag line exists *only* to let the reader know which character's speaking, so the writer should use one only when the reader may be in doubt. (Of course, you can do the same thing with a brief descriptive narrative.)

Many writers believe, erroneously, that a tag line should be "interesting." Most of them have learned that nonsense from alleged writing instructors who should be selling shoes instead of teaching writing.

Remember, the tag line exists only to let the reader know which character is speaking. For that reason alone, the tag line should be short and bland. It shouldn't draw attention to itself.

The form of the tag line on the page is

John said, "Dialogue goes here."

Ramona asked, "Does dialogue go there?"

But again, with reference to either of these, it's better to use a brief descriptive narrative rather than a tag line whenever possible:

John pointed to a place on the page. "Dialogue goes here."

Ramona frowned. "Does dialogue go there?"

As you can see, with the brief descriptive narrative, the reader **BOTH** learns which character is about to speak and sees a bit of the scene, determines the character's mood, etc.

Also notice that the tag lines do not make sense by themselves and are attached to the dialogue with a comma. The brief descriptive narratives, however, are both followed by periods.

A long while back, I began keeping a list of words various writers use in tag lines to try to (again, erroneously) “liven them up.” Keeping the list livened ME up. (grin)

So here’s a list of verbs that should NOT be used in tag lines. Ever.

You cannot “smile” a line of dialogue. You can’t.

As you look over the list below, in every case, imagine “he” or “she” in front of the word, then a comma and a line of dialogue. I think then this will become clearer for you.

Note that none of these verbs indicates a form of utterance. Yet I’ve seen all of them used erroneously in tag lines:

abused, accused, acknowledged, admonished, affirmed, agreed, allowed, amended, amplified, answered, apologized, assured, attacked, attempted, beamed, berated, blurted, blustered, broke in, brooded, brought up, bubbled, burlesqued, burst out, cajoled, called, called out, came back, cautioned, challenged, chastized, cheered, chided, chirped, chirped in, choked, chorused, chuckled, clarified, coached, coaxed, commiserated, complimented, conceded, consoled, contributed, continued, conveyed, convoluted, corrected, correcting, countered, cracked, criticized, croaked, croaked out, cursed, cut in, dared, defended, delivered, delved, digressed, directed, denied, described, editorialized, ejaculated, encouraged, ended, enjoined, enlightened, enthused, evaded, exhaled, explained, expostulated, expounded, extemporized, finished, fished, fly casted, followed, framed, frowned, frowning, gave, gave back, gave him, gave him back, gave out, giggled, got out, greeted, grinned, griped, gripped, grouched, gushed, hazarded, hedged, hinted, identified, improvised, informed, instructed, interrupted, intoned, inveigled, invited, justified, kicked out, lamented, laughed, lectured, lolled out, maintained, managed, mentioned, modified, mouthed, muffled, mused, nagged, nibbled, objected, offered, oozed, ordered, owned up, paddled back, persisted, panicked, piped in, piped up, placated, played back, pleaded, pointed out, pontificated, pounced, pressed, probed, prodded, prompted, pronounced, proposed, protested, protracted, pushed, put in, put out, quavered, questioned, quipped, quizzed, reasoned, reassured, recommended, relayed, reminded, reposted, resumed, retorted, returned, revealed, sang, sang out, scolded, seconded, sentenced, shot, sighed, sleazed, smiled, snapped, snarled, sneered, snickered, sniffed, sobbed, spat, spewed, spoke up, spouted, stamped, started, stumbled, submitted, suggested, sulked, summarized, supplied, supported, syruped out, talked on, teased, telegraphed, temporized, threatened, tossed, touted, tried, trilled, trumped, trumpeted, tumbled out, urged, ventured, vocalized, voiced, volumed, volunteered, warned, waved, welcomed, went on, worried, zinged.

This is not an exhaustive list. This is only a list of the misuses I’ve encountered in manuscripts to date. And yes, I do add to the list as I encounter new misuses. ☺

Example: “Some of the verbs on this list — like answered and acknowledged — are at least passable, but most are just ludicrous,” she sentenced. (grin)

“And with that, I’ll bid you adieu,” he French-linguaged. (grin)

For now, I’ve moved D.R.E.A.D. to the junkpile. I’ll sort through it later.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “My Cure for Writer’s Block” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/my-cure-for-writers-block.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1060 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1060

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11240
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 74750
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 299303

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Tag lines](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, June 22](#)

[June 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Even when [Dean Wesley Smith](#) doesn’t write specifically about writing in his posts, I often glean something of value.

His short post today is about a practice poker tournament. At the end, he turns it into a brief analogy about writing.

That spurred my own thought process.

Topic: Practice Is Important

Part I — Rationale and a Harsh Truth About Hovering

As it is in all art, practice in writing is important. Without practice, the writing craft and the writing itself goes stale. And as it is in all art, practice in writing is fun, if uncomfortable.

Many writers still feel more comfortable “hovering” over a WIP. They write, then rewriting, then polish, etc. in an attempt to make every word perfect.

They might spend months or even years on the same novel.

But make no mistake — they hover because it’s easier, more comfortable, and less threatening to revise and rewrite the same piece over and over than it is to let it go and move on to the next story.

I get that. I used to do it myself. And I’ve experienced the same twinge in my gut that they experience when, in rewriting and revising and polishing, they spoil the story.

That’s a pretty harsh truth. Even when they won’t admit it aloud, they know it’s true.

Part II — Practice

So here we are, back to the basic premise: Practice Is Important.

Maybe the only thing that’s more important is persistence in practice. Of course, that’s tempered with doing what works for the individual writer.

We all have different lives with different requirements and different priorities. I can’t speak to yours, and I won’t try. I can only speak to my own.

For the first couple of years I was writing fiction, I had a daily word count goal: 3000 words per day. For me, with breaks, that’s about 4 hours.

I hit my goal most days, and I exceeded it often. When I missed, it was all right because the goal reset the next morning anyway. I wrote about 800,000 words of fiction in each of those years. For me, that was very good.

But once I settled into an easy rhythm with my writing, I thought I no longer needed the daily goal. I seemed to be writing 11-12 novels per year either way.

And I started reading advice from other pros I respect who advised taking a day or two “off” every week, etc.

So I dropped my daily goal. I just let it go.

Bad idea. My practice lapsed.

Now, as we near the midpoint of this year, I’ve written only 225,000 words of new fiction and just under 300,000 words of fiction and nonfiction.

So it’s time to adjust and reinstitute my daily goal.

With 31 novel and around 200 short stories in my belt, I’m going back to the basics. I want to get to the keyboard every day in the company of a character with a problem in a setting.

There’s no need to take a regular “day off” from doing what I love. What excites me and makes me happy. There are more than enough days when life intervenes.

Fortunately, a new year begins with each day. I’m not tied to the Jan 1 – Dec 31 time frame. None of us are.

But I do like to begin new things on the first day of a month. So beginning July 1, I’m setting a daily word count goal again. It will be adjusted to the priorities as they exist in my life today.

Some argue that a daily word count goal adds pressure.

That’s true. But it’s only pressure to get to the keyboard. After that it’s all fun.

How about you? The midpoint of the year is coming up. Do you need to reassess, adjust and reset your own writing goals?

Part III — Putting It All Together

Of course, setting a new daily word count goal is tantamount to setting a new challenge.

I’ll announce my new word-count goal/challenge later this month after I’ve given it time to percolate among my new priorities. I want to be sure I get it right.

For me, “right” means big enough to make me stretch in the long term. Not so easy that it’s a done deal, but not so big that it feels overwhelming.

July 1 is on a Sunday this year. I intend to meet my new daily word count goal that day so the “year” starts off well.

It feels good — freeing, in a way — to have made this decision. I wish the same for you.

Some guys are bringing electricity from a nearby pole to the Adobe Hovel. That will be nice, and free up my two 100-foot extension cords.

So this delay will give them plenty of time to finish that. Once they're through (only another day or so, I hope), I'll move back into the Hovel and write a story or two, something to practice getting back in the habit of practicing. (grin)

See you soon.

Of Interest

From my friend Robert Sadler, don't miss the Lee Child/Stephen King interview and Q&A at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PaxX-DTGo0>. It's about 45 minutes long, and it's wonderful.

See "Business Musings: Licensing Opportunities" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/06/20/business-musings-licensing-opportunities/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 870 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 870

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12110
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 75620
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 300173

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Child](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stephen King](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, June 24](#)

[June 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No post yesterday. No anything else writerly either as I spent the day with my wife, celebrating 34 years together and wondering how she's put up with me that long.

Probably I won't write today either, fiction I mean. I'll start fresh on Monday, and that will give me a week to gear up to my new work ethic (fun ethic) and the coming challenge.

Today that challenge got a little more difficult too. Another copyedit came in, and a few days ago another writer told me to expect his manuscript for copyedit also.

I look forward to both copyedits, but I also plan to still make my daily word count goal on my own fiction. (grin)

This week will afford me time to work out a good balance between copyediting and writing. Then on July 1st I can go into the challenge more prepared than I might have otherwise been.

James Scott Bell's post, featured in today's "Of Interest" section, keyed the following brief topic:

Topic: On Research

It's easy enough to follow the old advice to write what you know. But for most of us, especially those of us with relatively few years and/or little experience in our belt, that's also limiting.

As James Scott Bell points out (via Toni Morrison), it's also perfectly all right to write what you WANT to know. I will add, it's also all right to write who you want to be. Or at least who you want to be for the duration of the story. (grin)

I've known writers who will read two or three (or more) books about Verona, Italy because a story or novel they want to write is based in that location.

I'm personally not that kind of researcher. For me, that's too much.

My own "heaviest" research is about any events or locations with which I'm not already intimately familiar. But that's only to provide layers of authenticity.

If I'm writing a novel and if the entire thing is set in Verona, I might download and skim (as necessary) a travelogue about the city. I might also download and refer to a street map.

If I focus down to an event in a specific neighborhood, I want to be sure to get the street names right. If a scene is happening in a particular building, I want to know what other buildings or types of businesses are adjacent and across the street.

I've found that maybe 10% of Given Story is about one or more events in one or more locations. The rest of the story is about the characters' reactions to those events.

But the characters themselves, their actions and reactions, and what happens as a result are all from the imagination.

The event is only the catalyst for the story. The location is only the overall setting. The story itself is how the characters act and react.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Write What You Want To Know" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/write-what-you-want-to-know.html>.

My friend Robert Sadler (<http://robertjsadler.com/>) sent a link to a LOT of interviews Lee Child has done about his Reacher series. See <https://www.leechild.com/author-interviews.php>. Even if you aren't a fan of thrillers, you can learn a ton from this master storyteller.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 550

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 17859
Total fiction words for the year..... 224823
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12660
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 76170
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 300723

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Child](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Research](#), [Robert Sadler](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, June 25](#)

[June 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to report today, but at least I'm writing fiction again. After such a long layoff, it feels great.

Awhile back I started my 9th Pulp detective novel. I'll probably push through from here and finish it first, then either back to something else or forward to something new.

My "novel goal" at the moment is to have two more novels finished by the end of July. That should be fairly easy to do. I've started three in the past few months that I allowed to lapse for one reason or another.

Had a lot of life things going on today, so a light writing day. But a light writing day is better than a gooseegg. (grin)

I'll have a really good topic for you in the next day or two. Stay tuned.

Thanks to Céline for bringing this to my attention: There's a special bundle going on right now that covers writing, publishing and marketing. From the email:

"Check out this bundle (<https://infostack.io/infostackwrite-publish-profit2-e/>) of writing courses from dozens of top authors, including David Farland. Not only can you take his \$200 course for only \$47.95, but there are plenty of other courses and writing advice books included in that price too! This is a very limited-time offer. Feel free to help us by spreading the word."

It's only \$40 and it's a TON of information. I signed up because I was curious. I recommend it. Not that EVERYTHING will be what you want or will work for you, but I believe a lot of it will.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "One Word Separates Us From Psychopaths: Writer" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/one-word-separates-us-from-psychopaths-writer/>.

See Sue Coletta's "Crime Writing: Scene Structure and MRUs in Action" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/crime-writing-scene-structure-and-mrus/>. There are links in this one to other posts I also recommend.

See "Do you have a muse?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/do-you-have-a-muse.html>.

See “Nifty Stuff In the Bookstore” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/nifty-stuff-in-the-bookstore/>. (It’s more than you think.)

Fiction Words: 1874

Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)

So total words for the day: XXXX

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684

Total fiction words for the month..... 19733

Total fiction words for the year..... 226697

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13020

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 76530

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 302957

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dave Farland](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, June 26

[June 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Nothing really to report today.

I took too many days off (got used to it). I’m glad I started working toward next month a little early.

So this is mostly to send you the “Of Interest” stuff below.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "9 Ways To Build Suspense ~ Fiction Writing" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/9-ways-to-build-suspense/>.

See Sue Coletta's "Pinch Points In Fiction Writing" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/pinch-points-in-fiction-writing/>.

See Sue Coletta's "How To Craft A One-Page Synopsis Using Story Beats" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/how-to-craft-a-one-page-synopsis-using-story-beats/>.

Fiction Words: 1816

Nonfiction Words: 90 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1906

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684

Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500

Total fiction words for the month..... 21549

Total fiction words for the year..... 228513

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13110

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 76620

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 304863

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, June 27](#)

[June 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Long post today. Below is the topic I've been promising.

Dean's back, sort of, with a post that proves he's human. You'll see it below in "Of Interest."

You all know Heinlein's Rules. (To get an annotated copy, [Click Here](#).)

Following Heinlein's Rules is like riding a bicycle. Eventually, you're going to fall off. And the only thing to do is climb back on.

Topic: Take Your Time

This is a bit of advice I've never heard specifically from any writing instructor.

The nearest even good writing instructors come is when they say your readers can't see what's in your mind. They can see only what you put on the page.

To expand and clarify that a bit, readers can *sense only what you put on the page. They can see, hear, smell, taste and feel only what you put on the page.

But I learned Take Your Time from reading for pleasure.

One thing my favorite authors seem to have in common — whether they write magic realism, SF, westerns, thrillers, mystery or suspense — is that they take their time when they write description.

You've all heard me say it's necessary to ground your reader at the beginning of each major scene or chapter.

Each time your character walks into a new setting, the situation, the character's mood and background, and other factors determine what he or she will notice.

What one POV character senses, another would sense in a different way, or not at all.

And whatever the POV character senses, you must allow that character to convey to your reader.

Notice I didn't say *you must convey it to the reader. This isn't about author intrusion. It's about allowing the POV character, through your fingers on the keyboard, to provide his or her opinion of the setting as revealed through his or her physical senses.

And the best way to do that is Take Your Time. In other words, don't rush through it. Allow the character the time (appropriate to the scene) to see, hear, smell, taste and feel the setting.

In one of my novels, the POV character is a homicide detective and she's just walked into a bedroom where a particularly heinous crime occurred. Did she go immediately to describing the body and the wounds?

No.

When she arrives at the front door and the on-scene officer greets her, the sight of the officer and the smells of the crime scene are the first things that hit her.

So I let her describe the officer. I let her notice the smell of blood (it smells like the taste of a copper penny in your mouth) and the stench of discharge from the corpse.

(Many writers go only to the sense of sight. That makes for shallow writing.)

Back to the POV character. The smells she encounters make her a little tentative. (You don't say that, of course. But she chats a few seconds longer with the officer. Lets him "run the scene" for her.)

When she's ready, the officer leads her to the actual crime scene: a bedroom at the end of the hallway.

He moves aside. She steps past him and stops in the open doorway. The stench is stronger. She glances at the body, then begins checking out the room.

She notes the position and state of the furniture.

Is there a dresser? Drawers closed or open? A jewelry box? Same questions. Windows? Blinds? Same questions. A closet? Same questions, along with why or why not.

Is there any evidence on the carpet? Boot or shoe prints, detritus from outside, blood? Maybe the killer grabbed the door frame. Hand, thumb or fingerprints? Or the light switch. Same questions.

She checks the ceiling. Light fixture? Overhead fan? Walls? Blood or other evidence?

And she conveys all of that (through your fingers, but her opinions) to the reader.

Finally to the victim. The position on the bed. Clothed? If so, in what? Rips or tears or stains? Naked? Note any unusual characteristics (now, finally, including the wounds).

I'm sure you get the idea.

Lest you think this is "too much" description or that it will slow the book down, here's a trick for you:

When you've finished writing a scene, Read It Aloud.

If it bores you, if you find yourself just wanting it to end, chances are it isn't filtered through the POV character's physical senses and delivered as the POV character's opinion. Chances are it's author intrusion.

In that case, yes, it's lard. Goey, gummy, slick gobs of fat.

But that doesn't mean you should strike it. It only means you need to give the scene back to the character. The characters, not the writer, are living the story. Let them tell it.

If the description of the setting is delivered by the POV character — if the reader is seeing, hearing, smelling etc. through the POV character's senses and opinions — it won't be too much. It will hold the reader's interest and pull the reader deeply into the story.

And best of all, it's a ton of fun.

A disclaimer and a final word: The scene described above is in a police procedural. The genre requires meticulous (and correct) description.

Another book or scene would require less. Especially in action sequences. And people notice different things during a high-action sequence.

For example, during a gunfight in a saloon there's a lot going on. Nobody involved will notice the color of the walls or what the floor's made of or how many bullet holes are in the ceiling.

But how many gunfights have you read where all the wounds are through-and-through clean, the guy is killed instantly, there's no (or little) blood, no smoke or smell (or heat or cold) in the air, no overturned chairs, no shattered glasses or bottles or bar mirrors, etc.?

How much better might the scene have been if the writer had added even one or two of those details?

So go with the flow, as we used to say. But let your characters tell the story. That's a sure track to an exciting book the reader won't be able to put down.

Apparently some CreateSpace accounts have been hacked recently. From Texas Authors Inc. via my friend Gary Vineyard, this excerpt:

“If you have a CreateSpace account, please check to be sure your payment information is still as you'd like it. Then, change your password, making sure it is both unique (i.e., not the password you use everywhere else on the web) and long enough that it's hard to guess.”

Pretty good day of writing today, and time left to work on the copyedit.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “I Seem To Have Fallen Off” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/i-seem-to-have-fallen-off/comment-page-1/#comment-186671>. Heinlein's Rule 4 has become the hardest for me to follow too.

See “Used Book Collection Bins Are Filling Up” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/used-book-collection-bins-are-filling-up/>.

See “Publishers are paying writers a pittance, say bestselling authors” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/publishers-are-paying-writers-a-pittance-say-bestselling-authors/>.

Mostly for humor, see “Do you have a muse?” (and the comments) at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/06/do-you-have-a-muse.html>.

Fiction Words: 2107

Nonfiction Words: 1176 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3283

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684
Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500
Day 5..... 2107 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 23656
Total fiction words for the year..... 230620
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14286
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 77796
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 308146

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, June 28

[June 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

All right.

For the past few days I’ve been practicing, putting together new habits.

Today I'm ready to announce my new daily word-count writing goal.

I picked a number that is easily attainable for me when I don't have anything else professional going on, like copyediting, teaching, etc. When those things are going on, the number is a stretch. But it's still attainable.

Beginning on July 1 and running through June 30, 2019, my daily word count goal will be to write 2000 words of publishable fiction per day.

Yesterday I exceeded that goal slightly. That's fine. And that left me four hours to work on my current copyedit.

Those of you who have been around since the beginning remember me hitting 3000 words per day routinely, and exceeding 4000 and 5000 every now and then.

So lest my new word-count goal seems too easy, let's look at some numbers.

Thus far this year (through yesterday), I've written 230620 words of publishable fiction. Through yesterday, there have been 177 days.

So my average (arithmetic mean) has been 1303 words per day. Over a year, that would bring me to 475,595 words of publishable fiction.

If I raise that average to 2000 words per day, over the year that begins on 1 July and ends on 30 June 2019, I will have written 730,000 words of fiction.

And if I raise that average to 2000 words per day for the remainder (188 days) of this year, I'll write 376,000 more words this year and finish the year with 606,620.

That's 131,025 MORE words this year than the number for which I'm currently on track.

Novels vary in size, of course. A few of mine are over 100,000 words, but most of mine are in the 35,000 to 60,000 word range.

So from today, not counting the novel I'm currently working on, if I average 2000 words per day (three hours of work, including breaks) I should be able to write at least 6 more novels.

And that's what daily goals are all about. They're stepping stones to hit larger goals. I'd love to finish this calendar year with 12 or 13 novels.

Figure out your own goals. What do you want to achieve?

I'll still have to make a few more adjustments to my schedule. For example, I'll need to sack out earlier on Friday and Saturday nights so I can reach my daily goal early on Saturday and Sunday

and still spend quality time with my wife. I won't copyedit or do any other work on weekends. Only my own writing.

This is so do-able it's almost scary. So it's also a challenge. Beginning on 1 July, I want to see whether I can put together a streak. How many days in a row can I write at least 2000 words of fiction per day?

If I miss on the goal, it's no biggie. The goal resets to zero the following morning anyway.

But if I can get a streak going, it will grow increasingly difficult to break it. And that's what I'm hoping for. (One caveat: the streak will almost certainly break later in July as I have to have my pacemaker replaced. It will be difficult for a few days to do anything other than sitting around griping.)

Continuing the preparation for my new challenge, I'm reversing the process today (and probably every weekday). My intention is to make my writing time a reward.

So I'll do any work first (copyediting, covers, etc.) and reward myself with time for my own writing afterward.

For example, it's currently 4 a.m. I rolled out a little after 3 and I'm working on the edit. It's all conscious-mind stuff, so interruptions don't matter.

I stopped editing around 10 and headed for the Hovel with my writing 'puter. I did a lot of cycling, and I stopped when I had written a little over 2000 new words. This is going to be my persistence novel, I guess. It keeps trying to stall on me, so I get up and walk around a little while, then come back and go at it again. (grin)

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "A Great Take On Writing Into The Dark" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-great-take-on-writing-into-the-dark/>.

Fiction Words: 2105

Nonfiction Words: 670 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2775

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926

Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810

Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684

Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500
Day 5..... 2107 words. Total words to date..... 10607
Day 6..... 2105 words. Total words to date..... 12712

Total fiction words for the month..... 25761
Total fiction words for the year..... 232725
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14956
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 78466
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 310921

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, June 29

[June 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Only two days left before my new daily word count goal officially begins, today and tomorrow. I'm not even going to begin the "streak" portion of it until after I have the minor surgery to replace my pacemaker.

Until then, the plan is to write as much as I can, tempered by the copyedit I'm currently doing. If you couldn't tell, I'm excited about this. (grin)

Meeting the new daily goal will be difficult while I have other professional things to do. So it's exciting in that way.

And when I don't have other professional things going on, it still won't be "easy" (life things continue) but I expect to exceed the goal every day on those days. So that makes that part exciting too. Something I can look forward to.

Finally, as a result of my "free book in exchange for honest reviews" promo (which is still going on, hint hint), one reader compared the main character in *Jobs Like That* (Nick Spalding) with Jack Reacher and with Gabriel Allons, the main protagonist in Daniel Silva's thriller and espionage series.

I have to say that made me feel pretty good. (grin)

And TWO reviewers called for a series with that character, which I'd already considered doing. In fact, after I've finished the current WIP, I might set a second one aside and continue the story of Nick Spalding.

If anyone else out there wants to review any of my books, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and tell me which title(s) you'd like. I'll send a URL and a coupon code straight away.

Now to the edit for a little while, then out for a walk, then to the writing, then back to the edit. At least I think that's how the day's going to go. (grin)

Well, plans change. At least immediate plans. Turns out today's gonna be a non-writing day.

A few days ago the landlord brought electricity to the Hovel, with another line going to my camping trailer (spare bedroom for guests). He also ran a water line to the trailer.

And today he's putting in a waterline to the Hovel so I can use my portable swamp cooler out there.

So this morning I moved my small spare desk out to the Hovel and folded up the old antique card table I'd been using as a desk out there. Then I went outside and did some shovel work with him.

That ate up about three hours of the day. Then the ice maker in my fridge is on the blink too, so I'm gonna spend some time messing with that to see whether I can get it to work again.

About halfway through the shovel work, I decided I'll take care of all that sort of stuff today in lieu of writing. And when I'm not working on that stuff today, I'll edit.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Harlan Has Left The Building" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/harlan-has-left-the-building/>. There will be other tributes out there, but this will probably be the best one.

In case anyone missed it in yesterday's Journal, please see "A Great Take On Writing Into The Dark" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-great-take-on-writing-into-the-dark/>.

Or just go watch the Michael La Ronn video at <https://youtu.be/w33JIZsVJYI>.

See "Business Musings: Outside The Box" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/06/27/business-musings-out-of-the-box/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 540 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 540

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684
Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500
Day 5..... 2107 words. Total words to date..... 10607
Day 6..... 2105 words. Total words to date..... 12712
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 25761
Total fiction words for the year..... 232725
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15496
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 79006
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 311461

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, June 30](#)

[June 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Adios, Junio!

Dean's post on what he learned from other writers (see "Of Interest") started me thinking about influences on my own writing and my life as a writer.

I'll post more about those influences here in other posts, but for today, the six most important life-changing lessons I've learned from Dean and Kris over the years (counted down):

6. Heinlein's Rules,

5. The importance of grounding the reader,
4. Use all five of the POV character's physical senses and his/her opinion of the setting,
3. Put time in the chair,
2. Keep Coming Back, and (drum roll, please)
1. Write the Next Sentence.

And the most important, overriding thing I learned from Dean Wesley Smith and Ray Bradbury is to let the characters tell the story. That I'm only the recorder, down in the trenches with them, attempting to keep up.

I have a lot of non-writing household stuff to do today. I got a couple of hours early for writing, but I'll post this now so I don't forget later.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "What I Learned" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/what-i-learned/>.

Fiction Words: 1491

Nonfiction Words: 190 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1681

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
 Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
 Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684
 Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500
 Day 5..... 2107 words. Total words to date..... 10607
 Day 6..... 2105 words. Total words to date..... 12712
 Day 7..... 1491 words. Total words to date..... 14203

Total fiction words for the month..... 27252
 Total fiction words for the year..... 234216
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 15686
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 79196
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 313142

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Influences](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, July 1](#)

[July 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Long post today.

Yesterday I published a list of the top six things I'd learned from Dean and Kris about writing fiction.

In retrospect, it wasn't really a countdown list. It was actually a list of things I've learned that all vie for number one in importance. (grin) I'm even thinking about putting them in a nonfiction book.

One writer commented that she would've added "Have fun with your writing" to the list.

I agree with that, except that having fun with writing is something I kind of take for granted. And that gave rise to this topic.

Topic: Have Fun With Your Writing (or Don't Be An Intrusive God)

Let me be clear: if writing fiction wasn't the most fun I could have with my clothes on, I probably wouldn't do it at all.

Writing fiction is an escape for me. Like going to the beach or going camping or taking a cruise is for other people. It's just fun, something I love to do.

I enjoy writing stories I haven't read before. I enjoy practicing (subliminally) new techniques I've learned from a mentor or from my reading. Occasionally, I even enjoy re-reading a short story or novella or novel I've written. Because even if that story has been told before, it's never been told the way I tell it.

And by "the way I tell it," I don't mean only my authorial voice. Let me explain that.

I see my role as a writer as twofold: god and reporter.

As the god of the story, I create characters *with completely free will*. Then I give them a problem and place them in a world. That's it.

Then, as they are wont to do, Things Happen. Situations come up. And the characters, not I, deal with them. Hey, I have my own life to live, my own situations to deal with.

Sometimes the situations in which my characters find themselves are thrust upon them by external forces (or other characters). Sometimes they occur as a result of the characters' own actions.

But in either case, I don't "save" them. I let them work out their problems on their own. If you're a religious or spiritual person — or even just a person who believes in personal responsibility, an increasingly foreign concept — and if you believe you have free will, this should sound familiar.

I'm aware that many writers are unable to trust their own subconscious, their own storytelling ability. That causes them to take the "god" responsibility to extremes.

They write extensive outlines, create in-depth character sketches, develop rising and falling action in graphs, carefully add plot points etc. (Ahem. None of which is writing.)

They effectively create and control every situation and everything their characters say and do in response to a given situation. Thus their writing "process" becomes laborious, even tedious. Often the process itself takes precedence over the writing! Then the worst among them hang out at launch parties, sling one forearm across their forehead, and proclaim writing "drudgery."

I don't wonder.

Now I'm no less the god of my story than they are of theirs. But I'm a different kind of god. I don't lounge on a pedestal among the clouds, micromanaging or directing the actions and voices of my characters from afar. Or at all.

I gave them free will, remember? And I meant it.

Once the story is peopled with one or two characters, I kick off my robes and become a mild-mannered recorder. An observer. I'm just another reader, waiting to be entertained. And that's where the real fun of writing begins.

As the recorder of the story, I roll off the parapet into the trench of the story (or into the interconnected trenches of the novel) and run through it with them.

Sometimes, though very seldom, I can foresee what the characters will do or say next. But more often, just as in "real" life, I'm surprised by what they do or say.

Most of the time, I don't have a clue what's about to happen, and frankly, I don't give it much thought. I'm too busy racing along with them, trying frantically to keep up, and writing down what they say and do.

That free will of the characters and letting situations unfold as they will is all-important. And not only to me.

In a recent interview, Lee Child said his New York editor mentioned that the book he'd submitted might have been better if a set of situations had occurred in a different order.

Child agreed with him at first. "Yes, it might." Then he said, "But that isn't the way it happened."

And this isn't anything I've learned recently.

Back in the early 1990s, when I was fairly well known for my poetry and was making the circuit, doing presentations at writers' conferences and in private seminars all over the country, writers occasionally asked about my fiction "process." (I'd written some even back then.)

I smiled and said the same thing I've said ever since: "I don't really have a process. I just follow the characters around and write down what they say and do."

Which brings us back to the notion of keeping writing fun.

What could be more fun than being a perpetual spy and eavesdropper on a group of characters? And getting paid for it?

Still, even with all the military training I've undergone in my own life, I seriously doubt I'm clandestine enough to avoid detection if my characters really wanted to notice me. In fact, I suspect they know I'm there. But they never mention me.

They're so busy living their own lives that my presence doesn't bother them. After all, who, as they move along a busy city street all wrapped up in their own tense situation, notices a non-threatening stranger loitering on the corner?

In an alternative view, my characters pay about as much attention to me as most characters pay to their creator. They know I'm around, and that's fine. But they'd prefer to work through their problems themselves. And who can blame them?

So once I put them there, my influence is finished. It's up to them to lead their own lives in whatever manner they see fit.

My only job is to have fun and be joyously amazed at how they do that.

And I am.

Rolled out at my “normal” time as of late, at 3:30. I spent a little time on the Internet, then wrote the stuff above this.

It’s a weekend, so I probably won’t write much over my goal today, then spend the balance of the day with my wife.

Well, surprisingly, I’m in the end game of the WIP. It will be a novella, not a novel. It’s all about one event. So I’ll finish it tomorrow and get to start something new.

See you soon.

Of Interest

Somewhat in contrast to my topic above (but whatever works for you) see James Scott Bell’s “Building Characters Layer by Layer” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/building-characters-layer-by-layer.html>. As you read the post, note his caution regarding locking a character into a particular profile.

See “I Am Not a Gatekeeper” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/i-am-not-a-gatekeeper/>. Be sure to read The Passive Guy’s take on the article too.

Fiction Words: 2005

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3185

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Burned-Out Building

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684
Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500
Day 5..... 2107 words. Total words to date..... 10607
Day 6..... 2105 words. Total words to date..... 12712
Day 7..... 1491 words. Total words to date..... 14203
Day 8..... 2005 words. Total words to date..... 16208

Total fiction words for the month..... 2005
Total fiction words for the year..... 236221
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1170
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 80346
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 316317

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	5
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, July 2](#)

[July 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, that was a short-lived experiment.

Embarrassment sometimes is the result (and is *always* the risk) of sharing one's writing life. But that's just the way it goes sometimes. If you're going to be an open book, occasionally a reader will find a bug smashed between your pages.

A few days ago I announced my new daily word count goal. Then I announced I was going to see how long I could hit it in a row, day after day, to create a streak.

Then reality started to set in and I backed off on the streak aspect because Coming Soon (July or August) there will be a week or so when I won't be able to do anything that causes my chest muscles to flex. Believe it or not, that includes activities as seemingly innocuous as typing.

And today, before I've even started, I feel overwhelmed. Today would be the first full day of attempting to hit my daily goal and work on a copyedit. I also wanted it to be the day I begin the next new book.

But it's also the day when I have to do laundry, water the yard, pull some weeds and tend to some other household things.

Of course, the laundry does itself. Well, other than transferring things from the washer to the dryer, starting the next load, folding the former and putting it away, etc.

The yard takes care of itself too, except for periodically adjusting the sprinkler, individually watering the several trees and bushes in the yard, etc.

And pulling weeds is, well, pulling weeds. No way around that.

I could put off the edit a bit to make up for time lost to the other nonwriting activities, but that doesn't seem fair to my client (because it isn't) and it's not something I would allow myself to do anyway.

So for the time being, I'm going to HOPE today I at least can write the thousand or so words that will finish my current WIP. At this point, frankly, it's limping along so badly that if it were a horse I'd shoot it. I hate the end game of writing a book. When I know how it's going to end, I just want to get there so I can move on to something new.

So just ignore all the rah-rah stuff I wrote about my new goals over the past week or so. I'm calling it off for the time being.

My priorities have changed somewhat. Honestly, I think it had something to do with publishing my 30th novel.

Sometime or other I got it into my head that many writers don't write and/or publish 30 novels in their entire lifetime.

But I have, since October 19, 2014. And more importantly, my knowledge and practice of the craft has expanded pretty much exponentially.

There are still stories I want to tell and characters with whom I want to run through a story, so my journey is far from over. But as for concrete goals... well, if they matter at all at this point in my writing career, I need to give them a great deal more thought.

But please don't get me wrong. I do stand firmly by the notion that a daily word count goal is a godsend for beginning writers.

A daily goal helps create discipline, and discipline results in more hours spent in the chair, which leads to more practice, improvement in craft and greater productivity. Which in turn leads to greater discoverability. (The more titles you have out there, the easier it is for readers to find you.)

Okay. As I suspected and hoped I might, I finished the WIP, which is renamed Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Bombed-Out Café. It's a novella.

I'll spend the balance of the day on the copyedit.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "6 Unusual Forensic Techniques" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/6-unusual-forensic-techniques.html>.

For any Hemingway buffs out there, see "The First Reviews of Every Ernest Hemingway Novel" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-first-reviews-of-every-ernest-hemingway-novel/>.

Fiction Words: 941

Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1591

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Bombed-Out Café

Day 1..... 1926 words. Total words to date..... 1926
Day 2..... 2884 words. Total words to date..... 4810
Day 3..... 1874 words. Total words to date..... 6684
Day 4..... 1716 words. Total words to date..... 8500
Day 5..... 2107 words. Total words to date..... 10607
Day 6..... 2105 words. Total words to date..... 12712
Day 7..... 1491 words. Total words to date..... 14203
Day 8..... 2005 words. Total words to date..... 16208
Day 9..... 941 words. Total words to date..... 17149 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1820
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 80996
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 317908

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, July 4](#)

[July 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy Independence Day, folks.

And happy Mmmphth birthday to my bride, Mona. Now you know the real reason behind all the parades and fireworks. (grin)

As to her age, well, we've been married for 33 years, so according to my considered calculations, she was six when we were married. Close enough. (grin)

There was nothing of interest to report yesterday. I did do a little writing but it was an opening that didn't work. So I kicked it to the curb and am not counting the words.

I won't do anything today but celebrate, and the celebration might well carry on through tomorrow.

Which is fine with me because I'm still working out how to handle working on copyedits while also writing my own stuff. It's more difficult than it looks, at least for me.

So I should be back on Friday at the latest. Here's a topic for you that seems always timely:

Topic: Guarantees in Writing and Publishing

There aren't any.

Well, if you follow [Heinlein's Rules](#) religiously, there's a guarantee that someone, somewhere will buy your work eventually, whether it's an acquisitions editor, a publisher, or other reader.

But otherwise, no. No guarantees.

This topic is sponsored by all the beginning writers who ask the same beginning-writer questions.

I understand why they ask. Back in the day, I asked the same questions myself. But the answers have never changed.

At times like this I always think of the writer who wanted me to critique her work for her, then took me to task because I didn't rave about how wonderful it was.

I was under the apparently mistaken assumption she wanted to improve. After all, otherwise why would she ask me to spend my time, time when I could have been writing, going over her work?

When the dust settled, she said it's standard practice for critiquers to "find something nice to say" about the subject work.

Sorry to burst your bubble, but that's standard practice in mutual admiration clubs, not in critique groups among serious writers who are constantly striving to improve their craft and assume all other writer are striving for the same thing.

Here's a list of questions you should never ask, because you already know the answer. So from that vantage point, my answers below are blunt and honest.

1. Is my work any good?

A. Did you enjoy writing it? If so, yes, it is, for your current skill level. If not, no, it probably isn't.

2. Is my work worth publishing?

A. Was it worth writing? If so, then it's worth publishing.

3. But seriously, is it really good?

A. Sigh. Even if I think so, that doesn't mean another reader will think so. It will be just the right cup of tea for some people; for others, not so much. And that's perfectly all right. (For example, I personally think James Patterson's work sucks canal water from all 50 states.)

4. Will it sell?

The short answer: Provided you publish it (or it is published), yes, it will probably sell to at least one person, even if that person is your Aunt Marge from Topeka.

If it has an attractive cover and a good teaser and you've labeled it with the right genre, it might sell to those whose taste runs to the kind of story you've told and who like your cover and are attracted to the teaser.

It will definitely NOT sell to those who don't like the kind of story you told and/or those who are not attracted by the cover or the teaser.

The long answer: Shrug. I have no idea. But don't confuse goals and dreams.

A goal is something you can control, like how many short stories or novels you can produce in a month or a year or five years or ten. How many stories you can tell. That's a goal.

And we all dream of being a bestseller, but that's completely out of our hands. In fact, the number of copies actually sold (even that one to Aunt Marge) is out of our hands.

You can write a great story, create or pay for a great cover, and write great teaser blurbs. Your critique group can rave over it, your Uncle Mort can say it's wonderful, and your copyeditor or first reader can help you make it the best it can be.

But you can't control how many readers actually buy (and recommend) your work.

5. Should I keep writing? (My go-to answer for this one used to be No. I mean, if you have to ask....)

A. Do you enjoy writing? If so, yes. Follow Heinlein's Rules: keep writing and publishing. Keep learning and keep applying what you've learned to the next story. You'll be fine.

If you don't enjoy writing, no. Life is not "too short" for most of us, but it's too short to do something you don't enjoy.

There y'go. I can't say it any better than that.

You're subscribed to this Journal, so you're obviously invested in your work. So I do believe *you* should keep writing.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Making A Living With Short Fiction 2018" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/making-a-living-with-short-fiction-2018/>. (Wow. Again I feel a little like a slacker. grin)

If you enjoy writing short fiction, I encourage you to check the For Writers tab on Doug Smith's website at <http://www.smithwriter.com/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 890 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 890

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 81886
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 318798

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Doug Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writer Resources](#)

The Journal, Thursday, July 5

[July 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Very long post today, but bear with me. I think you'll be glad you did.

I have a real treat for you today, via my friend, writer Christopher Ridge. Chris brought to my attention a presentation by Ray Bradbury to participants in a university writing program.

You can find the link in “Of Interest.” The video is almost an hour long, but it’s Ray Bradbury, for goodness’ sake. Who can’t listen to Ray Bradbury for an hour? On writing?

Of course, I was hooked at the name. Anyone who knows anything about me knows Ray Bradbury is one of my strongest and most favored influences. But even if I hadn’t been hooked at the name, I would’ve been hooked at these words from the guy who introduced him:

“[Ray Bradbury] embodies [the concept that] good writing is good writing across all types of genres.” Man, you can’t say it any better or with any more truth than that.

And in this case, by “types of genres” he means “forms”: short stories, novellas, novels, screenplays, etc. Although the same is true about the various commercial genres (romance, SF, western, mystery, suspense, thriller etc.).

I personally recommend you watch the video once for the sheer joy of it, and then listen again and take copious notes. That’s what I did. And yes, I still learned a few things and was reminded of a few others.

Watching the video also caused me to realize professionals (including Dean) seldom say “Don’t worry about the money. Write for joy.” Dean *does* say writing should be fun, but he also talks a lot about making money from it (probably because that’s what newer writers demand of him).

So I thought I’d tackle the topic today, perhaps expand a little on what Bradbury said in the video.

Topic: Writing for Money

Money’s nice to have. To paraphrase some comedian in years past, money won’t buy happiness, but it’s probably more fun being miserable in a yacht than a rowboat. Something like that.

I don’t know about any of that, but given the alternative, I’d rather make money from my writing.

Still — and frankly, I think this makes all the difference — making money is not the driving force behind my writing. Or behind my wanting to write.

For anyone who didn’t know, there’s a heirarchy among forms just as there is among genres:

- Novel series and novella series sell best.
- Then come novel and novella one-offs.
- Then short story collections.
- And finally individual short stories.

But as Bradbury says during his talk, a short story doesn't take long to finish, and it's all practice.

If you

1. have time to be prolific, and if you
2. know how to get out of your own way, and if you
3. spend the time in the chair,

ostensibly you could write one short story per week plus twelve novels in a year.

(But I don't personally recommend holding yourself to one short story per week. I think you should write an opening for every idea as it occurs to you and see where it goes. Chance are, if it's a short story, you'll finish it that day or the next. If it keeps going and heads for novella or novel territory, follow it. And after you finish, write the opening for the next story. If you write an opening and it's simply a non-starter, trash it and move on to the next idea.)

Obviously writing a novel every month would be easier if you didn't feel you had to conform to Big Publishing's page or word counts, but either way, you could do it.

I don't conform to anyone's preset prescribed notions on length. For a free copy of my own Fiction Lengths guide, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Many, many excellent works are far under 100,000 words. Witness works by Hemingway, Steinbeck and Weisel to name only a few.

But it would also be a ton easier if you didn't worry about how much money you're going to make (or not).

In one way, I'm fortunate that I didn't become a "serious" writer until a few years ago. Unless lightning strikes — and it strikes in this business even less often than it strikes in many others — most credible sources say it takes around five years for a fiction writer to even begin to see a good return on his or her investment of time, money in ongoing education, and so on.

Five years.

And that's if you do everything right.

- That's if you go in knowing you *must* have characters the readers care about. Characters who strike a strong emotional chord in the readers: a great protagonist the readers will pull for and a great antagonist the readers will root against. Feverishly, in both cases.
- That's if you go in knowing you *must* have a great cliffhanger at the end of every major scene or chapter, and a great hook at the beginning of the next one.

- That's if you go in knowing you *must* ground the reader not only at the beginning of the story, but at the beginning of every major scene or setting change, and you've learned how to do that without being boringly repetitive.
- That's if you go in knowing you *must* let the character experience the scene not through you, but through all five physical senses of the POV character and the POV character's opinions of the setting.
- That's if you go in knowing how to write great sales copy for the cover blurb, how to come up with a great title, and how to create (or cause to be created) a great cover.
- And that's if you go in knowing all of the above is required not only in mystery and thrillers and suspense, but in all genres across the board.

If you don't go in knowing all of that stuff, you'll still make a few sales, but whatever you don't know will still be in your future in your learning curve. And it will effectively push back the beginning of your five-year practice period.

You will still have to learn all of the above, and the only way to do that is to read extensively in your chosen genre(s), take courses and read books on writing from *credible* instructors, and p-r-a-c-t-i-c-e.

Oh, and you have to know that the only way to practice is

1. do your best at your current skill level on your WIP,
2. publish it (or submit it), and
3. move on to the next story.

There literally is no other way.

The thing is, to submit yourself to that kind of daily or weekly grind, you can't see it as a "grind".

It has to be fun. It has to be something you enjoy. As I like to say, it has to be the most fun you can have with your clothes on. (grin)

But I'm fortunate I came in late. As a result, I decided awhile back I probably won't make any real money from my writing. After all, five years from the time I became a proficient storyteller, I'll be in my late 60s or early 70s.

Therefore I don't worry about making money. (I figure my grandchildren will rake it in.) My payment in the here and now, seriously, is the writing itself. I get to hear the stories first. For me, it's all fun. When I get money for my writing too, it's a happy surprise.

I literally write to entertain myself. To let my characters entertain me, and to live lives, through them, that I otherwise never would have lived.

If you can do that too, in my opinion you will be among the most fortunate human beings on earth.

And if you can do that — if you can ignore the sales figures and the money and Just Have Fun — in the way of all great cosmic ironies, *that* is when you’ll start making money from your writing.

See you soon.

Of Interest

For advice from Ray Bradbury, see “An Evening with Ray Bradbury” at <https://www.uctv.tv/shows/An-Evening-with-Ray-Bradbury-2001-5533>. (This is also now permanently available on my website at the Writers Resources tab.)

In light of the above, see (again) “Making A Living With Short Fiction 2018” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/making-a-living-with-short-fiction-2018/>.

See “Business Musings: Own It” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/04/business-musings-own-it/>.

See “July Workshops and Copyright” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/july-workshops-and-copyright/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1320 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1320

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4030
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 83206
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 320118

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, July 7](#)

[July 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Nothing much going on yesterday, so no Journal entry for July 6.

This will continue the previous Journal post and topic (see <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-thursday-july-5/>).

In that post, I wrote that "...professionals (including Dean) seldom say 'Don't worry about the money. Write for joy.' Dean does say writing should be fun, but he also talks a lot about making money from it."

Dean's post yesterday was about copyright. (It's in "Of Interest" today.)

In one comment, a writer said (jokingly) she would buy the Copyright Handbook "someday."

Dean roughed her up a little bit.

Now in my previous Journal entry, I also mentioned it takes about 5 years before writers can expect to begin really making money with their writing.

And I listed several things they need to know in order to be good enough at storytelling to begin that process.

But by the time indie publishing rolled around, Dean and other professional writers who made the leap from traditional publishing already had mastered the techniques I listed. They also already had established careers as writers.

Bearing that in mind, it's easier to see why Dean et al talk so much about making money from writing in this indie world.

But again, the indie writer who started out as an indie writer and publisher still has to learn those things I listed in that post.

And bearing THAT in mind, here's my slightly modified response to Dean's reply to the writer's comment, again as a continuation of the topic from a couple of days ago:

Just a thought, or maybe a caution....

I've had work published traditionally, though it was through a small publisher. I earned only a 10% royalty, and when I dropped them, they were trying to cut that back to 8%.

Now I publish independently, and I would never go back. And I wouldn't chase an agent even if I was carrying a stick or a pitchfork. On that basis...

Learning copyright — learning what we actually own (IP) and how we can license it — is massively important.

But keeping writing fun is even MORE important.

I was reminded of that again recently in a filmed keynote delivered by Ray Bradbury. I want storytelling to remain something I look forward to. (The video URL is <https://www.uctv.tv/shows/An-Evening-with-Ray-Bradbury-2001-5533>.)

If writing the stories and novels weren't fun, I wouldn't have anything to sell in the first place, and neither would my heirs.

But I can't allow worry about selling to overlay or infiltrate the writing.

That's exactly why I occasionally fall off [Heinlein's Rule number 4](#). I always get back on, but not because it's important. More because I have the stories anyway, and publishing them costs me only a little time, so I might as well.

For me, personally, I have to keep that separation in there. If my characters ever stop telling me stories that get my blood circulating, well, I'll count myself fortunate they ever spoke to me at all and I'll find something else fun to do.

Just my two cents.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "A Copyright Question" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-copyright-question/>. And read the comment by Tony DeCastro and Dean's response.

From another commenter on Dean's post, for Canadian writers, here's a valid link to Canadian copyright: http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr00003.html.

See "The Inspiration Behind SCATHED May Surprise You" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/the-inspiration-behind-scathed-may-surprise-you/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 550

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4580
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 83766
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 320668

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, July 8](#)

[July 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm a guy who generally doesn't "should" on people. (Thanks to my friend Lloyd Chaves for that bit of sleight of mind.)

Today I stumbled across one of the worst articles I've ever seen on writing. I won't mention the name of it here (or the URL) because I don't want to advertise it. But it was all about a number of steps to achieve efficiency as a writer.

Four of the "tips" were the same old time-worn crap everybody repeats almost constantly: find a good place to write (really? thanks for that); find time to write, etc. blah blah blah.

One "tip" was to use Grammarly or a similar program. I helped beta test Grammarly when it was first introduced. ***Worst Piece Of Crap EVER***. It's nothing more than a way for the creators to play on the flood of other horrible writing myths out there and make money from writers. My advice is to stay as far away from it as you can get.

Another "tip" was equally useful: write as fast as you can with the specific intent of going back to "correct" things later.

That has NEVER made sense to me.

That's like loading up a large wheel barrow with dirt, moving it two feet, then dumping it so you can come back tomorrow, load it up again and move it the rest of the way.

Seriously?

This guy's advice sucked canal water from all 50 states plus Puerto Rico, China and Mexico. Naturally, I went to Amazon and keyed in his name.

Yeah. Not a single novel, short story or short story collection. I didn't even find any of this "guru's" books on writing. Which of course I wouldn't buy anyway because he has nary a single, solitary damn clue what he's talking about.

(I'm just a tad angry, if you couldn't tell. The utter chutzpah of the guy!)

Yet below his post, writer after writer aped "Great advice! Thanks!" Poor, poor, innocent little souls. I wonder how long it'll be before any of them catch on? Not that any of them will ever write much. They'll be too busy tinkering.

One writer (one of you, actually) told the guru that his "avoid self-editing" advice was stupid, though you were much nicer about it than I was.

I'm reminded of George Burns in the movie *Oh God!* This guy ought'a be selling earth shoes. Reading that post made me wanna chew wheels and spit nails. At him.

Now, I do try to pass along what I know, but I never pass along anything I *don't* know. To me, that's just unforgiveable. It's like the writing "instructors" I've heard who say things like "Oh, I can't explain what passive voice is, but I know it when I see it."

Pure, unadulterated batcookies.

Way back, before I'd written more than about a zillion poems and a few short stories, I taught writing seminars and presented at writers' conferences.

But even then, I stuck to what I knew.

I'm one of those lucky ones (to me) who apparently was dipped in the language at birth. I know the language, and I sense the nuances.

So that's what I taught. You can find it in books like *Writing Realistic Dialogue and Punctuation for Writers* and *Notes from Writing the World* and a bunch of others.

But I never taught anything that was flat-out wrong and I never handed out bad, hurtful, advice. And I never will.

Okay, duck. Here comes a “should”: until you get a million or so words under your belt, you should be writing, not teaching others about writing. And again, that’s from a guy who generally doesn’t “should” on people.

Also note that my personal advice is genre (type) specific. For example, if you’ve written five million words of real poetry (the line, and therefore the line break, is the basic unit of the poem), you shouldn’t be spouting advice on writing novels or short stories.

The advice holds in any direction. If you’ve written a few million words in novels, stick to giving advice on novels. Same with short stories, screenplays, etc.

In other words, give advice (if you’re so inclined) about what you know. But seek advice (and listen) about what you don’t know. From credible sources.

But guys like the one I talked about above? He needs to hold hands with himself and shut the hell up.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See “The Importance of Creativity Time” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/the-importance-of-creativity-time.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 730 (Journal)
So total words for the day:730

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5310
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 84486
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 321398

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Rant](#),

[the writing life, Topic](#)

The Journal, Monday, July 9

[July 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, another topic cued up by a comment on a post over at Dean's place.

The original post was about Dean's streak of posting to his blog for over 2100 days straight. Somehow it turned to reading for pleasure vs. "looking" for errors as you read.

Of course, I agree with Dean that a reader should read fiction in the chosen genre strictly for pleasure.

I also agree that sometimes a bestseller is a wonderful writer whose "style" is simply not the reader's cup of tea.

But I also believe culpability for bad storytelling and bad writing should be placed firmly where it belongs. And the simple fact is, sometimes even a best-selling author jerks the reader out of the story with some inane nonsense, and that is not the reader's fault.

Unlike Dean, who believes he avoids negatives all the time (grin), I'm willing to use examples of both good and bad. Here are a few:

Lee Child is one hell of a storyteller. Every now and then he makes a gaffe that I notice as I'm reading for pleasure. (I don't look for them; they pop out at me, i.e. pull me from the story.)

His errors usually are factual errors that are common to writers, like calling a magazine for a semiautomatic weapon a "clip" or calling a Texas Ranger the "state police."

Also, his paragraphs are so long that I sometimes have to backtrack and reread them. However, his overall story is generally good enough to hold my attention, so I skip over those minor gaffes and keep reading.

In science fiction, Robert Heinlein holds my attention until he goes deep into a description (usually engineering stuff) that has little to do with the actual story and bores me. But again, the overall story is good enough that I scan over the boring stuff and keep reading.

On the other hand, I've sampled several (7 or 8) James Patterson books from both when he was writing alone and after he started taking on writing partners.

I was never able to get past the first 4 or 5 pages of any of his books because what was written there was just so ludicrous. Not only did it jerk me out of the story, it never let me in.

In the middle ground is Stephen King. I've read and loved almost everything he's ever written. But when I happened across *The Dome*, I was unable to finish it. That was mostly due to formatting problems (for example, **ALL BOLD ALL CAPS FOR SIGNS**).

Again, these aren't things I was consciously looking for. They are problems that popped out at me and destroyed my suspension of disbelief.

Consider, you don't have to suspend the reader's sense of disbelief. The reader does that for himself when he chooses to buy your book. The writer's task is to allow the reader to go on believing and enjoying the story.

Jack Higgins, for me, is the ultimate thriller writer. His stories pull me in immediately and never allow me to surface until the end of the book.

My favorite cozy mystery writer is a relative unknown named Nora Barker (pen name). Again, her writing pulls me directly into the storyline and never allows me to surface.

The point of this topic:

I never look for "mistakes" or typos or any of that when I'm reading for pleasure. I get more than enough of that when I'm editing.

But there are a few bestselling writers out there who I swear are only bestsellers because they know marketing. Patterson is the best example of this.

When I'm reading along for pleasure, down in the story, and I'm suddenly jerked out of the story by something stupid (usually the writer talking about something he obviously knows nothing about) I put the book down and move on to another author.

When some idiotic formatting choice jumps out at me, like the aforementioned **ALL BOLD ALL CAPS**, I put the book down and move on to another book, often by the same author if I usually like his writing.

To be fair, formatting is usually a choice that's out of the (traditionally published) writer's hands.

But glaring factual mistakes or lack of knowledge of the subject matter cause me to mark that writer off my list for future purchases.

You the reader owe the writer Nothing. You paid money for the book; you deserve to be entertained.

It's the writer's responsibility to hold the reader in the story, to not shove the reader out.

Correction: Apparently the advice-giving writer I ranted about yesterday DOES have some published books. (Though to be fair, I didn't say he didn't; I only said I couldn't find any.)

However, I still can't point you to any of them.

But see for yourself. At David Chesson's own site, scroll down to "SO WHERE ARE YOUR BOOKS?" (<https://kindlepreneur.com/who-is-dave-chesson/>):

"You might have noticed that there are NO authors on KDP named Dave Chesson... and you would be right. So, whats the deal?

"When I started my path down self publishing, I was unsure of sooo many things. So I chose to use different pen names on each and every book.

"Fast forward to now, and I have created multiple consistent bestselling books that generate traffic from all sorts of sources and not just Amazon. Now, I could take all those books and place them under my name, but....

"[M]y books will not be a secret. Instead, this site will use them and their platform as prime example of any lesson discussed."

Okay, fine. But I still don't have the name of a single book, much less a single novel that would show me he knows anything at all about writing novels or even fiction.

If I were just a little more annoyed with this guy, I'd spin my wheels asking him to provide me with the titles of his "consistent bestselling books" and/or his pen names. But frankly, I'm betting they don't exist.

In my opinion, kindlepreneur.com is just another scam designed to separate writers from their money. If anyone can offer actual evidence to the contrary, I'm all ears.

Finally to the Hovel at 9:00, ostensibly to write.

Well, I dabbled a bit until noon. I think maybe I just don't have the kind of mind to compartmentalize writing on one hand and editing on the other.

The edits bring in money, which helps give me the freedom to write. And I don't get all that many edits, anyway, though I currently have one and another one waiting in the wings.

Anyway, the whole time I was writing, the edit (and other stuff) was lurking in the back of my mind. So I think I'll concentrate for a few days on finishing the edit(s), then go back to my own stuff afterward.

And of course I'll keep up these almost-daily Journal entries as well.

See you soon.

Of Interest

Nada today.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1130

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 85616
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 322528

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, July 10](#)

[July 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Seems to be The Week of Scams, all vehemently defended by the very writers who are the scammers' targets.

But that's all right. At long last, I've seen the light. As a result, I've decided to completely revamp my main website.

I'll begin by getting rid of all those silly book covers and book descriptions and individual book pages. In all, I'll be able to delete around 100 pages (of 104).

It will be SUCH a relief, not having to keep up with all of that. I mean, think about it:

- I won't have to design any new covers or write any new descriptions.
- Deleting those pages will free up tons of bandwidth, which will dramatically increase my page-load speed, cutting it from roughly a half-second to a half-millisecond.
- I won't have to spend arduous hours in the chair at my writing 'puter coming up with new characters and situations, writing new stories.

Instead, I can focus on what's truly important: increasing my bank account.

I've already laid out the plan, which I borrowed from my good friend David Chesson and myriad others just like him.

The new Home page will welcome writers with an upbeat message:

***Be a Writer!
Make Tons of Money at Home in Your Spare Time!***

Also on that page, I'll link to a few other pages.

My Audio Lectures page

There are currently 11 lectures, but they're all substantive things about improving the craft. Bo-ho-ho-horing.

To those I'll add exciting lectures on the use of Grammarly and Scrivener and all their rival grammar checkers and organizational tools. I'll also add lectures highly recommending any programs that pay me to recommend them.

My About Harvey Stanbrough page

I'll delete all the boring, substantive stuff about who I am and what I've done. What matters, after all, is not what I've accomplished but what I can help YOU accomplish.

So I'll focus instead on explaining that I've "penned" several international bestselling novels and novellas and short stories, each under its own pen name.

I'll explain that those bestsellers are making money for me hand over fist. In fact, I was recently forced into buying a brand new Cadillac Escalade for the sole purpose of hauling my loot to the bank twice a week. It's just that big a haul!

And of course I'll explain that I can do the same for you, if only you'll invest in your own Incredible Talent. And, you know, send me a small fee.

Of course, I won't divulge the actual name of any of my bestsellers or the pen names under which they're written. But that's strictly due to my overriding sense of modesty and fair play.

After all, I'd hate to bring a prospective client down by allowing him or her to actually verify what an excellent writer and storyteller I am by comparison.

My Blog

On the blog, I'll stop with all the nonsensical so-called "writing and publishing advice" in favor of truly helpful advice like "Use Grammarly" and "You'll Write Better If You Invest in Scrivener" and "Find A Quiet Place To Write" and "The Top Ten Ways to Make Readers Absolutely Slobber With Anticipation."

My Services page

I'll get rid of my copyediting service forthwith. Nothing destroys a writer's confidence like the notion that typos and misspellings and wrong word usages and inconsistencies actually matter.

Instead I'll offer to procure for you a Facebook page and a Twitter feed and an Amazon Author Page and a LinkedIn account. And because I like you and truly believe in you, I'll provide each of those for only, say, \$50 apiece.

For an extra \$100 (each), I'll even set up a Smashwords and D2D account for you. And for a small additional fee of \$50 (each) I'll give you a Smashwords Author Interview and a D2D Author Page.

Finally, (for two more low fees) I'll critique your website and make Professional Recommendations, and I'll crunch the Amazon sales numbers for you and let you know what's selling and what isn't and why.

Then, for the low, low one-time fee of only \$99, I'll send you an official-looking, suitable-for-framing certificate verifying that your copyright belongs solely and uniquely to you. No one else! And for an addition \$49 fee, I'll include a second certificate that proudly displays your Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number (LCCN).

Seriously, can you beat a deal like that? I don't think so.

Hey, I'm going all out here, folks.

I've decided it's high time I stop keeping all the secrets of my overwhelming success as a writer to myself and share them.

You too can be a lucky recipient of my generosity. And all you have to do is loosen your purse strings a little bit.

Well, that and race to my defense should any of the haters out there call me a scammer.

'Cause you know in your heart I'd never scam *you*, am I right?

Trust me.

I do think I'll keep my website logline though: I will lie to you, and you will enjoy it. Seems to fit even with the new scheme.

Of course, it'll take a little time to revamp my website to such a degree. But I have a target date in mind.

I'll launch the newly revamped site on April 1.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "A Copyright Scam" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-copyright-scam/>.

See "Top Five DIY Book Layout Mistakes" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/top-five-diy-book-layout-mistakes-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 890 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 890

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 73300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 86506
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 323418

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, July 11](#)

[July 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Just in case it wasn't obvious to anyone out there, my previous Journal entry was a sarcasm-laden spoof.

Upright is not a matter of degree. Neither, at least for me, is it a perpetual state. But like a goal, it's something I strive for.

There's a fine line between encouraging false hope and preying on those who fall for it, and encouraging writers to believe in themselves and their own abilities.

Anyone who promises to solve all your problems and make you a success (for a fee in real life or free in politics) is probably a scammer.

Those who attempt to help you along on your journey, offer encouragement to believe in your own abilities and explain that you still have to do the actual work yourself are probably legitimate.

By the way, I adapted the title of one of Howard Nemerov's poems for the title of one of my spoof blog posts in yesterday's Journal. A link to the poem is in "Of Interest."

One commenter on the post containing Nemerov's poem wrote (anonymously) "This had nothing to do with making big money." Here, I'll just write (grin), but when I read that comment I actually chortled. I'm not entirely sure I've ever chortled before, and I have to admit I found it a great stress reliever.

On a more serious note, Howard Nemerov was among the world's greatest poets. His "Collected Works" won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize one year (I believe it was 1978). Along with Yeats and Frost, he formed my personal triad when I was learning how to write blank verse.

Just more copyediting for me today. I hope to finish this one by close of business tomorrow. Then I have another, much shorter copyedit to do. After that, it's back to my own writing. I hope that will happen no later than Monday.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Make Big Money at Home! Write Poems in Spare Time!" at <http://poemhunter.blogspot.com/2007/08/make-big-money-at-home-write-poems-in.html>.

See “All July Workshops Started” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/all-july-workshops-started/>.

See “The Procrastination Habit” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/the-procrastination-habit.html>.

See “Too Busy for a Book Club? Join an Online Version” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/too-busy-for-a-book-club-join-an-online-version/>. Hmm. Maybe I should start something like this.

Don’t forget that Kris Rusch is still posting a free short story every Monday (this week it’s “The Silence”) on her site at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/09/free-fiction-monday-the-silence-2/>. There isn’t a better contemporary master of short fiction.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 410

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7740
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 86916
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 323828

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Howard Nemerov](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, July 12](#)

[July 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Just a reminder that I'm still handing out free books to anyone who would like to read and write a review.

To see what's available, visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/> and select from among the novel tabs. Then email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

If you prefer short fiction, you may also choose from among the 5- or 10-story collections under the Short Fiction tab.

Another day of editing today, and then probably on through the weekend. Then I should have two more edits coming in before too long. It's that time of year. But I hope to get back to my own writing for awhile in between them.

On advice of a knowledgeable friend, I heavily sanitized my post from July 9 and, to a lesser degree, my spoof post from July 10. Seems even when you tell the truth and use quotes from a scam perpetrator's actual website, you can still be sued.

And frankly, I can't afford either the time or the money even for a losing lawsuit. I don't think I'd lose, but I don't even care to win. I just want people like that to go away.

Which of course, they won't as long as writers keep defending them and throwing money at them. Sigh.

So you're kind of on your own here. Please protect yourself, folks. Just try to bear in mind that old saying: What looks too good to be true usually is. And if it looks like a scam and sounds (or reads) like a scam, it probably is.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "The Secret To Being A Long Term Writer" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-secret-to-being-a-long-term-writer/>.

See "Business Musings: Blip or New Reality?" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/11/business-musings-blip-or-new-reality/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 290

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	2946
Total fiction words for the year.....	237162
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8030
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	87206
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	324118
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, July 14](#)

[July 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No writing yesterday, of course, and I started a new copyedit. This one will take only a few days at the most. Today I have more for you in the “Of Interest” section, so I’ll post this.

Dean has a great post today on Pulp Speed. He talks at length about pulp writers. I recommend you read the post through at least twice. Chances are you’ll find new valuable nuggets on each read-through.

The post is so valuable, I’ve linked to it on [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) in the Writers Resources tab.

Some folks look at pulp as if it’s a genre, and a lesser one at that. Of course, it isn’t. Pulp writers crossed (and still cross today) all commercial genre lines.

Some folks understand that, yet still look down their noses at it because pulp writers produce a lot of stories quickly.

If you’re one of those, you’re missing a bet. Like the lady who told me she wouldn’t even read Heinlein’s Rules because she doesn’t write science fiction so she “knew” they wouldn’t work for her.

Problem is, she “knew” nothing. How could she? She wouldn’t even risk looking. And for that, I pity her.

Different strokes for different folks—I get that—but remaining intentionally ignorant of something isn't a stroke. It's a possibly life-altering mistake.

Do I believe you should always take the advice of those farther along the road than you?

No, I don't.

But I do believe, vehemently, that you should give yourself every possible opportunity for growth. And it's a harsh truth that those who choose ignorance will never avail themselves of the opportunity for growth.

If they choose not to even look at or listen to new information from those who are farther along the same path, they choose stagnation.

Read and listen to everything you can get your eyes or ears or hands on from those who are farther along the road you're following. Then you can at least make an informed decision: keep what you find useful and discount what you don't. But don't just toss it aside, unseen and unconsidered.

Of course, I realize I'm preaching to the choir here. If you were the kind to toss aside information without even considering it, you wouldn't have subscribed to this Journal and stuck with it even on days when I don't have a specific topic.

Like today.

From now on, or until I change it again, I'll be posting the Journal a couple hours earlier. Of course, that will matter only if you receive the Journal in your email inbox.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See "Pulp Speed Time Again" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pulp-speed-time-again/>.

See Joe Hartlaub's "Inspired by a Good Deed" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/inspired-by-a-good-deed.html>.

See "Research and Study" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/research-and-study/>. Not as in-depth as I expected but some tips to be gained by reading it. Especially if you read the comments afterward.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 450

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 87656
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 324568

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, July 15](#)

[July 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

From a DWS response to a comment on his “Pulp Speed Time Again” post (<https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pulp-speed-time-again/#comments>),

“[Writing] gets so much easier as you keep going. We call it ‘ground [e]ffect’ after that affect that planes have as they near the ground. The air between the plane and the ground makes it easier to stay aloft. When you get writing, it is easier to just keep writing. Starting is always the hard part.”

He also offers a lecture titled “Starting and Restarting Your Writing” that’s well worth the \$50.

Finally, Dean also wrote two posts for today, both about a BookBub promo he’s doing. I recommend going to his website and reading both posts and the comments. No telling what you might gain from the few minutes it takes to read them.

The posts are “Cold Poker Gang: Kill Game” and “Still Number One.”

Just editing this morning, then ending a pleasant visit with my youngest son and his wife.

Topic: Punctuation Revisited

I'm always annoyed when, as a copyeditor, I encounter punctuation that interrupts the flow of a story.

Of course, that's one of the things I'm paid as a copyeditor to fix, and I don't mind doing my job. After all, I took it on myself.

But it's still annoying, for two reasons:

1. Next to the words themselves, punctuation is the most important tool in the writer's toolbox. It directs the reader in the reading of your work.

2. It's the ONLY tool in writing that is absolutely finite in its use.

Not because of the "rules" as prescribed by various style manuals, but because EVERY mark of punctuation creates the SAME effect in EVERY reader EVERY time. Period.

This is not conjecture, and it is not theory. It's fact.

Now, once you realize and understand the appropriate uses of punctuation, you can use it in different ways. But do so from a position of knowledge, not ignorance.

In English classes at every level from elementary school through college, the instructor teaches what to do. I've never yet encountered even one (other than me) who explains WHY.

Here's a brief:

The rule — the period, question mark, exclamation point and colon (. ? ! ☺) should always appear only after a complete sentence. (The colon most often appears at the end of a complete thought in order to introduce a list. The long pause is necessary because the list is the most important information in the sentence.)

Why? Because each of those marks forces (causes the reader to take) a long pause while reading.

The rule — The semicolon (;) may be used INSTEAD OF a comma and a coordinating conjunction to connect two related complete thoughts (subject/verb combinations). The em dash (—) is used to indicate the abruptness of an interruption and introduce parenthetical information.

Why? Because each of those marks forces (causes the reader to take) a medium-length pause.

The semicolon forces the reader to see a connection (usually implied cause and effect) between two complete thoughts.

The em dash makes parenthetical information stand out. It tells the reader (subliminally) that the parenthetical information is more important than the sentence that surrounds it. When the reader encounters an em dash, he has no choice. He MUST read the parenthetical information that

follows it. (When parenthetical information is nice to have but less important than the surrounding sentence, use parentheses, which do not create a pause at all.)

The rule — The lowly comma is the only mark of punctuation that forces the reader to take a short pause.

The comma is used (with a coordinating conjunction — for, and, nor, but, or, yet or so) to combine two complete thoughts. (Note that the combination of the comma and the coordinating conjunction creates a medium pause, like the semicolon. That’s why these two ways of joining complete thoughts are largely interchangeable.)

The comma is also used to separate like-items in a list of more than two.

The key phrase here is “like-items.” If you have more than two nouns in the subject or more than two verbs in the predicate or more than two prepositional phrases in a row, for example, separate them with commas.

But DON’T (for example, and this is where a lot of writers get confused) wrap one or two prepositional phrases with commas.

Right: John kicked the ball over the fence and into the woods.

Wrong: “John kicked the ball, over the fence” or “John kicked the ball, over the fence, and into the woods.”

In the wrong example, do you see how the comma interrupts the flow of the sentence?

The only way I know of to check your own work for this problem is to read it aloud. Unnecessary commas will make you stumble as you’re reading.

But let go of “rules.”

The “wrong” example above isn’t wrong because of some stupid arbitrary rule. It’s wrong because it unnecessarily pulls the reader from the story, and there’s never a good reason to unintentionally interrupt the reading of your work.

The reader who encounters an unnecessary comma can’t simply read through it. Without even realizing it most times, he’ll stop, then go back and re-read the work, having mentally removed the unnecessary comma.

There are other marks of punctuation too, but none of them create a pause at all. Those include quotation marks, apostrophes, the hyphen, the en dash and the aforementioned parentheses.

For a great deal more on this, I strongly recommend buying my book, *Punctuation for Writers*, 2nd Edition. You can find it at all ebook retailers and it’s also available in paper. This book will improve your writing craft by leaps and bounds.

Again, punctuation is the only tool you have to direct the reader in the reading of your work. It's just that important.

If any of you have specific questions or examples you'd like to share or ask me about, I'm wide open.

See you soon.

Of Interest

Nothing other than the above.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 900

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9380
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 88556
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 325468

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#),
[Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, July 17](#)

[July 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Oops. Well, I didn't get this out yesterday. Not used to the new time yet, I guess. So I wrote most of what's below yesterday, but I'll count it today.

A request — if anyone knows of any writer’s blogs (or group blogs, like Kill Zone, or organizational blogs) where professionals hand out anything of value to other writers (regardless of genre), please let me know. You can comment below or email me privately at harveystanbrough.com.

Kill Zone still has a few authors who post valid posts now and then, but it seems to be devolving. Of course, we have Dean and Kris, but I’d like to add others to my list of regulars to pass along to you.

Tomorrow I’ll pass along a few posts from Mark Rubinstein.

From yesterday

Wow. In the midst of working on another copyedit, I received another manuscript — one I copyedited a month or so ago. The author had gone over the whole thing again and wanted it eformatted, for which she’d already paid me.

When I copyedit a manuscript, I’m happy to also do the eformatting for a small additional fee (only \$25) since I’m in the manuscript anyway.

Only despite the wonder of Draft2Digital, whose praises I constantly sing, this author wants the manuscript formatted for upload to Smashwords.

That’s fine, of course.

The problem is, Smashwords requires an interactive table of contents. Which isn’t a problem at all if there are no chapter heads (chapter heads really are silly in fiction, don’t you think?) or if the chapter heads are simple numerals: 1, 2, 3, etc.

When the chapter heads are simple numerals, Smashwords automatically creates the interactive TOC. (D2D automatically creates the interactive TOC no matter how you title the chapters.)

But because these chapter heads are written out (Chapter One, Chapter Two, etc.) I have to manually create the interactive TOC. If you’ve read my *Essentials of Digital Publishing*, you know what a time-consuming, labor-intensive task that is.

Plus it’s been so long since I did one that this morning I had to go back and re-read that section in TEDP. Which made me very glad I wrote it in the first place. Because nobody else out there teaches anyone how to do this stuff.

Anyway, I’ve decided I’ll still offer eformatting with paid copyedits, BUT NOT for Smashwords unless there are no chapter heads or unless they are sequentially numbered with only numerals.

So that and the current copyedit are going to be my day today. On the good side, even with this major interruption I should be finished with the copyedit tomorrow or possibly the next day.

By the way, to get your own FREE copy of The Essentials of Digital Publishing, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/DPubV2X.pdf>.

Okay, so yesterday I finished a formatting job and did a bit on the current copyedit. Today I'll finish the copyedit and send it back to its poppa.

A write emailed me yesterday to commiserate with me being in a "slump." I appreciate that, but I'm not in a slump. I'm in a time when I'm not writing fiction, but I don't lack for ideas, a desire to learn, etc.

Most of all, I don't currently lack for things to do. (grin) But I'm slowly clearing the decks so I can get back to writing without any outside pressure.

And I'm posting this a little early so I won't forget again.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "Can Creativity Pass Through Generations via DNA?" <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/can-creativity-pass-through-generations-via-dna.html>. I added a few ideas on this one.

See "The Passive Guy Comes To The Master Business Class" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-passive-guy-comes-to-the-master-business-class/>.

From Dean, "Kris's Web Site Is Down... So since she normally posts a free story on her web site on Monday, she put it on her Patreon page instead. You can find that at <https://www.patreon.com/kristinekathrynrusch/posts>. (Scroll down a little when you get there.)

Finally, for fun see "Reminder: Writing requires more than inspiration" at <https://meggardiner.wordpress.com/2018/06/02/reminder-writing-requires-more-than-inspiration/>. It sounds amazing, but once I started reading I was chuckling in two directions.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 680 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 680

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	2946
Total fiction words for the year.....	237162
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10060
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	89236
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	326148
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, July 18](#)

[July 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today's post is long. It's all about professional resources...

I went through my links yesterday, deleted any authors' websites that are about nothing but the author, new releases, etc. I'm keeping only those that offer some insight for other writers. And I'll be rearranging those today to make them easier to find.

One person responded to my call for resources yesterday. (Thanks, Gnondpom.) The ones that were already listed in my Writers Resources or that I've added are preceded below by an asterisk (to let you know you can find them on my site later). The others are not, for the reasons indicated. Here they are:

*Joanna Penn of The Creative Penn posts podcasts, but she usually posts a transcript too: <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/blog/>.

*David Farland drops a gem now and then at <https://mystorydoctor.com/blog/>.

*Ron Collins at <http://typosphere.com/blog/>. (He gets a little political but he recently finished posting a series on a workshop he took from Dean and Kris.) For the record, I don't like snowflakes of either variety, human or cloud-produced, and I do very much like Mr. Rogers.

*Jefferson Smith posts what not to do on his "Immerse or Die" challenge at <https://creativityhacker.ca/immerse-or-die/>. He invites indie writers/publishers to send him

books, then hopes he can remain immersed in the story while he's walking on his treadmill. If he isn't, he stops walking and posts about what pulled him from the story. Interesting concept.

I no longer list Chuck Wendig on my site because the guy uses so much purple language (and so gratuitously) that even I can't handle it. But if you aren't bothered by that and can handle his occasionally deep forays into populist, politically correct politics, you can find his site at <http://terribleminds.com/ramble/blog/>.

David Gaughran posts Amazon marketing advice at <http://davidgaughran.com/blog/>.

*Some, like J.A. Konrath, post very sporadically. Still, what he post usually contains a gem or two (or several).

*Some, like Mark Rubinstein, post interesting, gem-filled interviews with other major writers.

Both of those guys are featured in today's "Of Interest" section. I encourage you to check them out.

And again, if any of you know of any other accomplished resources who regularly post information of value to other writers, please let me know so I can check them out and share them.

With that in mind, a few months ago I was offered a free membership (enrollment) in a new, all-encompassing writing course called The Novel Blueprint. The course is presented by Christian author Jerry Jenkins.

They wanted me to look over the course materials and decide whether or not to become an affiliate and a pitch-man for them.

I decided against it. As I told the guy who contacted me for a final answer, the course looks like a good value for a beginning writer. And it's made more valuable that enrollees have lifetime access to the videos and other course materials.

That being said, I had some reservations in that the course teaches many of the perpetual myths that good writing can come from the conscious, critical mind. For example, although the presenter nods to "pantsers" (I hate that term [grin]) a few times, much of the emphasis is on outlining, planning, and several editing and rewriting passes.

As I skimmed through the course, I found some gems for more advanced (practiced) writers too. But honestly, I saw nothing they couldn't get from less-expensive courses, or free by reading in their chosen genre for pleasure and then going back to study what blows their socks off.

Still, for the all-encompassing range of the course alone, the Novel Blueprint price (just under \$2000) seemed about right to me. As an affiliate, I stood to “earn” a 50% commission. I would get \$998 per sign-up through my affiliate link.

Of course, the notion of being a highly paid affiliate was attractive. Who wouldn’t want to make a thousand bucks just because some guy somewhere clicked a link and signed up?

But as all of you know, given a basic knowledge of sentence structure, punctuation, and the touchstones of the writer’s selected genre(s), my own best advice to any would-be writer is to alternate Practice (keep writing) with Keep Learning.

And in my opinion, anything that actually invites the critical mind (outlining, plotting, planning, rewriting) into the writing process is harmful to that process.

For that reason, I told them I’d have to pass on their offer to be an affiliate.

Still, I DO believe this is a great course for beginning writers IF they beware the conscious-mind pitfalls against which I’ve always preached so stringently.

I mention all of this to show you how strongly I believe in what I tell you on this and my other blog. Kind of putting my money where my mouth is.

I will add that if Mr. Jenkins put this course in a book so I could pick and choose what to read and what to ignore, I would buy it in a heartbeat.

See you soon.

Of Interest

See J.A. Konrath’s “Amazon Ranking and Bestseller Lists – What’s the Deal?” at <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2018/01/amazon-ranking-and-bestseller-lists.html>.

See J.A. Konrath’s “Konrath’s New Year’s Resolutions for Writers 2018” at <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2017/12/konraths-new-years-resolutions-for.html>.

See Mark Rubinstein’s blog at <http://www.markrubinstein-author.com/>. (Click the Blog tab.)

See “Being Behind Is Normal” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/being-behind-is-normal/>. I really needed this one right now. I’ll add this specific post to my Writers Resources list too. It’s just that important.

See John Gilstrap’s “But Does It Sell Books?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/but-does-it-sell-books.html>.

See “Website News” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/17/website-news/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 900

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2946
Total fiction words for the year..... 237162
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10960
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 90136
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 327048

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writer Resources](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, July 19](#)

[July 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Another long post, but I think a good one.

I'm going to try an experiment.

I started this Journal almost 4 years ago to keep track of my own writing, both fiction and nonfiction.

I also did that in part to let others see what is possible if they can only get themselves to the keyboard.

But sometimes (even often, at times) it backfired. Instead of motivating others, sometimes seeing my numbers actually depressed them. They looked at my numbers as if I was daring them to do the same, or to surpass me.

That was never the case, and in fact some readers of this journal often DID surpass my own numbers. I didn't feel bad about that at all.

In this business as in no other, the only valid, useful comparison is whether you, as a writer, are better today than you were yesterday.

And that's true whether your measuring stick is words per day or week or stories finished or writing ability. It has nothing to do with me or anyone else.

In fact, nothing would make me happier than to see every one of the people I've ever taught surpassing my numbers in words, publications, sales and so on.

Why? Because others' success costs me nothing. And it certainly isn't going to depress me and make me stop writing. That would just be silly.

I write because I love to write. I love to tell stories, and I thrill in learning new, deeper ways to engage those who read my work.

Only one thing would please me more (*ahem, being born in a brothel with a weary frown on my face, a tuned-up blues guitar in my hands, and an intimate knowledge of the scales*). But that ship sailed almost 66 years ago. (grin)

So writing's pretty much it.

This Journal has morphed into a place where I can speak freely on topics concerning writing and publishing, and where I can pass along exciting little tidbits in the "Of Interest" section. It's become that much more than it's remained the other thing.

Most of all, it's a place where I can sit down most mornings and chat with my friends. You guys are the regulars who meet with me at the corner table in my local café. And in my life, that's pretty much invaluable.

So the experiment. From today onward, I'm going to leave off the running totals below.

Of course, I'll still keep my numbers on my spreadsheet for my own use. Then maybe at the end of the year or whatever, I'll look back and recap what I accomplished during that stretch.

I'll talk about my fiction writing only vaguely and only in passing, unless if I've learned or discovered some new technique I want to share with you.

Topic: Story vs. Presentation

A few days ago, I commented on one of Dean's posts that I do sometimes wonder how some bestsellers got to be bestsellers. I mentioned that at least one I know is a masterful marketer, and having tried to read several of his book, I believe his skill in marketing is the only reason he's a bestseller.

Dean responded that Nope, if I don't like a bestselling author's work, it's always because the work simply isn't to my "taste."

Today, Kris Rusch talks about that same topic in her Business Musings blog. And of course, she generally draws the same conclusion Dean drew.

I have to disagree.

When I read for pleasure I actually hope I'll like a novel. That's why I buy it in the first place. All I ask is a good story, well-told and well-presented.

Now I'm talking about reading in a genre I like, and I'm talking about reading the work of a writer who understands the techniques to pull the reader into the story and keep him there: primarily, those techniques are grounding the reader in the setting using the five senses of the POV character, and writing good hooks and cliffhangers.

If the writer doesn't use those techniques, is the reader's inability to get into the story a matter of the reader's personal taste?

But given that the writer knows the craft and those requirements are met, only two things will cause me to stop reading and put the book aside:

The first is the repeated use of erroneous "facts" that the writer of a particular genre should know. For example, a writer who writes a lot about pistols should know the thing that holds the spare cartridges in the handle of the gun is called a "magazine," not a "clip."

Not that one such problem will shove me out of the storyline or that the repeated use of one erroneous fact through a book will do so. But when it happens three or four times with different "facts," yeah, I pretty much stop caring.

The second is a lot of repeated typos and wrong-word usages. When, in a quiet moment, the hero sits on the edge of a bed in a quiet room with his beloved and coyly slips his arm around her "waste," it tends to jerk me out of the story.

As I commented on Kris's post (if my comment gets through), it is the writer's responsibility to pull the reader into the story and to hold him there.

Story and Presentation are two separate things. It is possible to have a great story poorly presented.

Whether a reader likes a story is strictly a matter of taste. If you only read Romance genre, you probably will never read one of my crime/detective/mystery stories or westerns or SF. That's a matter of taste. If you read in those genres but don't care for mine, that too is a matter of taste. That's fine.

But how the story is presented is up to the writer.

And if the writer, in that presentation, constantly shoves the reader out of the story with inaccurate facts, inconsistencies, etc., that is the fault of the writer, not the reader.

As I also mentioned in my comment, Otherwise why do we advocate using a first reader and/or a copyeditor to spot erroneous facts, inconsistencies, etc.?

There is only one answer: To keep us from running off the reader.

As I've always advocated, beyond simply telling a good story, it is the writer's responsibility to continually hone his or her craft. And it's the writer's responsibility to present that story to the best of his/her ability.

I'm posting this hyper early. I'll spend the morning dealing with a household issue (swamp cooler's about a thousand years old and on the blink again) and then maybe get to my writing.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Taste (or Blaming The Writer)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/18/business-musings-taste-or-blaming-the-writer/>.

See you soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, July 20](#)

[July 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Gird your loins and prepare for an onslaught of words. You know how I get. (grin)

Before I begin, my apology to anyone who's subscribed to the RSS feed for the big site. During construction this morning I inadvertently created two or three new "posts" that should have been pages. So if you got those, just delete them. No worries. Posts from over there go out once a week, on Tuesday.

All right, I've revised my [Writer Resources page](#). Pretty dramatically, actually.

Basically, I replaced the gaggle of individual links that were there with an ungaggle of links to several new pages on my website.

On each new page is also a particular writer resource category. And now each new page holds a series of links to resources in that category.

My hope is that this will make your search for resources a little less mind-numbing and quicker.

(If you look it over and are interested in specifically how I did it, to include the free plugin I used, email me and I'll fill you in.)

For example, on the [Conversion Tools page](#), there are links to conversion engines or calculators for fifteen different problems.

On the [Dictionaries page](#), there are links to ten different dictionary or translation sites.

The “catchall” page is [Other Helpful Topical Websites](#), those that don't fit specifically into any of the other pages.

Enjoy. As you browse, let me know if you think of anything else that should be there or if you know of a resource that isn't listed.

Thanks to the few who wrote to say they found watching my numbers grow encouraging rather than discouraging. I appreciate that.

I also appreciate that some of you noticed I was being as up front and honest about “failures” as about successes. Unfortunately, setbacks are part of writing as they are with life in general.

I'd love nothing better than to have (and sustain) the mindset of Ray Bradbury. (See the second item in “Of Interest” today.)

When I'm in the midst of a novel or in a short-story writing frenzy, that's pretty much how I feel. Every morning is a new opportunity to run playing with my fictional friends. A new opportunity to allow them to entertain me.

But there are other days when other things have crowded in and built up until they must be addressed. And then there are days when other humans (at least that's what they tell me) horn in and flop their problems on my lap.

At times like either of those, writing slips to my second priority while I deal with whatever “crisis” has arisen.

Sometimes I deal with those “crowd-in and build-up” issues with direct and decisive action.

Over the past few days, for example, I repaired three different problems that occurred coincidentally but separately with our rooftop swamp cooler — a blown fuse, a busted pump, and a shattered spider — and paid a wholly separate visit to my primary care guy. This morning I

polished off the doctor problem with a visit to the lab to finally end that annual bother. Simply saying, “Yes, I’m fine. In fact I’m healthier than your average horse” is no longer sufficient.

In case you’re interested, that went about as well it usually goes. The doc recommended various invasive “tests,” which I declined. Then I patiently explained that at my age and with my overriding physical issues, I would probably die “with” anything they found during the tests rather than “of” it, so I’d really rather not be bothered with the tests and the resulting knowledge.

After all, I have things to do, places to go, people to see.

On the up side, I did manage to keep my muttered “So there” to myself until I was safely back inside my 4Runner and on the way to the house.

I know. It ought’a be a short story, huh?

But at other times, strictly and solely because the civilian authorities frown on certain types of direct and decisive action, especially if it involves the word “terminate” and the phrase “with extreme prejudice” (I’m still very good with open-sight firearms up to around 300 yards), I deal with other issues with My Words.

And of course, that pretty much always becomes something it shouldn’t sometime during the return volley, especially when my opponent hasn’t lived quite long enough yet to have developed a blood type, much less to have gained my respect and my implied consent to give me direction.

Then I get “blocked” from various forms of social media and other communication which, you know, Breaks My Heart yada yada but is also a minuscule price to pay to ensure I won’t walk into anymore cleverly disguised ambushes for awhile.

As one of my sons added on his Facebook page earlier today (along with a smiley face that will largely be ignored), “Offended: It’s what’s for breakfast.” (grin) Yes. And it’s also an excellent opportunity to enjoy yet another fine cigar and an hour or so in quiet contemplation. Especially as regards why we’re not allowed to shoot annoyances.

So it’s all good. If I’ve learned one simple fact since I left the USMC, it’s that some folks can recognize a joke for what it is and some simply prefer drama.

I’m still writing. I wrote quite a bit in an ongoing story yesterday (a few thousand words) and might write more on it today. Or I might write something else for awhile. Or I might not write at all. Depends.

But I want to get this out early while I’m still clinging to (and getting used to) this new format. So here you go.

Of Interest

Just for grins, see “Top 100 Kindle Best Sellers” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/top-100-kindle-best-sellers/>. Interesting.

See “Reader Friday: Good Morning!” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/reader-friday-good-morning.html>.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, July 22

[July 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not much to write about yesterday, so I skipped the Journal, though I did add a few items to “Of Interest.”

Yesterday Mona and I did yard work, then cooled down and went to Sierra Vista for a few hours. It was a nice diversion.

Not sure yet what today will hold. But I’ll post this so I can get the “Of Interest” items out to you.

A few have asked what I mean by “character-driven fiction”; a few others have wondered why I pay such close attention to settings.

Here’s the short answer: Maybe 10% of a fiction is composed of an event in a setting. The other 90% is the characters’ reaction to that event. Also in a setting.

Still struggling (though that’s too harsh a word) with whether to post my numbers at the bottom of each edition of the Journal. I sort of want to and sort of don’t.

I’m in the midst of two simultaneous life-rolls, one emotional and one physical. Nothing major. It isn’t a perfect storm so much as sort of a squall. It will all blow over soon, and I’ll get back to writing fiction.

In the meantime, I’ve discovered I’m more of a sprint writer (write furiously beginning to end) than a leaky faucet (write a little each day). When I’m writing, I tend to write almost continuously until the story is finished. Then I lapse into nonwriting mode again for awhile.

As I told a friend in a response via email a couple of days ago, since mid-April of 2014, I was kind of a combination of the two.

That really kicked into gear in October of that year with my first novel. I wrote almost frantically and almost every day, shoving everything else out of the way. I might take a day or maybe two off between projects, but most of that time I Just Wrote.

Now I'm just a little more relaxed about it. Not lethargic, but not frantic either (unless I'm in the middle of an ongoing story). So when Other Stuff crops up that I have to do (or less-often, want to do), I do that instead, then go back to writing.

In my current project, I've returned to a character I really enjoy, though he has a whole new cast around him. I'm enjoying the process, and when I do sit down at the writing 'puter it's as if I only got up a moment ago instead of two or three days ago.

In the meantime, the Journal itself has me writing "something" almost everyday, so at least I know my brain isn't going to atrophy. At least for awhile. (grin)

The writing-in-public aspect will still be here, though not as strongly. That's one reason I'm still considering putting my numbers back at the bottom of these Journal posts. To make that aspect stronger again. To hold myself accountable (again) to someone beyond myself.

Finally, although originally I was going to keep this to myself, passing the 30-novel mark had some kind of effect too. I'm not quite sure yet what it was. The number 30 has no special meaning to me or anything like that.

But for some reason, after 30, something within me shifted. It was almost "Okay, I can do that. Now what do I do?"

Maybe I'm a pretender. What do I know? (grin) Or maybe I just need to dream up a new challenge.

All I know for sure is that I love the nuances of our language and I love characters and I love that they let me come along for the ride.

I hope this helps in some way in your own journey.

Of Interest

See "It Helps If You Can Write" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/it-helps-if-you-can-write.html>.

See "A Few Words from Roger Zelazny" at <https://www.tor.com/2016/05/19/a-few-words-from-roger-zelazny/>. Yes, it's about SF and Fantasy but his advice is good for any genre.

See "Fun Day" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fun-day/>. Interesting picture.

See “Great Beginnings” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/great-beginnings.html>. I hoped for more, but at least it spurs thought.

See “What Really Caused The Salem Witch Hunts” at <http://dyingwords.net/what-really-caused-the-salem-witch-hunts/>.

See “Audible Best Sellers – Updated Hourly” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/audible-best-sellers/>. I found it extremely interesting that “Mystery” and “Thriller” are lumped together in the same category. Probably because I’ve been honing my craft on mysteries and looing forward to writing a thriller. Maybe the only true difference is scope.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#)

The Journal, Monday, July 23

[July 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A Brief Memoir with a Point

When my dad passed away around 30 years ago, I was thrilled to find some of his writings in an old suitcase.

It wasn’t a suitcase full of manuscripts or anything like that. The suitcase was an old two-tone brown pressboard affair. It had a kind of fishnet container stretched across the inside of the lid.

Inside were old New Mexico State Police shoulder patches, an old pair of glasses and other things.

And inside that fishnet area were a few poems typed on an old manual Remington.

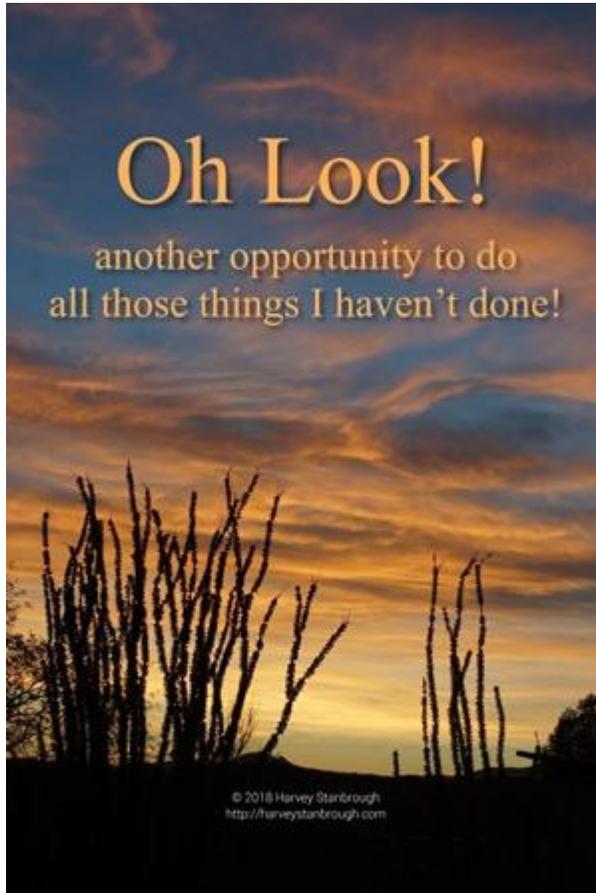
Dad never talked about writing or having written. But the poems were very good. They were wittily written bits about various topics. They would have sold easily to magazines, but he never even attempted to submit them for publication.

He was a very intelligent man but, like me, he was born with one foot in his father’s generation and one foot in his own. For him, any kind of literary or artistic accomplishment was a possible (even likely) source of embarrassment.

But to me and a few others, those poems were wonderful. Not only because they were good in their own right and not even because he was my father, but because they provide an insight into this man that he seldom or never allowed others to see.

I found myself wishing fervently he had written short stories. Just to give me a deeper glimpse.

This morning we experienced a great sunrise. I took a photo of it, and realized it lent itself to an inspirational meme.



So I imported it into a program I have, slapped a few words on it, and created a meme. That's it on the left.

And I'd no sooner posted it to Facebook than I realized my new writing goal: to get as much of my fiction "out there" as I can while I'm here.

The stories themselves don't matter. Nor does it matter whether I write them in sprints or trickles. All that matters is that I write them.

When I'm no longer here, I will have left four legacies. The first three are my time and experiences as a father and husband; my time and experiences in the USMC and the people I shared those with; and my time as a writing instructor and copyeditor and cover designer and the positive influence I might have had over others through those pursuits.

In all of those, I was "on" in one form or another. I was playing a role and doing what was necessary in whatever positive way I could. And in each of those, my own legacy is shared with and informs the legacy of others.

The fourth legacy is my writing. That is the legacy that drills deepest into the truth of who I've been and who I am. And because I'm an adherent of Heinlein's Rules, it's also the one that is least a composite. It's pretty much all me.

And with the revival of self-publishing, and especially electronic publishing, in this wonderful new world, it will also be the longest lasting. Whether that's a good thing is for the readers to decide.

Hence the meme. Each morning presents us with a new opportunity to do the things we haven't yet done. To make our lives matter. To add to the legacy we leave behind.

For me, that's a renewed dedication to learning the craft, and a renewed determination to write all the stories I haven't written yet. Guess I'll get started.

To the Hovel at 9 a.m.

I wrote today, and I'm still writing as I post this. (Took a short break.)

A few days ago, I eeny-meeny-miny-moed my way through four or five works I'd started that had then stalled. Some of them reached all the way back to 2017.

I found one that grabbed me, read the first few paragraphs to set the idea in my mind, then deleted it.

Then I started writing a fresh story with that idea in mind. I wrote a couple thousand words on Friday, and maybe a thousand on Saturday. Yesterday I literally did nothing at all, writing or otherwise.

Today, after the stuff I wrote above, I opened the file and started in on it. From 9 a.m. until about 15 minutes ago, I wrote around 3500 words, and after I post this, I'm going back to it.

Keep Coming Back is an excellent technique. But it isn't much good if you don't start in the first place. (grin)

Of Interest

See "5 Steps to Prove You've Been Plagiarized" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/5-steps-to-prove-youve-been-plagiarized/>.

See "... or Lunch in NYC with Lee Child...." at <https://www.leelofland.com/big-news-your-name-in-craig-johnsons-next-book-or-lunch-in-nyc-with-lee-child-and-more/>. It's a raffle. Good luck!

See "Why Amazon is deleting your reviews" at <http://eepurl.com/dBDCHb>. (Reedsy)

See “David Farland Joins the Master Class” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/david-farland-joins-the-master-class/>. This is going to be one hell of a class.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, July 24

[July 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to talk about this morning. I didn't write much fiction today. Worked on a website for a new writer. I still have a lot to do on it but I'm waiting for more input.

I find that more and more often I have to re-learn to separate Advice from Outcome. Specifically, to not look back and rate my recommendations in light of what various writers do with them. For example...

1. I can talk 'til I'm blue in the face about the pitfalls of traditional publishing (I've been there), but writers still choose to chase agents, which of course is the worst possible idea.

Getting an agent is like BEGGING the guy who mows your lawn once a month to PLEASE take 15% of the income from your rental properties for your lifetime plus 70 years.

Not only that, but you're also begging him or her to accept all the rent money that comes in, deduct his/her 15%, then send you a check for the rest every month or every quarter or every now and then if and when he or she thinks to do so.

The answer? Seriously, if you want to go traditional, submit your manuscript to publishers yourself. Then WHEN YOU LAND ONE and they call you, tell them you'll have your “agent” get in touch in a few days to hammer out the contract.

Then pick up a phone and call a few IP attorneys. Hire one to negotiate the contract for you. Tell him/her what you want, and release the hounds.

Either that or, if you're very good, negotiate the deal yourself. But don't go chasing after agents.

2. Stop letting other people into your work already. New writers are constantly showing their work to non-writers or other writers and asking their opinion. As Mark Twain said, “No urge is stronger than that of a writer to change another writer's work.” Something like that. If you ask 100 people for an opinion on a paragraph, much less a whole story, you'll get 100 different (uninformed) opinions.

The answer? Send your work (when it's finished) to ONE reader — a very good reader, someone who consumes books in your genre — and ask him or her to point out any inconsistencies and anyplace that boots him/her out of the story. Correct what the first reader points out THAT YOU AGREE WITH and then send it to a copyeditor and pay money to have it professionally copyedited.

3. Stop “striving” to write “the Great American Novel.” It’s already been written. Millions of writers agree. Some agree Hemingway did it. Others say it was Gabriel Garcia Márquez. Others say it was Steinbeck or Elie Weisel or other folks. But seriously, whether a novel is “great” is up to the reader. And whether it’s “the” great novel is still up to the reader.

The answer? Write to entertain yourself.

4. Stop with the drama. If you still hear angels singing when you say the word “writer,” as in “Why yes indeed, I am a writer (aaaaAAAAAH),” stand in front of a mirror in the bathroom and smack yourself in the forehead with a two-by-four. Once should do it. Why the bathroom? So you’ll be close to the Band-Aids.

The answer? Uhmgain. Write to entertain yourself. If it isn’t fun, don’t do it. Go find something fun to do. It isn’t that difficult a concept to grasp.

You can love the works of Hemingway, Márquez, Steinbeck, Weisel, et al, but no matter how hard you “labor” you’ll never be them. And the only way you’ll get to be LIKE them is to stop worrying about traditional vs. indie publication (and publish already), stop letting others into your work (it’s YOURS, not theirs), write what you want to write and have fun with it.

Go. Play.

Of Interest

See “How to Skillfully Use Subplots in Your Novel” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-skillfully-use-subplots-in-your-novel/>.

See “Promotion Package Is Back” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/promotion-package-is-back/>. An excellent opportunity for someone. And even if you aren’t interested in the package, the post lists a lot of items that generate thought.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, July 25

[July 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Still not fully back up to speed with my writing. At times, I've found myself actually hoping "other things" (website construction, copyedits, etc.) will come up so I can delay it a little longer. It's a conundrum.

I want to write. I want to give myself wholly over to my stories and play with my friends. For me, there is no better feeling than being lost in a good story as it unfolds. And then there's that legacy thing I talked about a couple days ago.

And of course, if someone else said to me, "But I really want to write," I would tell them, "So go write already. Sit down at the keyboard and put new words on the page."

In the future, I might temper that a bit with something like, "Well, if nothing's stopping you, go write already."

I'm going through a couple of life rolls at the moment. The lesser one consists of a couple of medical situations that are no big deal. Those will be resolved soon.

But the other, larger life roll is emotional. We all have them, so I won't bore you with details. But every time I try to practice what I preach (that whole "So go write already" thing), bits and fragments of the larger life roll pop into my head. I can't concentrate, and more importantly, I can't *not* concentrate.

So I'm just gonna have to wait it out.

On Assumptions

I started to title this brief section "On Faulty Assumptions," but it's been my experience that assumptions are almost always faulty.

I'm a simple guy. I'm honest, and often bluntly so. On serious matters (so when I'm not joking around), I say what I mean and I mean what I say, nothing more and nothing less, no innuendo. And I show others the respect of taking what they say or do at face value as well, unless they're obviously joking, etc.

I've always held that whatever others do, they do because they feel it's necessary for their own life. Mostly that's because I'm seldom privy to their reasons, nor should I be.

As a result of that attitude, I don't assume ulterior motives. It's an enjoyable, mostly stress-free way to live.

Of course, I have the feeling most of you already know that. Would that the whole world did.

Of Interest

See “Hometown” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/hometown.html>. Kind of interesting, especially the comments.

See “The Hero’s Journey: an Author’s Guide to Plotting” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/heros-journey/>.

Also Reedsy is offering a FREE webinar on How to Create the Ultimate Book Launch plan at 1 PM EDT on Tuesday, September 11th. To read about it and sign up, click <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-create-the-ultimate-launch-plan-for-your-next-release-registration-48058217422/>.

See “It is better” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/it-is-better-2/>.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Hero's Journey](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, July 26

[July 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A few decades ago I started writing aphorisms and definitions, more as a mental exercise than anything else.

Be forewarned: Of the definitions, some are serious, some are attempts at humor (ala Ambrose Bierce) and all are cynical. Which, if any, you perceive as humorous will depend on your own life and experiences.

So today, here are a few random thoughts, definitions and aphorisms. Except where noted, these are original to me. If any of them spur story ideas, please feel free:

From a poster I saw on Facebook — “The past is in your head. The future is in your hands.” (tinybuddha.com)

My take on it — “The past is in your head and the future is a possibility. But the present is in your hands.”

Or the way Wes Crowley put it, “Any day that starts with you seeing the sun rise and ends with you seeing the sun set has the potential to be a good day. The rest is up to you.”

Why do I focus on character and setting? Because maybe 10% of a fiction is comprised of events that take place in a setting. The other 90% is the characters' reactions to that event, which also take place in a setting.

Democratic Republic, n. That form of government in which, every four years, the citizens are kept busy canceling each other's votes while the electoral college selects a president.

Fictionist, n. One who puts the truth, save the boring parts, into the proper perspective for the entertainment of an audience.

Friend, n. 1. One who knows the difference between intent and perception and gives greater weight to your intent than to his or her perception. 2. One of two or more people, each of whom feels superior to the other but will not say so out of an egotistical sense of kindness; situationally, one who needs.

Addendum to the definition of "Friend": Honesty above all else. I'd rather have an honest enemy than a dishonest friend.

Friendship, n. 1. That relationship which exists when each trusts the other to do no intentional harm, and when each trusts the other will not leap to the conclusion that he or she meant intentional harm. 2. A sometimes fleeting condition for which Need is the catalyst and Trust is the currency.

Intellectual, n. 1. One who will drive a Hummer six blocks to a Save the Ozone rally or fly internationally on a fuel-guzzling jet to plant a tree. 2. A closet tuna-eater. 3. One who will gladly sacrifice your life to ensure his right to spout off. 4. One who quickly and gladly latches on to a bit of propaganda and fervently bears witness to its truth until it's proven false, at which time he clears his memory and latches on to the next bit. 5. One who, handed a scrap of paper with "see other side" penned on both sides, would not fall for the gag, but would apply for and receive an NEA Foundation grant to study the phenomenon.

Intolerance, n. Proof of an atrophied mind and a lazy disposition.

Casting a blanket of blame is a handy way to escape the rigors of original thought.

The right to free speech does not include the right to an audience.

There is no greater conflict than that of a character with a conscience, a choice of paths, and an urgent need, provided by an external stimulus, to choose one.

I think that's a good smattering of jagged fragments from a frayed mind. Hope you enjoyed them.

Of Interest

Wow. See "Business Musings: Sometimes I Just React..." at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/25/business-musings-sometimes-i-just-react/>.

See "First Page Critique" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/first-page-critique-sofa.html>. I don't usually recommend these, but this one is so sweeping and spot-on I do recommend it.

See "An Ode to Libraries, the Original Co-Working Spaces" at <https://thepassivevoice.com/an-ode-to-libraries-the-original-co-working-spaces/>.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, July 27

[July 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Yesterday, Amazon hosted a free webinar on Paperback Formatting Essentials. I was registered for it, but I missed it. Probably because taking my books to paper isn't the priority it used to be.

Anyway, Amazon was kind enough to send a link to a recording of the event. It's in "Of Interest" today. If you're interested in taking your books to paper (or even if you already do), I suggest you take a look.

Even if you don't want to use Amazon, I suspect you can still learn something about paperback formatting. Plus the video is only 20 minutes.

Some of my personal issues resolved late yesterday so I'm hoping I can return to my writing soon.

Of Interest

See "Paperback Formatting Essentials" at https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G202193670. The "meat" starts at about 1:50.

See “Study Along Workshops” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/study-along-workshops/>. If you’re interested in the craft workshops but can’t make it to Vegas (or the cost is prohibitive), this sounds like a very good deal.

See the Writing Prompts category at <http://storyaday.org/category/inspiration/writing-prompts/>. (Disclaimer: I do not agree with all of the advice you’ll find there.)

I also recommend you check out the Reading Room category at <http://storyaday.org/category/inspiration/reading-room/>. A lot of gems there, and all based on the work of successful writers.

See you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Amazon](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [StoryADay.org](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, July 28](#)

[July 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today’s Journal entry is all about writing advice, the Kill Zone blog, and the “Of Interest” section of this Journal.

In my own hunt for writing advice, I seek out other professional writers who are farther along the road than I. Once I find them, I gauge whether their advice is valuable to me overall.

If a blog post is rife with misspellings and wrong word usages, awkward phrases and misplaced modifiers, or if they display a certain level of ignorance about the language (for example, ignorance of the difference between “likely” and “probably” or “if” and “whether” etc.) I’m less likely to trust their craft advice. If I’m interrupted in my reading by a comma AFTER each coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so) or other egregious punctuation misuses, the same general rule applies.

After all, the use of words and punctuation is at the heart of writing. Punctuation, in fact, is the most powerful tool a writer has to direct the reading of his or her work. Punctuation is to a writer what the wand is to a maestro when he directs an orchestra.

So at the outset, writers should know words, and writers should know punctuation. Everything else is craft, and it comes with practice, reading others’ fiction for pleasure, and study.

Bear in mind, though, that one or two such errors don’t put me off. (Actually, DWS falls into this category. Interestingly, Kris Rusch does not.)

And bear in mind that I'm talking about a professional writer presenting information to other writers in a non-fiction format. Language and even intentional punctuation anomalies are perfectly all right and sometimes even necessary in fiction, especially in the dialogue of characters.

If the writer (professional or otherwise) doesn't understand the basics of the language, I might still scan the blog post for gems, but I do so only skeptically.

This is much the same reason I wouldn't take carpentry advice from a professional carpenter who refers to nails as "you know, those straight round steel things with a point on one end" or advice on diesel engine mechanics from a truck mechanic who talks about replacing the spark plugs in a diesel engine.

Now to the Kill Zone blog...

Some of the professional writers who contribute to the Kill Zone blog offer a first-page critique. It's free, but sometimes those who submit their work wait weeks or months for a response. It isn't clear whether there's ever a response unless the piece is used in the blog. (I'm considering offering a similar service, but with a one-day turnaround.)

That being said, I don't often list the first-page critiques from TKZ in "Of Interest" unless I see gems and recognize them as valid information. I realize that makes me a gatekeeper.

If you want to, of course, you may subscribe to TKZ, and I recommend it. Or if you're interested in seeing several first-page critiques, see today's "Of Interest" section.

When a post (first-page critique or otherwise) pops up from Joe Hartlaub, Sue Coletta, James Scott Bell or John Gilstrap, I most often mention it. With the other writers, whether they make the cut to "Of Interest" depends on the content of the post. (There's that gatekeeper thing again.)

TKZ also has another feature some of you might find valuable: the TKZ Library. There, the "best of the best" posts are grouped under specific topics. You can find the TKZ Library in "Of Interest" today as well. (I'll be adding that one to my Writer Resources list today.)

If you visit the Library, remember to take on board the information that strikes a bell with you. Feel free to dismiss what doesn't. Just as I recommend you do with any advice I offer in this or the weekly blog.

Finally, although professional writers who take the time to write blog posts do so to pass along information, they also do so to sell books.

I've read fiction by all the writers I named above. Some of it was not to my personal taste. Some of it was. I like the work of some of those authors in some genres and not in others. (Another reason to write in more than one genre, if more than one interests you as a writer.)

I would be remiss not to mention my own ongoing giveaway of books in exchange for reviews, or for that matter, just to hear your thoughts. Also, every other week now I'm highlighting another of my major works over on the big blog (complete with giveaway information).

Onward. Because this is Saturday, I'm posting this early. No telling what the day may hold, but as ol' Wes Crowley would say, I've seen the sun come up, and I expect to see it go down. Whether the part in between is good is up to me. (grin)

Of Interest

See "Great Questions On Study Along Workshops" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-questions-on-study-along-workshops/>.

See Joe Hartlaub's "First Page Critique: THE DIVINITY COMPLEX" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/first-page-critique-the-divinity-complex.html>.

See all TKZ first-page critiques at <https://killzoneblog.com/first-page-critiques-at-tkz>.

Visit the TKZ Library of selected posts on specific topics at <https://killzoneblog.com/tkz-library-2>.

Talk with you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, July 29

[July 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A lot in "Of Interest" today. Some of it's spot on, and some of it, not so much.

With the abundance of writing advice out there, I've taken to carrying a shaker of salt with me as I read, so I can take a grain as necessary.

I receive James Scott Bell's infrequent newsletter. In today's edition, he notes that his stand-alone thriller, *Don't Leave Me*, is on sale for 99 cents. But the tagline is what prompted me to add this entry: "When they came for him it was time to run. When they came for his brother it was time to fight." Is that great, or what?

It's a great story idea too. If a hundred writers wrote a story (however long) based on that premise, the result would be a hundred different stories. Hmmm.

Topic: Be Careful of Cycling

Yeah, I know. The title of this topic is probably surprising to some of you. But I promise, it's no more surprising to you than to me.

And if you've read my previous posts on cycling and have put the practice into use and found it a good technique, please keep doing what you're doing. I recommend you skip the rest of this topic.

If you haven't heard of cycling, or if you've decided against it for some reason, read on.

In its intended, purest form, cycling is an excellent exercise whether you write off into the dark (colloquially called a "pantsier" [ugh]) or plot everything down to skin and bones and blood ("plotter" or "outliner"). In fact, Sue Coletta, whom I admire as a writer, is a plotter but she "see[s] no reason to end with a sloppy first draft." She cycles as she writes.

Basically, there are two ways to practice cycling:

1. You write a scene or chapter (say 500 to 1200 words), then take a short break. When you return to the work you "cycle back" and read through it AS A READER. But you allow yourself to "fix" any little problems (typos, misspellings, wrong words, inconsistencies) you encounter. In my case, that includes adding necessary details I somehow omitted as I was writing. (Per Stephen King, I'm a "putter-inner".)
2. You write (with the necessary breaks) until you're through for the day. The next day, when you return to the WIP, you read back over what you wrote the day before and do the same thing.

This is not "editing as you go." The difference is that cycling is done in creative voice (the subconscious), whereas editing is done critically, with the conscious mind engaged.

The problem comes in when, as you're cycling, you start paying conscious, critical attention instead of just reading for pleasure. This is what's been happening to me recently, and IN EVERY CASE it harms the work.

Sometimes as I read I start thinking What if this happens earlier instead of here? or Do I need to bring in some guys with guns to jump start the action? or a million other things.

Usually when that happens I recognize it for what it is. Then I get up and take a walk or do something else to break away for awhile.

When I come back, I sit down, read the last few sentences, then write whatever next sentence comes to me and I'm off and writing.

But sometimes I don't recognize it in time to break away. And when I don't, every single time, the story is ruined and bogs down. The story becomes listless and boring, and then I realize what's happened.

Most often, in that case, the only way I can satisfy the urge to be excited in the midst of a story again is to start a new story. Fortunately, I never lack for ideas. But sometimes Heinlein's Rule 2 haunts me.

And this from a guy who's written off into the dark almost every day since mid-October of 2014.

I'm never happier as a human being than when I'm "just writing," running through the trenches of a story trying to keep up with the characters.

And I'm never sadder or more nauseated as a writer than when I suddenly realize I've allowed my own conscious mind to wreck what was otherwise a good story.

And readers know. Believe me. They can tell when a writer has bogged down and kept slogging away anyway.

This has happened even to the inestimably talented Lee Child. In one of his Jack Reacher series novels, the writing was so boring I almost put the book down and gave up. The writing itself was still excellent, but the story was hopelessly bogged down.

The first hundred pages or so was excellent as always, but that was followed by around 250 pages of boring, sluggish narrative and dialogue that was obviously the result of him forcing his way through the book as he wrote it. If he hadn't had a deadline, I seriously doubt the book ever would have seen the light of day.

He pulled it out in the end (the last 50 pages or so), but if it had been his first novel, I seriously doubt his contract would have been renewed.

So caution when you cycle. Keep it pure. Read over what you've written and allow yourself to add or subtract and to fix little problems that pop up. But don't allow your conscious mind to intervene.

I do still strongly advocate writing off into the dark. I do still strongly advocate cycling, but only in its pure, intended form.

Of Interest

See "No, you probably don't have a book in you" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/no-you-probably-dont-have-a-book-in-you/>. What an overinflated assbag. The feudal system, in which the poor (writers) do all the work for a pittance to ensure the livelihoods of the elite (publishers, agents) is alive and well in traditional publishing. Be sure to read The Passive Guy's comments at the bottom.

See "Not Rewriting. A Great Image of Proof" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/not-rewriting-a-great-image-of-proof/>.

See “Harlan Ellison Wrote in Public” at <https://www.sleuthsayers.org/2018/07/harlan-ellison-wrote-in-public.html>. If you pay attention to the comments, watch for misinformation.

See James Scott Bell’s “Huckleberry Finn’s Transformation” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/huckleberry-finns-transformation.html>. It’s all about what Bell calls “the mirror moment.”

See “Secrets of Writing Bestselling Crime Thrillers With Sue Coletta” at <http://dyingwords.net/secrets-of-writing-bestselling-crime-thrillers-with-sue-coletta/>. I was a little disappointed, frankly. Sue’s posts on her website are much more informative than this.

Talk with you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [SleuthSayers](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, July 30](#)

[July 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

First, thanks to writer friend Bob C. who sent a URL for an article for the “Of Interest” section. You will find it below.

With it, Bob sent an email that read in part, “This struck me as a con artist who knew just the right buttons to push for a certain well-heeled market of aspiring writers. The lesson here is that there are a ton of people hovering around would-be authors looking to take their money.”

From the article,

“Today Anna March ... offers private literary consulting — manuscript consultations for \$1,600 to \$3,000 and coaching for hopeful writers to construct submissions to literary agents.”

Be advised. If it sounds like an easier road and costs a ton of money, it’s probably a scam.

As I’ve always said, there is no valid alternative to learning the craft, learning the business, and doing the work.

And today I’m actually back to doing the work.

Back on July 20, I started a complete recast of a story idea I had. I started with the basic idea, but tossed out what I’d written up to that point (not quite 6000 words).

Then on that day I wrote around 2000 words. On the 21st, I wrote about another 1000 words, then let it lapse for a day. On the 23rd, I had a good day with around 3500 words (for a new total of around 6600).

Then I was slapped with a couple of life rolls. One is mostly resolved, and the other is ongoing. I expect it will resolve in the next month, and with a whole new, healthier me.

This morning, I made it out to the Hovel at around 9 with my writing 'puter. I'm writing slower than I was when I was hitting it every day, but I'm writing. And since it had been several days, I read over the whole thing to get back in the flow. I managed to avoid the critical mind traps this time.

Today thus far, I've added around 3500 words (it's almost 1 p.m. now) and I'm headed back out there. I hope your writing's going well too.

If this one works out (and I expect it will), it will be the third book in the Nick Spalding series, which began with the novella Jobs Like That. Then sometime in the future I'll have to go back and write the second one to fill in the gap. (grin)

Tomorrow morning I should have time to write. Then tomorrow afternoon I begin settling the second life roll.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "How To Write a Press Release That Works" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/how-to-write-a-press-release-that-works.html>. In case this might be useful to you. (If you schedule book signings, etc. in advance.)

See "Lifetime Subscription to Vegas Workshops" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lifetime-subscription-to-vegas-workshops/>. Something to consider.

See "Literary ambition. Fabulous parties. A hidden past." at <http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-ca-jc-anna-march/>. This is the article I talk about in the opener. Thanks again to Bob C.

Finally, as if she needs my help (grin) see "Psst! You! The Person Who..." at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/28/psst-you-the-person-who-hasnt-read-diving-yet-do-i-have-a-deal-for-you/>. A great offer.

Talk with you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, July 31](#)

[July 31, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm posting this early so those of you who get it via RSS will get it sooner. This is one benefit of not reporting my numbers. I can post earlier when necessary.

Dean is back.

See his post "Just About Clear" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/just-about-clear/>.

Scroll down in his post to "Short Story and Novel Challenge." This is exciting, and an excellent opportunity to jumpstart both your writing AND your learning.

If you've been thinking about signing up for some of Dean's online workshops, this is an absolutely excellent value. I might even do it myself, though there aren't many online workshops I want that I haven't already taken.

I'll head out to the Hovel in about an hour and add some more to my WIP, then get ready for my appointment in Tucson.

Of Interest

See "First Page Critique: Vaulting Foreign Language Barriers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/first-page-critique-vaultingforeign-language-barriers.html>.

Today is Free Fiction Monday at Kris Rusch's site. See "The Charming Way" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/07/30/free-fiction-monday-the-charming-way/>.

See "5 Old School Social Media Tactics That Are No Longer Effective (And What To Do Instead)" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/5-old-school-social-media-tactics-that-are-no-longer-effective-and-what-to-do-instead/>.

See "The Best Book Database You've Never Heard Of" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-best-book-database-youve-never-heard-of/>.

Okay, I'm outta here. Talk with you again soon. (grin)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, August 1](#)

[August 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, yesterday's trip to Tucson was mostly a waste of time. The upshot was I have to go back in early September for another test. In retrospect, that is the test I should have had yesterday. But as with all things, it will be what it will be.

Nothing to worry about. Just little annoyances, the largest of which is the putrid, festering intrusion of insurance company mandates into what should be purely medical decisions.

Today, writing will be even more of a joyful escape than usual.

The "first-page critique" offered by the Kill Zone blog has been on my mind for awhile. It's probably a good deal, but I understand that writers often wait up to several months for the critique. Also, I don't know whether every submission is critiqued. (If anyone out there knows, fill me in.)

As a way of giving back, I've decided to make a similar offer to my subscribers.

I'll critique the opening of any fiction work (up to 600 words) free of charge and with a real-time turnaround directly to you via email.

The only caveat is that you by using the service you agree to allow me to use excerpts of your work (but not your name, ever) and my response for instructional purposes in either of my blogs.

Other offerings will be forthcoming after I iron out a few details.

Received a BundleRabbit royalty statement and payment this morning. Just as a reminder, if you'd like to check out some of my work along with the works of some truly great fictionists for some ridiculously low prices, visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/bundles/> and take your pick.

To the Hovel and my WIP at around 9:30. Up to the house around 11 to tend to laundry and check Internet stuff, then back to the Hovel.

Back to the house at quarter to 1 to check the laundry and the Internet. The writing's going well. Thus far I've added around 2000 words, and I'm going back after I've posted this.

Of Interest

See “Copyright – Ideas vs. Expression” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/copyright-ideas-vs-expression/>. For anyone who wasn’t aware, The Passive Guy is a copyright/intellectual property attorney. Good stuff.

I haven’t mentioned this for a long time, but if you’d like to read about a way to help improve literacy among teenagers, please visit Literacy Inc. at <http://literacyinc.com/>.

See Dean’s “Six Years Without Missing A Day” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/six-years-without-missing-a-day/>. Quite an accomplishment, especially when you consider all the sheer gold advice he gave away during that time.

See John Gilstrap’s “Rejection Proofing” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/rejection-proofing.html>. A great post on “social algebra.”

Another excellent writer resource. See Ralan.com at <http://www.ralan.com/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Announcement](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Literacy Inc.](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Writer Resources](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, August 2](#)

[August 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, when the smoke cleared yesterday I had just over 3000 new words on the story. Feels great to be writing again.

This one is in a different style than my pulp-noir mysteries or detective stories or mob stories. It has as much action, but the writing requires considerably more patience. It’s a good change of gears for me.

Hmm. Maybe if I go back to reporting my daily/monthly/annual numbers at the bottom, I’ll report them on the day after (like I did in the first paragraph above) instead of the day-of.

That will remove any pressure I feel to get the writing done in time to post the Journal. And I’ve heard from a few folks who like to follow along. So maybe I’ll do that.

Or maybe I’ll do it the way Dean does and publish the whole Journal on the morning after for the day before. Something to consider.

From Jordan Dane's Kill Zone post (see below),

“Louis L'Amour hooked me into reading, but thriller authors like Robert Ludlum kept me going (Bourne Identity series). I got into crime fiction and espionage thrillers. Ludlum made me pay attention to how to pace a book and the structure of cliffhangers.”

Short post today. I wrote a lot of stuff in an essay, but mostly to release some steam, so I won't include it here.

Suffice it to say I'm thankful to be surrounded by friends and acquaintances (you) for whom original thought is not a foreign concept.

To the Hovel at 10. Wrote for about an hour, then up to the house for lunch. Back to the Hovel for another hour for a total of around 2500 words. Short day today.

Of Interest

See “The SF Plot Twist Bundle and Nifty Picture and Challenge” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-sf-plot-twist-bundle-and-nifty-picture-and-challenge/> for fun.

See Jordan Dane's “Nostalgia Time” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/nostalgia-time-what-tv-show-from-your-childhood-influenced-you.html>.

If you're making money at your writing, you might read “Business Musings: Over Capitalization and Hamster Wheels” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/01/business-musings-over-capitalization-and-hamster-wheels/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, August 3

[August 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Slowly working my way back to getting out to the Hovel for at least one session before my wife leaves for work. So we'll see how that goes.

The Hovel is like the house, with adobe walls three feet thick. In the wintertime it's perfect, because the adobe walls retain the heat from the day before pretty much all night.

And I have a portable swamp cooler out there for these hot afternoons in the summer. But seriously, the Hovel makes me look forward to the winter.

When I was younger, I was a pure desert rat. Back then I would much rather be hot than cold. Nowadays, not so much.

I also hope to be back soon with some good topics for you.

Okay, I've decided to start posting my numbers at the end of the Journal entry again. And frankly, it's for a selfish reason. I'm keeping up with them anyway, and it's less work to post them here every day than it is to skip that and keep up with them separately.

Of course, they'll still be way down at the bottom, so if they don't interest you, bail out when you encounter my little adios note. (grin)

If they DO interest you, by all means read along. But please don't let them negatively influence your own writing. Of course, if they motivate you to write more, that's a Good Thing.

Of Interest

Two entries today from The Passive Guy, neither of which is directly about writing, but both of which contain great imagery. That alone can help your writing.

See "Early Morning Venice" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/early-morning-venice/>. The few comments are worthwhile too.

Then (via TPV) see "Look up from your screen" at <https://aeon.co/essays/children-learn-best-when-engaged-in-the-living-world-not-on-screens>. Especially the second paragraph.

Talk with you again soon.

The Writing

Fiction Words: 3859

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4149

Writing of Nick Spalding 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 2000 words. Total words to date..... 2000

Day 2..... 1000 words. Total words to date..... 1000

Day 3..... 3597 words. Total words to date..... 6597

Day 4..... 4538 words. Total words to date..... 11135

Day 5..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 14151

Day 6..... 2534 words. Total words to date..... 16685
Day 7..... 3859 words. Total words to date..... 20544

Total fiction words for the month..... 9409
Total fiction words for the year..... 257706
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1060
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 99346
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 356802

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, August 4](#)

[August 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

In today's "Of Interest," the second entry is about what one writer does when he's stuck in a story and unsure what to do next. If you read it and an impending sense of boredom doesn't sweep over you, you're probably a plotter and/or an outliner. And that's fine.

I want to say I disagree with the guy, but as Dean often reminds us, every writer is different. I will say that his post enabled me to understand how some writers can view writing as pure drudgery.

I added the entry to "Of Interest" today to provide a counterpoint. Because frankly, when I get stuck in a story, I do the same thing he does: I take a walk.

But that's where the similarity ends.

When I get stuck in a story, it's always for one of two reasons: Either I've written past the scene, or the realization descends on me that I've tied myself into a knot trying to "figure out" what will happen next.

When I've written past the scene, I read back a few sentences and find the cliffhanger. Then I either take a short break (usually) or just go ahead and start the next scene or chapter.

But when I realize I've balled myself up trying to figure out what happens next, I take a walk. Or I go read. Or I watch TV for a half-hour or so. Anything to get myself *away* from the story.

So the difference is, I walk or do other things to intentionally distance myself from the story, most often to pry my conscious mind off it. Mark Alpert walks to give himself time to focus on the story and figure out what happens next.

Topic: Conscious and Subconscious Mind as Children

I see the conscious and subconscious mind as children and siblings. I love them both (really) but for different reasons. Like real children, they have different talents, different things they're naturally good at.

I consider myself fortunate in both ways, conscious and subconscious.

My conscious mind is practical to a fault, extremely critical and highly analytical. It learns easily, and it (I keep wanting to write "she") doggedly clings to a problem until it figures out a solution.

I've found my conscious, critical mind useful in everything from understanding new computer programs to copyediting to making important choices in every area of my life. Like politics or keeping snakes out of my yard (yes, I see the digression) or zealously safeguarding my little cat.

Pretty much everything except writing fiction.

My conscious mind is also constantly hungry, and it eats (absorbs new information) pretty much all the time when I'm awake. It kicks into high gear when I'm studying a new technique in a workshop or studying a bit of writing to understand how the author blew my socks off.

But the other sibling, my subconscious, is fun-loving and easy going. It jokes around a lot, and it often says things that others find unusual or oddly inappropriate. To which my response is usually from one of my Brooklyn characters: "Hey, mea culpa. Now kindly remove yourself from my line of sight until you develop a sense of humor or otherwise lighten the hell up."

On the other hand, I very seldom find anything anyone else says "inappropriate" as long as it isn't also unauthentic. I'm not patient with those whose baseline currency is innuendo, half-truths, outright lies and utterances based on ignorance of logic and fact. Oh, and woe be to the poor soul who, in my presence, utters a clichéd soundbite and presents it as an original thought.

But again I digress.

The conscious-mind sibling is also a bully to its brother.

There he is, sitting in the middle of the room, barefoot and in minimal clothing, his little face smudged with some unidentified substance, his hair tousled, playing happily with a new story. And having entirely too much fun.

If there's one thing of which the conscious-mind sibling is absolutely certain, it's that nothing worthwhile should be fun.

She barges into the room. Behind her back, she's holding a straightjacket. "Hey, what'cha doing?"

The little guy looks up and shrugs. "Just havin' fun. Makin' s'uff up, tellin' myself stories."

She frowns, and storm clouds well in her eyes. "Fun? Is that it? Telling yourself stories? What about your poor readers?" She leans over him, points over his shoulder. "*That* isn't a complete sentence. It's a fragment. You're also using the word 'that' way too much. And isn't a paragraph supposed to continue until you finish discussing the topic? And your language isn't flowery enough. This will never sell. No way."

Innocently, he looks up and grins. "Maybe not, but I'm sure havin' a good time!"

"Um, writing isn't about having a good time? It's about drudgery and suffering for your art? How do you not know that!" She whips out the straightjacket. "Here, this will get you back to the straight and narrow."

He recoils in fear. "I ain't puttin' that thing on!"

She springs. "Oh yes you are!"

And just in time, he leaps to his feet and races past her out the door.

She whirls around. "You get back here! Where exactly do you think you're going, anyway?"

His voice filters in from the living room. "I'm gonna take a walk!"

The door slams.

No fiction writing today, probably. If I write, I'll report the numbers tomorrow. We're headed out of town to an estate sale and other things in Sierra Vista.

Of Interest

See "Behind-The-Scenes Look at a Murder Interrogation" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/behind-the-scenes-look-at-a-real-murder-interrogation/>.

See "The Walking Cure" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/the-walking-cure.html>.

Talk with you again soon.

The Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 910 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 910

Writing of Nick Spalding 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 2000 words. Total words to date..... 2000
Day 2..... 1000 words. Total words to date..... 1000
Day 3..... 3597 words. Total words to date..... 6597
Day 4..... 4538 words. Total words to date..... 11135
Day 5..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 14151
Day 6..... 2534 words. Total words to date..... 16685
Day 7..... 3859 words. Total words to date..... 20544
Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 9409
Total fiction words for the year..... 257706
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1970
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 100256
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 357712

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Conscious mind](#), [creative subconscious](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, August 6](#)

[August 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. Not sure what's going on with the Journal. I posted an entry early on Saturday, yet it didn't "ship" through Mail Chimp until yesterday and it was dated for yesterday (though the actual post was dated correctly). Weird.

And then I wrote a journal entry yesterday, but I forgot to post it. When I remembered, it was a few minutes after 5.

So I'm leaving that post below. I'll add minimally to it today and then post it.

Well, no writing again today (Sunday). But knowing the novel will race along when I get back to it tomorrow gives me a great deal of confidence.

I could have worked on it a bit today, but I realized I hadn't pre-posted many of my books in promotional posts over on the big site. I need to do that so I don't miss posting for a week.

Currently, I'm still posting writing-related tips every other week, and in the interim I'm posting about one of my own works, complete with a link where the reader can go to download a free copy. All I ask in exchange is a review.

So today (mixed in with family stuff) I'm doing some admin work.

But first I had to get it all organized.

I went to <https://timeanddate.com>. That's an incredible resource. In addition to free, downloadable PDF calendars, you can find all kinds of converters. So I added TimeAndDate.com to my Writer Resources page under a few different categories.

I also realized I'd missed adding a novel to the freebie list. So I did that. (Added it to Smashwords, created a coupon code, copied the code and URL to a spreadsheet.)

Then I went back to organizing. To my Coupon Code spreadsheet, I added a new column that will contain the date I do a promo post for each novel, novella or long (10-story) collection over on the big site.

And I realized, with only those works, I have 48 works to promote. And that's not including the 5-story collections. And of course it doesn't include novels and novellas and collections I'll put together in the future. Whew!

Forty-eight works, at a rate of one promo post every other week. So that's 26 posts per year (in addition to the 26 writer-tip posts each year) for at least two years.

Until I got it all down in black and white, I didn't realize how much work I have to do.

I'll pre-post a lot of the novels and novellas today, and then I'll continue as I have time until I've gotten them all up.

Also, with the promo posts I'm trying to skip around a bit among genres. One week I'll post a mystery/crime novel. Then two weeks later I'll post a western. Then SF. Then back to mystery, or maybe to a psychological suspense or war novel or novella. And so on.

It's kind of fun, but the whole time I'm doing that I'd rather be writing. Still, even as time-consuming as this is, I think it will probably be the total of my marketing effort. I mean really, what more can I do beyond offering free books in exchange for reviews?

And of course, nothing says after a reader downloads the book he or she "has" to review it. Still, it gets the work out there and maybe increases the readership, so it's a risk I'm willing to take.

Maybe you can do something similar to promote your work.

Okay, now it's Monday. Yay! Back to my writing! Because this is already long, I won't detail the day, but let the numbers below reflect what happened.

Of Interest

See "I Could Have Been Alex Trebek" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/i-could-have-been-alex-trebek.html>.

See "Reading And Story Consumption" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/reading-and-story-consumption/>. Nothing really new, but maybe a new take. Dean's coming slowly back up to speed.

See "Cover Art Angst" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/cover-art-angst.html>. Very good post, thoughtful and iformative.

See "Another Way To Sample The Diving Universe" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/05/another-way-to-sample-the-diving-universe/>. (And she should have another free story on there later today.)

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3913

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4603

Writing of Nick Spalding 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1.....	2000 words.	Total words to date.....	2000
Day 2.....	1000 words.	Total words to date.....	1000
Day 3.....	3597 words.	Total words to date.....	6597
Day 4.....	4538 words.	Total words to date.....	11135
Day 5.....	3016 words.	Total words to date.....	14151
Day 6.....	2534 words.	Total words to date.....	16685
Day 7.....	3859 words.	Total words to date.....	20544
Day 8.....	3913 words.	Total words to date.....	24457

Total fiction words for the month.....	13322
Total fiction words for the year.....	261619
Total nonfiction words for the month...	2660
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	100946
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	362315
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, August 7](#)

[August 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

According to an article I read this morning on Venezuela’s economy, you can now buy 3,500,000 liters (that’s 924,602 gallons) of 91-octane gasoline there for one US dollar (about 80,400 bolivars). Almost makes it worthwhile to consider buying a tanker truck and getting all the necessary permits, doesn’t it?

But buy your eggs at home in the local grocery or from a farmer. In Venezuela today, a single egg costs 200,000 bolivars (about \$2.49).

This is not a rant on socialism. In my mind, the Prime Directive applies on Earth as it does in space fantasy. Citizens create their own destiny, putting up with whatever they can abide; when they can no longer abide it, they fix it. No longer any of my business.

Rather, this is a practical reminder. I converted the liters above to gallons using <http://www.worldwidemetric.com/measurements.html>. I converted the bolivars to dollars using <https://themoneyconverter.com/>.

You can find both (and many more) on my [Writer Resources page](#) under the [Conversion Tools](#) listing.

One stop shopping. Just sayin’.

Topic: One Alternative to Either Outlining a Novel to Death or Writing Off Into the Dark

This topic has been awhile in the making. About twelve years or so, actually.

Back in the day, when I was primarily a poet, essayist and conference speaker, I often asked writers about their process. How they went about structuring their books.

A few said they outlined. Some carried that to extremes, including not only every major plot point and twist, but every minor one too. Others used a kind of story board or 3×5 cards (or both). Others created a rudimentary outline, often supplied in part by their traditional publisher.

For example, the publisher's outline would describe the number of chapters required and the approximate number of pages per chapter. (I remember one publisher required 40 chapters and 8 to 12 pages per chapter; no more than 12, no fewer than 8). The result was a 400 page manuscript that fit the publisher's folio and price point for that genre.

Today, with the advent of independent publishing or a hybrid of traditional and indie, much of that nonsense is out the window for writers who choose to determine their own career.

As you all know, I'm a proponent of writing off into the dark. But several years ago, I met a writer who outlines. Sort of.

This writer wrote psychological suspense novels (horror without the slash and gash) for one imprint of a major publisher who has since folded. But the idea has always intrigued me.

She comes up with an idea for a 40-chapter novel, then prints the numbers 1 – 40 down the left side of a few sheets of yellow legal pad paper.

Then, if she has character names in mind (and they're subject to change) she adds a character name next to the number. Those chapters with "John" next to the numbers will be in the POV of that character. Those with "Josie" next to them will be in Josie's POV.

Then she jots a sentence or two that summarizes what she expects will happen in that chapter.

That's it. Nothing else.

Interestingly, after she begins to write, she returns to the "outline" and uses it as a reverse outline, noting character names, major events, clothing, etc. in case she has to refer back to them later in the book.

I find this intriguing because I use a reverse outline for every novel I write. And as I move into writing thrillers (of necessity, thrillers are longer novels that are larger and much more complex in scope than I'm used to writing), I'm thinking of trying her method as well.

Not as an outline to be strictly followed, but as a series of guideposts to help me avoid confusion and getting sidetracked. The one thing I won't put on any kind of outline is the ending. If I know the ending, I won't write the book. Too boring. (Isn't that right, Dan?)

Anyway, I thought this might be helpful for you as well, either as a step down from full-blown outlining or as a step up to a more ordered universe.

By the way, I'm still asking: What method, if any, do you use?

To the Hovel late this morning, then back and forth with laundry and other tasks.

Instead of "just writing" I also spent some time changing one aspect of the novel that wasn't fitting right and also updated my reverse outline, which I had allowed to lag several chapters behind.

Also, it's so humid out there (monsoons) that my little portable swamp cooler isn't doing a lot of good. As a result, the Hovel is sort of like a sauna. Like if you stand in the path of a tornado, things might get "sort of" windy.

So I knocked off a little early. Still had a pretty good day.

Oh, also the WIP is now Nick Spalding 2, not 3. I might or might not write one to fill the time gap between the novella (Jobs Like That) and this one. We'll see.

Of Interest

See "Free Fiction Monday: At the Crossroads" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/06/free-fiction-monday-at-the-crossroads/>. I found myself wondering whether this was influenced by Hemingway and a few other similar stories. Though of course, this one is PC all the way.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 2194

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2944

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1.....	2000 words.	Total words to date.....	2000
Day 2.....	1000 words.	Total words to date.....	1000
Day 3.....	3597 words.	Total words to date.....	6597
Day 4.....	4538 words.	Total words to date.....	11135
Day 5.....	3016 words.	Total words to date.....	14151
Day 6.....	2534 words.	Total words to date.....	16685
Day 7.....	3859 words.	Total words to date.....	20544
Day 8.....	3913 words.	Total words to date.....	24457
Day 9.....	2194 words.	Total words to date.....	26651

Total fiction words for the month.....	13322
Total fiction words for the year.....	261619
Total nonfiction words for the month...	2660
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	100946
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	362315
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reverse Outline](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, August 8](#)

[August 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Some great new (to me) memes on Facebook lately. One I saw read “How many grammar nazis does it take to change a light bulb?” The answer? “Too.” (grin)

Another read, “I swallowed a dictionary. It gave me thesaurus throat I’ve ever had.” I know. Groan. But it’s still funny, so I thought I’d share.

Another older one was, “The past, present and future walked into a bar. It was tense.” (grin)

Okay, enough of that nonsense.

To the Hovel early, three good sessions (with breaks) for a little over 3000 words, then up to the house to insall my new Roku Stick. Woohoo!

Of Interest

See “The Business Rusch: The Bad Book” at <https://kriswrites.com/2013/03/20/the-business-rusch-the-bad-book/>. An oldie but a goodie. Stick with it.

See “The Business Rusch: Perfection” at <https://kriswrites.com/2012/06/27/the-business-rusch-perfection/>. Another oldie but goodie.

See “The New World of Publishing: Book Pricing from Another Perspective” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-new-world-of-publishing-book-pricing-from-another-perspective/>. Yet another oldie but golden. Please read it.

See “The Getting and Keeping of Ideas” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/the-getting-and-keeping-of-ideas.html>. Take it with a grain of salt, or read my comment at the end. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3477

Nonfiction Words: 180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3657

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 2000 words. Total words to date..... 2000
Day 2..... 1000 words. Total words to date..... 1000
Day 3..... 3597 words. Total words to date..... 6597
Day 4..... 4538 words. Total words to date..... 11135
Day 5..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 14151
Day 6..... 2534 words. Total words to date..... 16685
Day 7..... 3859 words. Total words to date..... 20544
Day 8..... 3913 words. Total words to date..... 24457
Day 9..... 2194 words. Total words to date..... 26651
Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128

Total fiction words for the month..... 18993
Total fiction words for the year..... 267290
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3590
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 101876
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 365259

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, August 9

[August 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Long post today. Get a beverage. Settle in.

Wow. Stayed up too late last night. It was a great night, with almost constant low-level rumbling thunder and distant flashes of lightning through the window. Not a lot of rain, but a great, soothing (and cool) light and sound show.

But as a result I stayed up far too late, enjoying the breeze through the door. And as a result of that I got up late this morning. If I'm not careful, that late rising will throw off my whole day.

Topic: Prejudice and Discrimination

Anyone else ever heard (or heard of) the “myth” that only white males from 18-35 see movies? Yeah, me either.

Yet a writer whose blog post I read today made that point and several others in a post today. All strongly biased, all strong prejudicial, all strongly discriminatory.

I won't share the URL of the post for three reasons: it was, to me, repugnant; it was, to me, hate-mongering, albeit on the sly; and it was posted by a person who I suspect might sue me for expressing my “white male” opinion.

God I get tired of being bashed. Especially by someone who doesn't have the slightest clue who I am or what I've done, good or bad.

Not that I fall into that specific (“18-35”) age group, but I do fall into the parent classification (“white male”) that is, by at least that writer's standard, directly responsible for all the world's ills since before humans even separated themselves into races.

I and all others in the group are regularly disrespected as a result, in my opinion, of that writer's own “white guilt,” for which apparently she wishes to make restitution through our blood.

She (also a “white” female) is very careful to balance her stories with characters of every race because, after all, there are absolutely no “all white” or “all black” or “all hispanic” etc. professional groups anywhere on Earth.

The writer typically writes some great posts. But all too often she then taints my suspension of disbelief and shoves me away with her obvious hatred. Of me, whom she's never met, and of all others she considers “like me.” Again, whom she's never met.

Why do some people believe “white males” as a demographic are responsible for every single wrong done to people of other skin tones and countries?

In the first place, what gives them the right to generalize, grouping anyone with a penis and a skin tone similar to theirs as a “white male” deserving of their wrath?

This isn't just a rant. I do have a point: The world is made up of individuals, and whether or not they like it and whether or not they agree, those individuals are responsible for their own behavior and attitudes.

Yes, individuals are raised in a society. Yes, they're raised by human (and therefore faulty) parents. Yes, they're influenced by their education or lack thereof and the people they hang out with.

But in the final analysis, individuals have Choice, and once they exercise it, that choice becomes their responsibility, whether or not they expect others to shoulder it for them.

To offer the writer the benefit of the doubt, which I suspect she believes she deserves and would take in a heartbeat, she slips only a few words now and then, a phrase, of this ridiculous garbage into her blog posts. And she does so innocuously.

But the typical dagger is less than an inch across and only a few inches long. It too can easily be slipped in between a pair of ribs or into a kidney. And it's no less harmful.

Either way, injured is injured, and dead is dead, a complete lack of sentience. And accompanying it is a complete lack of trust-in and caring-about the biased opinions of the one who wielded the knife.

This particular writer's current blog post reminds me of my college days. I'd already retired from the USMC, so I wasn't the typical student. I started college at 38.

In an effort to broaden my own education and horizons, I signed up in my junior or senior year for a course on Women's Issues (or something like that). They should have called it Hatred 101.

On the first morning, I arrived right on time. I stepped into the classroom, ready to be taunted a little about being a guy, being “old,” etc. But what I found stopped me cold.

Seated in a circle on the floor (we used to innocently, not slanderously, say “Indian-style”) were a dozen or so females, all angry, all sparkly white, all “traditional” students at 17 to 20 years of age. All that experience, chomping at the bit to solve all the world's ills.

I remained just inside the door, listened for a few minutes. And what I heard was a bunch of young white girls discussing how terrible it was to be born black in our society. Just as if they knew first-hand. And they were being urged along by their white female professor.

I left. I went straight back to Registration, dropped the class, and signed up for another one.

I left not because I disagreed with them. I was privy to some of the worst times in American history. I left because they had ZERO idea what they were talking about.

I suspect we all (of all races, both genders, and all nationalities) have our own private little quirks. If I'm walking down the street and I see a group of tough-looking youths coming my way (black, brown, white or otherwise) I'll probably cross the street.

In my humble opinion, anyone who says he or she wouldn't do the same is either a) Jack Reacher, b) a fool trying to make a point, or c) a liar. Or maybe B and C both. I remember seeing water fountains marked "Whites Only." This was southeast New Mexico, not Mississippi or Georgia.

And I was raised by a father who held several deep-seated prejudices. There were regularly jokes in our house about "Mexican hunting season" (when Mexicans are fair game) and about people of African descent.

Those jokes weren't funny then, and they aren't funny now. On the other hand, there are race- and gender- and nationality- and religion-based jokes that are very funny. And harmless.

But not one time did I ever assume that "all" white males held the same ignorant opinions my father held. How could they? After all, I was a white male, and I didn't.

And while we're slathering-on culpability, where are "white" females in the mix? I once (recently) became embroiled in an argument with a white female who said all Muslims, even infants, should be killed outright. Seriously.

And as a child of around 12, I was in the passenger seat of a car when my young aunt in the back seat, upon being asked where she'd gotten a particular item, said she "stole it off a dead n****r." (I just don't like that word.) She immediately turned, blushing furiously, to the other passenger, one of her best friends, also female but who happened to be of African descent, and apologized.

In case you're wondering, the friend patted her shoulder and smiled, then said, "It's all right. I know you didn't mean it."

My aunt didn't mean to harm her friend. She had merely spouted a popular "comeback" of the day. Yet she was mortified at her own behavior. And I never heard a similar comment from her again.

Even then, I never believed for a moment that every white female was hateful. And I already knew that not every white male was hateful.

In my life experience, maybe the most profound thing I've learned is that despite the color of skin, race, religion, nationality, etc., most people are very similar. They're just people, trying to get by the best way they know how.

They don't harbor hatred for others regardless of general differences like skin coloration, nationality, etc. And likewise, they understand, as the author of the Conan series wrote in the words of the protagonist, "There's scum and scut in every folk and nation." None are exempt.

The simple fact is, there are bad actors out there. Some of them are black, some white, some in between. Some are Muslims, some Christians, some Catholics and some Protestants. And in the United States, some are Liberal and some are Conservative.

But by and large, people are just people. No individual group, race, nation or belief should be singled out for abuse. No matter the source of such abuse, it's based in every case on the actions of a few.

And it's caused by ignorance and, sometimes—say, when it's posited by a person who's intelligent enough to know better—it's caused by outright meanness or stupidity.

What does this have to do with writing?

In a general sense, writers and other artists are by definition supposed to be open-minded free-thinkers, people who don't automatically lump others into groups.

In a more specific way, we write what we know and what we know "of," and maybe we censor ourselves, but we never allow others to censor us.

You know, for what it's worth.

Today is a half-day, and I slept about two hours of it away. So I'm behind. And perturbed. So we'll see what happens.

To the Hovel, finally, at 10. I seriously considered just letting today go as a writing day, but I figured I might as well at least look at it. In just over 2 hours, just under 2000 words. I'll take it.

Of Interest

Dean's Master Business Class still has openings. For information, see <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/master-business-class-information/>.

See "Chittorgarh Fort" at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/chittorgarh-fort>. I strongly recommend a free subscription to Atlas Obscura. Great initial idea and research site. I can easily imagine this one as a great setting for several genres.

See "Wilkie Collins, master of the cliffhanger" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/wilkie-collins-master-of-the-cliffhanger/>.

Strictly for fun and a great read, see TPG's take on "Leisure sickness: why you should not relax on holiday" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/leisure-sickness-why-you-should-not-relax-on-holiday/>.

For the same reasons, I recommend "Gutenberg, WordPress, & You: the What, the Why, and the How" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/gutenberg-wordpress-you-the-what-the-why-and-the-how/>.

And that's it for me today.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 1911

Nonfiction Words: 1710 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3621

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128

Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039

Total fiction words for the month..... 20904

Total fiction words for the year..... 269201

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5300

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 103586

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 372537

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),

[The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, August 10](#)

[August 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Okay, first up, I recommend you visit [Reedsy.com](#) and subscribe to their free newsletter. Seriously. If there's more than one, subscribe to the one by Ricardo Fayet. Extremely informative articles, but they come only via email.

Topic: Take Your Time

Most of you know I enjoy reading thrillers and action-adventure novels. (What are called "thrillers" today were called "men's action-adventure" back in the '60s and '70s.)

When I find something that blows my socks off, I finish reading for pleasure, then go back and find that place and study it to see how the guy (or gal) did that.

It's a smart way to study particular techniques.

But recently, having read 18 or 19 of Lee Child's Jack Reacher series, I started wondering what made readers and critics identify them as "page-turners."

I mean, I agreed with them. It takes me no more than two or three days to read a Reacher paperback. I typically read a hundred or so pages without realizing I've read that much. So they're definitely page-turners, but I still wasn't sure why.

Jack Higgins' books also are page-turners, but I'd already identified his method. Usually you won't get through more than two or three pages in one of his books without a strong challenge or conflict occurring and the hero or heroine meeting it head-on.

But for all the critics' one-liner praise, the Jack Reacher books are NOT chock full of riveting action.

So what makes his novels page-turners?

I asked myself this question about six books back. And then about three books back, I realized what it was. (I kept it to myself until I read a few more, just to be sure.)

For one thing, Child is absolutely GREAT at writing cliffhangers. And each scene is a chapter, so he writes a LOT of cliffhangers.

And he's careful to ground the reader in the opening of every chapter. So those two things alone are excellent, and it's difficult to put the book down.

But what about all the in-between stuff? As I said, with the Reacher series it isn't non-stop action. So what is it?

It's something I've come to call quiet suspense. The whole time, from the hook to the cliffhanger, the reader SUSPECTS something's going to happen. Or suspects something MIGHT happen. Something seems always on the verge of happening.

It doesn't always (or even usually) happen, but the level of tension is so high you can't stop reading anyway. Even when Reacher's doing nothing more than enjoying a cup of coffee and a quiet conversation with someone (usually a professional woman, like a cop or a lawyer or an Army officer or NCO) in a diner. He spends a LOT of time drinking coffee, and he drinks a LOT of it in diners, and he does so in the company of a beautiful professional woman almost every time.

Even in the midst of a non-action scene, the dialogue and the narration (whether first or third person) is necessary and snappy.

And detailed.

Excruciatingly detailed.

Child takes his time when he writes. He allows the characters to tell the story, and he allows it to unfold at close to real-life speed.

As a result, an underlying sense of suspense flows through pretty much every sentence in the book. Not only does the reader flip pages like they're on fire, but he has zero chance of escaping.

The reader isn't even disappointed when he comes to the next cliffhanger and nothing "significant" (meaning no strong action) has occurred. Instead, he turns the page, reads the next opening, and goes right on through.

Incredible.

And what's more incredible is that this will work in pretty much any genre.

Setting is of HUGE importance in most major genres. Characters are a little more important in Romance and they're certainly on top (so to speak) in Erotica, but in SF&F, Westerns, Thrillers, Horror, Suspense, Action-Adventure, and Mystery, setting is king.

So my advice is this: When you're writing scenes, don't be impatient. Take your time and let the scene unfold. Allow your characters, through your fingers, to put the words on the page that enable the scene to unfold.

Remember, as long as the setting is described through the senses and opinions of the POV character(s), the readers will eat it up. If the POV character(s) notice it, it belongs in the scene.

Then slap a good cliffhanger at the end, and go write the opening for the next scene or chapter. Then, again, take your time.

I hope you'll be able to see how well this works in one of my own novels before the end of the month. (grin)

Now I'm gonna get back to it.

Well, I'd hoped for a really big day today, but somehow I ended up with a headache instead. Go figure.

Of Interest

See "Depth Done Right" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/depth-done-right/>. He offers more of a reading recommendation than anything.

See you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3251

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4051

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 2000 words. Total words to date..... 2000
Day 2..... 1000 words. Total words to date..... 1000
Day 3..... 3597 words. Total words to date..... 6597
Day 4..... 4538 words. Total words to date..... 11135
Day 5..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 14151
Day 6..... 2534 words. Total words to date..... 16685
Day 7..... 3859 words. Total words to date..... 20544
Day 8..... 3913 words. Total words to date..... 24457
Day 9..... 2194 words. Total words to date..... 26651
Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128
Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039
Day 12... 3251 words. Total words to date..... 35290

Total fiction words for the month..... 24155
Total fiction words for the year..... 272452
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 104386
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 376588

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, August 11](#)

[August 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Topic: How to Write Like I Do

Recently I received an email in which a writer wrote (toward the end of some lengthy praise of my “process”) “I only wish I could write like you.”

During an exchange of emails, I eventually determined the writer was talking about my ability to turn out a lot of quality short stories and novels fairly quickly (though I’m pretty much a slug by old pulp standards). And what the writer really meant was that s/he wished s/he could write, period.

I explained that a short four years ago (2014) I too was wishing I could write like I do today. Albeit without the down times and delays that occasionally come along. (grin)

But that started me thinking about my process. Most of you who’ve been with me awhile have heard more about that than you probably want to know. Others, not so much. So I thought I’d try to put it all in one succinct topic.

This actually is a post I personally wish Lee Child and Jack Higgins and Sue Coletta and Ray Bradbury and any number of other writers would write. But they aren’t here, so I guess it’s up to me.

The Idea

For my novels and most of my shorter works, I most often “receive” ideas. By that I mean they pop into my head. This sounds similar to inspiration, but it isn’t. It’s usually based on situations or characters I’ve written (or read or seen or heard).

And it isn’t a matter of looking-for or waiting-for those ideas. They simply hit, often when I’m in the middle of doing something else.

They usually come as a snippet of dialogue in a character’s voice. Less frequently I’ll “see” (or smell or taste) part of a scene that interests me.

Sometimes, especially if I’m in the midst of a self-imposed challenge (for example, writing a short story every day or every week), I’ll come up with a character name, hand the character a problem (doesn’t have to be “the” problem of the story) and drop him into a setting.

Then I write an opening and I’m off and running. Or not.

The Opening

Once I have an idea, no matter its source, I write an opening. I do this for almost every idea that comes to me. (Hey, practice is practice.) The only time I don’t is if an idea occurs while I’m away from my computer, meaning in a car or in another town. If I’m in the vicinity of my writing computer when an idea strikes, I go write an opening.

My openings are usually around 400 to 600 words. (For me, that’s a third to a half of a scene.)

If the opening grabs me and takes off, I keep writing. I take a brief (10 minutes to a half-hour, depending) break at the end of each scene, which usually takes around an hour to write. When I come back, I put my fingers on the keyboard and read over what I wrote during the previous session. During that time I usually add things, usually to the setting (to more solidly ground the reader), but sometimes I allow the character to expand the dialogue too.

Note: During that part of the process, I read for pleasure, NOT critically. That's the difference between doing this (cycling) and editing. I do NOT "look for" misspellings, wrong words, awkward sentences or anything else. And I don't "fix" anything. I just read and let my fingers move if the characters move them.

When I get back to where I stopped writing in the previous session, I'm back into the flow of the story and I write the next scene. Then, as they say in the shampoo commercials, it's lather, rinse, repeat.

If the opening DOESN'T take off, I pitch it and either go back to what I was doing before or, if I have another idea handy, I write another opening. Shrug.

In all of this, I avoid thinking about where the story's going or what the next scene will be or what's about to happen next or anything like that. I simply sit down at the computer, put my fingers on the keyboard, and write the next sentence that comes to me.

That's through the whole story.

The only "secret" is that I trust my subconscious, and that took practice. Occasionally it still does. Sometimes I find myself worrying about what will happen next in the story or hoping the characters will do a certain thing or that a situation will take a particular turn.

When that happens, I most often take a break. When I come back, I either cycle back (as described above) or I just write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, then write the next sentence.

Story Length

I've been asked whether I know going-in how long a story's going to be. The short answer is, I don't. Nor do I worry about it. I just write the opening and go where it takes me.

Several times I've expected to write a short story and ended up with a novel when the idea expanded (more on this below). A few times I've set out to write a novel and ended up with a short story.

Okay, but how do I know which ideas will work for a short story and which will work for a novel?

Almost any idea will work for at least a short story as long as the idea still interests you after you've written the opening. And by that point you can usually tell whether it's "just" a short story or something larger.

If the story is centered around one major problem and will wrap up satisfactorily when that one problem has been resolved, it's a short story. (That's up to around 10,000 words. For my short "Fiction Lengths" paper, [email me](#).)

If "the" problem or its resolution leads to other problems that also have to be resolved, you probably have a novelette (long short story, to about 15,000 words), novella or novel on your hands. Enjoy!

How to "Work Up" to Writing a Novel

Wrong attitude.

If the thought of writing a novel is daunting or frightening to you, toss that thought aside. Seriously. After all, you aren't writing a novel. You're writing a sentence. You can do that, right? Especially when someone else (your character) is giving it to you? You're taking dictation, really. Not difficult or daunting at all.

You don't write a novel. You write a sentence.

You write a sentence, then the next, then the next. Soon (usually sooner than you expect) you've written the cliffhanger at the end of the scene. Then you take a break, then come back and write the opening for the next scene.

Note: Remember that readers have short memories. In every opening, write a few words or sentences to ground the reader. This will come naturally now that you know to do it. If the new scene takes place in the same setting, you can ground the reader with a few words. If it takes place in a new setting (even the next room), grounding the reader will take a little more.

So you write a sentence, then another, and soon you've written a scene.

You write a scene, then another, and before you know it you've reached the end of the story. Whereupon the characters dust off their little hands, look at you and say, "That's it, pal. You're done."

And you look back to find you've written a novel.

Summary

If you wish you could write like I do, being "prolific" aside and with genre and story style aside, what you're really saying is that you wish you could write, period. Really, there's only one "rule," and then I have only a few suggestions:

1. Follow Heinlein's Rule 1: You must write. Remember that thinking about writing or talking about writing or even researching for your writing is not writing. Writing is putting new words on the page. So to write, you have to sit down, put your fingers on the keyboard, and write a sentence. Then write the next sentence, then the next. Keep going. There's no substitute for this rule, and really, it's the only one. What follows are suggestions:

2. Trust your subconscious. Or as Bradbury put it, "write whatever comes." After all, it's been telling stories since before you knew there was an alphabet, and you'll improve with practice. But even if you're an outliner or have some sort of hybrid process, Rule 1 still applies.

3. Trust your subconscious, Part 2. Remember that yes, it's "your" story. Um, but not really. After all, the characters are living it, so who do you suppose knows it better? Again, sit down, put your fingers on the keyboard, and don't worry about it. Just write whatever comes.

4. Keep coming back. If you have to leave the story for awhile, no problem. Do what you need to do. But literally The Next Time You Get A Chance (it takes effort to build a habit), sit down, put your fingers on the keyboard, and write the next sentence. Then the next.

5. If you want to "keep coming back," only the little voice in your head says something that starts with "But," shove aside the "but" and whatever comes after it and go write anyway, even if it's for only fifteen minutes or a half-hour. (Usually that will turn into a much longer session, and you'll thank me, unless you're an ungrateful sot.)

Joking. I don't need thanks. Considering what I do for a "job," I'm pretty much the luckiest guy in the world. (grin)

That's really pretty much it.

Happy writing!

Ironically, probably no writing for me today. I was up early, then wrote the stuff above. I'll make breakfast, then do some necessary things around the house. Then a visit from a friend around 11, then maybe a trip to the store.

Of Interest

See "Challenges Coming Up" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/challenges-coming-up/>. Great to stir thought and/or join in a writing challenge.

See Joe Hartlaub's "Mail in Your Future" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/mail-in-your-future.html>. (Not available in my area yet, but we only got indoor plumbing a year or so ago.)

See you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1700 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1700

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128
Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039
Day 12... 3251 words. Total words to date..... 35290
Day 13... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 24155
Total fiction words for the year..... 272452
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7800
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 106086
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 378288

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, August 12](#)

[August 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I took pretty much a full day off yesterday. I did a lot of things and had a great visit with my buddy, but I did no fiction writing at all. And three or four times, when nothing else was going on, I yearned to get back to the story. One of those good/bad feelings.

So today it's back to writing for at least awhile. I'll set up the writing 'puter in the Hovel, and every time I have a half-hour or so of dead time, I'll head out there.

We've been spoiled during this monsoon season this year with low temps (when I got up this morning it was 65), a nice break from the heat. I've always been a lower-desert rat, and for most of my life I loved Dry and I much preferred Hot over Cold.

But this year (like last year) I find myself enjoying the cooler temps of the monsoons and actually looking forward to winter. I'd rather the mesquites were evergreen, but you can't have everything. (grin)

Anyway, I hope I'll remember to post this later. For now, out to the Hovel and the novel.

Well, I didn't get a lot of writing done today, but the story is improved. The characters told me something I didn't know before, so I cycled back from Chapter 31 to Chapter 22 and added a few sentences to set it up.

It's wonderful to be unstuck in time in your writing. (grin)

Of Interest

See James Scott Bell's "From My Bookshelf: Early Writing Lessons" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/from-my-bookshelf-early-writing-lessons.html>.

See you again soon.

Fiction Words: 1327

Nonfiction Words: 270 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1597

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128

Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039

Day 12... 3251 words. Total words to date..... 35290

Day 13... 1327 words. Total words to date..... 36436

Total fiction words for the month..... 25482

Total fiction words for the year..... 273779

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 106356

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 379885

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, August 13](#)

[August 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I wish I'd found me before I started writing novels.

I mean, if I were not me, I wish I'd found me. Something like that.

I did rediscover Dean Wesley Smith after a long absence. And I learned a lot from him, often plucking free gems from his blog posts. But most of the in-depth stuff that I learned from him came at \$300 a whack.

Not that I regret any of it. Knowledge is priceless, and paying \$300 for a huge shortcut in the learning curve is pretty inexpensive really. You know, depending on what's important to you.

I still have things to learn, but most of those are things I can learn through my own reading and further practice. (And I love to read and study, and I love to practice, to write, so woohoo!)

But the Electric Basics (my term for the basics that will make your writing electric) remain priceless. And so I wish I'd found me before I wrote my first novel.

Like everyone else on the planet who has both a conscious and subconscious mind, I knew instinctively how to tell stories before I was even aware there was an alphabet or elementary school or teachers. If you have children, or if you were a child yourself, you know what I mean.

But I learned much of what's necessary to tell a GOOD story, one that the right readers (depending on their personal taste) would have difficulty putting down, only after I'd written my first several novels and a few dozen short stories.

It's true (as in all arts) that writers improve only with practice. And I'm thankful I've been smart enough to spend time in the chair, writing instead of hovering over something I'd already finished. I'm thankful, too, that when I finished a work, I moved on to the next one without delay, or with a relatively short delay.

Even my very first novel is a good story, or so I've been told. And I thought so too. But it could have been so much better if only I'd known a few basics going in. You know, those Electric Basics.

Now, I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but something as good as the Electric Basics bear repeating. So here they are again:

1. Come up with a GREAT opening sentence or paragraph (the "hook"). What is "great" will depend on the story that follows, of course, but most often these will be short and terse. It isn't a

stretch to say a truly great hook can be used as the basis for several stories. This is what immediately pulls the reader into the story.

2. *Ground the reader in the setting.* Let the reader see, hear, smell, taste and feel the setting, and always Through The Senses And Opinions Of The POV Character (not the writer). If you force your own description of the setting on the reader, he will sense it and bail out. Because it will be bo-ho-ho-ho-horing. The character, not you, is living the scene.

3. *Come up with a great cliffhanger at the end of every major scene.* This is easier than it sounds if you're trusting your subconscious and writing off into the dark. Sometimes you'll recognize the cliffhanger as you write it, and sometimes you'll write past it and the scene will whimper away. When that happens, back up a few sentences and you'll find the cliffhanger.

4. *Use paragraphing to establish pacing.* There are other tricks too, but paragraphing is way up there. Shorter paragraphs equal faster pacing. Longer paragraphs slows down the pace. (A "longer" paragraph is 5 to maybe 10 lines on the page.) And in dialogue, begin a new paragraph each time a different character speaks. For the record, I use this guideline even when writing magic realism, which is widely regarded part of the "literary" genre.

And really, that's it. I mean, there are a lot more "little" things I could teach you, nuances I've taught for the past 30 years. But if you follow the bold-italic 1-4 above, you can write really good genre stories.

I hope this helps.

Oh, and adhere to [Heinlein's Rules](#). I dare you.

To the Hovel and the novel at 6:30. You know, to practice. (grin)

I stopped after the first two sessions and prepared a sample edit for a prospective copyediting client. Then back to the Hovel. It still isn't quite noon. (grin)

By the way, a couple days ago I mentioned a few conversion engines on the Writer Resources page over on the big website. If you have Windows on your computer, and if you have the little calculator that comes with it, that also has conversions on it for length, volume, etc. Just click the little menu item in the upper left corner. And prepare to be amazed. I know I was.

Well, a pretty good day today overall.

Of Interest

See Sue Coletta's "Dear Writer's Mate ..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/dear-writers-mate.html>. I added this one to my Writer Resources page. Funny, and mostly true.

See “The Rewriting Myth” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-rewriting-myth/>. A great new take.

See the comments on “Depth Done Right” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/depth-done-right/#comments>.

See “Legal Resources for Authors” at <https://www.indiesunlimited.com/resources-for-authors-legal/>.

See “Book Covers” at <https://www.indiesunlimited.com/resource-book-covers-2/>.

If you enjoy writing flash fiction (albeit to 250 words), and especially if you enjoy contests or challenges, see Flash Fiction at <https://www.indiesunlimited.com/flash-fiction/>.

See you again soon.

Fiction Words: 4420

Nonfiction Words: 880 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5300

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128

Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039

Day 12... 3251 words. Total words to date..... 35290

Day 13... 1327 words. Total words to date..... 36436

Day 14... 4420 words. Total words to date..... 40856

Total fiction words for the month..... 29902

Total fiction words for the year..... 278199

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8950

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 107236

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 385185

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Indies Unlimited](#), [KillZone Blog](#),

[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, August 14](#)

[August 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The following is about professional (or aspiring professional) writers, which I'm beginning to believe are born, not made. They are driven. Their overall number-one priority, the one thing to which they always return, is writing.

Now, some write part-time because that's what they enjoy doing. Some write a memoir to leave for their family. Some simply enjoy attending writer conferences or writers group meetings and immersing themselves in the life for awhile. Maybe they enjoy talking about writing. Maybe they enjoy rubbing shoulders with writers and agents and publishers. And all of that's fine. Nothing wrong with it. But those aren't the folks I'm talking about here.

Topic: Writers Write

Professional and aspiring professional writers write. They too might write a memoir and attend conferences and writers group meetings. But for them, What they write always takes a second seat to That they write.

A blog post popped into my inbox this morning from a young writer to whose posts I first subscribed a couple of years ago. I wasn't learning anything from the guy, but he was somewhat prolific (around 280,000 words of fiction in the first five months of 2017) and watching him speed along in his writing was fun.

For a long time, he was posting regularly — once a week, as I recall — and always with a motivating update about his writing, book covers, etc. That was up through early October, 2017. His post then was about “getting back on the horse” (resuming his writing).

Then he dropped off the face of the earth.

He surfaced again on January 2, 2018 and laid out his goals for the new year. He would finish three books that were over halfway written and write at least six more books by the end of the year.

I emailed him privately, told him I was glad to see him back. I cheered him on. He wrote back, assured me he'd been through a dry spell, but he was back.

And he disappeared again, not to resurface until today.

In today's post, he offered some excuses for his absence. It was nothing earth-shaking, no emotional or physical life rolls. It was things like getting back together with a band, practicing, etc. In other words, his priorities shifted.

He thanked us subscribers for staying with him, then announced vague new “hopes” (not “goals”) and a forthcoming Patreon page to which he hoped we would contribute.

Uh, no.

On the whole, frankly, the post left a bad taste in my mouth.

For one thing I no longer support Patreon. They regularly bite the hand that feeds them. That's the main reason I opted to set up my own [Rewards for Patrons page](#) over on the big site. And as an alternate, a PayPal donation button.

But more than not wanting to support Patreon, I was overcome with a sense that I just can't count on the guy. In my mind, he'd already gone from being a Writer to being a Whatever Happened To [Name] guy.

For a long moment after I read the post, I let my cursor hover over the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the email. But I didn't click it. I decided to wait, see what happens.

Because on a smaller scale, I've been there myself. I've gone long periods without writing fiction, albeit for me (for a writer), a week or two feels like a "long period." But even then I was writing the Pro Writers blog and this Journal.

Those of you who have been with me from the beginning will remember that for a time (three or four months?), I even stopped writing this Journal. But during that time I continued to write. There was still the Pro Writers blog over on the other site and there was still my fiction.

This "work ethic" (too haughty a term for something so enjoyable) is not something that's exclusive to me. It's a simple fact: No matter what they're writing, writers write. There are no excuses.

All of this makes me understand why Dean includes his nonfiction writing (his blog and even his email responses) in his writing totals.

And I realize it's why I include my Journal and blog posts in my own overall writing totals. (I don't include email responses or the imbedded comments I make on copyedits. For me, that would be too much approximation and too time consuming.)

But all of this — all the "rules" of writing, all the talk — boils down to one fact: writers write.

And for me it's a kind of return epiphany, a reminder. But the epiphany is that I and other professional writers don't really need the reminder. It's one that we have never needed.

Because we're writers. Like Joe is a mechanic or Bruce is a pool-builder or Jay is a drummer.

Fiction writers write fiction. Bloggers write blog posts. Writers write.

Finally to the Hovel around 9:30.

A particularly good day today since I started late and stopped early. I have a copyedit to begin.
(grin)

Of Interest

I've often talked in this Journal about using all the physical senses, not only sight, when you write. For an excellent article, see "What Specific Smells Remind You of Home?" at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/what-smells-remind-you-of-home?>.

See "Being There: How It Really Feels To Be Tased...and Amazed" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/being-there-how-it-really-feelsto-be-tased-and-amazed.html>.

Here you go. A ready-made story idea. See "Found: A WWII-Era Fighter Aircraft Under Ice" at <https://www.popularmechanics.com/flight/a22575917/wwii-p-38-discovered-under-300-feet-of-ice-in-greenland/>.

Via The Passive Voice, and for the sheer joy of it, see "Notes Nearing Ninety: Learning to Write Less" at <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/08/08/notes-nearing-ninety-learning-to-write-less/>.

See you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3618

Nonfiction Words: 910 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4528

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128
Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039
Day 12... 3251 words. Total words to date..... 35290
Day 13... 1327 words. Total words to date..... 36436
Day 14... 4420 words. Total words to date..... 40856
Day 15... 3618 words. Total words to date..... 44474

Total fiction words for the month..... 33520
Total fiction words for the year..... 281817
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9860
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 108146
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 389713

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 31

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, August 15](#)

[August 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, first an update:

A prolific young writer who was certain his blog post was the catalyst for my Journal post yesterday (maybe it was, maybe it wasn't) emailed me to say he's back on track and committed to writing again. Also he won't be starting a Patreon account for a good while, if ever. His plan all along was to wait until he had plenty to offer subscribers.

He also wrote that the "Time for excuses is over. Now is the time for me to put up or truly fade away and realize that [I] don't have what it takes to make it."

For the record, that wasn't at all what I was trying to convey in yesterday's Journal. In my estimation, *being* a writer is no more important than being any other kind of artist or professional. Again, for me, what we choose to do is all a matter of our own priorities. And as always, this is only the opinion of one old curmudgeon.

The only "wisdom" I have to pass along is pretty common: Whenever possible, do what you enjoy and don't sweat the small stuff, including my opinions.

I appreciate all of you being out there. As I was telling a friend earlier today, my posting in this Journal is no longer a streak of any kind. Almost, maybe, but I don't look at it that way.

The Journal goes out almost daily, but only when I feel like chatting with my friends or have something to pass along in "Of Interest."

Really I see the Journal as a kind of virtual back fence. In that way, it generates no pressure on me at all. Rather, it's an exercise in relaxation. My elbow is propped up on this fence as I visit with my friends. Sometimes there are several dozen others standing in the yard next door. Sometimes only one or two. But the visit is the thing. (grin)

I had a topic or two, but this is already getting sort of long so I'll hold off for today. You're welcome. (grin)

To the Hovel at 6:30 for the first session. I also did some cycling and adding to the reverse outline.

Back to the Hovel at 10 for the second session. Another short break, then back to see whether the story would continue or whether it would wrap.

Unfortunately, it wrapped. Sigh.

To the copyedit for the rest of the day, then to a new story tomorrow or the next day.

Of Interest

See Linda Maye Adams' "Fear of Ideas" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/08/15/fear-of-ideas/>. Good post.

See "Pathological Need for Ideas" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pathological-need-for-ideas/>. His third paragraph is a gem. Read and re-read it. But there are other gems too, scattered through the post. I added this one to the Helpful Specific Topics on my Writer Reference page.

For my own take on ideas, see "Exercising the Idea Muscle" at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/exercising-the-idea-muscle/>.

See "Say Hello to My Little Friend" (free short story) at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/13/free-fiction-monday-say-hello-to-my-little-friend/>. As always, great to study for technique. Good story too.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 2377

Nonfiction Words: 510 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2887

Writing of Nick Spalding 2 (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 3477 words. Total words to date..... 30128
Day 11... 1911 words. Total words to date..... 32039
Day 12... 3251 words. Total words to date..... 35290
Day 13... 1327 words. Total words to date..... 36436
Day 14... 4420 words. Total words to date..... 40856
Day 15... 3618 words. Total words to date..... 44474
Day 16... 2377 words. Total words to date..... 46851 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 35897

Total fiction words for the year..... 284194

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10370

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 108656
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 392600

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [the writing life](#), [Writer Resources](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, August 16](#)

[August 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm writing this early (around 6), but probably a non fiction-writing day today. It's a half-day anyway, and a laundry day and I have a copyedit to work on.

Some of you probably are rolling your eyes, but the plan "this time" is to write first in the morning on most days (beginning tomorrow, I hope) and to edit in the afternoons until the copyedit is finished.

I know. Been there before, but my mindset is a little different this morning.

As I was telling a friend earlier, I'm in a Hemingway-esque state of mind.

I wrote the novella *Jobs Like That* in that state, and the novel I just finished was in that state. Though it annoyed me a bit that it ended so soon.

I went in thinking it would probably be my first "thriller" novel, but it didn't work out that way. I never chanced upon the earth-shaking conflict with international implications that are the centerpiece of most thrillers.

What I ended up with was a second Nick Spalding fiction that is an action-adventure psychological-suspense thing with, as it turned out, a strong element of romance. Go figure.

A good story, but not what I was expecting. But it was a ball to write. I looked forward to sitting down with it each morning.

And that's kind of the gist of this diatribe. I suspect we all go into a story with preconceived notions, but the characters, not we, are living the tale, and if we simply let the story unfold, they'll tell the story the way it should be told. Regardless of how we "think" it should go. (grin)

I was sad to see that story end, and frankly I was a little dismayed at what happened to a character who debuted in Jobs Like That. But I'm glad the characters allowed me to come along on the ride.

In fact, I'm thinking about expanding Jobs Like That into a novel (with a different name, of course) to expand on the role of that earlier character.

Got the laundry started, then mowed about half the yard (east and south). Now I'm gonna edit while I cool down, so I'll go ahead and post this early.

Of Interest

Via Dan Baldwin, see "Business Musings: Writers And The Hamster Wheel Of Doom" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/15/business-musings-writers-and-the-hamster-wheel-of-doom/>. As Dan says, it's "pure gold." This was posted yesterday, but for some reason didn't show up on my RSS feed.

See "Two New Regular Workshops Posted" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/two-new-regular-workshops-posted/>.

See Jordan Dane's "A Second Chance at a Cover" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/a-second-chance-at-a-cover.html>. Bearing in mind that as an indy publisher you have many more chances than two to update your covers. Potentially useful references here though.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 440 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 440

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 35897
Total fiction words for the year..... 284194
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 109096
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 393040

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jordan Dane](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, August 17](#)

[August 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A day or two ago in “Of Interest” I mentioned an essay by former US Poet Laureate Donald Hall. He also has two books of essays available. One is mentioned in the article I referenced.

If you’d like to get the books, I recommend buying them from Amazon. The publisher sells them both, but the price is marked up. You can get *A Carnival of Losses: Notes Nearing Ninety* (hardcover) from Amazon for only \$19, and *Essays After Eighty* (paperback) is available for only \$10.84, both brand new.

I’m not sure why traditional publishers are so upside down with such things. Readers can purchase all of my books (some in paper) from Amazon and other major retailers. But if they buy directly from my publisher, StoneThread Publishing, they get a discount. When readers buy direct, why not pass along part of the savings to the reader? Duh.

There are terms and phrases that leave an ugly taste in my ear every time I read or hear them.

I suspect most, if not all, of them are the product of some newly minted MBA who’s attempting to be “proactive” in his efforts to get the positive attention of the guy or gal on the top floor.

Chief among those terms and phrases is “grow your business.”

Every time I encounter that phrase, a four year old pops into my head, the little fingers of one hand nervously entertwining with those of the other as he strives to bring the right word to mind.

But it isn’t a four year old at all. It’s the aforementioned bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, eager beaver of an MBA who, over a five or six year period in college, learned nothing more valuable than business-speak.

Sigh. I suppose “expand” or “develop” is beyond his ability. Too many syllables, perhaps.

Per my own stubborn streak, I shall endeavor to persevere and refuse to “grow” anything that isn’t directly related to plant life.

I almost added “or a cynical, curmudgeonly attitude” but that’s something else one develops. Mine is coming along nicely, thank you. (grin)

Back to writing fiction this morning, after first reading in preparation for writing.

I’ve decided to write another Nick Spalding novel, one that will begin with (and include) the novella Jobs Like That and move the story forward so it leads to Nick Spalding 2, the one I just finished.

That will enable me to continue playing with the main character for awhile longer. It will also close a massive hole that currently exists in the storyline.

In this particular case, it also won’t be a struggle at all because the first novel chronologically doesn’t have to “meet up” with the second in any real way.

So here we go. As always, I have no preconceived notions except that the story will continue.

To begin with, I’ll bring forward the words in the novella.

Today, I’ll read over the novella as a reader (in reality-suspended creative mind), allowing myself to touch it as I go. And when I reach the end, I’ll simply write the next sentence and keep going.

Of course, I’ll only count new words of fiction in the totals below.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, if you are or are going to be around Bakersfield CA tomorrow morning, see “Writers of Kern hosting workshop on how to self-publish” at

http://www.tehachapinews.com/lifestyle/writers-of-kern-hosting-workshop-on-how-to-self-publish/article_09cc8488-9ff2-11e8-b6b6-77ef6195208a.html.

See “How to Set up Google Alerts...” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-set-up-google-alerts-and-use-it-to-grow-your-business/>.

In case you missed it in the comments on TPG’s post, there’s also the free TalkWalker Alerts at <https://www.talkwalker.com/>.

See “Why All the Secrecy ...” at <https://www.leelofland.com/why-all-the-secrecy-by-law-enforcement-regarding-the-disappearance-of-mollie-tibbetts/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 1449

Nonfiction Words: 610 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2059

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Total fiction words for the month..... 37346

Total fiction words for the year..... 285643

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11420

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 109706

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 395099

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, August 18](#)

[August 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A few days ago, for some reason, the RSS feed for Kristine Kathryn Rusch failed, on my end or on hers. You'll remember I referenced this in "Of Interest" when Dan Baldwin told me of a great new post.

This morning I explored her site a little more. Finally, on the Contact Kris page (<https://kriswrites.com/contact-kris/>) I scrolled down and found two subscription forms.

One is to "Subscribe to Blog via Email" and the other is to "Subscribe with RSS." (Both of these are only for the overall blog. She also writes several smaller occasional newsletters to which you can subscribe for particular series, etc.)

I recommend doing so. I disagree with her about many things, but she is still an incredible source of valid information on the business of writing. And if you want to learn the craft of writing

fiction, you'd be hard pressed to find better work to study.

Most of you know I dote on my little girl cat. I don't see her as a "pet." Our relationship is more that of father/daughter.

Though at 7 years old, she's a grown little woman cat, and more and more often she rolls her eyes when I call her "baby" or "little girl." She finds it condescending I guess.

Still, I've learned a great deal from her. She communicates in the only ways she can, with rubs and tail whips or taps, her tiny voice and her pleasant purring (two distinct types), and occasional touches or pats of her little hands (claws retracted). When she wants to make a definitive point, of course, her teeth and claws are available. And she uses them occasionally, but never harshly.

Through the use of all of those, she tenders all the various emotions, and more lessons than I can list here. Most of the lessons are based on respect, and all of them transcend species. Things like

Personal space is important — If I'm in a bad mood, she'll still come by to nuzzle me and let me know she's there, but then she withdraws. If I pet her and she growls or meows in an irritable tone, I withdraw but hope she's all right and wait it out.

Personal contact is important — Though we each lead our own human and cat lives during much of the day, she makes time to find me and rub past my leg or jump up on my desk and touch my cheek, and I find time to locate her and pet her and show her she's important to me.

It's all right to want things done a certain way — If I want to provide her morning dose of cranberry stuff (urinary tract care) on my desk and she wants it on the floor, well, it doesn't break my back to set it on the floor, now does it? If I pick her up toward the end of the day (against her will, but for a good reason, like darkness and owls are coming) and carry her inside, she doesn't complain.

It's all right to disagree — She's a cat and cats are far and away free spirits, so sometimes she hops over the gate. I'm a dad, so to keep her safe, I retrieve her. Neither of us gets upset, and both of us understand the other's motives.

Being stoic in the face of pain — All right, I learned a lot of this from Pope John Paul II (whom I see as a truly great man) but I also learned a lot of it from my girl. She can accept and wait out personal physical pain better than anyone I've ever seen.

Being stoic about things you can't change — This is important, and something I learned entirely from my little girl. I couldn't reciprocate with my own lessons to her on this one. And I'm still learning.

and the biggie.....

We're all much more alike than different — Whether two legged or four or six or eight or none, whether clad in hair or fur or feathers or scales, we're all sharing the same physicality and coping with one thing or another, some good, some bad, in our own unique ways.

I also learned, mostly from her, that neither of us is greater or lesser, only different. And for the most part, the differences are cosmetic and the result of fear. We're all just living our lives, most of us to the best of our ability, and trying not to revert to dust until we absolutely have to.

And a great deal more, but I've probably already gone on too long.

Not sure what the day will hold, other than some mowing and then a fun trip to Sierra Vista for an estate sale. My human love and I enjoy poking around in those, looking for things we can't live without for another day.

Then probably some copyediting later. Probably won't get back to the novel until tomorrow or the next day. But then, that's become my new norm. (grin)

In fact, I'm going to post this early so I don't forget.

Of Interest

See "Being Clear On Rewriting and Other Stuff" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/being-clear-on-rewriting-and-other-stuff/>. Short and worth the time to read.

See "Hometown Mysteries" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/hometown-mysteries.html>. Not only the post and its ingredients but the writer's response to (or assumption about) them.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 850 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 850

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 37346

Total fiction words for the year..... 285643

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 110556

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 395949

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, August 20](#)

[August 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

No Journal for yesterday. We did a lot of yard work and other necessarys, and I did some editing but that's it. There was nothing even for the "Of Interest" section.

I did receive an email yesterday from Kris Rusch. Her website is being migrated from one ISP to another and the RSS subscriptions didn't migrate with it, at least not yet. That just means for now it's better to check the site manually. Which you can do at <http://kriswrites.com>.

If you use dictation for your writing, PLEASE be sure to read it over afterward (preferably aloud) before sending it to a proofreader or copyeditor. No dictation software is perfect, and some of them substitute "did you mean" words for the word you actually said (like "French" for "fridge"), fail to capitalize the first word of sentences in dialogue, etc.

For years, possibly the most common statement I've made in teaching writing is to Question Everything. I'm more than pleased to see Dean passing along the same advice in his post today (it's in "Of Interest"). The guy is spot on, in my opinion.

There are a lot of gems in his post today. Some are practically buried. I recommend you read it two or three times, and if something he says makes you feel uncomfortable, Do That.

Also in today's "Of Interest," there's a post by Clare Langley-Hawthorne on selecting titles.

For me, most often the title of a novel comes from a particularly memorable phrase that suits the work itself. Usually it comes from the manuscript, and sometimes from another's novel in the same genre.

In the case of the latter, sometimes the title presents itself in whole cloth, but more often the phrase in another's work stimulates thought that eventually suggests a title.

For example, the eventual title of my current WIP might well come from a pair of phrases from a Jack Higgins novel I just finished.

Either way, I seldom search for a title. More often, it presents itself as a small jolt of literary electricity.

I've read that Papa Hemingway recommended using phrases from the bible for titles, which he did on occasion.

And Dean, as we all know, starts with a title (title as trigger) and starts writing.

For short stories, often the title "appears" first and I write the story based on the title. Of course, sometimes a short story wants to expand and become more, sometimes with the same title. But when that title isn't expansive enough, I go back to a phrase from the novella or novel.

This morning I pre-scheduled three more promo posts re my novels over on the main blog. That brings me up through September 25.

I hope these promo things are doing some good. What more can I do beyond giving away free review copies of my books? Sigh.

Around 7, out to the Hovel to cycle a bit more. I realized sometime over the weekend that as the basis for a longer (and separate) novel, the novella doesn't have to remain intact. Duh. After the cycling, I'll write awhile. Then this afternoon, I'll do more on the copyedit, report my numbers below and post this poor, disjointed little edition of the Journal.

Finished the little bit of cycling I had to do in the first hour. In altering the first part of the new novel, I cut around 260 words and added some for a net gain to just over 200 words.

Took a short break for breakfast and then went back to the Hovel for session two.

After another short session, I had to deal with what turned out to be a minor emergency (whew!) in New Mexico via email and chat, and by then I was out of writing time.

Of Interest

See "Forcing the Help" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/forcing-the-help/>.

See "A Title by Any Other Name" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/a-title-by-any-other-name.html>.

See "Rhyolite Ghost Town" at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/rhyolite-ghost-town>. Maybe a good story setting/idea.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 1611

Nonfiction Words: 680 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2291

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838

Total fiction words for the month..... 38957

Total fiction words for the year..... 287254

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12950

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 111236

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 398240

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Clare Langley-Hawthorne](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Titles](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, August 21

[August 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A lot in “Of Interest” today from the somewhat sublime to the outright silly. Enjoy.

The plan for today was to get to the Hovel early to begin writing New Words on my WIP. Yesterday I got out there a little late and still had some cycling to do, so I ran out of time before I had to return to the copyedit.

For various reasons, I didn’t get out there early. When I do get back (some time or other, and I hope it’s today) I’ll roll straight off the edge into the trenches of the story and race through them with my characters.

There’s nothing I like less in my own writing than to remain outside the story, “directing” and letting the characters have all the fun. I’ve fooled myself into believing they like to have me along, too, if only so they can enjoy a sense of superiority.

As I follow the characters, I'll hope to keep up, and I'll endeavor to record what they say and do for at least a few hours.

I despise being trapped in a machine that requires regular maintenance. How much more could I get done if not for the regular requirement of sleep, food, and moving about to appease deterioration?

Seen in an article by US Navy Pilot Nicole Scherer in the August 2018 issue of Air & Space Smithsonian magazine:

The Basic Rules of Flight

1. Try to stay in the middle of the air.
2. Do not go near the edges of it.
3. The edges can be identified by objects such as trees, buildings, cars, etc.

Anyone who's flown as pilot or passenger, successfully or otherwise, knows those basic rules to be true. Here's my own take for writing fiction:

1. Try to stay immersed in the story.
2. Do not go near the edges of it.
3. The edges can be identified in every case by mind-numbing fear expressed in thoughts such as "But what happens next? I'd better figure it out," and "The character(s) wouldn't say that. I'd better fix it," and "The character(s) wouldn't do that. I'd better fix it," etc.

The characters, not you, are living the story. It's their story to tell. Stand back and let them tell it. If you want to control everything, I suggest you write an autobiography.

If, on the other hand, you have the capacity to be generous enough to allow others to tell their own story while you serve only in the lesser role of the recorder, write fiction.

Ugh, a really blah day and a little under the weather. I went out and started a session around 9. Wrote only a few hundred words, but already I feel like much of the day is gone. I think I'll work on the copyedit the rest of today and get back to the WIP in the morning.

So I'll go ahead and post this.

Of Interest

See "SF Plot Twist Bundle Almost Done!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sf-plot-twist-bundle-almost-done/>. This is an excellent bundle. Plus he announces the Novel and Short Story Challenge have only a few spots left.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Details” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/20/free-fiction-monday-details-2/>.

Via The Passive Guy, see “Some Friendly Advice To New Law Students” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/some-friendly-advice-to-new-law-students/>. Seems to me this has a great deal of good advice for writers as well.

Literally “of interest,” see “How Aretha Franklin Earned ‘Respect’ by Flipping Gender Roles” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-aretha-franklin-earned-respect-by-flipping-gender-roles/>.

For a bit of silliness (and a special to DB), see “Court considers fake reviews not deceptive if they’re just puffery” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/court-considers-fake-reviews-not-deceptive-if-theyre-just-puffery/>. Be sure to read the comment of yours truly after the post. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 620

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227
Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 38957
Total fiction words for the year..... 287254
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13570
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 111856
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 398860

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, August 22](#)

[August 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

In response to my post at [harveystanbrough.com](#) about “Reviews,” I received an email from a guy who agreed with me. Sort of. Then he launched into a heated rant about “rich people” and then politics. Specifically, American politics, specifically at the national level.

I strive to keep politics out of my blogs. It isn't always easy because on the one hand, they're my personal blogs. But on the other, my stated purpose for them is to help other writers cut the learning curve in the craft of writing. That's regardless of the writer's race, skin tone, nationality or personal beliefs, political or otherwise.

The main point I was trying to make in the post on “Reviews” is that they really don't matter all that much, or shouldn't, to writers. Our job is to keep learning and improving in the craft with an eye to entertaining others. That's it.

Most often, if a reader praises your work (and if you aren't locked in a mutual-admiration society), it's because the story was to his or her taste. If the reader pans it, it wasn't. You know, unless the writing itself was just horrible, but I have more confidence in myself than that. I hope you do too.

Now, I'm going to back away slowly and go write. (grin) It's my job.

Speaking of which, I have what some consider a personality flaw. I don't care for “chatting” or whatever it's called. I don't mind that others enjoy it, as long as they aren't trying to enjoy it with me.

I've had what some have called an “overactive” sense of urgency since I was a child. I need (and more importantly, want) to be doing something constructive in pretty much every moment. Life is short, etc.

That's one reason I rely mostly on email for any genial conversations. I see telephones as intrusive, as I do “chats.” With email, at least I can select a time to respond, and I can edit my response before I hit Send.

So if you Need something, by all means, please email me or chat or phone or whatever. Unless my house is on fire at the moment, I'd be happy to help. But if you just want to chat casually about whatever (especially non-writing things), please use email.

To the Hovel, finally, at 8. Two good sessions back to back with only a very short break, then a slightly longer break (more on that next), and then one more session. That took me to noon and copyediting time.

When I left the Hovel for my longer break and walked to the house, I noticed the hummingbird feeder was empty. So I took it down, brought it into the sink and washed it. I had another one ready to go in the refrigerator.

I checked email, etc., then headed back to the Hovel, forgetting to hang the new feeder.

When I got to the Hovel, a hummer appeared outside the window and hovered there for a long moment. That's when I remembered the feeder. So back to the house I went to hang the new feeder.

The hummer followed me. He was happily lapping up the cold sugar water when I came in to write this. (grin)

Of Interest

GREAT comments on "Forcing the Help" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/forcing-the-help/#comments>. Don't miss these, folks.

See "I Wasn't Rich" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/i-wasnt-rich/>.

See "Many, Many Hats" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/18877.html>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3169

Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3749

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838

Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007

Total fiction words for the month..... 42146

Total fiction words for the year..... 290423

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14150

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 112436

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 402609

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, August 23](#)

[August 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

If you own your own hosted website, this will be of interest to you. It's important enough that I'm putting off my own writing to report.

Below in "Of Interest," Kris Rusch talks about problems with a particular web host. Having had similar experiences with that web host, I concur.

So I'm searching for a new web host. The first lesson is not to believe everything you read online, at least at first glance.

For example, I clicked a link that offered the "Top 15 Web Hosts." But when the page came up it listed only 7 hosts, and in the small print said they were all owned by the same conglomerate that owns the web host in Kris' post. Umm, I'll pass.

I won't recommend a specific web host, and I won't be moving mine anytime soon, but take all of this as a cautionary note: As they used to say on Hill Street Blues, Be careful out there.

Topic: A Brief Rehash of an Old and Valuable Lesson

Writing off into the dark works, folks. Writing the next sentence that occurs to you works.

For the past two days, I've gone to the Hovel, sat down and thought maybe I ought to give up on this novel. It would be so easy to start something new.

A character with a problem in a setting — that's all it takes to begin something new, to write a new opening. And writing new openings is pure fun.

But both times I pushed that thought aside (it was conscious-mind stuff, trying to protect me from myself). Instead, I put my fingers on the keyboard, read back a few lines and then typed the next sentence.

I let the characters take me away, and in both cases I didn't look up for about an hour. Both times I'd written around a thousand new words in the story.

The same story I'd been ready to give up on an hour earlier.

Just sayin'.

This is how you train yourself to trust your subconscious.

Acknowledge whatever little stumbling-block thoughts the conscious mind tosses out (remember, they're always negative), then dismiss those and write the next sentence that occurs to you.

Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Soon you'll be racing along, immersed in the story with your characters.

As as I hope many of you know from experience, there is no better feeling.

A half-day today, as is the case on Thursday, but even with a late start I managed a few good hours of writing.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Website Issues" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/22/business-musings-website-issues/>. She reports a lot more than I mentioned the other day. Some good lessons here.

See "Eight Lessons from Digging in the Dirt" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/eight-lessons-from-digging-in-the-dirt.html>. Pretty much every point she made caused me to wonder (and hope) whether she indie published her first nine novels. But no, I didn't bother to comment.

See "Canada's Rakuten Kobo Arrives in Amazonian America at Walmart: Ebooks and Audiobooks" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/canadas-rakuten-kobo-arrives-in-amazonian-america-at-walmart-ebooks-and-audiobooks/>.

See "A Great Question" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/a-great-question/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3077

Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3597

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838

Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084

Total fiction words for the month..... 45203
Total fiction words for the year..... 293500
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 112946
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 406206

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, August 24](#)

[August 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, if you publish your books to print, don't miss "Of Interest" today. Extremely important news.

It's been awhile since I stopped taking my books to print, so I was behind the curve on this one.

Please spread the news to any other writers or writers groups you know of.

Out to the Hovel a little late. I got a two short, disjointed sessions done, then one good third session and wound up with just over 2000 words of fiction on the day. But I'm feeling a little under the weather so I'll cut my losses and take it.

I also realized I hadn't done a reverse outline for this one yet (I'm in Chapter 23), so I went back and did that too.

Not sure what will happen over the weekend, of course. I'll definitely work on the copyedit off and on, but not sure what I'll get done on the WIP.

That's really about it for today.

Of Interest

Via [The Passive Voice](#), “What’s Going On With CreateSpace and KDP Print?” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2018/08/whats-going-on-with-createspace-and-kdp-print/>.
Read the entire article.

For fun, see “DIY Ice Cream in Wartime” at <https://www.airspacemag.com/as-next/cool-side-tropical-warfare-180969515/>.

See “Chocolate Frosting, Cheap Perfume, and Brains and Blood” at <https://www.leelofland.com/chocolate-frosting-cheap-perfume-and-brains-and-blood/>.

Reedsy offers blogs on almost every topic at <https://blog.reedsy.com/>. I recommend it.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 2146

Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2376

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838

Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007

Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084

Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230

Total fiction words for the month..... 47349

Total fiction words for the year..... 295646

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14900

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 113186

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 408582

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#)

The Journal, Saturday, August 25

[August 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A lot going on today, so if I write any fiction, I'll report those numbers for today and tomorrow in Monday's Journal.

Topic: Preaching to the Choir, Part 1

Yeah, Parts 1 and 2. I was going to post the whole topic, but it came in at around 1500 words, so Part 1 today, Part 2 tomorrow. (grin)

By "preaching to the choir," I mean reminding folks of things they already know, but maybe of which they can use an occasional reminder.

I received a particularly interesting blog post in my email, one that reminded me of myself in too many ways. And I'm convinced those points strike all of us at one time or another. I guarantee you, every one of them has struck me before and most (if not all) of them were reported right here in this Journal:

1. *Starting and restarting* — After a layoff, particularly a long layoff, it's difficult to get started again.

I'll venture a guess and say that's true. But it's also a myth. It's true only because we buy into it.

In truth, the only way to start is to start. If you have a work in progress, read over it to get back in the flow, then trust your subconscious and just write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Et cetera.

So it's hard to start or restart only as long as you give the fear of starting or restarting the power to stop you.

2. *Writing at pace* — Maybe I can't write as much or as fast as I did before.

All other things being equal, of course you can. Maybe you have to build up to spending the number of hours in the chair again, but if you did it once, you can do it again.

And if you don't, so what? As long as the characters are telling you a story, does it matter how slowly or how fast they tell it? Let them entertain you, and have fun.

3. *Impostor syndrome* — the sense that you're only pretending to be a writer, that you can't really write well, but that you can fake it well.

If you put the words on the page, you wrote them. We're all copycatting someone, and most of us are copycatting several someones. Again, so what? Your characters are telling you a story or,

if you're unfortunate, you're directing the characters as they struggle to tell you a story. Either way, you're the writer.

On the other hand, I still wonder almost every day whether I'm only writing to prove to myself and others that I can. You would think after 32 novels and over 200 short stories that would be behind me, but no.

4. *Impostor syndrome redux* — the sense, while reading back over something you've finished, that someone else wrote it. You feel a “disconnect” with the story.

The easy answer for this one is “Once it's done, let it go and move on to the next story.” Easier for some of us to say than to do, I know, but there it is.

The way Dean would answer this one (and I agree) is with a question: Why are you moving backward? Life is short. Move forward. Problem solved.

5. *The search for perfection* — Why most folks who move backward do so.

They go back to “fix” (meaning “to perfect”) something they've already written and published, with the intent of re-releasing it.

A few questions to consider when you're faced with this trap, this time drain:

- a. What's fun about trying to perfect something that can never be perfect?
- b. How much new writing could you have done in the time it took to go back and “perfect” something that's already published? How many new stories could you have told? How far along would you be in your next novel or series?
- c. Do you enjoy watching a ball game when someone's already told you the final score? Do you still want to go see a newly released movie when someone's already spoiled the ending? Then why do you want to revisit something you've already written?

6. *The characters are being resistant* — as an excuse for not getting into the flow again.

The characters, like most humans I've met, are actually eager to talk about themselves, to tell their story. So maybe you're being resistant because you've lost the ability to trust your subconscious.

The fix? Put your fingers on the keyboard and type the next sentence that comes to you. Just do it. Then type the next sentence, then the next and the next. Don't stop. Don't think. Just type. It gets easier as you go.

Back tomorrow with Part 2.

Of Interest

See “A Fun Harlan Story” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-fun-harlan-story/>.

See Joe Hartlaub’s “Nextdoor” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/nextdoor.html>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 980 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 980

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227
Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838
Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084
Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 47349
Total fiction words for the year..... 295646
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15880
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 114166
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 409562

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, August 26](#)

[August 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

As I expected, no fiction writing yesterday. If I write today, I’ll report it on Monday.

I received feedback on my previous novel from my first reader yesterday, and this morning I applied that feedback and (I hope) enlisted her aid as the first reader for the one I'm working on now. (grin)

Now I just have to come up with a couple of titles. One for Nick Spalding 2 (the one I finished) and another for Nick Spalding 1 (the WIP).

In the meantime, here's Part 2 of the topic I started yesterday. (You can see Part 1 at <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-saturday-august-25/>.)

Topic: Preaching to the Choir, Part 2

7. *Letting the critical voice in* — The error of thinking it's okay to do a critical read-through to catch and fix errors and look for points you need going forward.

Every time you let the critical voice in, especially if you actually invite it in, the next time becomes easier.

You're telling your critical voice you want and need its help, and you really don't. Trust your subconscious and let your fingers fly. True joy awaits, I promise.

If you want to do a read-through for any reason, do it as a reader for pleasure (that will engage the subconscious), not a writer. Read strictly for pleasure, on-screen, while your fingers rest on the keyboard.

If that little voice says "Add this," add it. Anytime you hear a negative in that voice (ooh, wrong word; ooh, that sentence is too long; etc.), you've slipped into critical voice.

If that happens, physically leave the keyboard and the story. Put it out of your mind. Tell your conscious mind to get lost, that it's not welcome. Take a walk. Do something to shake it loose.

And when you come back, bring the story up on the screen, back up a paragraph or two from where you stopped, and begin reading strictly for pleasure while your fingers rest on the keyboard. And as the writer of the original post wrote, "let your fingers" (characters) "do the work" (tell the story) "instead of your brain" (critical voice).

8. *It will come in time* — You'll get back into the flow of writing in time.

Only no, you won't. Not until you let go of the fear that causes you to depend on your critical voice. As Bradbury once said, "Nothing good in literature ever came from the conscious mind."

9. *Distractions suck* — Yes, yes they do.

I have a strong personality and strong opinions. I also have strong ideals (world peace, etc.) but remain rooted in reality.

I realize many of you are annoyed and distracted by things that don't annoy or distract me. Hey, works for me. Vive la différence.

About ten years ago (not joking) I stopped watching or listening to the national "news" on television. In my opinion, today's "unbiased press" in the US easily rivals the old Soviet TASS Agency for their ability to propagate witch hunts and churn out propaganda.

I was observing my kitten one day, and I realized whatever the foolish humans in the nation's capital do, if it doesn't directly affect her, she doesn't worry about it. So I adopted her attitude. And it works.

So yes, clear out as many distractions as you can. I don't recommend divorce or disowning your children, but otherwise, distance yourself from annoying outside influences.

10. *We write so others can escape reality for awhile (psychiatrists call this "transference")* — Absolutely. But write first so YOU can escape reality for awhile.

It's why your characters and their stories exist, to enable you to escape. Then, later, decide whether to share the story so others can escape too.

I've written 32 novels and am steeped in the story of the 33rd. There's one I still haven't released to others (published) and I might never do so. Don't ask. I have my reasons. (grin)

But the point is, it was worthwhile to write because it was vastly entertaining to me. It may or may not ever be entertaining to anyone else, but at the moment that isn't my concern.

11. *Others care about what I write and even That I write* — Those who read and enjoy what you write care, sure. Others, not so much. Not really, and that's okay.

12. *I'm trying* — For this one, I'll just quote Yoda (grin): "Do or do not; there is no try."

Again, the writing — allowing the characters to tell you their story — is the thing.

Notice that in every case above, except maybe number 9, the catalyst is fear as created by the critical mind. And even in the case of number 9, if you continue to allow distractions and let them keep you from writing, that one's based on fear too.

But it's an unreasoning fear, as are all the others. It's unreasoning because there are zero real consequences. If you "fail," absolutely nothing will happen, except the sun will dawn on a new day tomorrow, which means you get to try again.

So it's all good. So get out of your own way and write already if that's what you want to do. And if it isn't, that's okay too.

Of Interest

See “Put Some Snap in Your Style” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/put-some-snap-in-your-style.html>.

See “Agent Danielle Smith’s Former Clients Speak Out” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/agent-danielle-smiths-former-clients-speak-out/>. Yet another agent-related horror story.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 880 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 880

Writing of Nick Spalding 1 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227
Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838
Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084
Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230
Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 47349
Total fiction words for the year..... 295646
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16760
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 115046
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 410442

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, August 27](#)

[August 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, one of my novels is in a new bundle from BundleRabbit: Cosmic Clashes. So that makes eight active bundles. (grin) You can see all of the bundles that contain my work at <http://harveystanbrough.com/bundles/>.

Worked through the day yesterday and finished the copyedit. Looking very forward to getting back full-time to my own WIP today.

My first reader is excellent. Chief (to me) among her finds were places where my character “secreted himself” instead of simply “hid.” (grin)

In every case, those were places where I allowed the language to take precedence over the story. I call it “the poet’s curse.” In retrospect, “secreted himself” just sounded so cool, and maybe a bit haughty, a bit important.

But for her, an avid reader, it evoked images of secretions and things like snails and slime and... well, you get the point.

And really, all the character did was hide. So yeah, I made those changes and several others she recommended. A good first reader really is gold.

Allowing language to intervene in their writing is also one of the reasons folks attempt to improve over “said” as a tag line verb. (Is that a smooth transition, or what?) (grin)

And they end up with tag lines like

“Let’s go down to the lake,” she sentenced.

or “I can’t take it anymore!” he ejaculated.

Yeah. Not kidding.

So I was going to come back tomorrow with a long post. The main part of it would be a be-all-end-all topic on tag line verbs and the difference between tag lines and brief descriptive narratives.

But the topic alone is just under 1100 words, and thus far I’ve compiled a list of over 250 verbs that folks use erroneously in tag lines. So instead, I decided to save the whole thing as a PDF document and make it available (free) on my website.

I strongly recommend you download it and read it, especially if you believe you don’t have a problem with tag lines.

To get your free copy, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/>, then click on Not Tag Line Verbs.

Finally came up with titles for my previous novel and my WIP. They're in the same series (Nick Spalding).

In Jack Higgins' novel Night Judgement at Sinos, I encountered this excellent passage:

“It was a strange kind of existence. A sort of limbo between old endings and new beginnings.”

So the title of my WIP (chronologically the first book in the series) is Old Endings. And the title of the one I just finished (second in the series) is New Beginnings.

At least for now. (grin)

To the Hovel at around 9. Had three good sessions with breaks by 12:30, then a long break for lunch and a little Andy Griffith Show.

Back to the Hovel for a final session at 2. Good day today.

Of Interest

There are some great comments on Dean's "A Fun Harlan Story." You can read them at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-fun-harlan-story/#comments>. I even saved this one in a few categories on my Writer Resources page.

See "Two Sayings On My Office Wall" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/two-sayings-on-my-office-wall/>.

See "Does Your Story Have a Solid Foundation?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/does-your-story-have-a-solid-foundation.html>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: My Real Cousin Ruby" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/27/free-fiction-monday-my-real-cousin-ruby-2/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3882

Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4432

Writing of Old Endings (Nick Spalding 1)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227
Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838
Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084
Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230
Day 6..... 3882 words. Total words to date..... 33112

Total fiction words for the month..... 51231
Total fiction words for the year..... 299528
Total nonfiction words for the month... 173100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 115596
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 414874

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, August 28](#)

[August 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A new, educational quote about writing, especially for any beginning writers and rewriters out there:

“If you write one story [or novel], it may be bad; if you write a hundred, you have the odds in your favor.” — Edgar Rice Burroughs

Well, I wrote some today. But I had a thing, a clingy thing, in the back of my mind, bugging me.

I was supposed to receive a UPS package (cigars) yesterday, but coincidentally, yesterday was the day our road (an alley, really) was closed as workers were putting in a new gas line and something else. Water, maybe. My delivery was delayed by a day.

Of course, if UPS came today and the road was still closed... lather, rinse, repeat.

So I talked with one of the workers to find out when the excavation would be finished and the impassible hole filled. He said by 4 p.m. today.

Four p.m.? But UPS comes at noon-ish! This was, as a famous idiot once said, a situation “up with which I would not put.”

Sigh. Me being who I am, the grumbling thought accompanied me to the Hovel. And it stuck with me as I wrote. And around 10:20, after I went to the PO, mostly to work off some nerves, it was still resident in the vicinity of my brain-housing group.

So I did what I do best: I made a decision. Yes, it was a rash decision, and most of the better ones are. And certainly my decisions aren’t always the best, especially with the benefit of 20-20 hindsight, but I’m really good at sticking to them.

So I put myself and a book of Donald Hall’s essays and a cigar in my truck, locked the babies in the house, and drove via an alternate route (apparently unknown to UPS) to sit by the highway (in the sun) and watch for the big brown truck.

I parked at 10:30. Between Hall’s long, ponderous literary paragraphs and looking up to keep an eye on traffic, I still managed to get through 27 pages of essays. Most of them are short, so that was actually about 15 essays.

My plan was to see the big brown truck coming, then jump out and flag him down. Or, failing that, I’d follow him around town until he stopped, then accost him and ask him for my order.

And sure enough, a few minutes after 12, the big brown truck showed up.

I dived out of the passenger seat (it was out of the direct sun so only about 92°) and ran around to the driver’s seat. I plopped my shorts-clad legs on hot black leather, started the truck and —

watched the big brown truck brake sharply and turn down the same alternate, pitted, potholed, booby-trapped driveway I’d used an hour and a half earlier.

They aren’t supposed to do that, but MY UPS guy is a GOOD UPS guy. If he weren’t so masculine I probably would’ve kissed him.

Anyway, he apologized profusely, hand-delivered my cigars, climbed back into the big brown truck and headed out.

I’m not a good enough guy to have driven after him to make sure got through the pitted, potholed, etc. driveway, but I did wish him well.

Besides, I couldn’t tear myself away from my packages: two boxes of cigars, with which I immediately began filling my humidors.

So instead of writing for that hour and a half, I chose (foolishly, as it turns out) to wait along the road for a guy who planned to take care of me all along.

Blessed be the insane, for they are watched over. And blessed be the UPS for enabling me.

Of Interest

See “6 Ways to Help Your Make-Believe Evidence Collection More Believable” at <https://www.leelofland.com/6-ways-to-help-your-make-believe-evidence-collection-more-believable/>.

See “Killing Sacred Cows — Or Maybe Not...” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/killing-sacred-cows-or-maybe-not.html>. (If you don’t care for lengthy, syrupy intros, scroll down to “Never Open With the Weather.”)

See “Live Question Sessions with Me and Kris” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/live-question-sessions-with-me-and-kris/>. If you’re interested in supporting the Kickstarter, read the next post too.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 2511

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3201

Writing of Old Endings (Nick Spalding 1)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838

Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007

Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084

Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230

Day 6..... 3882 words. Total words to date..... 33112

Day 7..... 2511 words. Total words to date..... 35623

Total fiction words for the month..... 53742

Total fiction words for the year..... 302039

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18000

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 116286

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 418075

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, August 29](#)

[August 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Via The Passive Voice, the author of an article at Fast Company states one of the goals of a “3D novel” she wrote was to articulate “some of our generation’s concerns in the sense of ... how can we find a future worth living for.”

That got my curmudgeonly hackles up. Maybe because I’ve always had one foot in my father’s generation and one in my own. Maybe because I’ve been close to death a few times. Maybe because I think manufactured-drama is a silly way to shore up your own sense of self-esteem.

Yawn, stretch. Yeah, well, I have some advice for the young woman who wrote the article:

In my humble opinion, one sure way to “find a future worth living for” is to get out of your own 90% and help someone else.

And I don’t mean by spouting ideological niceties as if you’ve cornered the market on them and then going home to a warm, safe bed. Contribute something real, something concrete.

Join the Peace Corps. Join the military. Donate some time at a soup kitchen. Spend some time actually listening to the elders at a Home. Or even just share your expertise (free) with others.

Of course, another way is to have your air supply suddenly cut off. THAT’ll enable you to see a future worth living for. If only you can claw your way toward it.

But the first way is much less traumatic.

We’ve had some new folks join us here, so I thought I’d reference a few links to topics I often mention in the Journal:

See “*Character, Setting and Grounding the Reader*” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/character-setting-and-grounding-the-reader/>.

See “*Scene and Chapter Breaks and Hooks*” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/scene-and-chapter-breaks-and-hooks/>.

See “*On Pacing and Paragraphing*” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/on-pacing-and-paragraphing/>.

Laundry day today. Writing and laundry day. So back and forth.

I’m glad to see Reedsy is putting more of their excellent articles in blog posts. That means I can share them. (grin) There’s a good one in today’s “Of Interest.” Pay particular attention to the admonition under “Include sensory details.”

But as you read, remember that what a character in a tense situation sees, hears, smells, etc. is probably different than what the same character would see, hear, smell etc. in a non-tense situation. This is where I make my living in my stories. (grin)

Also see “Control the pace.” You can control a lot of that (especially in a tense scene) by hitting the Return (Enter) key more often.

End of lecture. Read it for yourself in “Of Interest.”

To the Hovel back and forth while doing laundry, did some cycling and bringing my reverse outline up to date, and wrote a bunch of new words. A little under the weather so I stopped at 2 p.m.

I think I inadvertently found the end of this novel today, which is odd for me, finding it when I still have a major scene to write. But this is a prequel, so....

Of Interest

See John Gilstrap’s “Cla-shack” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/cla-shack.html/>.

See “How to Write a Fight Scene” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-write-a-fight-scene/>.

See “Writing Believable Make-Believe Begins With Knowledge, Not Guesswork” at <https://www.leelofland.com/writing-believable-make-believe-begins-with-knowledge-not-guesswork/>.

For an official update on the CreateSpace/KDP Print switchover, see “Hello” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2018/08/whats-going-on-with-createspace-and-kdp-print/>.

To see KDP Print’s printing costs, click https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G201834340.

From the article, “To learn more about the move and review the latest, visit” https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/GSJULX3WGP36HQ3R.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3244

Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3774

Writing of Old Endings (Nick Spalding 1)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227
Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838
Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084
Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230
Day 6..... 3882 words. Total words to date..... 33112
Day 7..... 2511 words. Total words to date..... 35623
Day 8..... 3244 words. Total words to date..... 38867

Total fiction words for the month..... 56986
Total fiction words for the year..... 305283
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 116816
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 421849

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Fight Scenes](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KDP Print](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, August 30](#)

[August 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

After checking email and Facebook and a few reliable sources for “Of Interest,” I was about to move straight to the novel this morning. Then I had a thought and wrote a bunch of stuff below. But I got there eventually.

I mentioned yesterday that I had a glimpse of the end of my WIP. So now I guess I'm anxious to get there. I guess that's why I was eager to get straight to the story. Once I know the end, I want to finish the thing and get on with the next one.

Finishing is possible, in this case, because I have only one major scene and a few small, incidental ones, left to write. Maybe another 5,000 to 10,000 words or so.

And it's possible because, for those scenes, I'm still writing off into the dark. If I knew what was going to happen and how it was going to happen (ugh) in those scenes, I'd probably shoot myself or something.

As I've mentioned before, if I suspect the ending (especially if it makes perfect sense) EARLY in the writing process, I won't finish the novel at all. I toss it out.

Why? Same reason I won't watch a ball game or read a book or watch a movie if I know the ending. It's boring. And I can't write thirty or forty or fifty or sixty thousand words while I'm bored out of my mind.

To do so would be at least annoying, and the writing would be sluggish at best. It would become the "sheer drudgery" the literati brag about at book launches where cheese and wine and tiny watercress sandwiches are served.

Hey, I'm just not good at suffering for my art. I'm in it for the fun. If I want to suffer, I'll go dig a ditch.

In fact, that's exactly why I tossed out (a couple of months ago) D.R.E.A.D., a story I was really excited about, after I'd written the first 18,000 words. A close friend accidentally and inadvertently handed the ending to me as we were chatting about writing.

I heard him say, "Hey, you know what? She (the antagonist) could" and before I was able to slap my hands over my ears and run in circles yelling "Lalalalala!" the rest of it had come out.

My fault completely for going into detail about the stupid story in the first place. Never open up your current writing to anyone else. It jinxes the story, every time. Or if you have to open up about it, lie. It's what we do, right? (grin)

Or at least be very vague, even if it's a story you're hyper-excited about. At least be vague until after it's published. Then you can bore others with the details all you want.

Now, I might write a new opening based on the same idea that started D.R.E.A.D. and let it become a short story or novella or novel in another genre. But the action-adventure police-procedural mystery that it was going to be will never see the light of day. Nor will that acronyminal (don't look it up) title. Because frankly, it's a bee-otch to type.

But I digress. Badly. The point is, I should be finished with this novel today or tomorrow or the next day, depending. So it looks as if I might start September with something completely new.

And I'd just gotten used to the idea that "months" don't matter.

Well, as it most often does, the real title of my WIP occurred to me as I was writing today: Nightfall. (I know, I know, but it occurred naturally and you can't copyright a title anyway.)

It was a strange day for me, schedule-wise, as my wife was home part of the morning instead of the afternoon.

Still, I had a good writing day. It was one of those "keep coming back" days. And as luck would have it, I probably will finish this novel tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: An Example of Writerly Cluelessness (Negotiation/Contracts)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/08/29/business-musings-an-example-of-writerly-cluelessness-negotiation-contracts/>. See especially the twelve "what you need to learn" points toward the end.

See "Writers Conferences – Finding Your Tribe" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/08/writers-conferences-finding-your-tribe.html>. As much for a possible story idea as for the stuff on conferences.

See "Master Business Class Reminder" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/master-business-class-reminder/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3858

Nonfiction Words: 680 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4538

Writing of Nightfall (Nick Spalding 1)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227

Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838

Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007

Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084

Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230

Day 6..... 3882 words. Total words to date..... 33112

Day 7..... 2511 words. Total words to date..... 35623

Day 8..... 3244 words. Total words to date..... 38867

Day 9..... 3858 words. Total words to date..... 42725

Total fiction words for the month..... 60844

Total fiction words for the year..... 309141

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19210
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 117496
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 426387

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 32
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, August 31](#)

[August 31, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

The end of August! Where in the world did the time go? And it's 2018! Shouldn't it still be around 1978 or so? (grin)

Anyway, some very exciting news today, especially for those of you who design your own book covers. One of the best publishing suite companies is England's Serif. Their products are intuitive, and they easily rival Adobe at a small fraction of the cost.

Serif finally came out with the new Affinity Publisher (beta version) and is offering it free at <https://affinity.serif.com/en-us/publisher/>. I just downloaded my copy.

Based on my long use of Serif products, I can also recommend Affinity Photo and Affinity Designer.

Today is "Reader Friday" over at the KillZone blog. The posed question is "Which Story Is Your Best Work?" I actually wasted a few seconds with a response: "The last one I published."

But actually that was a fib. Actually my best work is the last one I finished. (It isn't published yet.) And the last one I finished will change later today. (grin)

This isn't a smart-aleck response, and I meant it. After all, if your storytelling skills aren't improving with each work, why bother?

Quote of the day, from a future character:

“Practically my entire life, I’ve found it useful to check my memory to see what’s coming next.”

To the Hovel about 7. By 11 (now) I added a little over 4,000 new words. Now I have one more scene to write to tie the ending to the denouement and I’m done.

So another new novel and a great writing day. For me, it can’t get any better than that. And by 12:30, done and done.

I think there will be more stories in this series, but not for a book or two. (grin)

Of Interest

A rare day of nothing to report in “Of Interest.”

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 5590

Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5910

Writing of Nightfall (Nick Spalding 1)

Brought forward..... 17778 words

Day 1..... 1449 words. Total words to date..... 19227
Day 2..... 1611 words. Total words to date..... 20838
Day 3..... 3169 words. Total words to date..... 24007
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 27084
Day 5..... 2146 words. Total words to date..... 29230
Day 6..... 3882 words. Total words to date..... 33112
Day 7..... 2511 words. Total words to date..... 35623
Day 8..... 3244 words. Total words to date..... 38867
Day 9..... 3858 words. Total words to date..... 42725
Day 10... 5590 words. Total words to date..... 48315 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 66434
Total fiction words for the year..... 314731
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 117816
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 432297

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, September 1](#)

[September 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

New day, new month.

I got Nick Spalding 1 (I'm still not sure of the title) sent off to my first reader yesterday.

Writing that one filled in a lot of previously unknown details about a secondary character who took a larger role than I expected.

So now I have to go back through NS2 and tweak it here and there. Should be fun. This won't be a rewrite. Mostly I'll be cutting some of Nick's private thoughts re that character.

So there's that.

No writing today other than this little bit. A shopping trip to Sierra Vista today, and otherwise a lotta nada.

Maybe watching some baseball, and I might even go nuts and have a beer. (grin)

Hope you all have a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend.

Of Interest

See "Living At Pulp Speed Five" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/living-at-pulp-speed-five/>. Note especially how well thought out the challenge is. Crazy challenge, but well thought out, well planned for.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 160

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	314731
Total nonfiction words for the month...	160
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	117976
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	432457
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, September 3](#)

[September 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy Labor Day.

I wrote a whole long post yesterday, mostly whining about Heinlein’s Rule 4. Then I forgot to post it until about 5:30, and of course by then it was too late. Well, that’s why I call it an “almost daily” Journal.

I counted yesterday’s nonfiction words (530) in my writing, but I won’t make you suffer through it.

I consider myself an adherent to Heinlein’s Rules, yet lately I slip and fall when I approach Rule 4. In brief...

1, 2, and 3 — I write, I finish what I write, and I don’t rewrite. (The very idea of rewriting makes me tired and a little nauseated.)

4. Ah, here’s the problem. I don’t always publish what I write. At least not right away.

When I started all of this almost 4 very short years ago, I would finish a story and then dive headlong and happy into finding the right cover art, creating a cover, adding front and back matter, and publishing the thing.

Only then did I feel it was truly finished.

Nowadays, not so much.

As I write this, I still have three novels and around ten short stories (and an uncompiled collection) that are unpublished. No cover photos (so no covers), no front and back matter, no nothin'.

I was masochistically pleased to learn awhile back that Rule 4 is also Dean's worst stumbling block. So in that way, I feel I'm in good company. But let's face it: knowing the stuff resides in my computer is still a misery at best. Sigh.

Yesterday I intended to begin learning Affinity Publisher (beta). I didn't.

I also intended to create covers for at least my two newest novels. I didn't.

I did download some free and royalty-free potential cover art from Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com/>), but that was it. (There are other free and royalty-free stock photo sites out there. If you'd like the URLs, [email me](#).)

But all of that wonderful stuff aside, I still have to do the actual work as a publisher.

My wife was standing behind me as I verbalized all this stuff. She laughed, put her arms around my neck, kissed me on my bald spot and said, "And all you wanna do is write." (grin) As usual, she is correct.

Maybe admitting my trouble with HR4 "live" here will self-shame me enough to reboot myself. I guess we'll see.

No fiction writing yesterday, and maybe none today. Today, more than likely, I'll begin cycling back through parts of one of my last two novels so it more adequately reflects some of the relationship changes that came about in the other one. (This is one problem with writing sequels.)

But as I was looking through potential cover photos on Unsplash, I came across (and downloaded) a few pics for which titles sprang to mind. So who knows? Maybe I'll start a new story. (grin)

In The Passive Guy's newsletter, I happened across an article titled "White Artists Need to Start Addressing White Supremacy In Their Work."

Wow. I don't even allow my own conscious mind to censor my work; why in the world would I allow anyone else to? Especially a white woman taking a podium (potentially from a person of color, who maybe has a better perspective) to rant about white supremacy?

"Whatta crocka crap," one of my Brooklyn characters said.

I agree with TPG's more civilized response: "[Maybe] white author[s] [sh]ould sit in a cave and eat gruel so as not to contribute to the many ills of white supremacy. Or authors of all types could simply write what they would like to write...."

Anyway, I hope you have a good Labor Day holiday no matter your physical or other differences from me.

From the Feel-Good Section of the Department of Something To Live Up To

After reading my last two novels, my first reader emailed me to say, "[Y]our situations and characters can trampoline a reader into something bigger than 'just a story.' Your stories are so real that the reader just accepts how it is, and they are so fascinated that the story can't hold all of that energy and goes off." (Thanks, ND.)

So I don't forget again, I'm going to post this early. If I write any fiction today, I'll talk about it tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "How to Write About Negative Leads" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/how-to-write-about-negative-leads.html>. Informative and instructional.

See "Now I'm Getting Nervous" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/now-im-getting-nervous/>. This is going to be interesting to watch.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 760

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 314731
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1490
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 119306
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 433787

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, September 4](#)

[September 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Ugh. I rolled out way late this morning at 4:30, so I'm still sluggish as I write this.

For anyone out there who still thinks writing is "hard work" (and if you have or want a Facebook account), drop by and spend about 6 minutes watching two guys build a swimming pool with only what they found on-site. It's wonderful and inspiring:

<https://www.facebook.com/TRNDVideos/videos/1572658269504526/?t=0>.

I will add that they couldn't do that here. Our "dirt" is rock and clay and mesquite root, three of the more resistant substances known to man. Still, what they did was one hell of an accomplishment.

I got very little done over the entire three-day weekend that had anything even peripherally to do with writing. I downloaded a few potential cover pics. That's pretty much it. Oh, and came up with a few story ideas based on titles that came to me along with a few of the cover pics. (I reported all of this over the past few days.)

The rest of the weekend I rested, watched baseball, watched old episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* or *The Andy Griffith Show*, went shopping for food, etc. Just normal stuff.

I planned to write today. I'm jonesing to get back to it. Not because I'm "a writer" but because I love racing through a story with my characters.

But I still have novels and short stories to publish (again, reported earlier). The writing's the thing, and at least at the moment, publishing isn't as important to me as writing. Shrug. It just isn't.

But that isn't fair to my donors.

I have some donors who've been waiting more than patiently. So I published the novels and short stories today, in a way, albeit in PDF and without covers.

I finished a few meticulous revisions to Nick 1 and 2, then added front and back matter to those. Then I did the same to the other “novel.” I put “novel” in quotation marks because I’m not happy with it as a novel. It’s more of a short story collection with a little insight into my personal (camping) life wrapped around the stories.

Anyway, once I got that done, I shipped those out to my donors. So for the time being, I’m caught up. (grin) And when I get around to creating covers and distributing them more widely, that’s fine.

So that was my day today.

Tomorrow, I’ll start a story based on one of the covers I downloaded or maybe I’ll start Nick 3. (grin) I’ll write something. It isn’t like I’m hurting for ideas.

I also wrote the base novel (Keeper of the Promise) for a new series awhile back (February 2018). So I want to write more on that series too. Soon, I hope.

And I wrote a they-come-here SF back in November 2016 titled The Consensus that (according to my first reader) begs a sequel or two. So it isn’t like I don’t have things to write.

And it isn’t like I don’t have time. In fact, Time might be the only thing I have that I alone can prioritize.

Onward.

Of Interest

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Tower” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/03/free-fiction-monday-the-tower/>.

If you’re into reading lists, see “Recommended Reading List: August, 2018” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/02/recommended-reading-list-august-2018/>. Disclaimer: I do not necessarily endorse this reading list.

See “Kindle Create” at https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/GHU4YEWXQGMLU94T. Draft2Digital’s been doing all of this for awhile. Just sayin’.

See “The Month of News Begins With Deals And Other Fun Things” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/04/the-month-of-news-begins-with-deals-and-other-fun-things/>.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 580

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 314731

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 119886

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 434367

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KDP Amazon](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, September 5](#)

[September 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today you get to see evolution, Harvey Stanbrough style.

You know how much I like playing with numbers, right? So yesterday afternoon, I opened each short story in *The Storyteller* and checked the word count. Yeah, I'm just that anal.

In the short stories alone (there are 11, not 10 as I previously reported), there are 50,061 words. The novel itself is only 55,140 words, including the short stories. So you can see why I said the "novel" actually is only a framework to showcase the short stories.

Anyway, as I wrote earlier, I probably won't ever publish the novel as a novel. (*Remember I said that for later.*) But I might leave it intact and publish it as a collection titled *Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train* and advertise it as a prologue, 11 short stories, and nine Intermissions. (grin)

Following the example set by Ernest Hemingway in *The Complete Short Stories: The Finca Vigia Edition*, I once published a short story collection with either 10 or 13 (I forget) short stories and a series of vignettes.

I inserted one vignette after every story from the first to the next-to-last. And if you read the vignettes as a whole, they comprise another short story. So that was kind of a neat thing.

I enjoy writing short stories, but I enjoy writing novels more.

An idea struck this morning for the cover of *Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train*. (*Ah, the evolution begins.*) It was two old gringos, waiting on either side of a No Loitering sign.

For awhile it didn't work out because I couldn't find the two original pics I needed. So I wasted an hour or so looking through stock pics.

Then I ate breakfast and headed for the Hovel around 8. Then I looked in one more place and found the original pics I wanted.

So I took another hour and a half (of my writing time) to manipulate them into a cover. Sigh. (*The evolution continues.*)

This is why, as a publisher, sometimes I don't wanna play anymore.

Now for a brief break, then back to the Hovel to write. (*Yeah, right.*) That'll be about 10.

Nope. (*The evolution develops.*) I opened *The Storyteller* (now titled *Two Old Gringos Waiting for a Train*) and glanced at it. I found some problems. Small, but annoying.

So I sent a note to my donors asking them to trash the one I sent them yesterday. Then I read the prologue and each Intermission throughout the book and made a correction here and there.

Finished that by 11:30. Now back to the house to send off the new version and maybe have a bite of lunch.

Nope. Since I have a cover, I spent the afternoon creating a promo doc and distributing *Two Old Gringos* to D2D and Amazon. (*Sigh. The evolution is complete.*)

Then I took an hour to clunk-grind-clunk through creating a special version of the manuscript for Smashwords since they still work with hammers and chisels over there, and uploaded that one too.

No fiction writing, but at least one more novel is out there, as well as 11 short stories.

By the way, since there seems to be a lot about writing in the prologue and Intermissions in *Two Old Gringos*, I thought I'd open it up to any of you who would like it. So if you'd like a copy, [email me](#).

Also, if any of my donors would like the .mobi version instead of the PDF I sent, [email me](#).

When I don't start writing by 2 at the latest, I don't usually write that day. From 2 to 4 is kind of a no-man's land for me. I can CONTINUE working on something I've started before that time, but I can't start something during that time.

I'm the chief cook and bottle washer around here, and I don't want to just start something and then have to interrupt myself to slap supper together for my hard-working bride. So there you go.

Of Interest

See "Changing My New Office for the Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/changing-my-new-office-for-the-challenge/>. Might be a gem or two there for you.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 690

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 314731
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2760
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 120576
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 435057

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, September 6](#)

[September 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Very long but very informative post today. I hope you'll get your favorite beverage and hang in there.

Wow. According to a staff member at Reedsy,

“The New York Times recently reported that short stories are ‘experiencing a resurgence’ with both readers and critics alike. In 2017, sales of short story collections shot up almost 50% over the previous year. In the past five years, three of the most prestigious prizes in fiction — the Booker, the Nobel, and the Folio — were awarded to writers best known for their short stories.

“In other words: the short story train is going full steam ahead, and it’s time for you to hop aboard! To give you a hand, we’ve published a guide to writing short fiction....”

I hope she’s right about the market for short stories picking up. But I read her “guide” and I can’t bring myself to vouch for it.

The “guide” is mired in the myths and never offers an iota of original thought. In fact, she goes on and on about how difficult it is to write even the opening. Sigh. The opening is the easiest part of the whole thing.

I included the link in “Of Interest” anyway, just in case you want to look at it. But again, IMHO it’s just flat wrong. Then I wrote a short article of my own:

Topic: How to Write a Short Story

1. *Decide who or what your story is about.* I mentioned a couple of days ago that some of the pics I downloaded keyed titles in my mind. Once you know who or what the story’s about, start writing.

2. *I recommend you also have in mind one specific craft technique* you want to practice in your writing. Maybe setting. Maybe dialogue. Maybe using all five senses in every major scene. But after you decide what you want to practice, don’t think about it. Just write.

3. *Start with a character with a problem in a setting.* The problem doesn’t have to be “the” problem of the story. That will come along soon enough.

4. *Write the opening (300 to 500 words or so),* using all five of the POV character’s senses and his/her opinions, and see where it goes. If the story takes off, keep writing. If it doesn’t, toss it and start over or move on to the next story idea.

5. *Remember the short story is about One Event.* If it gets bigger than that (sometimes they do) it becomes a novellette, a novella or a novel.

6. *Trust your characters.* After all, they’re the ones who are actually living the story. You’re just recording it. Don’t try to control them. Get dirty with them. Rip the knees out of your new pants. Stomp through mud puddles with them. Run through the story with them and write down what

they say and do. Doesn't that sound like more fun than obsessing over every word they say and every action they take?

7. When the ending comes (sometime shortly after the big climax) chances are you'll know it. But if the writing starts flagging and getting boring, read back a few sentences. You might have written right through the ending.

8. If you enjoy reading your own work, put it away for a day or two (while you're writing other stuff), then pull it out and read through it as a reader. Let your hands rest on the keyboard. If your characters urge you to add something, add it.

If you don't enjoy reading your own work, trade it with another short story writer and let him/her be your first reader. Nothing critical! Strictly what stopped him cold, confused him, etc. That, typos and inconsistencies. Nothing else. And you do the same for him or her.

9. If you're the patient sort (I'm not, sigh) submit your short stories to major markets. Places that pay a nickel per word or more. (Don't pre-judge your own work; that's the magazine editor's job.)

If it's rejected, dust it off (but change nothing) and send it back out to another market. Editors are only readers. If it's accepted, be certain there's a contract, and one that contains a rights-revision clause (no longer than a year out).

If you can't bring yourself to do all of that, build a cover for it and publish it. Or add it into a collection with nine other stories and publish that. Or do both.

10. Remember that being a writer is like "being" anything else. It isn't a "calling." It's something we do because we enjoy it and anything else would be work. I heard angelic voices as I read through the Reedsy article (ahhhAHHHH). That's sheer nonsense.

Okay, end of lecture. Go have fun.

Kris Rusch speaks for me in the first paragraph after her blog post in "Of Interest":

"[My] nonfiction writing isn't always fun. But these blog posts give me a place to think and work out what's going on in my professional life. They also let me vent about things that irritate me, all under the guise of advice. I do like giving advice, but usually I'm doing it for myself—as a reminder that I should be thinking a certain way or learning about something or avoiding that particular pitfall."

Amen.

As the days grow shorter and time becomes more of a premium, I'm seriously considering altering my schedule. I'm thinking of adding an evening writing session that will count toward

the next day's writing. That's after my usual morning session, daily chores and posting this Journal.

In other words, my new writing "day" will run from 8 or 9 p.m. one day to around 4 p.m. the next. And those are the numbers I'll report in this Journal. Naturally, I'll let you know how that goes.

Another note on Reedsy: Reedsy offers a block of free courses on writing, marketing and publishing. According to the founder,

"You can only take one course at a time, and it'll be delivered to you by email one lesson a day. It's free, won't take you more than 5min a day, and can positively change your writing career."

I don't necessarily endorse these courses (I haven't explored them yet), but they're free and you might pick up something that 1- works for you and 2- you didn't know before.

If you're interested, visit <https://blog.reedsy.com/learning/> to browse the courses and see what's available.

I went to the Hovel at 8, but soon realized I felt under the weather. No big deal, but just kind of blah, like I didn't want to do anything, like I ran out of steam. Back to the house to wait out whatever it is, but probably this will be another non fiction-writing day.

If I do write any fiction later today, I'll report it tomorrow. I'll post this now so I don't forget later.

Of Interest

See "Get your books into Walmart with Draft2Digital" at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/>. If you distribute to Kobo through D2D you're all set.

See "Business Musings: Popcorn Bunnies (A Process Blog)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/05/business-musings-popcorn-bunnies-a-process-blog/>. This is a GREAT post. I recommend reading it a couple of times to get more out of it.

See "A Writer's Imagination is a Nurtured Gift" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/a-writers-imagination.html>.

See "A Fun Evening" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-fun-evening/>.

See "How to Write a Short Story" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-write-a-short-story/>. (Meh. You already know how i feel about this one.)

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1070 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1070

Writing of

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 314731
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3830
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 121646
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 436127

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, September 7](#)

[September 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Do you use telephones? I don't like them.

Rarely, if we've worked out the details ahead of time via email, I'll talk with a very good friend via phone, but that's about it.

And two times out of three in the past year when that happened, the friends (Marines from a few decades ago) were dismayed, and said so, that I sounded so "old." Isn't that uplifting? (grin)

Well, several months ago, an acquaintance I literally haven't seen for 30-some years asked whether I would judge a writing contest for her writers organization. I said yes.

Yesterday, she emailed asking for a bio and a phone number. I sent her the bio.

She emailed back, insisting on a phone number for "emergencies."

Sigh. What, in judging a writing contest, might constitute an “emergency”?

But I imagine myself a “good guy,” so I sent her my number at the end of the following note:

Please use email. I will always respond as soon as I see the message. Frankly, I can’t imagine how anything having to do with judging a writing contest could constitute an “emergency.” A flood of entrants perhaps? A tsunami of bad writing? An F-5 tornado of bad puns and misplaced modifiers? A major tremor of (gasp!) adverbs?

I do have a phone (literally for actual emergencies) but I don’t care for phones. They always ring at the least opportune time, and they continue ringing until the bearer either answers or finds a hammer to silence the thing. My hammers, small ball-peen to heavy sledge, are all in the Hovel, an adobe storage shed some 200 feet from my house, so I pretty much have to answer the blasted phone.

I find telephones (cell phones, etc.) intrusive and annoying, so I very seldom even carry mine. In fact, I have been known to go camping in remote, rugged country for a weekend, forsaking my bride and my kitten, specifically so I won’t have to listen to my or any other cell phones ringing.

Mostly, when my phone and I are in the same general vicinity, I use mine to mark the end of the charging cord so I can find it when I need it for my Kindle. Even so, I really ought to keep a sledge hammer mounted on two nails in my office wall.

But if a phone number is required by your organization for me to judge a contest on their behalf, I don’t want to make your job as contest coordinator more difficult. So it’s [phone number].

Sent with a grin,
Harvey

I’m pleased to report she took my note with the good humor I intended.

I had a delightful day off from life yesterday. I sat on the reclining love seat in the living room, avoided computers (mostly), and watched baseball and old reruns. I think I just needed to recharge. Today I will write.

Ha! The subconscious mind works in miraculous ways. I started a short story, prompted by a photo I downloaded a few days ago and the title it evoked.

I wrote an opening (300 words) that just didn’t work. (Those words are included in the daily total below.) But a situation that came up in the opening spurred another thought, and that thought led me to begin the next Nick Spalding novel, tentatively titled Nick 3. Weird, but wonderful. Off and writing again.

Back and forth with laundry and the novel, not quite 4000 words on the day. If I add more tonight, I'll let you know tomorrow. (grin)

Of Interest

See "Time Management and Free Lecture" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/time-management-and-free-lecture/>. (I bought this lecture back in the day and it was well worth it. Highly recommended, especially now that it's free.)

See "READER FRIDAY: How Are You Supported as a Writer?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/reader-friday-how-does-your-family-support-you-as-a-writer.html> and of course, my inevitable comment.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3722

Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4352

Writing of Nick 3

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422

Total fiction words for the month..... 3722

Total fiction words for the year..... 318453

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4460

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 122276

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 440479

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, September 8](#)

[September 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Topic: On Being a Hack Writer

Character stands up tentatively from a brown metal folding chair:

Hello. My name is Harvey Stanbrough and I've become accustomed to the idea that I am a hack writer.

Character resumes his seat. Someone yells, "Scene."

That doesn't mean I write stories about taxicabs, but that I write far too fast and turn out so much work that no possible way could it be any good. (grin)

Never mind that my poetry and fiction is taught in at least two university English programs.

I must be a hack. How else could I churn out a short novel (30,000 – 50,000 words) in ten to twenty days? How else could I write a 100,000 word novel in a month?

I personally know writers who intentionally take much longer to write a novel. Some write only one hour per day (on days that they write at all). Some ruminate over each word, and then each sentence, as it strikes the page.

I know writers personally who already have established in their mind that they absolutely can't write anything worthwhile unless they severely limit themselves.

One writer, whom I admire personally for other achievements, recently posted for all the world to see that he "hopes" to write 8 or 10 novels during his lifetime, including the two he's already written. And he's only in his 40s.

Of course, he was roundly applauded. By nonwriters.

If I could convince only one person to Sit Down, Trust Your Subconscious, and Just Tell a Story, it would be him. Or maybe the lady who wrote three novels in eight years and said, vehemently, that Heinlein's Rules wouldn't apply to her because she doesn't write science fiction. Sigh.

The conscious mind does have a role to play in our lives. But writing isn't that role.

We use the conscious mind to learn new information, to absorb that information and determine what will work for us and what won't. But that's where the role of the conscious mind ends.

What we learn and absorb and believe useful filters into the subconscious. From there, it "shows up" in our writing. It becomes as integral a part of our process as crossing T's and dotting I's and putting a period at the end of a declarative sentence or a question mark at the end of an interrogative. We initially learned all of that with our conscious mind too, and then we internalized it.

In other words, once we take in the information, we no longer have to “think” about it as we’re writing. It just happens. Like magic.

That’s how I write. I drop a character with a problem into a setting and Just Write. Or an opening line occurs to me and I Just Write.

I trust my knowledge. I trust in my own ability to remember, without consciously thinking about it, to add a question mark at the end of a question.

And without thinking about it, I remember to ground the reader in my stories by describe the setting through the POV character’s physical senses and opinions. Because I learned and internalized that too.

Most of all, I trust my characters to tell their own story instead of me slogging along trying to force my vision of their story on them.

It wasn’t always that way.

When I started this journey, I thought writing off into the dark was impossible. I actually thought maybe my unintentional mentor, Dean Wesley Smith ([see Dean’s guest post](#)), was one of the scam artists he’s always warning others about. I thought No way in hell can I write a short story without knowing the whole story in advance.

But I also realized it would cost me nothing to try it. So I did.

Wow. Easy-peasy, and the 190-some short stories I wrote after my awakening are much better than the few I wrote before.

And between April and October of 2014, I still thought Maybe that does work for short stories (I’d proven to myself it does), but that’s a short form. No way in hell can I write a whole novel without knowing in advance what’s going to happen.

Then I did. Thirty-three times (not including short stories or novellas). Before this month is out (this will be the 48th month since I started writing novels), it will be thirty-four times. On average, that’s 1.41 months to write a novel.

That is dreadfully, almost terrifyingly slow.

To put it into perspective, that’s a total of 1,653,695 words in 1460 days. (I estimated my current WIP, Nick 3, at 47,500 words, averaging Nick 1 and Nick 2.) That’s an average of only 1,132 words per day. One hour of work per day.

At 1,000 words per hour (17 words per minute), if I had even a lax work ethic — say I worked only 5 days per week and only 4 hours per day, including breaks, for that four years — my word count for novels would be 3,120,000 words.

And I would have turned out SIXTY-FOUR novels (my average is 48,000 words per novel) in that four years instead of thirty-four.

Still, I'm far and away ahead of where I would have been if I'd written *Leaving Amarillo* (my first novel) and then spent the next four years rewriting and "polishing" it.

Had I done that, my novel word count today would be 40,610, a blazing-fast 28 words per day for four years. And I would have ONE novel. And it would be horrible because I would have "polished" my original voice off it until it sounded like every other novel out there.

And what's worse, I would have learned nothing new.

If you want to learn to write good stories (or to write stories "well" if you wish), the long and short of it is that you have to write.

Rewriting is not writing. Researching is not writing. Taking classes is not writing. Writing is putting new words on the page.

So I guess I'll accept that I'm a hack writer. (grin) As long as my readers keep telling me they were entertained by my stories, who am I to argue?

If you'd like to be a hack writer too — like Heinlein, Hemingway, Bradbury and a host of others you recognize by only one name — [download a free copy of Heinlein's Rules](#), then fasten your seatbelt and hang on.

And oh yes, this topic will appear very soon over on the big blog. Now and then I like to thin the herd by making subscribers so upset they choose to unsubscribe. (grin)

Even after all of the above, it's Saturday and I squandered the early morning hours with this post. So probably no fiction writing today.

The novel is doing well. I know the two words that will key the next scene (smaller vehicle), so it's all good. In the meantime I'll post this. As usual, if I do happen to write any fiction later today, I'll report it tomorrow or Monday.

Of Interest

See "Only One Day Until The Challenge Starts" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/only-one-day-until-the-challenge-starts/>.

See Joe Hartlaub's "Do What You Gotta Do" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/19067.html>.

See “[Reading Room] There Will Come Soft Rains by Ray Bradbury” at <http://storyaday.org/reading-room-there-will-come-soft-rains-by-ray-bradbury/>. More than just the story.

(Note: the link at the bottom of the article to read the story is broken, but you can click this horribly long link https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwjZbJravdAhVjKH0KHdmBf0QFjAAegQIDhAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.btbooces.org%2FDownloads%2F7_There%2520Will%2520Come%2520Soft%2520Rains%2520by%2520Ray%2520Bradbury.pdf&usq=AOvVaw2glg0nHvFREkljZ9-x75Yl to download a PDF file of the story.)

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1250 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1250

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3722
Total fiction words for the year..... 318453
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 123526
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 441729

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [The Reading Room](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, September 9](#)

[September 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I've had a sense of urgency about time and life since I read a book when I was around ten years old. If I remember correctly, it was *Cheaper by the Dozen*, in which siblings talked about growing up with their efficiency-expert father, Frank Gilbreth.

As a result, I developed a kind of "do it right now because you might not have time later" thing. Right or wrong, that philosophy has guided my life ever since.

To this day I hate wasting time. It really is the most precious commodity we have.

In my life, the philosophy extends from the mundane to the important. On the less-important end, when I'm going from one room to another, I look around to see whether I can carry something with me to spare myself a separate trip later.

On the more important end, when I have something to write, I write. One of my greatest fears is that I might get hit by a bus before I finish my current novel in progress. Fortunately, there are no buses in St. David, Arizona, but I suspect you get my drift.

I should have written fiction yesterday. Even though I wanted to write, I made an inane, pre-emptive decision not to. As a result, I was grouchy and out of sorts all day. Amazingly, I wondered why.

It's good to take a day off even from doing something you love to do when you want or need a day off. But yesterday, I didn't want or need a day off.

Most human beings devise ways to escape their routine, to inject their lives with interest or to just relax. They do things that please them.

Maybe they hike or go out to dinner or watch movies. Maybe they take day-trips or have friends over for jam sessions or card games. All of that's fine, of course. It doesn't adversely affect my liberty or my paycheck, so what do I care?

I have four methods of relaxing: of the lesser ways, one is to watch baseball when I'm in the mood; one is to browse estate sales once every few weeks, though I feel a bit like a vulture as I do so; and the other is to visit with a good friend and slather philosophy while we smoke cigars and/or enjoy a beer.

But my primary means of relaxing and having fun and giving my post-Marine Corps life a sense of meaning is to write fiction. It's my own chosen method of escape.

I hope I don't forget that again.

Yesterday, prompted by an item that's listed in "Of Interest" today, I bought Adam Croft's book. If you click through Of Interest you'll see the one I mean. It contains much that I already know and some ideas that are better left ignored (writing is laborious, etc.), but also some real gems. I recommend it.

There's also a pretty nifty guide to writing "crime thrillers" (and to writing, period) available free when you sign up for the newsletter at <http://dyingwords.net/>. I strongly recommend the guide. (It might also serve to validate that you're doing things "right" in your writing.)

Of Interest

See "A New Spade/Paladin Story—Unity Con" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/08/a-new-spade-paladin-story-unity-con/>.

See "Developing The Million-Selling Indie Author Mindset – With Adam Croft" at <http://dyingwords.net/developing-the-million-selling-indie-author-mindset-with-adam-croft/>.

See James Scott Bell's "How to Give Your Readers Unforgettable Moments" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/how-to-give-your-readers-unforgettable-moments.html>. There's some "ignore it" advice in this, but some good stuff between the lines. And yup, I added my two cents.

See "Introduction: Living at Pulp Speed Five" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/introduction-living-at-pulp-speed-five/>. I really wish I had the money to do this.

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 2664

Nonfiction Words: 600 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3264

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422

Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086

Total fiction words for the month..... 6386

Total fiction words for the year..... 321117

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6310

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 124126

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 444993

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Adam Croft](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [James Scott](#)

[Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, September 10

[September 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

First (so I don't forget), I have a late-morning appointment in Tucson tomorrow, so there might not be a Journal entry. The place is a couple hours away, so it blows a lot of the day.

Of course, I'm planning for it. I expect to get up early and write early, then make the rounds of the Internet afterward and file the Journal entry. We'll see.

Saw an ad for a "writers retreat" for which registration is about to close. The cost is \$40 to "hold your spot" and then an unadvertised amount due by the end of September.

I'm sure the balance is advertised in the brochure, which I haven't read. But I'll pass.

I went to one of those once, and I've conducted three of them.

At the one I attended, I was quickly dubbed a loner and somewhat antisocial because, when everyone else was hanging out chatting about writing, I was, you know, writing.

At the three I conducted, there was breakfast first. Then I taught a couple of classes on writing topics. Then there was lunch. And the rest of the day/evening was for writing.

One lady walked out of the first retreat I conducted halfway through the first day. Her complaint? There weren't enough "activities" planned.

The other two went pretty well. By which I mean at least I wasn't lynched for giving writers time to write.

As for me, well, I attend a writers retreat pretty much every day. It's called The Hovel. I retreat from life-things there, and I write. When I'm through writing for the day, I come home.

Fair to middling day today. In three sessions I hammered out a little over 3000 words. The next scene is a gimme, and I was going to write it today, but I'm feeling a little under the weather so I think I'll watch baseball instead.

Of Interest

See “Day One of the Pulp Speed Challenge” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/day-one-of-the-pulp-speed-challenge/>.

See Sue Coletta’s “Writers and Dreaming” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/writers-and-dreaming.html>.

Also see Sue Coletta’s “10 Building Blocks of a Psychopath” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/10-building-blocks-of-a-psychopath/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Oathbreaker” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/10/free-fiction-monday-oathbreaker/>.

See “Should we stop reading into authors’ lives and get back to their books?” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/should-we-stop-reading-into-authors-lives-and-get-back-to-their-books/>. (I personally say Bravo! to TPG’s take on this nonsense.)

Talk with you again soon.

Fiction Words: 3190

Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3590

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422

Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086

Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276

Total fiction words for the month..... 9576

Total fiction words for the year..... 324307

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6710

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 124526

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 448583

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, September 11](#)

September 11, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I hope we all have a thoughtful day of concern for the horrendous events themselves, the lives lost, and the lives forever affected on both 9/11/2001 and 9/11/2012.

I had planned to hit the sack early last night, rise early this morning, and give myself plenty of time to write a few chapters.

Well, any plan is only as good as its execution. I stayed up an hour later than I expected, then experienced one of those on-again off-again awkward nights of sleep and rolled out late at 4.

So I did my usual thing of going to the Internet first to wake up. The priority today is the doc appointment. I'll add to the novel, but probably not as much as I'd like. Not complaining, just reporting.

And I will post this Journal entry, probably this morning before we leave for Tucson.

I opened my writing 'puter at the makeshift desk outside the east window of my office. I did that for two reasons.

One, my little girl jumped the gate on the fence three separate times while I was looking at the Internet. That despite the fact there were coyotes singing nearby. But I signed on to keep her safe, and I'll do that even when it annoys her.

And two, I didn't want to waste time going to the Hovel.

I wrote an opening for Chapter 9 (I write an opening for every chapter or major scene to ground the reader) and took off from there. Once it was flowing well, I came here to write this brief bit.

It's only 7 a.m. and we have to leave at 9, so I decided to settle for one chapter so I can relax my way into the rest of the day. Around 1000 words in a little under an hour.

The novel is writing itself, flowing nicely, so I'll eat breakfast, then post this and get ready to head out.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Just Words... I Can Write More" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/just-words-i-can-write-more/>. An important concept to remember.

See “First Page Critique: Can Your Language Be Too Blue?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/first-page-critique-can-yourlanguage-be-too-blue.html>. I don’t often share these first-page critiques, but this one is done well and is thought provoking and informative.

Fiction Words: 1090

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1460

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... 10366

Total fiction words for the month..... 10666
Total fiction words for the year..... 325397
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7080
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 124896
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 450043

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, September 12](#)

[September 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Something around four to five years ago, I created a persona named Nicolas Z Porter. Nick and I and three other personas (Gervasio Arrancado, Ray Sevarid, and Eric Stringer) enjoyed a wild ride.

Overall, Porter was the persona under which I wrote stories that felt Hemingway-esque to me. They were more brusque, more on-point, stark shades of grey on a white background with the occasional splash of vivid color. Often the color was red-drying-to-black.

Of the other personas, Arrancado wrote Latin American magic realism, Sevareid wrote science fantasy, and Stringer wrote weird, psychological-suspense stuff. Though Eric's personality was such that when he wanted to dip his pen in other genres, he did so and none of the others said a word. (grin)

In the name of discovery, I've reverted most of the short stories (in collections) and all but one of the novels back to my name. The notable exception is [Confessions of a Professional Psychopath](#), for which I still allow Eric Stringer to take full credit. If you read it, you'll understand why.

The opening paragraph is "Of the three wingback chairs in my library, only one is upholstered in human skin. There's a reason for that."

Yeah.

Anyway, sometime later, in a short story titled, appropriately, "Death of a Persona," one or more of the other personas killed off Nicolas Z Porter. I'm still not certain who did it, but I have my suspicions.

But that freed up the name and the spirit that was Nick Porter.

And now I've decided to change the name of the main protagonist in my current series (Nick Spalding) to Nick Porter. Not sure why, except that I like it. Maybe this is the Great Cosmic Reason I haven't published the first two novels yet.

And now I'm in no great rush, so I believe I'll test the "common" wisdom that prepublishing creates bigger sales. Whatever.

I plan to release Nick 1 (Nightfall) on November 1. I'll release Nick 2 (A New Dawn) on December 1 (subject to change, of course), and then Nick 3, my WIP, which is as yet unnamed, shortly thereafter.

Which leads me to...

Topic: Pseudonyms (Pen Names) and Personas

These, to me at least, are very different things.

A pseudonym (literally, "false name") is simply a label, a name the writer has chosen to conceal his true identity for whatever reason.

Back in the day, prolific writers wrote under several pen names so they could publish more than one story in a given magazine in a given month. Or so they could publish more than one book with one or more publishers in a given year.

Some still do, although they also usually own up to their pen names today, whereas they didn't in the past.

Some writers use pen names to conceal how fast they turn out work, bending to the typical (and wrong) notion that work produced “fast” is work produced poorly. (See “On Being a Hack Writer” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/on-being-a-hack-writer/>.)

Others have more realistic reasons. Maybe the choir director at church makes good money writing erotica. Maybe a local police officer writes novels about a rogue crook who’s the protagonist of his own tales. Or maybe a professional writer writes different genres under different pen names.

I used to use a pen name now and then (and still do occasionally) when I didn’t want to lay claim openly to a particular piece of writing. Sometimes it’s simply better to test the waters.

But when I choose to write under a name other than my own, a rare occurrence, I much prefer to write as a particular persona.

The persona, like the well-rounded character, has a personality all his or her own. When I write under a persona, I write with that persona’s personality in play. The authorial voice is different.

For me, there are two distinct stages to using a persona: deciding which persona to use and the actual writing.

Decide which persona to use — Choosing a particular persona fills me with that persona’s personality. Hence the “mood” of the “author” is rooted in the story, which then grows as an extension of that mood.

Maybe the persona is quieter and more timid than I am, or maybe he’s louder and more brash. Maybe he’s bolder, or more reserved. Maybe his language is simpler, more straightforward and blunt. Maybe it’s stretched out, more flowery and poetic.

Maybe the persona has a military mindset and believes *Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori* (It is sweet and fitting to die for one’s country) is not a theorem to be argued but a valid philosophy.

Or maybe, like World War I poet and soldier Wilfred Owen, he has seen that philosophy tested personally and has decided that, for him, it is “the old lie.”

Maybe, even, the persona’s parents were 1960s San Francisco hippies and he finds absolute adherence to abstract ideals preferable to the strain of original thought and-or accepting responsibility for his own actions.

Writing in the persona — Note that the moods and beliefs of the persona also strongly influences the POV character of the story or novel, thereby establishing Point A on the ensuing character arc. (This is true whether you’re writing the story in first- or third-person.)

Having taken on the persona, I’m in the right frame of mind to write a given type of story or novel. The POV character speaks and acts in a different way than he or she would if I were writing the story as myself.

For example, you can't write a story like *Nightfall* unless you're in a pensive, descriptive, well-framed and well-focused state of mind.

You can't write a story like *Confessions of a Professional Psychopath* unless you're in a wild, internally uncontrolled (but externally controlled) frame of mind and willing to let it all hang out.

And you can't write a story like *Keeper of the Promise* unless you believe-in and can recognize that point on the horizon where dreams fold into reality and they quietly blend together.

But as I think I wrote earlier, I use personas rarely now, if ever.

So why do I no longer use personas?

The short answer is because I no longer need them. But I'm glad I chose to lean on them for awhile, and I strongly recommend it.

The longer answer is because I finally, *finally*, learned to slip into the POV character's mind, to clothe myself with his body and his mindset, and allow him the grace to tell his own story in his own way.

This doesn't happen overnight. For me, it took two and a half to three years of writing a few thousand words of fiction almost every day. (Some say it takes about a million words of published fiction.)

In the brief biography of the persona Nicolas Z Porter, he is described as

“an adventurer [who] enjoys deep-sea fishing, trout fishing in the back country, and engaging intimately in the revolutionary struggles of other lands.

“He also throws himself wholeheartedly into any other endeavors that might serve to refill the well of experience from which his stories evolve.”

You can read the full bio at <http://stonethreadpublishing.com/nicolas-z-porter/>.

Now, in *Nightfall*, *A New Dawn*, and my as-yet unnamed WIP (and having been deceased for the past couple of years), Nick assumes his own persona as a younger version of himself. And trust me, he has a great deal of fun. (grin)

So give it a shot. If you can't find a way to put yourself into the right frame of mind to write a particular story or type of story, consider donning a persona.

And have fun!

No fiction writing today. I had hoped to write most of today, but that isn't gonna happen. No big deal, but another life roll came swooping in yesterday, much of which I hope will be resolved by another doc visit tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Total Miss" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/total-miss/>.

See John Gilstrap's "Pesky Deadlines" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/pesky-deadlines.html>.

See "Self-Publishing vs Traditional Publishing" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/self-publishing-vs-traditional-publishing-one-right/>. (Note: Read this with a shaker of salt nearby. For just one example, he says if you want to get your books into physical bookstores, traditional publishing is better, insinuating that self-published books are not listed in the Ingram catalog and available for bookstore buyers. That isn't true.)

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1290 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1290

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10666
Total fiction words for the year..... 325397
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8370
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 126186
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 451333

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, September 13

September 13, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Welcome to a new member, Ilisa from Germany. And welcome to all other recent members. Glad you could join us.

Some great stuff in “Of Interest” today, and that’s the main reason I’m even posting this entry. It would behoove you to click through.

I’m focused on other things today, so no fiction writing again this morning, and probably none this afternoon. If I do write this afternoon, I’ll report it tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “New Fiction River Kickstarter Award for Writers” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-fiction-river-kickstarter-award-for-writers/>. This is a good one, folks. Don’t miss it!

See “First Page Critique: Jolted” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/first-page-critique-jolted.html>. Wow. Another first-page critique worth sharing. I don’t agree with the critiquer on everything, but she does a good job IMHO.

See “D2D Behind the Scenes” at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/d2d-behind-the-scenes-development-update-for-september-2018/>.

See “Business Musings: More Negotiation Advice From The Hardass” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/12/business-musings-more-negotiation-advice-from-the-hardass/>. I had to laugh at the title. Difficult to imagine Kris Rusch as a “hardass.” (grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 160

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422

Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086

Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276

Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366

Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	10666
Total fiction words for the year.....	325397
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8530
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	126346
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	451493
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, September 14](#)

[September 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

My buddy Dan Baldwin dropped by from Mesa (a 3-hour trip, much thanks Dan) this morning for coffee, a good cigar and a little philosophy slathering. Of course, we talked about writing too.

While I was waiting for him to arrive, I decided to cycle back through the last part of my WIP. Almost two hours later, I finally realized maybe it would be better to just forget it for awhile. (grin)

As I mentioned before, we're going through a bit of a life roll out here. It's some medical stuff that will be partially resolved sometime (we hope early) next week. After that, there will be a bit of a lag (probably a few weeks) and then a final resolution.

Of course, I'm absolutely jonesing to get back to the novel and the utter joy of writing, especially in the current story with the current characters.

If you're thinking "So just write already," I've said the same thing to others before. But now that I'm on the inside looking out, trust me, saying "just write" is like saying to a person who complains of being depressed they should "just snap out of it."

Great in theory, but impossible in practice.

Right now, even when I sit down at the writing 'puter with the budding novel open in front of me, I'm not able to devote my mind to the story.

This morning as I attempted to cycle through part of the WIP to get back into the flow of the story, it was difficult even to concentrate on reading what I'd already written.

I guess some aspects of the life roll sort of shove all other thoughts aside.

So I've decided to just not worry about writing fiction for the next few days at least. It's better, maybe, to just focus on getting through the life roll.

I'll still post a Journal when I have something to say that I think you might find helpful or something to pass along in "Of Interest."

Speaking of which, if you have an idea for a topic on writing that you'd like to see, drop me a line. If it's something I know and practice, I'll write a topic and post it in the Journal (with or without naming you, as you wish).

This would be an excellent opportunity to ask any questions you might have about my own writing process or why I do things a certain way or why I don't do certain things at all.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Three New Lectures" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/three-new-lectures/>.

See Lee Lofland's "Monday Morning Quarterbacks Lack..." at <https://www.leelofland.com/monday-morning-quarterbacks-lack-touch-taste-smell-and-motion/>. Some good stuff here for your writing, especially in scene details.

You can get an off-beat James Scott Bell novel FREE at Amazon right now by clicking <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07G8V1HPG/>. Mr. Bell emphasises the book "is not horror fiction. It's more like the Harry Dresden books by Jim Butcher. It leans heavy on the legal thriller side. It's just that Mallory Caine, Zombie-at-Law, has to consume a brain every now and again (not graphically, I can assure you, but all trial lawyers need their nutrition).

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 450

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422

Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086

Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276

Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366

Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	10666
Total fiction words for the year.....	325397
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8980
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	126796
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	451943
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, September 15](#)

[September 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Why are the causes-of and solutions-to others' conscious-mind mental blocks always more obvious to us than our own? I don't buy the argument that we're "too close." It just doesn't register for me. Too abstract. So I guess it will remain a mystery.

Regardless, I was inadvertently reminded this morning by another writer (thanks, writer who shall remain anonymous) in another blog post that I temporarily forgot the two basic rules I ususally follow in my writing:

1. Just write the next sentence.

While sitting at a keyboard with the WIP in front of them on the screen, anyone can just write the next sentence that pops into their head. Can't they?

I mean, given that their fingers aren't broken. But if they were, I doubt they'd be poised over the keyboard in the first place.

And until you write that next sentence, you can't possibly know where it might lead. Which is why Just Write the Next Sentence is a good rule to follow.

2. Keep coming back.

Even in the throes of my current life roll, there are plenty of times when I'm physically able to sit down and write.

For example, I can easily choose to sit at the keyboard instead of watching reruns on Netflix. And I never watch the national “news.” The couple of minutes of actual news (the hurricane, for example) isn’t worth wading through all the propaganda.

When I’m not mentally able to write (as I’ve felt has been the case recently), it’s always a conscious-mind-interference thing. Always. Then it’s time to see Rule 1.

The point is, it’s impossible to write new words unless we sit down, put our fingers on the keyboard (or whatever writing apparatus you use), and write.

The writer I mentioned in the second paragraph has admitted having trouble, in spades, getting back up to speed with his writing. I appreciate him having nudged me out of my own minor mess through his post.

As one way of saying thanks to that unfortunate writer, I offer the following as a kind of writer-to-writer first aid, and I’m offering it in this venue only because it might stop someone else from making the same mistake, the same reason I lay bare my own silly mistakes. (Of course, with the disclaimer that every writer is different.)

I suspect the problem began when he took down the earlier versions of his work and critically edited them so he could offer a “clean” re-release. Or I might be wrong. This is only my supposition.

(In the interest of full disclosure, when I’ve noticed after publishing a glaring error [wrong character name, glaring typo in the first few pages, etc.] I’ve corrected the original file and then uploaded the new document to replace the old one. But I’ve never taken work down or “unpublished” it.)

That critical edit and the pending re-release alone told the writer’s subconscious (the storyteller) that it was of lesser value to him than his critical mind. This is one of many reasons looking back is very seldom (or never) a good idea.

Maybe more importantly, but in a bad way, that act also gave his conscious mind the permission and inroads to intrude on his writing now.

And so it IS intruding, full-force. And I suspect his subconscious is standing over in the corner, facing away and arms crossed over its chest, refusing to talk to him. The subconscious is, after all, pretty much a two year old.

In this state of affairs, pretty much any excuse will do to keep him from writing new stuff. (Or again, I might be wrong.)

For an obvious example (to me), let’s say maybe this writer feels he “can’t” write until his family members get home. But once they get home, other priorities kick in — priorities that have to do with his family members’ presence.

So when they're away, he can't write, and when they get home, writing is no longer a priority. (Unless I'm wrong, which is always possible.)

IMHO, this writer is entering a vicious cycle. If he were piloting a plane, the ground would be rising quickly to meet him. I really hope he pulls up in time.

Of course, again, every writer is different. And of course, my suspicions might be way off base. I honestly hope they are.

But I'll leave this here in case it might help anyone else curtail a similar problem in their own writing.

To the Hovel around 8:30 and added 1500 words to the WIP. A break at 10 for a trip to the store.

I thought about going back to the Hovel, but I'm really tired so I think I'll take what I have and start fresh again early tomorrow morning.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For something very special, see this BBC Four interview with Roald Dahl at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQkz_X1Rg60. Fascinating. I especially like that he writes in his own "Hovel."

See "Back on Track" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/back-on-track/>.

Fiction Words: 1466

Nonfiction Words: 810 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2276

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422

Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086

Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276

Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366

Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832

Total fiction words for the month..... 12132

Total fiction words for the year..... 326863

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9790

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 127606

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 454219

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Roald Dahl](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, September 16](#)

[September 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to talk about today unless something occurs to me later. For now, I've browsed the Internet, didn't find much, and am going to write for awhile.

Which spurred this thought:

Once again, I'm setting a goal to write fiction every day. This self-discipline is nothing more than a trick to get me to the keyboard once a day, every day, and I'm stubborn enough to make it work.

My life is not one in which I have tons of responsibility. Been there, done that. But now, I don't have a day job, I don't report to anyone, and nobody reports to me. Those glorious days (and they really were) are past.

Other than a few life-and-living chores around the house and the occasional short trip, I very rarely have a valid reason not to write for at least a little while. And more often than not, once I get to the keyboard, that "little while" turns into much longer.

That means more new words on the page, novels finished sooner, and the next story started sooner. And time really is our most valuable asset.

One note, by way of a reminder: Most writers who hand out advice, free or paid, seem averse to personal responsibility. By that I mean they generally spout the same old stuff that doesn't work at all except on that extremely rare occasion when lightning strikes.

In a perfect world, they would at least admit that although their way works for them, something else might work better for you.

But generally, they don't.

So as I've said for years, it behooves you to Question Everything, in your own mind if nowhere else.

Trust your intuition. If a given piece of advice "feels" right to you, try it. If it doesn't, don't force it.

Especially if the advice is proffered by non-writing professionals, is something you've tried before without positive results, and is a regurgitation of the same old stuff.

As the sarge used to say on Hill Street Blues, "Hey, be careful out there."

Today was another of those keep-coming-back days. I wrote for about an hour while my wife and I were doing some laundry. Then we had lunch and I went back for another session.

Now a break to watch a little baseball, then I'll get one more session. Not bad for a Sunday.
(grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Fiction Is Truth Serum" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/fiction-is-truth-serum.html>.
Not a bad idea, at least on the surface.

See "Nothing in Capitalism is Clean: On Making Art in Empire" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/nothing-in-capitalism-is-clean-on-making-art-in-empire/>.
Originally I linked to the original article, but then I made the mistake of browsing that site. Then I changed it back to this link to The Passive Voice teaser. If you want to sully your hands at site of the OP, that's up to you. Mostly I think I posted this for yet another opportunity to see an avowed despiser of capitalism reap the rewards of, well, capitalism.

Fiction Words: 2859

Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3339

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691

Total fiction words for the month..... 14991
Total fiction words for the year..... 329722
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10270
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 128086
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 457558

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, September 17](#)

[September 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A lot in “Of Interest” today. Be sure to check it out.

Not a lot going on at the Stanbrough camp today. Mostly I’m just writing, cycling, and writing some more.

The babies are all behaving themselves, so today is mostly about the writing process.

I rolled out a little early this morning, mostly so I’ll be tired early this evening so I’ll get up early (to write) tomorrow.

I have a medical test in Tucson tomorrow, a prelude to getting my pacemaker swapped out, so tomorrow afternoon will be gone. Hence I have to get any writing done for tomorrow in the morning. Which isn’t really all that different.

Today is another keep-coming-back day. I moved to the outside writing desk early. By 5:30 I had 1300 words.

By 8:30, I had another 1000 words. I paused then to create a reverse outline, list of character names, etc.

I wrote another 1000 words or so, then (still during the late morning) jumped online to do a few minutes’ research on French surnames and first names.

I finished up at a little after 1. The story is racing along nicely, but I'm a little tired so I'll call it a day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For any fantasy writers out there, see "First Page Critique: Heir of Death" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/first-page-critique-heir-of-death.html>.

See "Jerome and Crying Kids: Drugs, Not Money, are the Root of All Evil" at <https://www.leelofland.com/jerome-and-crying-kids-drugs-not-money-are-the-root-of-all-evil/>. A lot of good info here. If you like to "write what you know," this should increase what you know. (grin)

See "Twelve Hours Left on the Subscription Drive" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/twelve-hours-left-on-the-subscription-drive/>. By the time this posts at 5, it will be too late, but maybe some RSS subscribers will want to jump in.

If you're a female and a writer, see "Share the Love – #Writers" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/share-the-love-writers/>. Of course, there is no "International Men's Day" or "Share the Beer – #Male Writers" or anything like that. But I don't really mind. (Frankly, I don't want an International Men's Day, though the Share the Beer thing has some merit.) And yes, from a sense of solidarity (or curiosity) I read the OP. And yes, I did notice when Sue Coletta "shared the love" she mentioned the works of some male writers too. Not me, of course. But I'm not bitter.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Dix" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/17/free-fiction-monday-dix/>.

Fiction Words: 3362

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3732

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053

Total fiction words for the month..... 18353

Total fiction words for the year..... 333084

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10640

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 128456
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 461290

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, September 18](#)

[September 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Welcome to new subscriber Dianne. Glad you're aboard. I hope you get something of value out of the journal.

The Journal apparently is a well-kept secret. That makes the subscribers a kind of elite group. Each of you is one of only 56 folks who currently enjoy these private glimpses and "Of Interest" tidbits. (grin)

I'm very glad you're out there. And it isn't all one-sided. Thanks to subscriber Céline who this very morning gave me some invaluable advice re naming conventions in France, where my WIP is set.

I received an email from another friend noting new "rules for provisional balls" in golf. For those interested, here's the link: <http://www.golfwrx.com/525564/rules-explainer-will-there-really-be-no-more-provisional-balls-in-2019/>.

My response? Well, first, a disclaimer. I don't play golf, so...

"Wow. Much ado about nothing, eh? If they played with low-impact grenades, wouldn't that be interesting? Pull the pin, tee off, the ball soars, and... *wham!*"

Of course, that would probably create a headache for the groundskeeper.

Irreverent? Probably. Shrug. I dunno (or IDK for the younger set). Maybe not. I've noticed golfers generally have a good sense of humor. But then, they would have to, wouldn't they? (I

know. Irreverence again.)

A Couple of Notes About Today's "Of Interest"...

I listed "Heil Safari" because the critiquer, Debbie Burke, offers some GREAT general advice for writers. Basically, "get inside the character's skin" and "use all five senses." Read it. You'll see what I mean.

And I re-listed Kris Rusch's "Free Fiction Monday: Dix" because I thought it might have gotten lost in the flurry of items yesterday. At just under 20,000 words, this is a novella. And Kristine Kathryn Rusch, to my mind, is America's premier storyteller. Enjoy.

Also, in a newsletter from Kris, "The first novel in my Smokey Dalton series published under the name Kris Nelscott is free in ebook." Click <https://books2read.com/u/bzPAVG> and pick your favorite vendor. I'm sure this is a limited-time offer.

I'm glad i decided to write fiction every day. In addition to creating a streak and adding to my productivity, it creates an excellent diversion from life things.

I'll post this a little early today, probably well before noon as I have to spend the afternoon in Tucson undergoing a medical test. And dang it, wouldn't you know I forgot to study. I'm also fasting All. Day. Long. today so if this seems a little more whacked out than usual, we'll blame the fasting. (grin)

The test is no real biggie, but frankly I'd rather have my fingernails pulled out, slowly, with a pair of pliers. Especially if the deed to a beach house in Ecuador was waiting at the other end of the whole nail-pulling episode. (grin)

Alas, the only hope I have of owning a beach house anywhere is to keep telling stories. So...

I started cycling and writing at 6:30 and by 8 I'd added almost exactly 1500 words. A short break to see my wife off, then back to the novel.

We're supposed to leave here at noon or a little sooner, so by 11 I was getting a little paranoid about maybe forgetting to post this.

So I ended the day with around 2400 words.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Pulp Speed Challenge Update" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pulp-speed-challenge-update/>.

See “Heil Safari – First Page Critique” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/heil-safari-first-page-critique.html>.

See Lee Lofland’s “How to Properly Identify the Red, Wet Substance Called Blood” at <https://www.leelofland.com/how-to-properly-identify-the-red-wet-substance-called-blood/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Dix” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/17/free-fiction-monday-dix/>.

For the replay (downloadable) of a webinar on getting reviews for your work, see “Mark Dawson’s 101” at <https://selfpublishing.lpages.co/webinar-replay-spf-101-14/>.

Fiction Words: 2465

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3025

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518

Total fiction words for the month..... 20818
Total fiction words for the year..... 335549
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 129016
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 464315

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 4

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, September 20](#)

[September 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A great “Of Interest” section today (playing catch up), but first some personal stuff, though it is related to writing, or in this case, not writing.

So sorry about missing yesterday. I missed writing not only this Journal but fiction for a day too. My “streak” ended at 4 days. Today it’s back to 1. (grin) Here’s the rundown on the past couple of days:

As you know, we went to Tucson on Tuesday for what we believed was an out-patient procedure. We expected to depart Tucson around 5 p.m. Then the following morning, I would resume my version of a normal life. (grin)

Uh, no. Some underpaid, overworked staff members told me (post-procedure) I had to stay overnight for observation. I wasn’t expecting that. So no computer, nothing to read, no change of clothing, etc.

I was miffed, to put it lightly. If you know anything about me, you know “miffed” is my least-desireable stage. This was only a cardio-cath (through the wrist nowadays), and to top it off, the “overnight” stay magically transformed into a 22-hour ordeal.

Of course, during that time I slept maybe 2 hours and heard five “reasons” for the requirement that I stay overnight, always different and always from the aforementioned staff members, none of whom were aware of more than the most sketchy details of the situation.

To cut to the chase, our expected 5 p.m. departure on Tuesday FINALLY became a 3 p.m. departure on Wednesday. We got home just in time for me to type a short Journal entry and hope MailChimp would pick it up in time for the 5 p.m. broadcast, but I decided to wait until this morning.

Oh well. At least it’s behind me for now, and the lesson was firmly implanted. I will never again go to any medical appointment or hospital visit without a full “go” bag containing at least one computer, my travel items, and a change of clothing. How wonderful it might have been to fill some of those 22 hours with new words on my WIP.

Just to be sure you understand, this was My fault completely. What happened was this: I trusted humans not personally known to me, believed I had all the pertinent information, and walked (smiling, no less) into an ambush.

And when the attack came, I didn’t adapt and overcome, nor was I calm enough to give a flip. At least I was smart enough (eventually) to stop trying to explain to those who could change nothing.

Let the formal record show (grin), I was taken hostage by the insurance companies and lawyers and accountants who run medicine now. (How Orwellian, but I won't let this drift into politics.) Fortunately, after leaping through several insidious hoops while slapping my flippers together, I was released back into the wild.

On top of that, the trip home (usually less than an hour and a half) took us almosts 2 hours because of a sudden deluge of post-monsoon rain in this place where it almost never rains.

To see more of the same kind of stuff, albeit directly about writing and publishing, don't miss Kris Rusch's post in "Of Interest."

An excerpt: "Tor/Macmillan's reasoning? To see if library ebook sales are the reason that the company's ebook sales are so low. That thinking is so damn stupid that I can barely type the words. ... Apparently, corporate think has decided that it's better to decrease sales to increase sales. (How Orwellian.)"

Rolled out at 3. Spent the first hour-plus waking up and writing the above, then scanned the Internet for other items of interest and added those below. My forced delay of today's fiction writing is almost sweet, because I'm jonesing for it so much. (grin)

To the Hovel and the novel at 7.

Well, I added only about a thousand words, then got onto another project (nonfiction), then went up to the house for lunch. Still not worried about the novel. It's flowing wonderfully.

Back to the novel at 11:30. I thought. (grin) A really light day of writing today as I ran out of steam. Back at it in the morning when I don't have so much to catch up on.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Surviving The Stupid" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/19/business-musings-surviving-the-stupid/>. (I added this one to my Resources page.)

See "Writing Small Town Police Departments" at <https://www.leelofland.com/writing-small-town-police-departments-are-you-ill-do-you-have-the-following-symptoms/>.

Via The Passive Voice, see "Why 'Little Women' Endures 150 Years Later" at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/why-little-women-endures-150-years-later-180970303/>. (Excerpt: "[S]he composed it quickly and with little deliberation...."

See "The Inner Voice" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-inner-voice/>. Especially see The Passive Guy's comments. They will help with your contract negotiations.

See “Talk Like a Pirate Day!” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/talk-like-a-pirate-day-2/>. A list of pirate lingo.

See “Bank Robbery and Dye Packs: Curses, Foiled Again!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/bank-robbery-and-dye-packs-curses-foiled-again/>. (A good read, but for the “meat” skip down to “Dye Packs” and “How a Dye Pack Works”.)

See “Young Explorer’s Adventure Guide Submissions” at <https://dreamingrobotpress.com/young-explorers-adventure-guide-submissions/>. Great guidelines. A friend tells me they’re open for submissions again. (Thanks, Ann!)

See “Great Fun Today” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-fun-today/>.

See “Just Write the Story” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/just-write-the-story.html>. “You don’t get to be the judge. You just have to write the story.”

Finally, if I haven’t mentioned it before, I recommend signing up for Mark Dawson’s newsletter at <https://selfpublishingformula.com/>. He will offer to upsell things, but you don’t have to buy. As always, take all advice with a grain of salt.

Fiction Words: 1177

Nonfiction Words: 880 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2057

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12080
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 129896
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 466372

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 1 (sigh)

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Mark Dawson](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, September 21

[September 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, it's taking a little time to get used to everything.

The long and short of my personal stuff is that my heart function is down to 10-15% (from 45% for the past 18 years) and I'm wearing an external defibrillator for awhile. It's an awkward device that makes every action a little different and a little more complicated. We're hopeful everything will be resolved in the next few weeks.

Very late getting to the Hovel and the novel this morning. An old Marine Corps friend called and we talked for about an hour. He's from the early days, maybe the mid-'70s. And then I no sooner got to the Hovel and settled in when my son called from Indianapolis. So that was nice.

Finally turned to the novel at 10. By 11:30, I'd cycled back over part of it, and I wrote a little, and by then I was worn out. I only added a few hundred words, so I'm not going to count this as a writing day.

So I'm gonna shelve it for the day and come back to it tomorrow. I'm going to try to keep this Journal going even on days when I don't write fiction. Most days I'll have something useful for you at least in "Of Interest."

And I hope to be back in the full swing of the novel before too long. I'd still like to finish this one before the month is out and then schedule all three novels for release about a month apart.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Well, feast or famine. Yesterday I was playing catch up, and today there's nothing in this section.

I do recommend you stop by <http://leelofland.com> and subscribe to his DyingWords blog, especially if you're a crime writer. But the advice on his blog is good for writers in ANY genre. Bad guys and crime show up even in Romances, right? So at least check it out.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 330

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 130226
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 466702

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, September 22

[September 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

You can't tell, but I'm laughing out loud as I write this. Yesterday I discovered (on top of everything else) I had a bad case of sniffles. As in grabbing a tissue and blowing my nose every other minute or so.

By the time my wife got home, I realized I had a head cold. (grin) It's not funny, not really, but in the overall context it's hilarious.

Awhile back, a person who should feel close to me asked why I was giving away some of my stuff to my children. "You aren't dying," the person wrote. "After all, it isn't like you have cancer."

Wow, eh?

The fact is, among diseases, heart disease is the number one killer in America. And that's only the plumbing side of things, things that lead to heart attack (the death of part of the heart muscle).

It doesn't include plumbing issues that lead to stroke; it doesn't include arrhythmias (like my heart block), which can lead to cardiac arrest; and it doesn't include heart failure.

And cancer? The big C (in all its forms combined) is number 2. So....

Anyway, after the cold piled itself on top of everything else, I decided I wouldn't do much over the weekend. Just take some days off and ease up.

Also yesterday I received a packet of contest entries I'm supposed to judge. And they're short-short stories, so easy-peasy. I'll get those done and probably out today, but nothing else.

And this morning I received a manuscript on which a client (having rewritten it) wants a re-edit. So I'll start that in a day or two as well.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See Lee Lofland's "A Sleepy Tweet: Working the Graveyard Shift" at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-sleepy-tweet-working-the-graveyard-shift/>.

See Joe Hartlaub's "blunt" first-page critique of "The Bare Bones of a Story: SKELETON" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/the-bare-bones-of-a-story-skeleton-a-first-page-critique.html>. If the anonymous author places learning the craft above having his/her feelings hurt a little, s/he should learn a ton from this.

From the Something To Consider Department (via Ann Stratton) see "How Will Police Solve Murders on Mars?" at <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2018/09/mars-pd/569668/>. Maybe a novel series here, folks. Either way, this is an extremely interesting article. (Should you

happen to browse other articles listed below the “Mars” article, be prepared for considerable political bias.)

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 390 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 390

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12800
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 130616
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 467092

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, September 24](#)

[September 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A LOT in “Of Interest” today. I even added a couple of them to my website Writer Resources page.

Absolutely nothing to report from yesterday. But this morning, after spending a couple of days getting over this cold or whatever it is, I feel better enough that I can at least think.

I mentioned a few days ago that I received a copyedit. It’s a re-edit, so it shouldn’t be all that difficult. Since it’s also prepaid, I’m going to set everything else aside and work on that until it’s finished. Some reshuffled priorities, in light of my current situation.

The copyedit shouldn’t take more than a few to several days, depending on how long I can go at it each day.

As I’m doing that, I’ll also read and judge the entries I received a few days ago for a short-short fiction contest. It probably will be my last one. In retrospect, I wish I hadn’t agreed so quickly. Probably my quick response was a holdover from the days when I was a regular conference speaker. (grin)

The third item in “Of Interest” today is kind of interesting. But maybe more in the US than anywhere else, it’s incumbent on responsible citizens that we decide which “laws” we choose to ignore because they’re simply ludicrous. Blind obedience has never been my strong suit.

For example, I occasionally collect shed feathers from my yard, but I don’t use them to adorn my hats. Neither am I going to toss them out just because some bureaucrat somewhere is laboring under an overwhelming sense of self-righteousness.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For a free session on how to launch books, see “Free Session: Launch Sequence” at <http://info.selfpublishingformula.com/101-free-session>.

See “How Beautiful Should Your Sentences Be?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/how-beautiful-should-your-sentences-be.html>. IMHO, much ado about nothing. Just write the story.

See “Could a Feather Send You to Jail?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/could-a-feather-send-you-to-jail.html>.

See Lee Lofland’s “An A-W Guide to Realism: A Pocket Dictionary” at <https://www.leelofland.com/an-a-w-guide-to-realism-a-pocket-dictionary/>.

See Lee Lofland’s “So, You’ve Committed a Federal Offense: How Much Time Will You Serve?” at <https://www.leelofland.com/so-youve-committed-a-federal-offense-how-much-time-will-you-serve/>.

See “What Do Tom Turkey and Writing Have in Common?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2017/11/what-do-tom-turkey-and-writing-have-in.html>. Too much structure for me. I offer this mostly for the mention of the three dimensions of character. If the rest works for you, so much the better.

See “Big Publishing and Its Small-Town Syndrome” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/big-publishing-and-its-small-town-syndrome/> specifically for The Passive Guy’s comments.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Strangers at the Room of Lost Souls” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/24/free-fiction-monday-strangers-at-the-room-of-lost-souls/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 420

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13220
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 131036
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 467512

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, September 25

September 25, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm headed back to see the cardio-electrician today. We'll head that way around 11 or so.

Before that, I'll work on the edit some more, but there are a few good things in "Of Interest" so I wanted to be sure to get this out there. Hence the early post.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Sleeping Secrets" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/sleeping-secrets/>. With a promo like that, I bought the book. (grin)

See "Planning Ahead in Writing Time" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/planning-ahead-in-writing-time/>.

See "How to Write a Great Story...in 18 Holes" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/how-to-write-a-great-story-in-18-holes.html>. Not what I expected, but still pretty good.

See "UNL announces creation of space law network" at <https://nebraska.tv/news/local/unl-announces-creation-of-space-law-network>. (Thanks to Linda Adams via Facebook.)

Via The Passive Voice, see "12 Unforgettable Sci-Fi Movies About Memory" at <https://io9.gizmodo.com/12-unforgettable-sci-fi-movies-about-memory-1829115205>. Something told me some of you would like to see this.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 150 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 150

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518

Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13370
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 131186
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 467662

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, September 26

[September 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the doc appointment yesterday went well. I found out I get my new internal pacemaker/defibrillator on the morning of October 4.

I also learned we won't find out whether my heart function will improve or how much for a month or longer. (They recommend three months, but expect to see a trend in one month.) So we'll see how that goes.

Either way, it just is what it is, and I'm entering a new stage of life. In the Corps we had a saying we used to toss back and forth when we were confronted by a less-than-ideal or otherwise annoying situation:

Every day's a holiday
and every meal's a banquet.
You WILL enjoy it.
(And that's an order.)

Good stuff, eh? (grin)

According to a newsletter I receive (if you have a CreateSpace account, you probably received it too), CreateSpace and Kindle Direct Publishing will now become one service.

This doesn't sound like an idea that's all bad. Besides, it simply is what it is. There's an old Mexican saying: What cannot be remedied must be endured.

But for me personally, this notice, combined with extremely low print sales of the 31 major titles I've taken to print, reinforces my decision to stick with digital publishing and eschew print publication.

If you don't currently have a CreateSpace account (or otherwise didn't see the newsletter) and would like a copy of the full newsletter, email me and I'll forward it to you.

Just editing today and/or maybe judging those contest entries I mentioned awhile back. Fortunately they gave me a distant deadline, so no major rush on those.

By the way, thanks for hanging-in. I'm looking forward to this medical stuff being behind me so I can get back to my version of "normal," including this Journal.

I'll post this now so I don't forget later.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See John Gilstrap's "Choose Your Weapon" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/choose-your-weapon.html>.

See "Must-Have Details Needed in Every Fictional Crime Scene" at <https://www.leelofland.com/must-have-details-needed-in-every-fictional-crime-scene-stop-and-smell-the-roses/>. Lee Lofland, with his daily output of these generous articles, continues to amaze me.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 330

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691

Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 131516
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 467992

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, September 27](#)

[September 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, mostly editing today. In fact, all editing other than the brief time I spent online for items “Of Interest.” Some good ones today.

I’ve also decided to re-enter the workforce by way of expanding my services to other writers. To that end, soon I’ll offer the following:

First Chapter or Short Story Critique (fiction, up to 3000 words) — This consists of personalized instruction and recommendations on your specific scene and chapter openings, how to pull the reader into the story and keep him there, use of character names, and a great deal more. The cost isn’t set yet, but it will be reasonable.

Proofreading (fiction or nonfiction, any length 3/4 of one cent per word [.0075] per word, payable in advance) — This includes checking for punctuation, spelling and wrong-word usage as well as consistency issues: hyphenation, numbers, capitalization, character names and

clothing, scene details, time and date details, etc. This is not an edit. I correct only what's listed above and only if it needs to be corrected. I'll make few, if any, comments.

Straight Copyedit (fiction or nonfiction, .0075 to .0125 per word, depending on an unedited sample from your manuscript) — This will include some explanatory comments if I feel they're necessary, but no outright instruction) To see what's involved in a copyedit, please visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/copyediting/> and scroll slightly down to "What I Do."

Copyedit with Instruction (fiction or nonfiction, .0125 to .02 per word, depending on an unedited sample from your manuscript) — This is the whole enchilada. I tend to explain every edit (that isn't self-explanatory), explain my recommendations, and instruct not only on what to do in a given place in the story but why.

If any of these interest you or if you have questions, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and we can talk about it.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "6 Ways to Transform a Boring Crime Scene into Fascinating Factual Fiction" at <https://www.leelofland.com/6-ways-to-transform-a-boring-crime-scene-into-fascinating-factual-fiction/>. Extremely interesting post.

See "Business Musings: Too Much Stuff (Estates Again)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/09/26/business-musings-too-much-stuff-estates-again/>. Extremely important post.

See "Reaction to Failure" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/reaction-to-failure/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 360

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518

Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14060
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 131876
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 468352

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, September 28](#)

[September 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'll be glad when things are back to normal. Or my version of normal. That should be a day or two after I get my new pacemaker.

I remember from before that there are certain physical actions I can't take for about a week after receiving the implanted device, like raising my arm on that side over my head, etc. But I don't think that extends to using a keyboard.

Anyway, the current problem isn't physical, it's mental. Well, compounded by the fact that my brain isn't physically getting as ready a supply of oxygen as it usually does.

Whatever the cause, it's difficult to think about anything right now other than the problem with the pump. I can't even think coherently enough about a given writing topic to put down a mini-essay here as a topic.

(As I wrote the previous paragraph I had to pause to copy/paste "coherently" into a search engine to be sure I had the right word.)

Fortunately, this doesn't adversely affect my ability to edit. I guess because I'm consciously looking at every word, every sentence and bit of punctuation, etc.

A few days ago (but while under the alien influence of this new me) I wrote an opening for a story or novel. Maybe an hour ago I came across it, wondered what it was and opened it.

As I started reading, I remembered almost instantly that I'd meant it as an opening to a story, but it was absolutely horrible. Ugh. No inside or outside setting details, no character description (or even a character name), no sensory input from the character, etc.

In a 300+ word opening, I managed only a vague setting, mentioned that it was night, and then repeated the opening problem in several paragraphs. Each mention was worded differently, as if somehow I didn't remember I'd introduced the problem only seconds before. Wow.

That isn't how I write, folks. Some have said I add a little too much setting description, most say they feel as if they're in the story with the characters, but no one has ever accused my stories of being bereft of details. (grin)

So apparently setting aside the novel (WIP) until this stuff is over was a good decision.

I have noticed also, through recent posts and comments on FB, that even a layperson's knowledge of heart problems is significantly lacking. That seems strange to me, and not just because of my current situation.

It seems strange because we have only one heart. It beats every moment we're alive, waking or sleeping, and it never takes a break.

If it fails, absolutely nothing else matters. If it fails, we quit, period.

More editing this morning, then judging the "flash fiction" contest this afternoon.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Running Out of Time" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/running-out-of-time/>. October online workshop schedule and master business class.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 490

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 132366
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 468842

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, September 30](#)

[September 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I can't stand publishing scams, and it hurts me to see so many writers falling for them. Hence this post.

Yesterday I did nothing at all except finish judging the contest. We got the results out in the mail. Today I will work on the copyedit for awhile, then take the rest of the day off.

But this morning, I saw that one of my writer friends in Oklahoma posted a newsletter from Booklocker.com to a Facebook group we both belong to.

That posting caused me to write a response and then the following.

Topic: The Scams, They Are A'waitin'...

In their Author Newsletter (posted 9/30/2018), Booklocker.com announced they'll file your copyright registration form for you for only \$99.

That's compared with LegalZoom (\$169), AuthorHouse and iUniverse (\$170), Xulon Press and Mill City Press (\$199), Balboa Press (\$204), Xlibris (\$249) and a host of others charging even more exorbitant prices.

The others they listed include InfinityPublishing/FastPencil, Trafford.com, Westbow Press, and Lulu. The one outfit to avoid that they did not mention is Wheatmark.

ALL OF THE ABOVE are subsidy publishers, meaning they will publish your work if you pay them an exorbitant up-front fee. Many, if not all, also require a royalty split. Not one of them tells you that you can do for yourself, at NO COST, everything they offer.

For just one example, according to a document I found on Scribd published by a Wheatmark author, Wheatmark offers "An arrangement with Amazon that allows Amazon to offer steep discounts."

I'm sure they do. It's called KDP Select. What they don't tell you is that ANY author who wants to go exclusive with Amazon (thereby forgoing sales through any other venues, including your own website) can take advantage of KDP Select. Free.

But back to the Booklocker.com Author Newsletter.

The problem is, registering your copyright through the copyright office yourself costs only "\$35 if you register one work, not made for hire, and you are the only author and claimant. To access electronic registration, go to the Copyright Office's website at www.copyright.gov."

To see this for yourself, download Circular 4 Copyright Office Fees (PDF) by clicking <https://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ04.pdf>.

Booklocker.com asks, "Why is copyright registration so important?" Then they answer that with four points, the first of which is misleading at best:

1. If someone steals your work, or portions thereof, you can't file a lawsuit unless your book was copyrighted before the infringement occurred.

That's true enough. BUT YOUR WORK IS COPYRIGHTED the moment it's set in fixed form (the moment you finish your manuscript) whether or not you choose to register that work with the US Copyright Office.

In other words, *owning* your copyright and *registering* your copyright are two different things.

Booklocker.com adds that if you use their service, “For two or more titles, multiply your number of titles x the \$99 fee, and enter it in the order form at the link above. *Paperbacks and hardcovers are considered different titles.*” (Emphasis added.)

Folks, paperbacks and hardcovers (and ebooks and audio books) are considered different titles for ISBN assignment, but NOT for copyright registration.

When you file a copyright registration, you’re registering the work itself, not any particular form of the work.

Please, please, please don’t be taken in by this scam.

In fact, I strongly recommend you stay away from ANY so-called publishing company that charges you an up-front fee to publish your work, whether or not they also require a royalty split. (The last time I checked, Booklocker.com does both.)

Note: This warning is only against working with subsidy publishing companies. Many independent authors hire out copyediting, formatting, book cover design, etc. to legitimate service providers. But those service providers are not publishers. They require a one-time fee for services rendered, and they don’t take a royalty split or otherwise own any part of your copyright.

Be careful out there.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Writing Habits” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-habits/>.

Then see “Creating a Habit of Writing” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/creating-a-habit-of-writing/>.

See “First-Page Critique: The Key to Writing Science Fiction” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/first-page-critique-the-key-to-writing-science-fiction.html>.

See (shock! gasp!) James Scott Bell’s “How to Make Good Dough Self Publishing” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/09/how-to-make-good-dough-self-publishing.html>. Note that I do not agree with the first paragraph in the post under “2. Think like a publisher.” I never share my unfinished work with anyone.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 730 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 730

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3422 words. Total words to date..... 3422
Day 2..... 2664 words. Total words to date..... 6086
Day 3..... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 9276
Day 4..... 1090 words. Total words to date..... 10366
Day 5..... 1466 words. Total words to date..... 11832
Day 6..... 2859 words. Total words to date..... 14691
Day 7..... 3362 words. Total words to date..... 18053
Day 8..... 2465 words. Total words to date..... 20518
Day 9..... 1177 words. Total words to date..... 21695
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21995
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 133096
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 469572

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 1](#)

[October 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. For me, September both flew by and slowly slipped through my fingers.

I allowed my WIP, the third novel in my Nick Spalding series, to languish on the back burner while I recuperated and worked on a copyedit for a gentleman.

But as October dawns, everything's wrapping up nicely. The symptoms of my cold are mostly gone and I've recovered fully from the initial medical stuff.

Just in time for Part 2, really, but it shouldn't be nearly as big a deal. For one thing, this time it's an outpatient procedure in a surgery center (not a hospital). All of which means I won't be confined in a small space with ill people for an extended period afterward.

I'll also finish the copyedit this morning, so I should be able to devote my time to my WIP from tomorrow until Part 2 (Thursday morning).

And as a result of Part 2, I'll finally be rid of this vest (it feels like a weak octopus is determined to squeeze me to death while continuously releasing itching powder across my shoulder blades) and the accompanying battery pack (ball and chain) that's currently dangling around my neck, availing itself of every possible opportunity to get in the way.

The vest, battery pack and I have had several arguments over the past several days. Let's just say our personalities clash. So putting those items back into a box and sending them back to the **masechists** folks who forced them on me will decrease my stress levels considerably.

Of course, I jest. The purpose of the LifeVest is to deliver a live-saving shock in case the wearer attempts to go off-planet as a result of unusually high stress levels. (Which the vest strives in every moment to provide. So there.)

I probably won't be able to do a lot on Friday, but I expect to send forth at least one rousing rendition of "Free at Last."

I'm aware that not everybody who's subscribed to the Journal reads every post every day. (Not that I blame you. I seldom read them every day myself.) But if you missed yesterday, I posted a pretty important topic, so you might want to check it out at <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-sunday-september-30/>.

After a very long time, Dean Smith is switching his schedule back to days. The mention is in "Of Interest" this morning. I hope he'll tell us more about why and how he's doing it.

To Benson for lab work this morning, then home to eat breakfast and finish the copyedit. After that, we'll see.

Finished the copyedit right at noon.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, see "Research tools for crime and thriller writers" at <https://www.louiseharnbyproofreader.com/blog/research-tools-for-crime-and-thriller-writers>. I can't really vouch for her editing service. She charges £50 (about \$65) for a sample edit of up to

1000 words (about 65 cents per word). The industry standard today is around 3 cents per word. I usually charge less than that. Shrug.

See “Switching the Schedule To Daytime” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/switching-the-schedule-to-daytime/>.

For what it’s worth, see “Reader versus Story” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/reader-versus-story.html>. Personally I think they miss the point. If the writer is familiar with a given genre, she already knows the reader expectations inherently and she can Just Write the Story.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Women of Whale Rock” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/01/free-fiction-monday-the-women-of-whale-rock/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 570 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 570

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 570
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 133666
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 470142

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 2](#)

[October 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I was going to go back to writing sometime today, but I decided against it. I still have the upcoming procedure (Thursday) on my mind, so I've decided not to do much of anything between now and then but relax.

It's only a couple days until that happens, and then I'll probably be down for a few days afterward. The Journal might be a little intermittent during the next several days too.

Physically, I felt a lot better, more myself, both yesterday and the day before. As a result, naturally, yesterday I overdid things a bit. Duh.

By "overdid things" I mean when I got tired, I kept pushing until I was really tired. Then I thought *Well, this is ridiculous*, and I pushed myself a little harder. (grin)

By the time my bride got home, she had to finish making supper. Like I said, ridiculous.

Now, I'm not complaining. Not really. I fully expected to reach a diminished capacity, but I didn't expect to reach it quite so soon.

Anyway, after Thursday and then a follow-up appointment or two, things will settle out again for awhile. At that point, whether or not my actual heart function improves, I'll be able to get back to some semblance of normal.

This is all good. For a guy who never expected to reach 20, much less 30, age 48 was a miraculous bonus brought on by a cracked chest and the replacement of my aortic and pulmonic valves. If the surgeon got a new boat out of that deal, well, he deserved it as far as I'm concerned. Anyway, after that, I decided I was probably going to be around awhile. (grin)

When I glided past 60, I took on some new challenges, mostly in writing, and I accomplished everything I set out to do as well as a few things I'd never considered. What a fun, exciting time!

But now, finally, I understand in a very real way that I have to slow down and "pace myself" (ugh, I despise that term). As I said, though, I didn't really expect that to happen 'til I hit 80 or so.

In retrospect, I've been creeping up on accepting my diminished capacity for the past year or thereabouts. It happened about the time my sense of urgency regarding my daily fiction output began to wane.

Thanks to these Journal editions, I could go back and almost pinpoint the exact date. But I won't. Meh. It doesn't matter.

What does matter is that writing — telling silly stories — is now my life's work. It's why I look forward to getting up in the morning and it's why I look forward to getting back to the WIP. Eventually.

Remember the old saw about fishing? That even a bad day of fishing is better than a good day at work? Well, as you know, even a day spent staring at a WIP and wondering how to re-jump-start it is better than a day spent flashing with ease through anything else. (grin)

So sometime or other, I'll go back to the WIP, read through part of it to reacquaint myself with the characters, and get back into telling their story. In other words, I'll write the next sentence.

But whenever that happens, I'll take it easy. I'll take a break when I want to, do other things when I want to, and do nothing when I need to, as I have over the past year or so.

The only real difference is that at this point, I figure that's all right. As you can probably tell, that's the part I still have to get used to.

I might have to drop back to writing and publishing only five or six novels per year instead of ten or twelve. (grin)

Just so you know, I *am* still planning to publish three novels (Nick 1-3) between now and Christmas. I think maybe that's my goal.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "October Workshops Starting Up" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/october-workshops-starting-up/>.

For fun, see "Pop Quiz" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/pop-quiz.html#comment-64349>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 660 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 660

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1230
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 134326
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 470802

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 3](#)

[October 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Some pretty good stuff in “Of Interest” today.

There won’t be a Journal tomorrow or probably the next day, so I wanted to get this one out.

In my absence, you might check on the websites from which I regularly post “Of Interest” topics:

I typically visit Dean’s site every morning at <https://deanwesleymith.com>. I often scroll down also to read the comments.

I usually visit the Kill Zone blog at <https://killzoneblog.com> as well. Even some of their First Page Critiques are worth reading, but keep your salt shaker handy. (Tequila is optional.)

I also recommend stopping by Kris Rusch’s site at <https://kriswrites.com> unless you’re subscribed to everything she puts out. She occasionally puts out a blog post that is neither Free Fiction Monday nor Business Musings.

If you haven’t subscribed yet, you might also check Lee Lofland’s blog at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-graveyard-shift-blog/>. The guy posts every day, and most often it’s a meaty topic you can use in your writing.

And don’t be a genre snob. Even if you don’t write crime fiction, much that is included in crime fiction works in other genres as well.

Heinlein’s Rules aren’t for everybody, but to dismiss them out of hand without even looking at them because you don’t write SF is just silly. (If you haven’t seen them and would like to, click <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Heinleins-Business-Habits-Annotated.pdf>. This should open a new window and automatically download a PDF document.)

You might want to check The Passive Voice at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/>. Almost always some good stuff there.

Finally, you might stop by my Free Downloads page at <http://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/> and see what's available. Lots of good information there.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "200+ Writing Prompts to Inspire You" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/>. (If you are required to subscribe but don't want to, subscribe anyway. Just don't click the confirmation email they send you.)

See "I Spy with My Little Eye ... Every Breathe [sic] You Take, Every Move You Make" at <https://www.leelofland.com/i-spy-with-my-little-eye-every-breathe-you-take-every-move-you-make/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 320 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 320

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 134646
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 471122

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#),
[KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, October 6](#)

[October 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A lot of items in “Of Interest” today, some older just in case you missed them.

I have a new favorite quote, culled from Joe Hartlaub’s post at the Kill Zone blog:

“Grandparents and grandchildren have a special relationship, given that they have a common enemy.” (grin) Isn’t that wonderful?

The operation went well (Thursday), with a couple of post-op glitches, natch. But long story short, I’m on the mend. A few days of extreme caution so I don’t pull any wires loose and then a few weeks of sort-of caution as my body gets over the physical trauma. So I’ll be getting back to normal, slowly.

I feel uncomfortable and a bit dramatic using the word “trauma.” They made maybe a two-inch incision, removed a device, inserted another device, and attached 4 wires to my heart. Apparently they did that last part through a vein. How, I don’t have a clue.

So I’m experiencing a little discomfort. Actually, mild discomfort around the site of the incision. Thus far I’ve taken only a few extra-strength acetaminophen tablets, and that was more to help combat the swelling than to alleviate the “pain.”

But I see “trauma” as something traumatic, like having a body part ripped off. Now that would be trauma.

Still, I’m following directions, blah blah blah so I can get back to focusing on more important things. So no worries.

They’ll do a pacemaker check on Tuesday (in Tucson again, sigh) and then I have a follow-up with the cardio-plumber guy (he’ll meet me in Benson, about 10 miles away) on November 1. I hope that visit will reveal news about my heart function. I hope it’s on the rise.

But either way, it’s all good. If it isn’t on the rise (worst case) I’ll still do everything I’ve always done, but just a little more slowly. So as I say, it’s all good. (grin)

I probably won’t be writing fiction for a little while longer, and that’s fine. Stories are percolating in my head. Those that entertain me will find their way to the keyboard soon enough.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Some great comments on “Stunned By The Voice” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/stunned-by-the-voice/#comments>. I especially like the comment left by “Thomas E” and Dean’s response, but all of them contain gems.

See “Business Musings: When To Stop Writing” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/03/business-musings-when-to-stop-writing/>. Frankly, given my current situation, the timeliness of this one blew me away.

See Joe Hartlaub’s “Don’t Be Afraid of the ‘No’” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/dont-be-afraid-of-the-no.html>.

See “What is and Who are Confidential Informants, and What Do They Do?” at <https://www.leelofland.com/what-is-and-who-are-confidential-informants-and-what-do-they-do/>.

See “A Sleepy Tweet: Working the Graveyard Shift” at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-sleepy-tweet-working-the-graveyard-shift/>. I used to work the graveyard shift as a cop, and the guy nailed it.

See “Sad News About David Willoughby” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sad-news-about-david-willoughby/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 470 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 470

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2020
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 135116
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 471592

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine](#)

[Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Sunday, October 7

[October 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Nothing to report. Absolutely nothing.

The healing continues.

Despite somewhat forced and mostly continual practice, I'm not getting any better at Doing Nothing.

But I guess I'll keep practicing for awhile yet.

On the up side, my bath robe fits a little better every day. I'm also binge-watching episodes of The Sopranos and getting back in touch with some of my earlier characters.

So sayeth the grouch.

And if this brings a chuckle to your visage, Hey, good f'you.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See James Scott Bell's "Mastering the Four Modes of Fiction" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/mastering-the-four-modes-of-fiction.html>. This is supposed to be a first-page critique, but it's much more. I'll leave it at that.

See "New Writing Bundle" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-writing-bundle/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 130 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 130

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 336726

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 135246
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 471722

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 8](#)

[October 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I just start thinking I'm posting way too much stuff about my current situation when I get a kind email saying some of you appreciate it. Thanks, I needed that. (grin)

Still, maybe it's at least time to mix in some other things.

It's bitterly cold here this morning (at 43°) under a crystal clear sky full of stars. But no wind, so it isn't all that bad. And I keep reminding myself, this year, for the first time ever (having been a desert rat most of my life), I actually looked forward to cooler weather.

Still, I'm at my outside desk, and I'm a sight. Fortunately, it's still an hour or so before dawn, so nobody can see me.

I'm wearing fur-lined leather house slippers, grey sweat pants, a zipped-up light-grey sweat jacket (can't wear t-shirts yet), my chocolate-brown bath robe, and a black USMC ball cap. Yeah, I'm not kidding.

When my bride wakes, while she's commuting from the coffee pot to her office with half-closed eyelids, I'll slip past her and get dressed in more conventional garb. Hey, y'gotta keep the magic alive, amiright? (grin)

And a short, fat, balding old guy in a bathrobe, house slippers and a ball cap doesn't cut it in that department.

I binge-watched more episodes of The Sopranos yesterday. Aside from being endlessly entertaining, the series is extremely well written in several respects.

The main characters are complex and real, with the “bad” guys having some redeeming qualities and the “good” guys having some flaws. The few cardboard (flat, strictly stereotypical) characters always serve a purpose, usually to foreshadow something that’s coming later.

The series is a masters class in writing fiction in pretty much any genre. I’ll probably expand on that statement in a topic or two soon.

I’ll probably repeat that whole “do nothing but hold down the couch and watch training films” thing today again. And part of tomorrow.

Tomorrow, Tuesday, I have the follow-up in Tucson for the most recently installed feature of my bionic self. That visit probably will result in me hearing “clean bill of health” no matter what they say. So I expect to return, at long last, to my WIP on Wednesday morning.

At that point, it will have been 19 days since I’ve written a word of fiction. Feels more like a year.

I expect it will be a relief to have a seat at my remote desk in the Hovel, which should be a toasty 70° no matter the outside temp.

I’ve also reclaimed the ability to type painlessly with both hands, so there’s that. Now if only my characters will welcome me with open arms after my prolonged absense, which I’m certain they believe is completely unwarranted. But we’ll see.

In the meantime, I can only hope some of this stuff’s been borderline entertaining. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “B&N In Trouble” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/bn-in-trouble/>. This is much more than the title reveals. Actually it’s a brief lesson about Intellectual Property (IP). Be smart out there.

See “What’s Your Inspiration to Write Book After Book?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/whats-your-inspiration-to-write-book-after-book.html>. She ends up going off-topic, but it still isn’t a bad post.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 540 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 540

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2690
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 135786
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 472262

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 9](#)

[October 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, again today we're off to see the wizard (cardio-electrician). That will happen early this afternoon. Then on November 1, I'll have a followup with the cardio-plumber who implanted a stent. After that, I suspect I'll be allowed to relax back into the semi-annual checkup routine.

As far as I know, today the tech will check the implanted device. Then someone will check the stitches on the incision and tell me what I can and can't do for the next few weeks and on into the future.

I'm actually looking forward to that part of the conversation. I don't mind limits as long as I know in advance what they are. After all, we all make adjustments pretty much every day of our life. My hope is that this will end the present drama.

I'm also looking forward to figuring out my new personal schedule, chiefly the writing part.

The plan is that I'll write fiction every day, mostly because I want to see whether I can develop a streak in that regard.

Some of that writing will no doubt be on the WIP, the “Nick 3” novel that seems to have been languishing for months toward the bottom of these posts.

Some of it probably will also be short stories and novellas, whether or not those are connected in some way with the WIP.

The priority isn’t WHAT I write (WIP etc.), but THAT I write.

During this period of “rest,” I’ve been assailed by story starts. It’s a good problem to have.

Often (for me) a story start comes in the form of a line of dialogue, delivered, naturally, by a character. Other times it’s a setting or a mood. Now and then it’s a combination of those, and it’s delivered to me on a silver platter by the white-gloved hands of some inanity I’ve heard.

The most recent inanity is also an old one: “I had no choice.” My immediate thought anytime I hear that is “[Expletive deleted], you always have a choice.” To me, that one ranks right up there with some adult, when asked why he did something, who says “I don’t know.”

So that will more than likely be the basis for a forthcoming story. How is that a story starter? Maybe a character says it one time too often. Maybe a major corporation heads a stockholder’s annual report with it. Maybe some politician uses it to defray arguments.

How about you? Does that one set you off? If so, and if it appeals to you as a story starter, write it.

Anyway, gotta go.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Free Fiction Monday: At Witt’s End” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/08/free-fiction-monday-at-witts-end/>.

See “Getting To Some Writing” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/getting-to-some-writing/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 470 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 470

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 336726
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3160
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 136256
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 472732

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 0

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 10](#)

[October 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Back to writing today. When the sun is up and I know the babies are safe inside or in the yard, I'll head out to the Hovel.

I still run out of steam after only a few hours, so I want to spend those hours putting words on the page. I can rest after that. (grin)

In the meantime, there are a lot of great posts in "Of Interest" today.

To the Hovel a little after 8. It was enjoyable to see my old friends again.

I spent some time going over the reverse outline and updating it, then put my fingers on the keyboard and listened to the characters, adding around 800 words.

A break up at the house, then back to the Hovel for another session. Around a thousand words later, I was getting tired, so I decided to call it a day.

It feels great to be writing again.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, see “110 Type Ornaments to Use in Your Book (Plus a Free Download)” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2018/10/110-type-ornaments-to-use-in-your-book-plus-a-free-download/>.

And again via The Passive Voice, see “How to Have an Opinion: The Criticism of Martin Seymour-Smith” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-have-an-opinion-the-criticism-of-martin-seymour-smith/>. Click through if you want, but be sure to read TPG’s take. (grin)

And yet again via The Passive Voice, see “How (Not) To Start a Publishing Company, a Case Study” at <https://publishingperspectives.com/2018/10/richard-charkin-how-not-to-start-a-publishing-company-mensch/>.

See “Stop and Frisk – A Legal Practice, or Not?” at <https://www.leelofland.com/stop-and-frisk-a-legal-practice-or-not/>.

See “Hangings and Strangulations: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of it All” at <https://www.leelofland.com/hangings-and-strangulations-the-good-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-it-all/>.

Some good comments on “B&N In Trouble” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/bn-in-trouble/#comments>.

See “eBook: The definitive digital marketing guide to getting results” at <https://www.talkwalker.com/marketing-essentials/the-definitive-digital-marketing-guide-to-getting-results>. You might have to subscribe, but you can unsubscribe later.

Fiction Words: 1736

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2036

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Total fiction words for the month..... 1736

Total fiction words for the year..... 338462

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3460

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 136556

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 474768

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Days of writing fiction every day..... 1

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, October 11](#)

[October 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. I rolled out (actually, I “sat up” as I’ve been sleeping in a recliner) really late this morning to the sounds of my wife releasing the hound and the cat from their kennel-beds at 5 a.m. I’ve usually been up an hour or two before then.

And Wow #2, I’m pretty obviously not ready to return to my usual schedule yet.

I planned to alter my routine a bit this morning. I was going to move my writing ‘puter to the outside desk instead of all the way out to the Hovel. Moving it out there yesterday took a little extra something out of me, so I thought I’d try this for the time being.

But the fact is, I just don’t feel like messing with any of it right now. The story was moving along fine yesterday, but I’m guessing maybe I pushed a little too hard. Today, I don’t feel like even looking at it.

So I guess I’ll wait it out and focus my energy and effort on healing.

Those of you who are new to the Journal, I hope you’ll hang around. I suspect your patience will pay off.

At the moment, I don’t know what to expect, but I know a “streak” of writing every day won’t be possible for awhile yet.

I realize I probably sound like a broken record here, but until I come around, the Journal might be sporadic at best.

In the meantime, here’s a topic for you to consider.

Topic: Critiques

“Critique” (n.) is defined as “a detailed analysis and assessment” of a literary work. To me, the definition implies that the critique will be honest. But maybe that’s just me.

Notice, the critique is not a criticism (good or bad) of the writer or even of the writer’s skill level. It’s a criticism of the work. Period.

And just to put it out there, I don’t care for the term “constructive criticism,” a phrase that puts me in mind of “participation trophy.”

The phrase is also redundant. All criticism is constructive, isn’t it? Everything depends on how the writer of the work takes the criticism.

Honest critique is nothing personal. It is neither an invitation to destroy a writer’s self-esteem nor merely an opportunity to pat the writer on the back. Again, it’s about the work, not the writer.

With that in mind, as a matter of discussion and thought, see “First Page Critique: Dearest Executioner” and the comments that follow at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/first-page-critique-dearest-executioner.html>.

Frankly, I was left feeling incredulous at the “critique.”

I read the submitted opening, but I was almost immediately bogged down. I was pulled into the story with the first two-thirds of the opening sentence, then shoved out by the final third. After that, I was never able to get back into the story, much less into the character’s head.

Frankly, it sounded to me like it was more important to the writer to showcase her use of formal, flowery, drama-laden language rather than just telling the story.

(Note: In certain Romance sub-genres and in certain literary fiction, this use of over-the-top language is appropriate, but this story didn’t seem to fall into any of those genres.)

The writer piled drama on drama on drama, which of course, waters down the drama. When everything’s dramatic and all-important, nothing is.

In the first paragraph, the character has “hysterical laughter bubbling in her throat” (so I could hear it). Later we learn the laughter hasn’t actually escaped yet. So how does the writer know it’s “hysterical”?

But as I said, the opening two-thirds of the first sentence (up to “executioner”) was great, even wonderful. It enabled me to see the character (sort of) and a little of the scene.

After that, everything on the page was from the author, not the character. And because it was from the author instead of the character, it was hokey. The writer forced one forearm over the character’s forehead and shoved her headlong into melodrama, never to return.

If I were asked to critique this, I would strongly recommend the author stop editorializing and allow the character to convey the horror of the scene.

For just one example, the doomed character has her hands “bound behind her back” and “heavy rusted shackles rubbing her wrists raw.” Yet the reader can’t feel the pain in her shoulders or her wrists.

Instead we get “The moon hung low. [The l]ights of the distant manor dwindling [should be “dwindled” to avoid changing verb tense] into darkness.”

Then the author wanders off into more melodramatic language with “souls” (not people or soldiers or occupants) wandering the halls and her wondering whether they would “shudder at the echoes of screams.”

(Granted, the use of “souls” is fine if only the spirits of dead people occupy the “manor,” but if that’s true, we should learn it up front.

Besides, if the “souls” would “shudder at the echoes of screams” they wouldn’t have sentenced her to death in the first place, right?

Then, in the same paragraph, we’re ripped out of the scene with “As it was,” which sets up an invalid comparison of all the stuff about screams with the fact that there’s no breeze. One thing has nothing to do with the other.

And all of that was in the opening paragraph. I won’t continue with my own critique. The “hysterical laughter bubbling” was enough to kick me out of the story. And as I said, the rest of the paragraph killed off any chance of me getting back in. Or wanting to.

Obviously the critiquer in this case would disagree with me, and I with her. When I read her critique, my jaw literally dropped open.

And the only two visitors who chimed in seemed to ape the critiquer. Which of course is fine if that’s how they really felt.

I saw a lot in all three so-called critiques that would help “empower” the writer and build or enhance or maintain her self-esteem. But I saw nothing that would actually help her improve her writing. And that’s just sad.

The whole thing reminds me of the woman who practically begged me for a critique of a short story she’d written. I’ve related that story here before, so I’ll summarize:

I finally agreed and took the time to provide an in-depth critique of the opening page. She dismissed most of what I said with a generic “I’ll take it under advisement” and spent the rest of her lengthy response complaining that I hadn’t found anything “good” to say, as “most critiquers” do.

Of course, I did not tell her I wish there had been something “good” to talk about. I just left it alone. She wasn’t looking for a critique at all. She was looking for a pat on the back.

Now, I don’t go into a critique looking for “bad” things or inadequacies. But when they pop out at me, I’m presented with a decision: I can either ignore them, tell the writer how wonderful s/he is and leave it at that, or I can explain what did and didn’t work for me (and why) in an attempt to help the writer grow in the craft.

I always take the second option. Not because I relish the idea of making a writer feel good or bad, but because I trust that the writer is seeking an honest opinion. And because I refuse to betray my own sense of professionalism.

I hasten to add, if I see nothing wrong with an opening (it happens more often than you would think), I tell the writer that. If praise for the writing is warranted, I praise the writing.

So again, critique is all about the writing, not the writer. When you seek a critique, you should demand nothing less than honesty. Then take the parts of the critique that appeal to you and leave the rest.

On that note, if any of you would like an honest critique of the first page of your story (say up to 500 words), I’ll provide that free of charge for a limited time. Email it to me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com as an attached Word document. I’ll do the critique and get it back to you ASAP. You may send the full manuscript or just the first 500 words.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Swing An’ A Miss” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/10/business-musings-swing-an-a-miss/>.

See “Intellectual Property” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/intellectual-property/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1400 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1400

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 1736
Total fiction words for the year..... 338462
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4860

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 137956
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 476168

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critique](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, October 13](#)

[October 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I set out to do nothing yesterday, and I almost succeeded. I wrote a short blog post for the big blog, but otherwise played with old stories.

One of my favorite short story collections (of my own) is Mobster Tales. I don't know how many other readers enjoy those, but I do. (grin) And that's important, for reasons that will become clear as you read on.

Yesterday, while browsing files, I remembered a story I wrote titled "What Happened That Day." It's high up on my list of favorite stories, so I read over it.

Then I realized I probably have a lot more short stories of that kind and about those kinds of characters.

So I started searching titles. I often don't remember what a story's about from only reading the title, so most often I had to open the promo doc and look at the Internet search terms.

The upshot was that I found over 20 short stories of the "mobster" type that were not included in Mobster Tales.

So I dediced to put together Mobster Tales 2 and Mobster Tales 3. Each will be a 10-story collection, and each will provide yet another stream of revenue for me from those stories.

Today I plan to find cover art and publish those collections. Or at least one of them today, and maybe the second one tomorrow.

Topic: The Heirarchy of Publishing

There are actually two hierarchies writers should be concerned about. Naturally, both are based on sales.

The first is commercial genre.

It's common knowledge that some genres sell better than other genres.

Romance is at the top of the heap. If you're a Romance writer (and if you can tell a good story), you're pretty much golden.

After Romance comes Thriller, then Mystery, then Suspense. Crime is in there somewhere too. I forget some of the others but toward the bottom (for written works, not film) are SF and then Western. And then Literary, which apparently includes Magic Realism.

But the thing is, the smart writer writes what s/he wants to write.

For example, despite its top-selling status, I have zero interest in writing bosom-heaving romance. I have friends (male and female, from best-sellers to some-sellers to some-dayers) who write Romance, and many of the stories probably are great. Just isn't my cuppa tea.

And yes, there are dozens of subgenres, and yes, elements of one genre often cross over into other genres.

For example, my own 10-novel western saga contains many elements of romance, psychological suspense, Latin magic realism, etc. (If I changed the setting from 1880s Texas and Mexico to 1000 years in the future, the stories would be firmly in the SF genre. Same characters, same situations, ray guns or pulse emitters instead of Colts and Remingtons.)

And my Detective and Horror and Crime and War and SF novels and novellas almost always contain psychological elements and so on.

So again, despite what you learn about which genres sell better than other genres, the smart writer writes the stories s/he wants to write. The stories s/he is passionate about. Because that's where we tell our best stories.

Then there's the second hierarchy.

Even with everything we hear about the "new" limited attention span, blah blah blah, the fact is, within each genre, novel series and novella series sell better than anything shorter.

One-off novels and novellas (again, within each genre) come in second in sales. Coming in third are the longer (10-story) short story collections. Then the shorter (5-story) collections.

And finally, individual short stories.

My point is, the writer (if s/he's smart) can't really manipulate what s/he wants to write. You can't really manipulate where your passions lie.

But you CAN manipulate what and how much you write within the genres you love.

I've written a 10-novel western saga. (I call it a "saga" instead of a series because really it's one long story.) I've also written a several-novel and novella Detective series. I've written an SF novel with a sequel and several other one-off (so far) SF novels and novellas.

I've never written a Crime novel, but I've written at least thirty short stories in the genre, and soon I'll have three 10-story collections of those works available.

I did all of that and more without giving a moment's conscious thought to this second hierarchy (what sells better within the genre).

Now, as I'm passing from having written a war novel with a sequel to a series with the third book, I'm giving it a lot of thought.

As a result, once this novel is finished, I might write a fourth in the series. And I might also revisit some of the other genres/worlds in which I've written and add to those as well.

I suggest you do the same. Especially if there was a story you wrote in which you really enjoyed the world and/or the characters, I hope you'll return to that world or those characters and give us more.

The readers are waiting for you.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "When the web started" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/when-the-web-started/>.

See "Science Fiction and Reality" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/science-fiction-and-reality.html>. Of course, there is also "science fantasy," in which the science goes beyond the boundaries of physics as we know it.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 870 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 870

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month.....	1736
Total fiction words for the year.....	338462
Total nonfiction words for the month...	6120
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	139216
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	477428
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, October 14](#)

[October 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I hope I'll be writing fiction again soon. Maybe not today. Possibly tomorrow. Almost certainly during the upcoming week.

The Passive Guy today wrote a post (in "Of Interest") regarding politics. It is compelling. It has little if anything to do with writing or politics, but it has a great deal to do with writers and with the political polarization that began almost twelve years ago and is currently ongoing in this nation.

His post also keyed me to write a long post of my own. On reflection, I removed most of it to another, more appropriate venue.

Like The Passive Voice, this Journal also is not about politics.

The Journal is only a place for me to report, a way for me to hold myself accountable as a writer. I have been told it also serves as a source for other writers, regardless of their own political biases, who wish to shorten the learning curve as they advance in the craft of writing.

I hope that is so.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

If you want to learn to write better description, see “In the Midnight Hour: A Cup of Joe ... and Maggots” at <https://www.leelofland.com/in-the-midnight-hour-a-cup-of-joe-and-maggots/>.

See “How to Mess Up Your Lead Character’s Ordinary Day” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/how-to-mess-up-your-lead-characters-ordinary-day.html>.

Finally, see “Politics and The Passive Voice” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/politics-and-the-passive-voice/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 230

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)
Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 1736
Total fiction words for the year..... 338462
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6350
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 139446
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 477658

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, October 15

[October 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Half the month is gone. I’ve written fiction only one day this month, and that was ill-advised. Still, it is what it is. I hope all of you are having a better month writing than I am. (grin)

But today all of that changes.

I'm feeling much better overall. I realized yesterday I didn't get tired as quickly or as early in the day. I've learned new ways of getting dressed without assistance, and yesterday for the first time since the operation I was able to wash my entire body in the shower without assistance. Woohoo!

Maybe most importantly, I believe I've passed the point where I might inadvertently do something to dislodge the device-to-ticker wires the doc placed so carefully. Wouldn't want to disrupt his handiwork, but neither do I want to let my newfound vigor go unused.

So today I'll begin a streak of writing fiction every day.

I specify "writing fiction" every day vs. "writing" every day because the latter is easy. I've written almost every day through this entire ordeal and could easily have written every day if that were important to me. Writing fiction every day is a slightly more difficult endeavor.

Anyway, I'm excited to be back. Part of my resolve comes from an item in "Of Interest" today, though I disagree with some of the blanket assumptions pointed out in the OP.

However, the OP caused me to consider why writing fiction every day is important to me, and why I recommend it if it's something that appeals to you. So here are my own reasons:

Topic: Why Writing Fiction Every Day Is Important

1. Production — For a writer, production of new work is important, and nothing enhances production like a positive routine.

2. The challenge — Nothing ventured, nothing gained. It's energizing to me to challenge myself, and I'm always excited to see what I've accomplished when the dust clears.

3. Improving storytelling skills — The more often I write while practicing newly learned concepts, the more I understand and the faster my skills improve.

4. Cultivating awareness of story ideas — The more I write, the more I exercise the idea muscle. The more exercise it gets, the easier it is to use.

5. Developing and ingraining habits — Even as I practice new concepts I'm also repeating and reinforcing my use of previously learned concepts. The more I write, the more ingrained those concepts become. (For example, using all five senses in every new scene or chapter opening.)

6. Seeing the power of compounding in action — Writing fiction every day enables the power of a streak. The streak repays me by driving me to the keyboard. The more I write, the more quickly my numbers (of words and of publications) grow, and the better chance my audience will continue to grow.

7. More fun — The more I write fiction, the more I want to write. The more time I get to spend with my characters in their situations, the greater the sense of escape and the more enjoyable the writing becomes.

8. A sense of accomplishment — Few events in my life have given me a greater sense of having accomplished something than to realize I'm working on my 34th novel in four years. And when I've written only a few more short stories I will have written over 200 of them. And of course, the future is what we make it.

Getting back on the horse of Heinlein's Rules 1–3 really isn't all that difficult. Not if you love to tell stories. I will also endeavor to get back on HR 4, getting covers done and getting the finished work out there. (grin)

Not a huge day today, but I got back into the story.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Remember My Last Challenge?" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/remember-my-last-challenge/>. I so admire this man's candor.

See "A Million Indie Titles Were Published Last Year, and Other Nonsense" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-million-indie-titles-were-published-last-year-and-other-nonsense/>. Be sure to read TPG's thoughtful and humorous take even if you choose to click through to the OP later.

See "Why A Daily Writing Habit Improves Your Life" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-a-daily-writing-habit-improves-your-life/>. See my take above.

See "I hate the new word processors" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/i-hate-the-new-word-processors/>. A timely reminder that the machine cannot displace the value of the human mind.

See "First Page Critique: A Plan of Change" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/first-page-critique-a-plan-of-change.html>. Maybe valuable if you wonder about foreshadowing. And if you can read through the comma splice the author put in her revision of the submitted work. Sigh.

Fiction Words: 1468

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2218

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899

Total fiction words for the month..... 1736

Total fiction words for the year..... 338462

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 140196
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 479876

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 1

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 16](#)

[October 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Raining here today. Drizzling, really, as the dregs of one hurricane or another move northeast from Baja. And I do mean drizzling. In the past four days, we've received an accumulation (in the rain gauge) of only 1.5" of rain.

Oh well. Here in the desert southwest, we really need the moisture. And the cooler temps are nice, to be sure. It just makes my commute (about 200 feet to and from the Adobe Hovel) a bit tricky.

And of course, the constant overcast and the requisite cuddly sweat jacket would make it very easy to snuggle with a good book or watch TV.

But I'm writing.

Thus far this morning I've had two sessions during which I knocked out around 1500 new words. And yesterday, I got only about that many as well.

I'm not going at it really hard, and I tell myself my approach is mostly due to my medical thing. To some degree that's true.

But I also feel as if the end of this one is coming in another 10,000 words or so, and really I'm in no rush to get there.

I've had the feeling lately this might be the last book in the Nick Spalding series. Part of that is probably because I've been in this book so long.

Today is only the twelfth writing day, but I started this thing way back on September 7 (40 calendar days ago today), and I'm not used to dealing with a storyline for that long. That's about the length of time it usually takes me to write two novels.

I do enjoy the characters a great deal, and the story is moving right along when I spend any time at all with it. But I'm tired of it. So part of me wants to get to the end and finish it, but a stronger part wants to drag my feet.

You ever have a problem like that?

When I started this series, I thought it might run to 10 or 12 books. Now it looks as if it might end at 3.

Then again, Nick recently showed me a different side of his character. It might bring about a prequel, one that maybe explores how he came about being this American expatriate guy who dabbles in other nations' affairs. And maybe how the psyche that enables him to want that life was formed.

I don't know. I guess for now I'll just keep writing and see where it takes me. Or us. Nick and me.

A lot of cycling back in this one as the characters reveal new little twists and turns that I then have to go back and set up. Sure glad I have that reverse outline. (grin)

In case you're wondering, those cycling jaunts take only a minute or two each time. It's very satisfying to know when I write the last word in this novel it will be a clean draft ready for my first reader and then publication.

The novel is still racing right along. What a great feeling that is.

A pretty good day today, and it will be topped off with the one LCS game at 1:30 and then the other at 5:30.

After I wrote all of the above, as I checked my email for any other links that might interest you, I received notice that a dear friend, Don Johnson, passed away on October 8.

Don was a mentor and a dear friend. He was also an old working cowboy, a writer, and — for those of you who remember the old TV show *Outer Limits*, he was the guy behind some of the hokey “special effects.” Of course, they weren't hokey at the time.

Don called me one time with a problem. One of his characters was an old Texas cowboy from the brush country. The character's great granddaughter was getting married in California and the character wanted to go visit her.

The problem was, each time his wife drove him in their beat-up pickup to the airport, problems happened. One time it was a flat tire. Another time, the radiator overheated. Etc. Of course, each time he missed his flight.

Don called me and said "How in the world can I get him to California if I can't get him on a plane?"

I thought about the old Iron Horse, the fact that the character had never flown and didn't really "hold with such nonsense," and suggested he try putting the character on a train.

A few days later, I got another call. "Harvey," Don said, "I just wanted to let you know Grandpa got on a train and he's in California." (grin)

Don Johnson, my dear friend, will be sorely missed.

If you enjoy westerns, I can't recommend his work strongly enough. My personal favorite was A Texas Elegy. The opening sentence alone will blow you away. But he wrote many more, including Brasada, Play the Pipes Softly, and The Last Cowhunt: A Texas Elegy.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See Debbie Burke's important post, "Throw Away Your Shoehorn" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/throw-away-your-shoehorn.html>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Trick or Treat" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/15/free-fiction-monday-trick-or-treat/>.

Fiction Words: 2796

Nonfiction Words: 850 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3646

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899

Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695

Total fiction words for the month..... 6000

Total fiction words for the year..... 342726

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7950
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 141046
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 483522

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 2

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Debbie Burke](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 17](#)

[October 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

In his post today, Dean talks again about how trying to “perfect” your writing project can ruin it. He cites the coaches on The Voice saying the same thing.

But he casts a few very general nets regarding what we who read his posts believe. I can only assume he did so because he’s received a lot of disparaging comments over the years.

Still, generalizations really annoy me, so I chose not to include his post in “Of Interest” today. So if you do go read it, please do so with a grain of salt. Guy probably has a toothache or something.

Due to various circumstances, I got a late start and only one long session today. Not quite two hours with a short break in the middle.

Then I headed up to the house to check on the babies and laundry. While I was there I found baseball will begin shortly so I’m gonna call it a day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “The Perfect Murder: Human Soup?” at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-perfect-murder-human-soup/>.

For a dash of humor, see “25 Ways To Avoid Writer’s Butt*” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/25-ways-to-avoid-writers-butt.html>.

Fiction Words: 1719

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1919

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431
Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899
Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695
Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414

Total fiction words for the month..... 7719
Total fiction words for the year..... 344445
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 141246
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 485441

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 3

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#)

The Journal, Thursday, October 18

[October 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Watched an excellent baseball game last night and stayed up late (for me) to do so. I seldom watch baseball on TV through the season, but I almost always watch the division and league series and then the world series.

I’m of the generation that remembers games being played only in the daytime, teachers allowing us to listen to the radio broadcast during class, etc. (grin)

I'm old enough to remember men asking other men (as a test of their manhood) whether they knew who won the previous world series. I'm glad the custom didn't persist; my memory isn't all that. The question was allegedly even used during World War II to determine whether a new guy in the unit was possibly a spy.

Baseball is part of American Culture, which has been of great interest to me of late. Probably because so many proponents of open borders proclaim so loudly that Americans as a whole have no unique culture.

Of course, that's silly. Our culture, like that of every other nation on Earth, is a great blending of cultures from around the world. And nowhere is that blending more apparent or more openly on display than in baseball. Long live the game.

I actually got out to the Hovel early this morning, a little after 6, a little before sunrise. That's the joy of the Hovel. When the outside temp hovers around 40°, it's a toasty 65° inside the Hovel. (grin)

This weekend, I'm going to enlist my wife to help me rearrange my Hovel office, though. I not only write "into" the dark, but "in" the dark, and currently there's a window directly above my writing desk. The light blinds me and after a short time my eyes get fuzzy.

In a darker setting, I can lower the display intensity from 100% to around 50%. My eyes do better and I can spend longer with my fictional friends.

I wrote all of the above, then started on the WIP again at 6:30.

About 900 words later, I headed up to the house for breakfast and a shower.

Back to the Hovel at 8:30. Another 900 words, then to the house for a break.

While I was there, I remembered I received a request yesterday for a free critique of the first 500 words. I meant to do it earlier this morning. Oops. (grin) So I did that, then went back to the Hovel and the WIP at 10:30.

Only a half-day today, but I'm wearing thin anyway.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Barnes & Noble" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/17/business-musings-barnes-noble/>.

See “Real Things and the Proof of Truth: Look Up, Look Down, Look All Around” at <https://www.leelofland.com/real-things-and-the-proof-of-truth-look-up-look-down-look-all-around/>.

See “Because of Last Night’s Comments” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/because-of-last-nights-comments/>.

Then see those comments at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-threat-of-perfect/#comments>.

Fiction Words: 2677

Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3157

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899

Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695

Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414

Day 14... 2677 words. Total words to date..... 32091

Total fiction words for the month..... 10396

Total fiction words for the year..... 347122

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8630

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 141726

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 488598

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 4

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#),

[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, October 19

[October 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today's post at the Kill Zone blog is a Reader Friday thing. I don't often mention them, but today's post is about cartoons and comics. It was fun looking back. See "Of Interest."

And regarding Lee Lofland's posts... they're full of great information for writers, but each post most often is a story of sorts in its own right. Just as writers can learn hard, cold facts from the posts, they can also learn descriptive techniques (writing setting).

Today's post is particularly interesting. Lee writes a great hook (in this case, the first paragraph), then not only mentions a worn-out clichéd myth (never start with the weather) but disproves it with his own opening. (grin)

It's a great post. I hope you who are not specifically "crime" writers won't pass it up.

So what's the key to writing a great opening? There's only one test: Does it pull you into the story and make you want to keep reading? Then it's a great opening.

A short while back, I wrote either a topic here or a post on the main site about Taking Your Time with your writing. (It's on the main site, not scheduled to post until mid-December. I'll update it with the information below.)

Today as I was writing, I realized, if you allow your characters to tell the story (their story, after all), you will have no choice but to take your time.

This is important. Writers who control their characters and the story they're trying to tell often see, hear, smell, etc. things in their mind that never make it onto the page.

If you allow your characters to tell the story, and especially if you cycle back through what you wrote during your last session before you begin the next session, that won't happen.

Your characters won't leave out any important details because they're actually living the story. They know what matters, and they know what will matter later.

To the Hovel and the novel way late at 9 a.m.

I knocked out a little over 1100 words in the first session, then took a break to visit with the babies up at the house. When my little girl curled up for a nap, I went back to the Hovel.

The novel is going very smoothly and closing in on the climax. After another day or two, it will be finished. I will be sad to see it end. I kind of hope Nick and Marie will tell me another story I can carry into the future. (grin)

Back in the Hovel, I looked around for a minute and decided to go ahead and rearrange my office. I realized I could do most of it with only my right arm and a little leverage.

I'm still not supposed to put any stress on my left left chest for another week or so. And I'm being a good, obedient patient. Mostly.

As it turned out I was able to do it all. Patience and a little leverage. So that clears the weekend for other things.

Back to the novel at 1 p.m. I got some more words, ran out of steam and headed up to the house to post this.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Comments Have Been Interesting" (subtitled "Best Advice I Can Give") at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/comments-have-been-interesting/>.

And please see the comments at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/because-of-last-nights-comments/#comments>.

See "Murder on a Hot Day: Weather is a Character" at <https://www.leelofland.com/murder-on-a-hot-day-weather-is-a-character/>.

For fun, see "Reader Friday: Cartoons" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/reader-friday-cartoons.html>.

Fiction Words: 2682

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3242

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899

Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695

Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414

Day 14... 2677 words. Total words to date..... 32091

Day 15... 2682 words. Total words to date..... 34773

Total fiction words for the month..... 13078

Total fiction words for the year..... 349804

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9190

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 142286

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 491840

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Days of writing fiction.....	5

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, October 20

[October 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I didn't roll out as early as I wanted to today. I'll get some fiction done, but I have no idea how much time I'll have. Depends.

I started the day with a couple of free critiques. I'm not complaining. Hey, I offered, am I right? (grin) I hope even more folks will take advantage of it.

To see what I'm talking about, look at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/new-services-offered/>.

This is a great opportunity to cut your learning curve. If your openings don't immediately grab the reader and ground him in your story, I urge you to take advantage of this limited-time offer.

Anyway, time. There might be a trip to Sierra Vista later today for me. Again, we'll see. For now, out to the Hovel for at least one session.

I got one good session, then went to the grocery, then another, shorter session. The end is in sight now. I suspect it will finish tomorrow. Monday at the latest.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "From Cool to Heat" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/from-cool-to-heat.html>.

See "The Rookie: The Pilot – A Good Cop/Bad Cop Review" at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-rookie-the-pilot-a-good-cop-bad-cop-review/>.

Fiction Words: 1533

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1733

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431

Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899

Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695

Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414

Day 14... 2677 words. Total words to date..... 32091

Day 15... 2682 words. Total words to date..... 34773

Day 16... 1533 words. Total words to date..... 36306

Total fiction words for the month..... 14611

Total fiction words for the year..... 351337

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9390

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 142486

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 493573

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 6

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, October 21](#)

[October 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, given the time and a little attention to the WIP, the story will end today. I'm not looking forward to it.

In my endeavor to write fiction every day (and it always has to be "honest" fiction, meaning I intend to publish it), I already have a vague story idea for a short story or novella.

A wise guy on a camping trip. Eh? Eh? Or something like that. How would a guy born and raised into a very different lifestyle in Brooklyn react to wide-open spaces, and overnight no less?

If you've ever been way out in the boonies on an overnight camping trip, you know everything seems both bigger and more expansive and more tightly closed-in at night.

Out There is the entire world — the entire universe — expanding forever into... well, Forever. Yet you're also in your own minuscule bubble, hemmed in on all sides by a void where even air might not exist.

So in that way it's a good experience for both the extrovert and the introvert. Though the latter might get a little rattled at some of the sounds that filter in from outside the aforementioned bubble. (grin)

So I wondered, how might that Brooklyn guy react to that environment? Of course, he would have to react according to his ingrained psyche, and I love writing that stuff. Should be fun.

Wow. The novel's really flying along.

I went to the Hovel around 7 and knocked out a little over 1000 words. Then I took a break to see how everyone's doing up at the house.

That lasted for about a half-hour. Then I headed back to the Hovel and the novel. Knocked out the rest of today's effort in a little more than a half-hour, and I'm gonna call it a day.

There are probably four or five thousand words left to the end (the story took a twist) so I'll probably finish it tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "The Mystery of Jack Waer" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/the-mystery-of-jack-waer.html>. This one strikes close to home. (grin)

See "It Helps If You Can Write" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/07/it-helps-if-you-can-write.html>. (This might be a repeat.)

Fiction Words: 2118

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2488

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431
Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899
Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695
Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414
Day 14... 2677 words. Total words to date..... 32091
Day 15... 2682 words. Total words to date..... 34773
Day 16... 1533 words. Total words to date..... 36306
Day 17... 2118 words. Total words to date..... 38424

Total fiction words for the month..... 16729
Total fiction words for the year..... 353455
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9760
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 142856
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 496061

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Days of writing fiction..... 7

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 22](#)

[October 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Long post today, but a good one, I think.

I'm in the Hovel as I write this. I got out here around 7 this morning, played a game or two of Spider Solitaire, then decided to write this stuff before moving back to the novel.

I'll probably finish the novel today, but as I've mentioned, I'm in no big rush.

After I write the stuff below, I'll probably delay writing on the novel for a little longer. I have to update my reverse outline. For those who don't know yet what a "reverse outline" is, I'll explain it in a couple of days. It's a real life-saver at times, and well worth the extra effort.

After I wrote the topic below, it lent itself to a follow-up topic, so I wrote that one as well. I'll publish that one (and count the words from that one) in tomorrow's Journal.

Topic: Writing Into the Dark — Why It's So Hard to Do

Well, truthfully, it isn't. Not after you've re-learned to trust your own subconscious.

Many believe the "writing into the dark" technique is simply deciding not to use an outline. A close writer friend of mine recently alluded to this in his own blog post.

But WITD is actually a great deal more than that.

Although my friend didn't talk specifically about the more important aspect of WITD, he did lay out the formula for it: Write the first sentence that occurs to you, then write the next sentence and the next. And as they say in the shampoo ads, later, rinse, repeat.

The thing is, once you learn to trust yourself, writing into the dark actually negates the need or desire for an outline.

What I mean, when you get used to WITD, you won't even *want* to write an outline. After all, with WITD, you're writing first and foremost to entertain yourself. So why would you want to write a story when you already know (via your outline) every twist and turn and the ending?

Do you still want to read a novel or watch a movie when you know how it's going to end? Yeah, me either.

For the same reason, I'll never write an outline. Or a character sketch. Or a world-building exercise. Or anything else that would enable me, the writer, to levy control over the characters and situations in the story I'm writing.

I don't want to "control" my characters. I want them to do what they do and make their own choices. I want to roll off into the trenches of the story and run along with the characters, letting them and their story entertain me as I go, rather than controlling them from some ivory "Author" tower on high.

Writing off into the dark is not difficult. Nor does it have anything to do with outlining or not outlining. In fact, there's only one "rule" to learn, and although it has four moving parts, it's really easy. The rule is Just Write the Story. The moving parts are

1. Put your fingers on the keyboard.
2. Write the first sentence that occurs to you.
3. Write the next sentence that occurs to you.
4. Repeat until you've accompanied your characters to the end of the short story, novella or novel.

Yes, it really is that easy.

In the past few years (since 2014) I've written 34 novels (when I finish my WIP), 6 novellas, and almost 200 short stories. I wrote every one of those "into the dark," allowing the characters to tell their own stories. Most of the time, they did and said things that never would have occurred to me.

My process became difficult only a few times when I was "stitching" a prequel to an original first novel of a series, or tacking a sequel onto another novel I'd written much earlier.

The difficulty was created by having to match timelines and characters. In other words, the difficulty was caused by my having to "think," having to allow conscious thought into the process momentarily to make sure things matched up.

If I'd had to think my way through everything I've written by adhering to an outline, I wouldn't have written nearly as much. And probably I'd be doing something else by now, because writing really would be a grind instead of the wonderfully fun release that it is.

And that's the whole point of writing into the dark and why it works so well.

When you're writing into the dark, you aren't thinking. No conscious thought is involved. (Some famous writer once said nothing good in literature ever came from conscious thought.)

When you write into the dark, you're allowing the characters in your subconscious mind to tell their own story, a story they're living.

Why in the world would anyone want to screw that up by imposing a framework on the characters in the form of an outline? Why would anyone want to predetermine a character's psychology and his or her physical and mental abilities by limiting the character to a character sketch?

For me, none of that makes the slightest bit of sense. It would be like me taking it upon myself to determine what and when the folks next door eat, how they dress, where they work, and what they do in their leisure time.

If I wrote that "outline" of my neighbors' lives, do you suppose it would bear any resemblance to reality? Of course not. And if I tried to force it on them anyway, wouldn't they have every right to protest? Of course they would.

That's because the neighbors are living their story in their own way, by their own rules and according to their own needs and desires. Who am I to force them to do things my way?

It's exactly the same with the characters in my stories. They are who they are, from the bad guys to the heroes, and they're highly entertaining. Why would I want to screw that up by making them look and sound and act like every other character in every other novel in the slushpile on every editor's desk?

But if you need a more selfish, maybe money-driven reason to create original characters and stories in your original voice, try this on for size:

Every time you write from an outline and hold your characters to it, you're making conscious-mind choices. The same conscious-mind choices being made by thousands or millions of other writers every day. What's original about that?

And how can you hope to surprise (and thereby entertain) your readers when those readers also make exactly the same conscious-mind choices every day of their lives?

And every time you make another "polishing" pass at your manuscript, you're making it look like everything else out there. In other words, you're polishing your original voice off of it.

Think about that. Every day, millions of writers around the world buy into all the BS they've learned over the years, mostly from non-writers. And in the name of "originality" they outline, write, rewrite (ad nauseam) and polish all the originality out of their works.

Silly, isn't it?

Still, as I am often reminded, WITD is not for everyone. (Back in the day, we called this a cop-out.) And the thing is, WITD *could* be for everyone. You only have to learn to let go of the BS and trust yourself.

Those for whom WITD absolutely will not work are those who are unable to let go of their safety net: all the garbage they've been taught over the years about writing. Again, most often by non-writers.

BUT if you want or need the safety net of an outline, knock yourself out. After all, your meticulous planning and the resulting boredom won't affect my process, so what do I care? (grin)

But I do have a wish for you, and it's this:

Be original. Live an authentic life. By all means, always march to the beat of your own drummer. Enjoy the feeling that you aren't allowing others to control you. Live your own life's story.

Then allow your characters to live theirs too.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the second comment on "Nifty Writing Bundle Once Again" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/nifty-writing-bundle-once-again/#comment-190821>. Is "cycling" confusing to you at all? I'll be back with more on that tomorrow.

See “How To Use False Eyewitness Testimony...” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/how-to-use-false-eyewitness-testimony-in-thrillers.html>. The post is aimed at Thrillers, but the advice should work in any genre.

And for a ton of fun, see “Politically Correct 10-Codes” at <https://www.leelofland.com/politically-correct-10-codes/>.

Fiction Words: 3337

Nonfiction Words: 1420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4757

Writing of Nick 3 (novel, tentative title)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431
Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899
Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695
Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414
Day 14... 2677 words. Total words to date..... 32091
Day 15... 2682 words. Total words to date..... 34773
Day 16... 1533 words. Total words to date..... 36306
Day 17... 2118 words. Total words to date..... 38424
Day 18... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 41761

Total fiction words for the month..... 20066
Total fiction words for the year..... 356792
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 144276
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 500818

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 33
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 8

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 23](#)

[October 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

On this day in 1983, two suicide bombers in truck bombs attacked the Marine barracks near the airport in Beirut, Lebanon. The attack killed 220 Marines and 21 other service personnel. This was the deadliest attack against US Marines since the battle of Iwo Jima in February 1945. At the same time, another truck bomb attacked a building housing French paratroopers, killing 58. We will not forget.

Now to writing....

First, a thought to ponder: When we look back at something we've written and think it's good, our first thought is usually "But writers are the worst judges of their own work."

Yet when we look back and think something we wrote is no good at all, the thought that writers are the worst judges of their own work suddenly flees the scene. What's that all about?

Keep learning, believe in yourself and write. Everything you write is "the best" for someone.

Topic: Cycling Revisited, Again

In my Journal post yesterday(<http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-monday-october-22/>), I included a topic on Writing Into the Dark. Mostly it was to downplay the notion that WITD simply means writing without an outline.

The much more important aspect of WITD is that when you learn to trust your subconscious (yourself) you will neither want nor need an outline.

And I'm writing this post today to set aside another possible misunderstanding, especially with NaNoWriMo looming (I guess) on November 1. NaNoers are often encouraged to write a sloppy first draft with an eye toward "fixing" it later.

For me, that makes about as much sense as hauling a wheelbarrow load of dirt halfway to the hole where you intend to deposit it. Then you dump it, and come back tomorrow to reload the wheelbarrow and take it the rest of the way. Silly.

The purpose of today's topic is to let you know that WITD is in no way a recommendation that you should write a sloppy "first draft." In fact, NaNoers would be much better off writing into the dark and then cycling, as described below.

Those who write an outline first, then write the novel (or whatever) most often write a "first draft" and then follow up with several more "drafts." Usually until they've polished enough of their original voice off the work that they then feel it is ready for submission or publication.

Hogwash. It's all hogwash, plain and simple.

And so is the idea that writing into the dark necessitates the need to write an ugly, “rough” first draft.

Conversely, when you write off into the dark, you’ve written in your own unique, original voice. So if you’re pursuing “originality,” you’ve got it. And you don’t want to screw it up.

WITD is not stream-of-consciousness writing. You shouldn’t ignore punctuation or capitalization or misspellings or wrong-word uses. If you notice them, fix them. Duh. Then write the next sentence.

So when your characters lead you to the end of your short story, novella or novel, how do you know you don’t need to go back through and rewrite the whole thing?

Easy. You use a technique called “cycling.” It comes in two forms.

Form 1 — As You’re Writing

Say you’re in chapter 28. And suddenly soft-spoken Aunt Marge, a kind, little-old-lady type, pulls a .32 caliber revolver from the folds of her robe and shoots dead a drug dealer who just broke down the front door of her home.

Where in the world did she get that gun?

She surprised you with it as much as she surprised her would-be assailant. Not to worry. She’s simply letting you see a little more of her story.

So you cycle back a few sentences or paragraphs or chapters to the appropriate place and watch as she, maybe for the first time ever, takes her deceased husband’s .32 caliber revolver out of the nightstand and slip it into the pocket of her robe.

Never mind that you also have no idea where she got the attitude to use it. After all, there are many things about Aunt Marge you don’t know. Even in “real” life.

Form 2 — After You’ve Written

When I’ve written a session (usually 800 to 1200 words), I take a break. Sometimes it last a few minutes as I walk up to the house to get another glass of water. Sometimes, if I have other things to do, it lasts a half-hour or an hour or longer.

But regardless of how long the break lasts, when I get back to the WIP, I start by reading over what I wrote during the previous session.

Now this part is all-important: I read for pleasure. I read as a reader, not as a writer. So I’m reading with my subconscious mind.

As I read, I rest my fingers on the keyboard. And just as when I was writing (also with my subconscious mind engaged), I allow my characters to add to the setting, dialogue and other scene details if there's anything they want to add.

Often there's nothing. But even when I add to the manuscript during this "cycling" session, it's always something from the characters, never from my conscious, critical mind.

I don't look at sentence structure, how many times I used "that," or any other such thing. I just read through what I wrote in the previous session and allow my characters to come through my fingers if they have anything to add.

Then, when I've read through to the blank space (I'll bet you guessed it) I Write the Next Sentence. Then the next. Then the next.

And that's writing into the dark with cycling. When I come to the end of the story, I've written one clean "first draft" (the only draft).

Disclaimer: Actually, honestly, I write three drafts.

When I've finished the first draft as described above, I run my spell-check program and correct anything that needs to be corrected. (Especially in fiction, spell-check is often wrong.) On a novel, this might take as long as ten minutes or so. That's the second draft. (grin)

Then I send that second draft (often within minutes) via email to my first reader.

He reads for pleasure, and points out any typos, wrong-word usages, and inconsistencies. Then he sends it back to me.

I look over his comments and make any changes that I feel are necessary. That usually takes less than a half-hour. That's the third draft. And that's the one I publish.

Nice day here today, humid, with the early morning temps hovering around 60°. Unless my characters throw me another curve ball, I'll finish the novel today.

To the Hovel at 6. Got right at a thousand words in the first session, then back up to the house for a bit.

Back to the Hovel at 9 and another thousand words. I think the novel is finished.

I'll take another break now, then cycle through what I've written today, do a spell check, and that will be that.

Wrapped up just before noon.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Great Discussions” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-discussions/>.

See “The Party Crashers: Demise and the Mortis Triplets – Algor, Livor, and Rigor” at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-party-crashers-demise-and-the-mortis-triplets-algor-livor-and-rigor/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Fumes” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/22/free-fiction-monday-fumes-2/>.

Pretty interesting blog over at Tony Writes Pulp. See <http://tonydwritespulp.wordpress.com/>.

Fiction Words: 2058

Nonfiction Words: 1200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3258

Writing of Coincidence (formerly Nick 3)

Brought forward from September..... 21695

Day 10... 1736 words. Total words to date..... 23431
Day 11... 1468 words. Total words to date..... 24899
Day 12... 2796 words. Total words to date..... 27695
Day 13... 1719 words. Total words to date..... 29414
Day 14... 2677 words. Total words to date..... 32091
Day 15... 2682 words. Total words to date..... 34773
Day 16... 1533 words. Total words to date..... 36306
Day 17... 2118 words. Total words to date..... 38424
Day 18... 3337 words. Total words to date..... 41761
Day 19... 2058 words. Total words to date..... 43819 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 22124

Total fiction words for the year..... 358850

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12380

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 145476

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 504076

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Days of writing fiction..... 9

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, October 24

[October 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Over the past two days, I've written lengthy topics as part of my Journal posts. I've included another one today on The Reverse Outline. And I probably will include another one tomorrow on A Different Kind of Outline (for those who would like a safety net).

These posts are mostly for new folks who have subscribed to the Journal or who follow along on Facebook.

But I encourage those of you who've been with me awhile to read over them too. Even if it's a topic you've seen before, you might pick up something you can use. It isn't all the same old information, and even what is, isn't said in exactly the same way.

Also, check out the comments on the posts for the past couple of days.

A chilly morning with the cloud cover gone and the temps hovering around 40°. Also there's a full moon this morning (or close to full) and the coyotes nearby are all paying homage to it.

But their singing keeps my little girl in the yard, so it's all good. Of courses, song dogs can easily leap our 5-foot fence. To inhibit them, I occasionally turn on my flashlight and shine it around the fence line.

Topic: A Look at the Reverse Outline

Those who write outlines before they start writing a novel do so (I'm told) to keep themselves and the story on track.

They lay out plot points, major twists, etc. Then they stick rigidly to the outline and bend the characters and the events of the story to their authorial will.

As I've already mentioned, I'm not that angels-singing-on-high, Ivory Tower, omnipotent Author Guy. I have no desire whatsoever to control anyone, either in real life or in the stories I'm fortunate to write. Too much work, too much responsibility.

So probably I sound like a hypocrite when I advocate using a reverse outline. But it ain't so. (grin)

A reverse outline is as odd as it sounds. Basically, you write the scene or chapter first, then outline it.

Why?

Well, if you've ever had a reader wonder why a character's name suddenly changed from John to Jim in Chapter 28, or wonder why John was wearing a blue sports jacket when he went into a bank and a brown one when he came out, that's why.

If you've ever had to stop writing while you searched back through the previous eighteen chapters to find the make and model and caliber of the pistol or revolver your PI is carrying, that's why.

If you've ever had to search back through fifteen or twenty or thirty thousand words to find whether a car was a Buick or a Pontiac, whether it was dark blue or light blue, etc. that's why.

Ugh. Stopping in the middle of your writing to invoke the conscious mind, go back, and find something you need is just deadly.

I use a reverse outline for anything I write that has chapters and is 15,000 words or longer. I also use one when I'm writing a series in which any characters from one story continue in other stories.

So what is a reverse outline? It's an outline of what's already happened in your book.

Different writers use this technique, and each has his or her own way of doing it.

Dean Smith keeps a yellow legal pad next to his writing computer. As he finishes a scene or chapter, he jots a few notes about the characters and the scene.

Because it's easier for me to type than to write, I use a Notepad (.txt) document. I start with the title of the book, followed by a list of character names and maybe who the character is. (Grocer, chief of police, so-and-so's son, etc. Each item in this list is on one line.)

I follow that with a list of place names of any significant buildings, cities, towns, intersections, etc. That list might include dimensions and other attributes if they're important to the story.

Finally, I list 1, 2, 3, etc. along the left margin of the page.

Unlike Dean and others, most often, I don't update my reverse outline after each chapter.

I usually wait until the day's writing is finished, then add notes to my reverse outline for the chapters I've written that day.

During that process, first I add any new character names and place names to those lists. Then I skip down to the number of whatever chapter I just wrote, and I basically write a short synopsis.

Most often that includes the characters who appear in the chapter, what they're wearing (if they change clothing often), the main conflict/event of the chapter, etc. This is one paragraph, anywhere from 10 to 70 or 80 words.

On average, my chapters are around 1200 words. The novel I just finished is slightly under 44,000 words and 38 chapters, an average of 1158 words per chapter. The reverse outline for that novel, not including the character and place-name lists, is just over 1800 words. An average of 48 words per chapter description.

Important: If I provide an in-depth description of a character or a setting in a particular chapter, in my reverse outline for that chapter I note "Desc of [character or place]." This is extremely valuable and saves tons of time when I'm wondering, late in the book, whether the small scar next to John's eye was by the right eye or the left. (grin) I just go to the reverse outline, search for "Desc," find the one about John, and eyeball him.

As you can see, an accurate reverse outline can be a real time and sanity saver for you. As with any new technique, it will become easier and more useful the more you practice it.

I encourage you to try it on your next novella or novel. If you do, let me know how it works out for you.

Well, my "streak" of writing fiction every day lasted all of 9 days. (grin) No biggie. It was a false goal anyway, with no payoff and no consequences.

So I let it go. It's better to not sweat the small stuff and to write on days when I legitimately feel like writing fiction. For me, today was more of a nonfiction day.

Went to the Hovel around 7, wrote everything above, then sent the latest Nick Spalding novel off to my first reader.

After that I filtered through some ideas in my head and set them all aside. Nothing piqued my interest.

Then I fidgeted through a few idea files on my writing 'puter, including a few short stories I thought might make good novels and a few openings I wrote awhile back and then set aside. But nothing interested me there either.

I just didn't feel like starting anything new today. I dunno, mebbe I'm still mourning the one I finished yesterday. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “A Different Twist on Storytelling” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/a-different-twist-on-storytelling.html>.

See “No Sweat: Solving Crimes and a Sweaty James Brown” at <https://www.leelofland.com/no-sweat-solving-crimes-and-a-sweaty-james-brown/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1150 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1150

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22124
Total fiction words for the year..... 358850
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 146626
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 505226

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, October 25](#)

[October 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Writing fiction is my escape. It’s fun, and I love nothing more than being shoulder-deep in a story, racing along with my characters, almost breathlessly anticipating what will happen next.

It’s so enjoyable for me that I occasionally use writing as a carrot. It dangles from a string, hanging from a stick that’s tied to my balding old head. It’s the only way I can think of to get my muley old butt to pay attention to Heinlein’s Rule 4 and move forward.

That will be the case today. No more fiction writing for me until I create covers for my last three novels (the Nick Spalding series) and two more Mobster Tales 10-story collections. (The hardest part is finding five appropriate cover photos.)

Then I have to prep the books for publication. That won't take nearly as long as finding the photos and creating the covers.

The last novel is with my first reader, so I can't publish it yet, but I can at least prepare the other two novels and the two collections for publication (add front and back matter, format, etc.). And I can publish the first novel and one of the collections.

So today (or beginning today) I'll create five covers, prep four books for publication, and release two. Then I'll allow myself to go play again.

Tough love, but it's gotta be done. (grin) I'll report here each day on the process and how it's going. Should be a hoot, although one filled to the tipping point with sheer drudgery. Well, when compared with writing.

For now, here's another topic for your liesurely perusal.

Topic: A Different Kind of Outline

When we think of outlines, we typically think of a multi-page behemoth, along the left margin of which are, in descending order, Roman numerals, upper-case alpha characters, arabic numerals, and lower-case alpha characters.

You can go further than that if you want, including each of the above in parens. Sigh.

In fact, I've heard of novelists actually writing novella-length outlines before they ever write a word of the actual novel. Some of them take months just writing the outline.

But there are other ways to construct an outline. They're still primarily conscious-mind endeavors, and I will never advocate allowing the conscious mind into your writing process.

But at least these other ways are not as intrusive and controlling as that "formal" outline we all learned back in fifth or sixth grade.

The first I want to discuss (and toss out) is the "mind map."

As I recall, this is basically a stream-of-consciousness kind of thing by which the writer brainstorms with himself and allows each idea he jots on the page (usually in a circle or square) to generate the next idea and the next and so on.

This technique might even lead to alternate ideas in much the way each decision we make leads to an infinite number of futures.

The better mind maps do not follow a strictly linear flow, which I understand is a good thing.

I guess my question here would be, why not just write the story in the same way? (Except you wouldn't have to worry about your circles or squares being the right size, the little lines that lead from one to the next, etc.)?

In a way, I mind-map all of my stories, but the map never sees paper. I write the initial sentence. Then I write the next sentence, which I assume was generated by the first, and so on.

So for my money, the mind map is pretty much as silly and unnecessary as the formal outline.

So is there an outline that can help guide you through your book without soaking up all your time and energy? Um, yes. Yes there is.

Years ago, when I spent a lot of time asking other writers their method of outlining, I learned one from an excellent storyteller named Deborah LeBlanc.

Deborah was a major author for a medium-sized publisher (now defunct). Frankly, her method still stirs my interest from time to time. It actually makes sense as a way to provide an overall structure that isn't overbearing.

Ms. LeBlanc knew from long practice (and the publisher's requirement) that her book would be roughly 400 pages and about 100,000 words. Her chapters would average 10 pages each, about 2500 words. (That's two major scenes per chapter, if you're counting).

So she would begin by putting 1, 2, 3 ... 40 down the left margin of a sheet of paper.

Her novels were always multiple-viewpoint, so she added a POV character's name next to each number. As I recall, she said she tried to give the protagonist two of every five chapters, sometimes in a row, sometimes not. The other chapters were in the POV of the antagonist or a lesser character (good or bad).

After that, she wrote the hook (in this case a single sentence that would grab the reader's interest) for Chapter 1, then for Chapter 2 and so on through Chapter 40.

When she'd listed the POV characters and the hooks all the way through, she'd start with Chapter 39 and add a cliffhanger that would "attach" to the hook at the beginning of Chapter 40. Interesting to note, the cliffhanger usually just popped into her head (came from her subconscious).

Then she moved back to Chapter 38 and added a cliffhanger that would attach to the hook at the beginning of Chapter 39. And so she worked all the way back to Chapter 1.

This writer always had a one-line premise when she started out. The premise of one book was something she'd read in the newspaper (they used to have those) about young teenage girls using something called "sigils" to attract dark powers.

The girls in question were cutting themselves, carving the desired sigils directly into their skin, an act that made the power of the sigil much stronger.

Anyway, by the time she'd worked her way from Chapter 40 back to Chapter 1 adding cliffhangers, she had a general direction the book would take.

But after that, when she started actually writing, she let the characters surprise her with the story.

But how could they surprise her when the cliffhangers and hooks were already in place?

Simple (and this is important): If the story veered in an unexpected direction, she went with the story and used the cliffhanger/hook combo the characters gave her instead of the ones she'd originally come up with.

In other words, with her "outline" she had a basic framework in mind and a basic structure (a safety net) on paper. But when the story changed, she changed the structure to fit the story, not the other way around.

This is still far too much work for me, but maybe it's something that would interest you. (grin) If so, feel free. And good luck.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Dreams" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/dreams-2/>. You can skip the article, but (OMG!) don't skip the Passive Guy's comments.

See "Business Musings: Copyright Savvy" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/24/business-musings-copyright-savvy/>. Folks, this is a must-read.

See "A Get Out of Jail Free Card for Some Authors" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-get-out-of-jale-free-card-for-some-authors/>.

For a short, fun video of ziplining, see "While I Recover My Brain" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/while-i-recover-my-brain/>.

See "It's Time To Share..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/cmon-time-to-share-what-are-you-working-on.html>.

If you're a fantasy writer (and reader), see "The 2018 Truly Epic Fantasy Bundle" at <https://storybundle.com/fantasy>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1240 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1240

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22124
Total fiction words for the year..... 358850
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 147866
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 506466

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, October 26](#)

[October 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm actually writing this on Thursday afternoon (yesterday).

Wow. I figured it would take at least a full day just to find the appropriate cover pics for the five publications I want to put out soon. Or longer.

Didn't happen that way. I got lucky. And I can't say enough good things about [Unsplash](#), a place where you can download high-resolution images FREE and use them for any purpose you like.

Unsplash even tags each photo with the photographer's name, so it's easy to give them appropriate credit for their work.

Anyway, I started searching for photos yesterday right after I posted the Journal, so around 7 a.m.

By 11 (now, as I write this), I had downloaded the photos I needed (plus about 20 more I'll use in the future), designed five ebook covers, and filed everything in the appropriate folders. I am STOKED! (grin)

Now to put away the load of laundry I folded an hour or so ago, then have lunch. After that, I'll upload the first Nick Spalding novel (now titled Nightfall).

After that I'll start compiling the second Mobster Tales 10-story collection. With any luck, I should be able to publish it this afternoon as well. When I get Mobster Tales 3 compiled (I might have to write one more story for that one), I'll schedule it for release a month out.

I'll also upload the second Nick Spalding novel (now titled Transitions) for later release (maybe November 20. Then when I get Nick Spalding 3 back from my first reader, I'll finalize and upload it for release on December 15. In time for Christmas, don'tcha know.

So it's all going much better than I'd hoped.

Annnnd I forgot a few things. Promo docs. I forgot to prepare promo docs. So I did that for all three Nick books. (I haven't compiled the collections yet.)

Then I uploaded Nick 1, 2, and 3 to D2D and then to Amazon. D2D was having some issues, but that whole process (with both D2D and Amazon) still took less than an hour.

I released Nick 1 today. Nick 2 will release on November 19, and Nick 3 will release on December 15. (grin)

Then I went to Smashwords.

Ah, but I also forgot I had to upload a special Word doc created just for Smashwords. Since I used only numerals for my chapter heads, I did NOT have to manually create a TOC though. Yay me. Creating a manual TOC for a book with 40 chapters takes about an hour if everything goes smoothly.

I did create the two Smashwords docs. (I decided to wait until I get Nick 3 back from my first reader before jumping through that hoop.)

So I uploaded Nick 1 and 2 to Smashwords, the second one for release on November 19. So that's all done, and at the moment it's only 2:20 p.m.

But I'm pretty much all-in at this point. So tomorrow (now today, Friday), I'll compile the first short story collection (Mobster Tales 2).

Then I'll create a promo doc for it, create a manual TOC for the Smashwords version, and get it published in all three places for immediate release. (grin) I suspect that (and finishing this Journal entry) will be a full day's work.

Then I'll go back to my writing schedule. I haven't counted, but I think at the moment I have only 19 short stories to split between Mobster 2 and 3.

If that's the case, my first project when I go back to writing will be another short story to fill Mobster Tales 3. Then I'll do all the prep work (at least I already have a cover) and put that one up for release on probably December 1.

So all in all, it's all good. And I'm remembering more with each passing moment why it's so easy to slip off Heinlein's Rule 4. (grin)

But. Even. At. My. Slowest. I'm still publishing a lot more and a lot more quickly than I would be allowed to do through a traditional publisher. And as an added bonus, I don't have to sign away my copyright. (grin)

Oops. After everything else, I also forgot to go to the very clunky Channel Manager at Smashwords to keep them from distributing my books to the same venues to which D2D will distribute them.

A true PITA, but I want the books available in Smashwords' online store, so I put up with it. And now it's almost 3, and I'm quitting for the day (Thursday).

And now it's Friday.

I realized overnight that I also didn't put my Nick 1 novel up on BundleRabbit, so I'll do that today after I compile and publish the Mobster Tales 2 collection. Sigh. I really wish I could hire someone to do all of this stuff. (grin)

But doing all of this myself is what's made it possible for me to publish 34 novels etc. in fewer than five years. Just think about it. If lightning struck and I'd been with a traditional publisher for the past five years, my FIFTH novel would just now be coming up for publications.

It's shortly after 11 now. I started this morning around 7, compiled and published Mobster Tales 2 (to all three venues), then uploaded Nick 1 and Mobster Tales 2 to BundleRabbit. So a day and a half later, I'm finished with all the external stuff.

Now I'll update the website to reflect these new additions. The smoke has finally settled. So I'll say goodbye until tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "The Party Crashers: Demise and the Mortis Triplets – Algor, Livor, and Rigor" at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-party-crashers-demise-and-the-mortis-triplets-algor-livor-and-rigor/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 940 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 940

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 22124
Total fiction words for the year..... 358850
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 148806
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 507406

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, October 27](#)

[October 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. Who knew last night's ball game would become the longest game in the history of post-season baseball? It finally ended (for me) around 12:30 a.m. my time. (groan) I gave up and went to bed halfway through the 18th inning. And the Dodgers won it moments later, 3-2. It was Boston's first road-trip loss in this post season.

And I actually saw Mary Hart (of TV entertainment show fame) making fun of and trying to distract a Boston pitcher who has a unique "look-in" to his catcher. Sigh. Some people are surprisingly crass.

A minor publishing-process update. You'll remember I was sure I had 20 stories to fill two 10-story collections.

Turns out I had 22. So I put 11 stories in Mobster Tales 2. (grin) And if all of them fit, I'll put 11 in Mobster Tales 3 as well. I haven't compiled that one yet, but the docs are waiting and most of the hard work is done.

I also finally got caught up with sending books to donors. I sent out the first two Nick novels and the collection.

Anyway, in case any of you are interested, Nightfall (Nick 1) is available at <https://www.books2read.com/u/mleogY>.

Transitions (Nick 2) is available for preorder at <https://www.books2read.com/u/38r5WO>.

Coincidence (Nick 3) is available for preorder at <https://www.books2read.com/u/mBPN5p>.

And Mobster Tales 2 is available at <https://www.books2read.com/u/4NGnpJ>.

All four titles are also available at Amazon. Just key in my name and the title, and it should pop up for you.

There, I think that covers all of it for now. (grin)

Still managed to roll out at 3:30. Should be an interesting day. Ah well, I can sleep when the Series is over. (grin)

To the Hovel at the first hint of dawn, around 6. Knocked out around 2180 words on a new Stern Talbot (detective/mystery) story in two sessions with only a short break, then up to the house to see what's up for the day.

Spent some time with my wife, went to the store, then back to the Hovel at 1 p.m. to write a little more. All in all, a good day on a new novel.

By the way, anyone out there enjoy detective/mystery/crime novels with a noir flavor? If you would like to be a first reader for this one, [email me](#).

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Fiction and Politics" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/fiction-and-politics.html>.

See "Imprint consolidation at big houses is a sign of changed times" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/imprint-consolidation-at-big-houses-is-a-sign-of-changed-times/>.

Fiction Words: 3703

Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4083

Writing of Stern Talbot 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3703 words. Total words to date..... 3703

Total fiction words for the month..... 25827
Total fiction words for the year..... 362533
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16090
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 149186
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 511489

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, October 28](#)

[October 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot going on today. I'll write some fiction, and probably I'll spend time watching a little NFL football (haven't watched for about three years) and then of course Game 5 of the World Series.

In baseball, I always watch as many division series as I can, and then both league championship series. I enjoy watching professionals in any discipline perform at such a high level.

But this year, as I watched the NLCS, I told my wife I thought either team (whichever won) was going to be awed at the buzzsaw that is this year's Boston Red Sox.

In the Sox' only road loss during the post season, the Dodgers eked out a win in the 18th inning as the Red Sox uncharacteristically played sloppy ball the whole game.

Then last night, when the Sox apparently remembered who they are, they scored nine unanswered runs in the final three innings. Wow.

Tonight, LA will either roll over and show the Red Sox their belly or they'll claw and scratch and maybe squeeze out one more win. I almost hope for the latter because I'd like to see One More Game (or two).

But either way, this has been an incredible year for the Boston Red Sox. So much so that whether or not they win the World Series, for this year they're still the best team in baseball.

For those of you into predictions, I predict the Red Sox will win the series tonight.

Is there a lesson for writers in all of this? Maybe.

For me, the lesson is to keep learning, keep improving, and always perform (write) at my current professional best. I wish that for you too.

And for goodness' sake, have fun.

To the Hovel, lazily, at 8 a.m. Wrong a couple of thousand words in two goos sessions. The novel's flying right along, but I'm gonna call it a day. Maybe mow part of the yard, then watch some TV.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Staying Afloat in the Roiling Sea of Books" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/10/staying-afloat-in-the-roiling-sea-of-books.html>.

Just in case you missed it, see "Business Musings: Copyright Savvy" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/24/business-musings-copyright-savvy/>.

Fiction Words: 2317

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2687

Writing of Stern Talbot 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3703 words. Total words to date..... 3703

Day 2..... 2317 words. Total words to date..... 6020

Total fiction words for the month..... 28144

Total fiction words for the year..... 364870

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16460

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 149556

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 514176

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 29](#)

[October 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I had a thought yesterday...

I never celebrate when I finish writing a novel. Never. It's a vast sadness that leaves me feeling empty, and I mourn the sudden separation from my fictional friends.

After all, do we celebrate the end of a friendship? The end of a marriage? The end of the life of a loved one? Of course not.

But as with any other birth, I always celebrate starting a new novel.

It's the beginning of an exciting new journey — in my case, with old or new friends — and I love the wonderful anticipation of what will happen along the way.

Just food for thought.

Yesterday, after yard work and while waiting for the ball game to begin, I updated my website with new book pages.

If you'd like to see the new covers for the novels, take a look at <http://harveystanbrough.com/action-adventure/>. Clicking any cover will take you to a larger photo and the page and description for that novel.

I don't currently create new individual book pages for collections, but you can see the cover for Mobster Tales 2 at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07JRBCBXF>.

You can also see it at other venues, but at Amazon you get to look inside. That means you get one free short story. And I think it's one of my better ones of that style. (grin)

Wow. I didn't roll out this morning until almost 5:30. I don't remember the last time that happened. Guess I needed the sleep, but it threw off my entire morning schedule. I'll have to remember to check for "Of Interest" items later today, maybe just before I post this.

I hope to make significant headway on the new novel today despite my late start on the day.

To the Hovel at 6:30, but I did little other than write the stuff above and play Spider to warm up my brain. The temp outside is a chilly 48°, but I enjoyed my coffee and my first cigar in the 66° Hovel. (grin)

Finally to the novel for a short session a little before 8. I added only around 500 words, then up to the house for a bit.

Back to the Hovel at 8:30. By 10 I'd added another 1600 words or so, then took another short break.

Back to the Hovel at 10:15. The story's really running. By 1 p.m., with a couple more very short breaks, I added another 3,000 words. Super-great day so far.

I'm taking a longer break. Then I hope to get at least one afternoon session in.

Well, I ate a quick lunch, then back to the Hovel. The writing's going too well, and I'm too excited. (grin)

Okay, I wrote a little over another thousand words and I'm calling it a day around 2:15.

This might be the best day of fiction writing I've ever had. It's like the characters are as happy to see me as I am to see them.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Recipe for a Macabre Soup: Grave Wax, Autolysis, and Putrefaction" at <https://www.leelofland.com/recipe-for-a-macabre-soup-grave-wax-autolysis-and-putrefaction/>.

See "Street Teams" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/street-teams/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Children" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/29/free-fiction-monday-children-2/>.

Fiction Words: 6283 (!)

Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6773

Writing of Stern Talbot 9 (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3703 words. Total words to date..... 3703
Day 2..... 2317 words. Total words to date..... 6020
Day 3..... 6283 words. Total words to date..... 12303

Total fiction words for the month..... 34427
Total fiction words for the year..... 371153
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16950
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 150046
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 520949

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 30](#)

[October 30, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm a very lucky guy.

The first reader for my Nick Spalding series sent me an email last night. (I got it this morning.)

While reading back through Nightfall (Book 1) she noticed I'd misspelled "cannon" as "canon." In her email, she sounded as if she were hyperventilating. (grin, but great catch, Nan)

So when I emailed her back this morning, basically I just told her typos happen (yes, even in books published by the "Big 5") and to not worry about it. It was an easy fix.

Then, because the typo occurred in the first few pages of the story, I opened the docs, changed the spelling, and uploaded the new versions to Smashwords, D2D and Amazon. They're already available again.

And all of that took about two minutes.

A minor lesson on typos, maybe, if you want it —

Had the typo been much later in the story, after the reader was already invested, and had the book been published a few months ago instead of a few days ago, I probably would have let it slide.

Why? Because 1) most readers would have missed it, 2) those who did notice it would have quickly forgiven it, and 3) it wasn't much of a typo.

I say that because it was a homophone. That alone made it a minor typo.

There are varying degrees of typos. As a reader myself, I would have been much more put off by "teh" for "the" or "it's" to show possession ("it's" always means "it is") or "mine" instead of "mind." Things like that.

That's my rule of thumb: If the typo might cause the average reader to close the book and find something else to do, and especially if it occurs early in the story, I fix it.

On the other side of that, it also falls to me to tell a story that's good enough to pull the reader in deep. If the story is well-told, there's a greater chance that the reader won't notice (or will forgive) the typo.

To the Hovel at 8:30. Making great headway on the story. Goodness, this thing is flying. Just over 2000 words in the first two sessions, and it's almost 10. Up to the house for a break.

Back to the Hovel a little after 10 for another session, another thousand words. For a "break" this time I just walked up to the house and back, then dove back in. (grin)

A final session of a thousand words and I'm done for the day. I think I could write one more session, but I'm dragging my feet a little bit. I want to be sure I have something left to write tomorrow.

Not only is this one racing along, but the story's developing quickly too. I have a feeling it might not make novel length.

I don't have a clue to the end yet (yay) but I feel like it's only a few thousand words away, unless the characters throw me a serious curve. That's all right. The world needs novellas too, especially in series. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Character Name Generator" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/character-name-generator>.

See "D2D Print now in beta!" at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/d2d-print-now-in-beta-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>.

See “When a Pet Iguana Could Help Police Search...” at <https://www.leelofland.com/when-a-pet-iguana-could-help-police-search-without-a-warrant-search-incident-to-arrest/>.

Fiction Words: 4118

Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4648

Writing of The Case of the Disappearing Worm (Stern Talbot 9)

Day 1..... 3703 words. Total words to date..... 3703
Day 2..... 2317 words. Total words to date..... 6020
Day 3..... 6283 words. Total words to date..... 12303
Day 4..... 4118 words. Total words to date..... 16421

Total fiction words for the month..... 38545
Total fiction words for the year..... 375271
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 150576
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 525597

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 2
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 6
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Draft2Digital](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 31](#)

[October 31, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Man, October flew by. Already. There are a LOT of interesting if a little spooky articles in “Of Interest” today. Don’t miss it. You might want to get your favorite beverage ready before you settle in to read. (grin)

Happy All Hallows Eve, everybody. Enjoy. And please be safe. If you actually eat all that extra candy you bought... well, you know. (grin)

We live on a side road on the edge of a very small and very socially/religiously segmented (cliqueish) town. And we aren't part of the primary societal/religious segment, so we don't get trick or treaters.

Frankly, I miss the little spooks and goblins, especially considering how scary I must look to a young kid these days. But on the upside, we don't have to buy candy. Especially extra candy. So I guess it's all good. (grin)

An appropriate thought, maybe, for Halowe'en...

I know my birthdate, blah blah blah. But birthdates are for others, not for the principal. Birthdates give others an excuse to feel good about themselves as they ply the principal with good wishes, gifts, etc.

And that's fine. Hey, I'm human. Good wishes and gifts are easily among my favorite things.

But on the whole, given the choice, I'd rather know my expiration date. It certainly would be more useful.

The birthdate gives me no truly valuable information. And although I'm mostly immune to sly glances and furtive looks, it informs me of nothing but how much others believe I've changed and how many years I've struggled in my ongoing endeavor to Just Keep Breathing. Some would say annoyingly so. (grin)

The expiration date, on the other hand, would at least enable me to leave no works unfinished. And for me, that's far more important.

To the Hovel at 6. As usual, I cycled back through what I wrote yesterday, but I added very little. Then I knocked out 1300 words. This one definitely is in the closing stages.

Took a very short break. In fact, I stayed inside the Hovel, rigged an exhaust fan and turned it on, then went back to the chair.

Got another thousand words by 8 a.m., then up to the house for a half-hour or so.

Back to the Hovel at 8:30. Got one more session of around a thousand words and hit The End. Then I took a brief break and cycled back over what I wrote this morning. Again, very few changes. This one is history at 9:30.

It's early, so I thought about looking around for something else to write. But tomorrow begins a new month (defined by Ambrose Bierce as "the eleven-twelfth of a weariness"). (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Back to Writing” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/back-to-writing/>.

See “The Real Reason Clowns Creep Us Out” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-real-reason-clowns-creep-us-out/>.

See “Medallion Press Files for Chapter 7 Bankruptcy” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/medallion-press-files-for-chapter-7-bankruptcy/>.

See “Written in Stone” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/gravestone-linguistics>.
Graveyards and obit columns are also a great place to get character names.

Also see “Bone Bread” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/what-people-eat-during-siege>.

Finally, see “Chicken Feet and Grave Robbers: A Cop’s Halloween” at <https://www.leelofland.com/chicken-feet-and-grave-robbers-a-cops-halloween/>. As you read this one the second time through (I recommend two readings) check out the descriptions he uses.

Fiction Words: 3259

Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3789

Writing of The Case of the Disappearing Worm (Stern Talbot 9)

Day 1..... 3703 words. Total words to date..... 3703
Day 2..... 2317 words. Total words to date..... 6020
Day 3..... 6283 words. Total words to date..... 12303
Day 4..... 4118 words. Total words to date..... 16421
Day 5..... 3259 words. Total words to date..... 19680 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 41804
Total fiction words for the year..... 378530
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18010
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 151106
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 529386

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional](#)

[Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, November 1

[November 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy November, everyone!

After I published the Journal yesterday, I went ahead and published the novella. You can see all of my mystery/noir/PI things at <http://harveystanbrough.com/mystery/>.

To see the most recent cover and description, visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/stern-talbot-disappearing-worm/>. (grin)

I have a doc appointment I'd forgotten about early this afternoon. Just a followup with the cardio-plumber. I'll see the electrician on the 13th. I'm happy to report that will not be a Friday.

I almost wish I'd gone ahead and written more yesterday, when my fingers were jonesing for the keys. But it isn't all bad today either. I just have to settle on something, then start writing it.

I also learned yesterday that my novel Nightfall, which some of you recently received, has two Chapter 33s in it. The content is fine. I just repeated a chapter number. I corrected the problem and uploaddc the new version yesterday afternoon too.

Be careful with the Kill Zone blog bit of advice today (below). I listed it just in case you might find a gem there somewhere, but it's confusing and clichéd advice at best.

I didn't even respond to her question about how to make a character "memorable" because I knew it would do no good. But I noted, not once did she mention character description. Just sayin'.

Making a character memorable is difficult if you don't put a picture of the character (plus clothing, mannerisms, etc.) in the reader's mind.

Have I mentioned lately how much I enjoy the Hovel and why? Especially at this time of year?

Outside temps are hovering in the mid-30s this morning (5:30) but it's a warm 64° in the Hovel. (grin) I wish everyone had a Hovel, or at least a good, settled place to write.

Topic: A Place (and Computer) of One's Own

I've said it before, but having a dedicated writing space is all-important.

Now and then I hear about folks who are able to write "all the time." For example, they're equally able to write on their laptop in their office or on their iPhone on the bus or on their notebook PC (or Mac) while otherwise on the move.

They are blessed, maybe, in that apparently every place they find themselves enables them to write.

But for most of us, a dedicated writing space is essential.

You've all heard the drill. It should be a space that has few if any distractions and so on.

But more importantly, it becomes a place that, when you enter it, keys your subconscious that it's time to write fiction. It's nothing less than a way to psych yourself up. A way to let your subconscious know it's time to play.

I take that a step further with a dedicated writing computer, and of course since it works so well for me, I recommend it.

My writing 'puter is an older model HP. The keyboard is comfortable, meaning I can type faster and experience far fewer instances of having to visit the delete or backspace key.

I often at least begin the Journal on a Notepad (.txt) document on my "main" computer. It isn't dedicated to fiction, or to me for that matter. Through the Journal and other things I do on it — covers, editing, uploads and so on — it belongs to the business side of things, not to me, the writer.

As is the case this morning, I often add to the Journal on my writing 'puter. It isn't fiction, but it's pertinent, and using it saves me from trying to remember things until I get back to the house. (grin)

As close as I can figure (early 2014 numbers were sketchy), since April 16, 2014 I've written just under two and a half million words of fiction (2,422,643). That's up through yesterday.

Most of that, if not all of it, was on this dedicated writing computer. Some of the characters on the keys are worn off. (grin)

Of course, I didn't write all of those in the Hovel. And I prefer writing in the Hovel. The atmosphere is perfect for me.

But I very seldom go anywhere without my writing computer. And just the act of opening it keys my desire (and ability?) to write fiction. For me, that's the key.

My dedicated writing 'puter creates its own "place of my own" and makes wherever I happen to be more conducive to writing fiction.

I should add that owning a dedicated writing computer doesn't have to be expensive. As DWS mentioned long ago in a post, you can pick one up at a second-hand store for next to nothing.

It only has to be able to run whatever program you enjoy writing on. And you can find older versions of most word-processing programs on Ebay.

So if your production is lacking, whether you count it in words typed, short stories completed, or novels finished, consider finding a place of your own.

It might be a completely separate abode, like my Adobe Hovel. Or it might be nothing more than a different desk and chair (and computer), as in DWS' office.

Or it might just be a dedicated writing computer that, no matter where you happen to be at the moment, keys the desire to tell stories as soon as you open it.

To the aforementioned Hovel at 5:30 this morning, where I was inspired to write the stuff above this. (grin) Now a brief break for breakfast and then to the fiction for the day.

Turned out I grabbed a Ziploc that contained three slices of cold pizza (breakfast of champions) and headed back to the Hovel. (grin)

And I wrote. I took a few breaks, including one to polish off the last slice of pizza for lunch, and had a good day of writing.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: The Post-Master Class Process Blog" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/10/31/business-musings-the-post-master-class-process-blog/>.

See "Make Your Characters Memorable" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/make-your-characters-memorable.html>. Be careful with this one. I listed it here just in case it might touch some of you.

See "These Scary Things in Space Will Haunt Your Dreams" at <https://www.space.com/34546-scariest-things-in-space-photo-gallery.html>. Meh, not really.

Fiction Words: 3894

Nonfiction Words: 1000 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4894

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894

Total fiction words for the month..... 3894

Total fiction words for the year..... 382424

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1000

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 152106

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 534280

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Space.com](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, November 2](#)

[November 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

There I was yesterday, writing my poor little fingers down to a nub, practically flying over the keys.

I had a deadline. I had to stop typing in time to get a shower and get ready to go to the doc appointment. Dang!

I finally stopped at noonish. Raced up to the house, jumped in the shower, got dried and dressed. Even put stuff on my hair so it'll stop sticking up like that on a two-month old bear cub.

Got back in the house office and saw I had a little time, so I filed yesterday's edition of the Journal.

Then I emailed my wife to let her know I'd be ready. She gets off work at noonish on Thursday. She was going to come home, pick me up, then take me to the doctor appointment.

She emailed back to say the doc had an emergency and had to return to Tucson. He rescheduled the appointment to mid-December.

Well rats. I wasted a perfectly good shower. Not to mention, how many more words would I have knocked out yesterday?

But today's here now, so....

I'm including a post from Dean this morning. He makes a valid point.

However, I went back to read the comments he referenced in the post, and frankly I think he misunderstood the intent of the commenters. So although I believe the "sacred cow" he mentions is valid (that having fun writing automatically equals bad writing), I believe his premise in this instance is misguided.

I consider Dean a friend (a term I don't use lightly) though I haven't seen him in a couple of decades. He has done things for me that only a friend would do. From that perspective, I can only say I hope he's all right, that some damn age-related disease isn't sneaking up on him.

So if you read his post, please take his personal comments with a kindly grain of salt.

I rolled out at 2:30 and actually got out to the Hovel before even my little girl got up this morning, around 3:15. I used the quiet time to create a reverse outline for Nick 4 — those really are invaluable — and to write the stuff above. That ate up an hour. Then back to the house for a bit.

Despite my early venture to the Hovel, I didn't get started with writing until around 7. Still ended up with a pretty good day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Forever Haunted: The Day I Handcuffed a Dead Man" at <https://www.leelofland.com/forever-haunted-the-day-i-handcuffed-a-dead-man/>.

See "Killing Another Sacred Cow... Having Fun Makes Your Writing Bad" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/killing-another-sacred-cow-having-fun-makes-your-writing-bad/>.

See The Passive Guy's take on "Can diversity in children's books tackle prejudice?" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/can-diversity-in-childrens-books-tackle-prejudice/>.

See "Publishing Trends: Tropes Readers Adore Across 15 Fiction Genres" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/publishing-trends-tropes-readers-adore-across-15-fiction-genres/>. Recommend you click through to read the full article.

Fiction Words: 4701

Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5191

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894

Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595

Total fiction words for the month..... 8595

Total fiction words for the year..... 387125

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1490

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 152596

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 539471

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, November 3](#)

[November 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to talk about today, but some good stuff in “Of Interest.”

I got out to the Hovel a little early to get some writing done. The story’s rolling right along.

We have a scheduled trip to Sierra Vista today, so an abbreviated writing day. Thanks for hanging in there.

Never know what might happen so I wanted to post this before we leave.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Requiescat in Pace” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/requiescat-in-pace.html>.

See “Typing Fast vs Being Prolific” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/typing-fast-vs-being-prolific/>.

Also, Dean replied to explanatory comments on the other thing. See <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/having-fun-advice/#comments>. (Toward the bottom.)

Fiction Words: 1941

Nonfiction Words: 100 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2041

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894

Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595

Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536

Total fiction words for the month..... 10536

Total fiction words for the year..... 389066

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 152696

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 5415121

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, November 4](#)

[November 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

What sites about writing do you follow regularly other than mine or the ones I regularly mention in “Of Interest”?

If any of you know of any good websites from other writers who are serious about the craft or from writer-enablers that I don’t mention here at least occasionally, please share those URLs with me.

I went through my list of “followed” sites this morning and found I had to delete roughly half of them.

Most I deleted because the writers who were posting on them previously had faded into the “whatever happened to” domain. They hadn’t posted in so long that nothing showed up in the reader. Likewise, a quick Amazon search showed they hadn’t written or published any new works.

A few I deleted because their posts lent no new knowledge, nothing that I could either glean or pass along on their behalf.

Of the few sites I’m still following, one is a close friend who writes interesting articles, although they aren’t about writing.

The others are writers who either explore their experience with writing or present actual “lessons” on writing or the business of writing.

Input, folks. I need more input! (grin)

To the Hovel a little early and got 900 words in the first session. Then a very long break as we returned to Sierra Vista.

Finally back to the Hovel at 11. Over the next two hours with one short break, I added another 1600 words.

Gonna call it a day and catch some TV with my bride. It’s Sunday, after all.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “How to Win Friends and Influence Beta Readers” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/how-to-win-friends-and-influence-beta-readers.html>. To the end of lesson number one I would add “for them.”

See “Amazon Ranking and Bestseller Lists – What’s the Deal?” at <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2018/01/amazon-ranking-and-bestseller-lists.html>. An old post I’d missed, but it contains some gems.

Via The Passive Voice, see “The Time Raymond Chandler and Ian Fleming Got Together To Talk About Thrillers” at <https://crimereads.com/the-time-raymond-chandler-and-ian-fleming-got-together-to-talk-about-thrillers/>. Includes 4 audio files of the two talking.

Fiction Words: 2577

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2927

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894
Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595
Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536
Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13111

Total fiction words for the month..... 13113
Total fiction words for the year..... 391643
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1940
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 153046
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 544439

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [JA Konrath](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, November 5](#)

[November 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Yesterday evening, I saw a great little post in one of the blogs I subscribe to, and it led me to write the topic below. You can read the original post. It's in "Of Interest" today.

Food for thought: "The first page sells this book. The last page sells your next book." ~ Mickey Spillane

Topic: NaNoWriMo: Just Stop Already. Or Go Do It. I Don't Care.

Sounds callous, doesn't it?

Sorry.

I only say I don't care because I'll be too busy writing instead of and seeking or checking with online partners and concentrating on doing an outline and then writing a sloppy first draft so I can go back later, maybe, if I get time, and "fix" it.

I guess I'm just tired of hearing about the "wonders" of NaNoWriMo.

But if you do it, that's fine by me. Hey, whatever floats your boat. If that sort of challenge is what you need to get you to write, go for it.

I left a comment on that post, and not really grouchy, because I consider the writer a colleague of sorts. We've never met and probably won't ever, but I've seen her fiction, and she's pretty good (in my estimation).

In my comment, I agonized a bit on behalf of NaNoWriMo participants, or at least the new ones.

I wrote (paraphrasing myself), how much better things could be for those writers if they could learn that it is Hours In The Chair that turns out "more words," not a scrambling for speed.

But before I continue with my comment, let's do some quick math.

The goal of NaNoWriMo participants is to turn out a 50,000 word novel in one month. Good.

To write 50,000 words in 30 days, one must write 1667 words per day. Every day. That will take most people about two hours. (More on this later.)

Or if they write only on the 22 weekdays, they'd have to turn out 2273 words per day. So about 2.5 hours.

Since the common wisdom is that participants should write a sloppy first draft, neither of those should be a problem. At all. How fast can you type?

If participants wanted to write only on the 8 weekend days of the month, they'd have to churn out 6250 words per day. Not at all unheard of. That would take about 8 hours (with breaks).

(Most writers I know can hammer out about 1000 words per hour. That's only 17 words per minute. 1000 words times even 7 hours is 7,000 words per day and if you do that for 8 days you'll have written 56,000 words. And of course, that isn't just typing. Putting down 17 words per minute leaves a lot of time for staring off into space, cycling, etc.)

Okay, back to my comment.

If the participants stay in the subconscious, creative voice (assuming they ever got there in the first place) and cycled back every thousand words or so they would easily attain their current level of "perfection."

In four days and about 4 hours per day (as of yesterday), I've churned out the first 13,111 words of my WIP. Just over 3277 words per day. At that lowly rate, in 30 days I could write a 98,310 word novel during NaNoWriMo.

Now, I understand that I'm fortunate, that not everyone can devote 4 hours per day to writing. But if I may go back to the math for a moment, even 3277 words in 4 hours is only 819 words per hour, or a blistering, searing, scorching pace of:

Not quite 14 words per minute. (grin)

And again, the task of NaNoWriMo-ers is to Just Get 50,000 words down on the screen. It doesn't have to be neat or edited or any of that.

So again, how fast can you type? Most of us in typing class in high school hit 40 or 60 or even 80 words per minute.

Makes my paltry 14–18 words per minute seem a little pathetic, doesn't it?

Yet when I'm finished, the novel is publication-ready (that cycling thing I mentioned above).

So just think, if the NaNoWriMo participants would just write and then cycle too, they wouldn't even have to go back over their 50,000 words to revise. (grin)

Just sayin'.

And thanks for the topic, LMA.

To the Hovel this morning at 3, but I frittered away the first whole hour and a half with nonsense, including some of the above.

Since I'm still getting up early, my next personal goal is to answer emails, then ignore all other Internet stuff until I've finished writing for the day. Wasting these hours during my quiet time is just ridiculous.

Back to the Hovel at 6:30. A little over 1300 words in my first session, then up to the house at 7:30.

Back to the Hovel again at 8:40. From then until 10:15 I wrote another 1800 words, then up to the house again for a break.

Wow. I had a lot of little chores to do. No major thing, but just a lot of small, time-consuming tasks. That plus a quick lunch and I was back to the Hovel at noon.

And as it turns out, I had a really good day. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “The Fevered Brain of JSB” (James Scott Bell) at <http://www.jamesscottbell.com/styled-22/blog/index.html>.

See “The Curse of Perfection” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/11/04/the-curse-of-perfection/>.

See “Questioning an Eyewitness: To Lead or Not to Lead?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/questioning-an-eyewitness-to-lead-or-not-to-lead.html>.

Via The Passive Voice, see “Bowker’s ISBN Site Has Been Hacked, and Credit Card Numbers Have Been Stolen” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/bowkers-isbn-site-has-been-hacked-and-credit-card-numbers-have-been-stolen/>. I hope none of you buy ISBNs for the outrageous prices Bowker charges. You can get free ISBNs for both paper and digital books. There’s also a bit about getting “virtual” credit card numbers to use for one-time purchases anywhere. I urge you to read it.

Also see The Passive Guy’s take on “What’s the Matter with Fiction Sales?” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/whats-the-matter-with-fiction-sales/>. But I have to wonder, would anyone who reads this Journal still go after traditional publication of their works (other than limited contracts for short fiction)?

See “Free Fiction Monday: On the Trail” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/05/free-fiction-monday-on-the-trail/>.

Fiction Words: 4870

Nonfiction Words: 1020 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5890

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894

Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595

Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536

Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13111

Day 5..... 4870 words. Total words to date..... 17981

Total fiction words for the month..... 17983

Total fiction words for the year..... 396513

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2960

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 154066

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 550329

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, November 6](#)

[November 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

RAMbling a little today, but it might be good. I never know. (grin)

The polling places opened out here right at 6, and my wife and I drove down to vote. Feels good. I hope those of you who are citizens of this nation voted as well.

Finally out to the Hovel at 7. I updated my reverse outline (much more on this later), then wrote around 1000 words, then headed up to the house.

Back to the Hovel at 9:30. I started writing, but hit a minor snag.

The WIP takes place in France (at least so far) and I was uncertain whether “madame,” “mademoiselle,” and “monsieur” should be capitalized when used in a formal setting.

So I emailed my friend Céline (a subscriber in France) and asked her advice on capitalization. Of course, she came through wonderfully as she always does.

We decided that, in a formal setting, such as when a servant is addressing the people he is serving, those terms would be capitalized. As an added bonus, I also learned if the female in question is older than about 16, the term would be “madame,” not “mademoiselle.”

But then “mademoiselle” USED to be the correct way to refer to “a single woman” and “madame” was for a married woman. And since my WIP is set in the early 1920s, I decided to go with “mademoiselle” for my female protagonist, who is (I believe) 28 but unmarried. Besides, mademoiselle is such a pretty word, isn’t it? (grin)

By the way, this is in stark contrast to most style manuals in the US, which recommend the terms “sir” and “ma’am” not be capitalized.

Then again, I, not some style manual, am the writer. My rule of thumb has always been to capitalize any term that’s being used as a name. (grin)

For example, if Jim is a doctor, since you would capitalize his name, you would also capitalize any word that replaces his name. So in my world, both “Hello, Jim” and “Hello, Doctor” would be correct. (Or if you didn’t like him, “Hello, Creep” or “Hello, Quack” would apply as well.)

Of course, if you’d rather follow some arbitrary style manual, that’s fine with me.

Then I took a phone call from another friend, Robert in Texas, and we talked for a little while, mostly about writing. It was flat-out wonderful.

And from some little thing that was said during that conversation (I think we were talking about being “stuck” and writing the next sentence to get out of it), I realized something else:

Not only is a reverse outline important as an ongoing reference to what’s in your WIP, but it can also help launch you into the part of the story you’re writing on the current day.

You all know that when I sit down to write, first I cycle back through what I wrote the day before. Lately, I’ve been doing the same thing with the reverse outline.

Instead of updating it at the end of the writing day, lately I’ve been updating it with the previous day’s chapters when I first sit down to write. Summarizing the chapters I wrote yesterday helps launch me into the mood of the book today.

I love epiphanies! (grin) Onward and upward.

It wasn’t quite 11 a.m. when I returned to the Hovel and wrote the stuff above.

Today was a “keep coming back” day. I first considered stopping after only the first session. I took a break and decided to push ahead.

Then I almost stopped at the end of a chapter. But I wasn’t quite to the 20,000 word mark and had written only around 1900 words on the day.

I wanted to move to at least over 20,000 words. So I took a break and went back again. And my wonderful characters threw me a curve.

So it was a pretty good day, and I’m going to stop while the current scene is running. There is no better advice I can give you than to Just Write the Next Sentence. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Note: If you follow the Journal every day, the first two items below might be repeats.

See “‘That’ You Write vs. ‘What’ You Write” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/that-you-write-vs-what-you-write/>.

See “Learning from Other Writers” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/learning-from-other-writers/>. A little cross-pollination here, but this is a great post that should be bookmarked around the world. (grin)

See “Solving Murders Using Human Nature: Are Detectives Plotters or Pantsers” at <https://www.leelofland.com/solving-murders-using-human-nature-are-detectives-plotters-or-pantsers/>.

See “First Page Critique: Floating in Space” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/first-page-critique-floating-in-space.html>. For openings and grounding the reader.

Fiction Words: 3286

Nonfiction Words: 740 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4026

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894
Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595
Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536
Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13113
Day 5..... 4870 words. Total words to date..... 17983
Day 6..... 3286 words. Total words to date..... 21269

Total fiction words for the month..... 21269
Total fiction words for the year..... 399799
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 154806
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 554355

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, November 7

[November 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Be sure to read through the “Hovel” stuff today. There’s a little topic hidden there.

While looking through items for the “Of Interest” section today, I came across the item listed below. I listed it because I found a flaw that cracks me up.

Many of you know I admire John Gilstrap for his knowledge of weapons and the advice he freely shares. That’s why so many of his Kill Zone blog posts make it into my “Of Interest” section.

But today he pulled a real boner. The irony of the his own comments hit my sense-of-humor nerve.

Not wanting to embarrass John, I sent him a private message through his website:

I love your advice, but your third bold paragraph had me practically rolling out of my chair.

First, you admitted you’re “not sure what ‘passive sentence construction’ actually means....” And then you proved it in your third bold paragraph.

Thing is, “It’s important to remember that there are always better options” is NOT a passive construction.

But “The conjugated to-be+verb construction can’t be avoided in its entirety, but remember that better options always exist” IS a passive construction. (grin)

Many, many folks misunderstand this concept. The passive construction consists of an avoidance of responsibility. It is marked by a state-of-being verb (am, is, are, was, were, being, been) PLUS a “by phrase,” either written or implied.

In your sentence, the implied phrase is this:

“The conjugated to-be+verb construction can’t be avoided [by writers] in its entirety, but remember that better options always exist.”

An active (not passive) rewrite would render “Writers can’t avoid the to-be+verb construction in it’s entirety, but remember that better options always exist.”

In your original, the verb is “can’t be avoided.” In the rewrite, the action verb is “can’t avoid.”

I post this with respect for your weapons knowledge and your fiction. But thanks for the chuckle.

There you go. A humorous tidbit and a topic all in one. And I don’t mean to break hard on John. We all have our little glitches and things we don’t know. The lesson here is to never stop learning.

Should we actively think about whether a sentence construction is passive or active as we write or even as we cycle?

No. Just as we don't have to "think" about whether to put a period after a sentence.

But we should know these things. They are tools of our trade. And what we learn with the conscious mind comes to the forefront of the subconscious as we write.

To the Hovel a little at 4:20. I'll bring the reverse outline up to date as I cycle through, probably adding a few words.

Up to the house at 4:40 to let the pup out of his kennel, then back to the Hovel at 4:50 to continue cycling.

Back to the house at 5:40 to see my bride, then back to the Hovel again. And wow, did my characters throw me a curve!

An important character who came on the scene in Book 3 had carried over to this one, but 22,000 words into this one, I learned he was not what he seemed. I actually opened the earlier book, searched for his name, and read what was written there.

It all seemed innocent at the time, yet it all led to this revelation. It's amazing how well writing into the dark and trusting your characters works.

If you don't yet, try to learn to trust your subconscious, folks. It knows what it's doing. The characters know their own story.

I took a break, in-Hovel, to set up a 24" monitor and attach it to my writing 'puter. I continued cycling through for awhile, then took another break at the house for breakfast.

When I got back to the Hovel, I rigged a way to adjust the height of the monitor and of my mouse pad.

Those brought my WIP up to eye-level and my mouse pad to the level of my keyboard. Very nice.

Of course, all of that took time but I think it's all settled now. A little after 9:30 and somehow I've written around 1300 words this morning.

Another 1200 words by 10:45 and I'm headed to the house for a break.

Back to the Hovel at 11:30 and another thousand words. At 12:30 I'm calling it an early day. I could get at least one more session, but I have a gate to fix up at the house.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “First Page Critique: Musical Hairs” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/first-page-critique-musical-hairs.html>.

Fiction Words: 3570

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4320

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894
Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595
Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536
Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13113
Day 5..... 4870 words. Total words to date..... 17983
Day 6..... 3286 words. Total words to date..... 21269
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... 24839

Total fiction words for the month..... 24839
Total fiction words for the year..... 403369
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 155556
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 558675

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, November 8

[November 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

There’s a lot to explore in “Of Interest” today.

I'll begin with a new favorite quote: "You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them." ~ Ray Bradbury

I have a slightly altered routine that I have to get used to.

I'm leaving the writing computer in the Hovel now, hooked up to the big monitor, instead of carrying it back and forth to my office in the house. So I have to remember to carry a flash drive back and forth with me.

Each day I'll transfer the WIP, the .txt version of this Journal, the reverse outline and the spreadsheet on which I keep track of my writing to and from the flash drive.

It's a little extra effort, but it's actually better this way since I'll now have two backup copies of everything instead of only one.

Topic: Dangling Participants (or Don't Leave Your Characters Hanging)

I call this effect "dangling participants," a play on the always humorous "dangling participles."

One great example of a dangling participle is "Sitting on the park bench, the sun disappeared behind the clouds."

Obviously, the sun wasn't sitting on the park bench, but that's how the sentence sounds. That's because the participle, "sitting," is intended to modify a subject that isn't there (probably "I" in this case). See? "As I was sitting on the park bench, the sun disappeared behind the clouds."

So dangling participles are always funny, but they don't do your story much good, and they'll drive away your readership.

A "dangling participant" will have the same effect on your readers, mostly because it will leave them confused. It has the additional downside of not being funny at all.

If your character John twists around in the front seat of a van to talk with a character in the back seat, at some point you have to let the reader see John face front again. Otherwise, in the reader's mind, John will remain twisted around in the front seat.

If he then suddenly twists around in the seat to say something else, it will confuse the reader.

If the character Raymond is standing at a curtain looking out over a veranda, and in the next paragraph he and Melanie are walking along a hall, that will confuse the reader too.

When did Raymond turn away from the curtain? For that matter, who in the world is Melanie and when did she come into the room? Did she say something to Raymond that caused him to turn away from the curtain and accompany her out of the room and down the hall? What did she say?

More than likely, as you're writing the scene, all of that is in your mind. That's a good thing. In fact it's wonderful.

But if those thoughts don't make it onto the page, your reader won't have a clue what's going on or how it came to be.

Just so you know, dangling participants is one of the problems I experience while writing. But during the cycling process, most of that gets fixed. (grin)

Don't leave your characters (and readers) hanging.

To the Hovel at 5, where I updated the reverse outline while cycling through what I wrote yesterday. I added about 500 new words, then to the house for a brief break.

Back to the Hovel at 7:15. I wrote a lot of the stuff above, then turned back to the novel. About a thousand words later, to the house at 8:15.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 8:40. Only a half-day today, so no more details, but it was a good day. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "How to Write Killer Tales, and Music" at <https://www.leelofland.com/how-to-write-killer-tales-and-music/>.

See "Business Musings: Getting To The Stories You Love" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/07/business-musings-getting-to-the-stories-you-love/>.

See "Thanks To Those I Met This Morning" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/thanks-to-those-i-met-this-morning/>.

See "Valor: Military SF Bundle" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/valor-military-sf-bundle/>.

See "Deadlier than the Male" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/deadlier-than-the-male.html>.

Via The Passive Voice, see "Murder, She Wrote" at <https://crimereads.com/jessica-fletcher-and-murder-she-wrote-are-alive-and-well/>.

Also via The Passive Voice, see "Having No Time is the Best Time to Get Writing Done" at <https://lithub.com/having-no-time-is-the-best-time-to-get-writing-done/>.

If you enjoy poetry and poets, and also via The Passive Voice, see "The Burying Party" at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/wilfred-owen>.

And from Linda Adams, for fun, see Kristen Lamb's "Flawed Characters vs. 'Too Dumb to Live': What's the Difference?" at <https://authorkristenlamb.com/2018/11/flawed-characters-dumb-characters/>.

Fiction Words: 3428

Nonfiction Words: 720 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4148

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894
Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595
Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536
Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13113
Day 5..... 4870 words. Total words to date..... 17983
Day 6..... 3286 words. Total words to date..... 21269
Day 7..... 3570 words. Total words to date..... 24839
Day 8..... 3428 words. Total words to date..... 28267

Total fiction words for the month..... 28267
Total fiction words for the year..... 406797
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5170
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 156276
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 562823

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristen Lamb](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, November 9

[November 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Tomorrow, November 10, will mark the 243rd anniversary of the dubious beginnings of the United States Marine Corps in a bar (Tun Tavern) in Philadelphia.

I will pass it, as I always do, with a piece of birthday cake that I will share in the collective consciousness of Marines past and present. Then I'll do some writing.

Later in the day, I'll enjoy a healthy shot of Who Hit John in a toast to my brothers and sisters in the Corps, and by extension to my other brothers and sisters-in-arms in all branches of the military.

I hope it will be a good day for you as well. Semper fi.

Friday. Sometimes I get lost in a week. I don't realize what day it is. Every day is a potential writing day for me, so the calendar really holds no particular distinction.

Other than specific dates on which I have doctor appointments or when I know one of my sons will be visiting. Things like that.

But in my "normal" life, I have three days per week when the day isn't my own. There's Thursday, when my "lone" day ends at 1 p.m. That's my half-day. It really has no bearing on my productivity, or not much, since my writing is usually wrapped up around that time anyway. Like yesterday.

Then there are Saturday and Sunday. I know when those occur mostly because Thursday warns me Saturday is coming, and the next day is Sunday.

So on those days in particular, I try to get up early and get as much writing done as I can before the day begins.

And that's pretty much the whole of my schedule. Do you have a particular schedule you stick to or that you try to stick to?

I found a cool setting on my big monitor. I can set a "night light" that has a huge range of "heat" settings. I find I can use it to filter out a lot of the blue-light radiation from the screen. That enables me to look at the screen longer without my eyes getting fuzzy.

In the first session this morning I updated the reverse outline and cycled through what I wrote yesterday. Between that and the second session, I wrote around 1200 new words.

Back and forth a few times, Hovel to house, and by 10:30 I had over 3000 words on the day. It looks to be a very good day.

Well, not quite as good a day as I'd hoped. I hit a snag, but cleared it after some cycling.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “So You Think You Know Everything About Cops: A Quiz” at <https://www.leelofland.com/so-you-think-you-know-everything-about-cops-a-quiz/>. Very good, and it has a few other links.

Just in case you’re interested, see “Miami Book Fair” at <https://www.miamibookfair.com/>. I wish I could go. (grin)

Anthony DeCastro posted the first chapter of his novel North Country Girl on his website at <https://tonydwritespulp.wordpress.com/>. It was well worth the read, and it enticed me to buy his first novel, Everything Is Broken, which is available at [Amazon](#) and other booksellers.

Fiction Words: 3831

Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4361

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894
Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595
Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536
Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13113
Day 5..... 4870 words. Total words to date..... 17983
Day 6..... 3286 words. Total words to date..... 21269
Day 7..... 3570 words. Total words to date..... 24839
Day 8..... 3428 words. Total words to date..... 28267
Day 9..... 3831 words. Total words to date..... 32098

Total fiction words for the month..... 32098
Total fiction words for the year..... 410628
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 156806
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 567184

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the](#)

[writing life](#)

The Journal, Saturday, November 10

[November 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A Toast on the Birthdate of the US Marine Corps

May your days be vibrant,
your evenings calm,
your heart safe and warm at home.
Semper Fi

Given the length of the other books in this series (this is Book 4), I thought this novel might wrap today. That would mean I'd written a novel in 10 days. That would be one-half the shortest time it's taken before.

With this one, the ten writing days also happen to be 10 calendar days. That feels really good.

Those are false goals, of course. What's the difference in whether I write a novel in 10 days or 12 or 20?

None, really. The only difference is that I can get to the next story a little sooner. (grin)

But barring a miracle (and I'm certain the miracle-passer-outers have better things to concentrate on), this one probably won't be finished for at least a few more days.

I don't know all the ins and outs of what's gonna happen, but I know I'm approaching the end.

You know the part of the movie where you think the bad guy is dead but then somehow he grabs your ankle while you're celebrating his demise with your friends? That's where I am right now.

So there's still that scene, then the big climactic scene. (I look forward to whatever curve balls my characters will throw at me during that.) And, who knows, maybe another "grab your ankle" scene or two.

So we'll see. I'm in no hurry.

To the Hovel sort of early at 3:45. Spent the first hour cycling and updating the reverse outline.

Back to the Hovel at 5. A break at 7 after a little over 1800 words.

A pretty good day today, especially for a Saturday.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Finally Done With A Warm-Up Book” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/finally-done-with-a-warm-up-book/>.

See “Smashwords Unveils New Book Discovery Interface” at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/11/greatbooks.html>. Some very exciting news.

Fiction Words: 4095

Nonfiction Words: 340 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4435

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Day 1..... 3894 words. Total words to date..... 3894
Day 2..... 4701 words. Total words to date..... 8595
Day 3..... 1941 words. Total words to date..... 10536
Day 4..... 2577 words. Total words to date..... 13113
Day 5..... 4870 words. Total words to date..... 17983
Day 6..... 3286 words. Total words to date..... 21269
Day 7..... 3570 words. Total words to date..... 24839
Day 8..... 3428 words. Total words to date..... 28267
Day 9..... 3831 words. Total words to date..... 32098
Day 10... 4095 words. Total words to date..... 36193

Total fiction words for the month..... 36193
Total fiction words for the year..... 414723
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 157146
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 571619

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, November 11](#)

[November 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy Veterans' Day. Or as we in the Corps used to call it, Marine Corps Hangover Day. (grin)

In truth, this is also (and was first) Armistice Day. It commemorates the end of the war to end all wars. Which later became known as World War I. The Armistice was signed officially at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Maybe that's one reason Ambrose Bierce, in his *The Devil's Dictionary*, defines November as "the eleventh twelfth of a weariness."

As a personal aside — and I'm speaking here only for myself, not for any other veterans or for anyone else — I don't look forward to the inevitable "thank you" I receive on this day for simply being a veteran.

Why? Because personal responsibility is all-important to me.

The thing is, during my time in the Marine Corps, I was thanked adequately every two weeks with a paycheck. Had it not been adequate, I had the opportunity every few years to go elsewhere and do something else with my life.

In other words, I lived (and am living) a unique, authentic life that I chose of my own free will. I am blessed.

That being said, I am personally grateful to other veterans for several things:

Veterans enabled me (and all of us) to choose the course of our own life.

Veterans embued me with a sense of personal integrity and personal responsibility.

Veterans taught me that the survival of this nation and our Constitution far outweighs the personal concerns of any one person. Even me.

Finally, veterans gave me a recurring gift: Once every two years, like all citizens of this nation, I have the opportunity to show my gratitude to those veterans for this nation and her Consitution at the ballot box.

Who could ask for more than that?

To the Hovel at 3:30. I wrote the stuff above, visited the Internet for items of interest, and thought a lot about things that are not writing related.

To the house later to let out the pup, and finally to the novel a little after 6. Added a few hundred words while cycling and updating the reverse outline. Then a break for breakfast and a few chores.

Back to the Hovel at a little after 8. Really, I'm not much in the mood to write today. But the story's moving along well, and if I can finish this one in an uninterrupted "streak" of writing every day, I think it will be a first for me, for a novel.

Today is Sunday, and tomorrow I'll be back on a regular full-day schedule. So I called it early today at 9 a.m. after a good session.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Anthology Workshop" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/anthology-workshop/>. If you enjoy reading and writing short fiction, I recommend this. I wish so much I could attend.

See "Writing About Experiences You've Never Had" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/writing-about-experiences-youve-never-had.html>.

See "The Run Went Well Until It Didn't" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/the-run-went-well-until-it-didnt/>. Whew! For a minute there I thought he meant his challenge. (grin) Anyway, there are pics.

Fiction Words: 1253

Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1773

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Brought forward..... 36193

Day 11... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 37446

Total fiction words for the month..... 37446

Total fiction words for the year..... 415976

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6560

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 157666

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 573392

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, November 12](#)

[November 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a great deal to talk about today. I'm annoyed because my Internet was out for about 4 hours. That happens a lot. Funny, they still charge us for that time.

Makes me glad I'm a writer. I can escape to a world where you actually get the service you pay for, people take responsibility for their own actions, and politicians who lose concede gracefully instead of stamping their feet, holding their breath 'til they turn blue, and bring in dozens of lawyers to find "misplaced" ballots. Sigh.

Topic: To Create A New Text-Only Hyperlink

Recently a friend and client asked me how to create a hyperlink that showed only the title of her book, not the entire hyperlink itself.

This topic consists of the response I sent, just in case it might help some of you. By the way, these instructions are for WordPress websites. Others might vary.

I've left her book (and link) as the example. If you enjoy reading about obscure events during World War II, please consider purchasing her book. It's a first-hand account of life in a Japanese internment camp on the island of Java. You won't be disappointed.

The hyperlink example is <http://www.amazon.com/Rising-Shadow-Sun-Story-Survival/dp/1519299583>.

To create the hyperlink so it shows only the title,

1. First type the title (Rising from the Shadow of the Sun) where you want it to appear.
2. Highlight the title by dragging your cursor over it. When it's highlighted, go up to the menu and click the hyperlink symbol. It looks like a squashed 8 lying at an angle. Click that.

3. A small dialogue box will open. In the appropriate space on that dialogue box, paste the hyperlink above.
4. Click the little gear symbol on the right end of the dialogue box. A new dialogue box will open. You will see the hyperlink in the top space and the Link Text (your book title) in the next space.
5. Put a check mark in the box beside Open Link in a New Tab.
6. Go to the bottom of the dialogue box and click Update. All done!

When you go back to the page, *Rising from the Shadow of the Sun* will appear in blue underline and the link will be active. It should look like this: [Rising from the Shadow of the Sun](#).

For those of you who might be interested in more information, Ronny de Jong's website is <http://ronnyhermandejong.com/>.

To the Hovel very early, around 2. We'll see how the day goes.

I spent the first almost 2 hours with the Internet, responding to Ronny's email, writing the stuff above and updating the reverse outline.

To the house a little early at 4:15 to let the pup out of his kennel and get more coffee. Then back to the Hovel by 4:20. Finally to the novel, and I knocked out 1300 words in a little less than an hour. That included cycling through the little I wrote yesterday.

I got up and walked briefly in the Hovel, a few trips back and forth (it's about 40 feet long), then sat down again. Odd how even a break as short as that is refreshing.

After I get a good start on the novel, I'll take longer breaks and return to the novel as necessary.

When I get started on the next novel, I'm going to try to develop a new "keep coming back" habit. I'll try to write up until around 4 p.m. (instead of 2) to maybe squeeze in another session or two. I'd like to get up to writing 6,000 words on a typical day.

Took a long break for breakfast, then fled back to my nice, safe fictional world. Sometimes, I wish I never had to surface.

But I do. At a little over 3500 words today, I'm quickly coming up on the end of this one. Probably only another three or four thousand words. And I find (again) I'm dragging my writerly feet. (grin)

I'm gonna call it a day today. I could easily write at least one more session, but I'd rather wait. Just one more day (or given my doc appointment in Tucson tomorrow, maybe two more days) with these folks will feel very good.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Workshop Credit Sale” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/workshop-credit-sale/>.

Wow. See “Lyrics In Books: Your Questions Answered” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/lyrics-in-books-your-questions-answered/>. Good to know.

See “Cop Details That’ll Help Your Stories Zing with Realism” at <https://www.leelofland.com/cop-details-thatll-help-your-stories-zing-with-realism-whats-in-your-underwear/>.

See “First Page Critique: Titan’s Fall” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/first-page-critique-titans-fall.html>. Note the critiquer’s comments re lack of being able to see the scene.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Coolhunting” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/12/free-fiction-monday-coolhunting/>.

Fiction Words: 3595

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4355

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Brought forward..... 36193

Day 11... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 37446

Day 12... 3595 words. Total words to date..... 41041

Total fiction words for the month..... 41041

Total fiction words for the year..... 419571

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7320

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 158426

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 577747

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 8

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 34

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, November 13

November 13, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

I have no expectation that the story in this novel will end today. But barring any unforeseen complications in my own life, it will end tomorrow.

I have to go to the doc in Tucson at mid-morning for a routine check on my new pacer-defibrillator (read “make sure I didn’t screw up the doc’s work”).

I guess that was in my mind as I slept.

I rolled out at 1:30 and was in the Hovel before 2. I used up the first hour with nonsense, as I am wont to do, and turned to the novel a little after 3.

I updated the reverse outline and cycled through what I wrote yesterday, but added very little.

I took a break around 4, then finally settled in for the first session around 4:30. A little before 6 I went up to the house to exchange coffee for water. I promised my wife I’d write one more session, then give it up for the day and get ready for our trip.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Saturday Evening Post – 200 Years of American History” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/saturday-evening-post-200-years-of-american-history.html>.

Fiction Words: 2493

Nonfiction Words: 200 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2493

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Brought forward..... 36193

Day 11... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 37446

Day 12... 3595 words. Total words to date..... 41041

Day 13... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 43534

Total fiction words for the month..... 43534

Total fiction words for the year..... 422064

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7520

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 158626

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 580440

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	8
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	34
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, November 14](#)

[November 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Welcome to a new subscriber from Germany. I hope you'll find something of value here.

My characters will definitely wrap up the story in my 35th novel today. Somehow, 35 seems like a milestone to me. I'm not sure why. My new short-term goal now is to write at least 50 novels. We'll see.

I mentioned this a long while back, but if you haven't subscribed to the newsletter from CrimeReads.com, you're missing a bet.

The focus at CrimeReads is recommending books on crime (duh), but they regularly interview writers about their process, about various genre touchstones, and about what makes a "good" book. I strongly recommend it.

There are three entries in "Of Interest" today from CrimeReads. I tried to note (below) why I listed them there.

All I can say beyond that is please don't be a genre snob. Even if you don't write crime or mystery or horror (or whatever) genres, you can still learn a great deal about writing from writers of those genres.

Also in "Of Interest" today, a couple of young writers (Linda Maye Adams and Tony deCastro) make some interesting points in their own blogs. The former reports on a conference and the latter explains why he "went wide" when publishing his first novel.

And of course, there's more in "Of Interest" as well.

I wrote a response to Dean's "A Question I Got." Of course, I urge you to read that as well.
(grin)

To the Hovel at 3:45. I sipped coffee, looked around the Internet and wrote the stuff above. (Somehow, since I plugged in the larger monitor, I get the Internet at the Hovel now. So yes, I use it on my writing 'puter, but only for writing-related things. No Facebook etc.)

To the house at 6 to visit with my wife and the kitten for awhile, and back to the Hovel at 6:30. I wrote about 800 words in the first session, then headed back to the house.

Another 900 words from 9 to 10, then back to the house.

Back to the Hovel and I pushed through until the story was finished. I'm going to take a day or two now to decide which idea to write next. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "A Question I Got" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-question-i-got/>.

See Linda Maye Adams' "BookBaby Marketing Conference (Part I)" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/11/13/bookbaby-marketing-conference-part-i/>.

See "Liane Moriarty: 'Secrets Always Drive Any Story'" at <https://crimereads.com/liane-moriarty-secrets-always-drive-any-story/>. A few gems for writers.

See "Why I went 'Wide'" at <https://tonydwritespulp.wordpress.com/2018/11/14/why-i-went-wide/>. I can't agree strongly enough.

See "Do Horror and Crime Go Together?" at <https://crimereads.com/do-horror-and-crime-go-together/>. Again, some good gems, and it isn't all about horror.

See "What We Owe to Wilkie Collins' The Woman In White" at <https://crimereads.com/what-we-owe-to-wilkie-collins-the-woman-in-white/>.

See "Heading to the Laboratory: Toxicology, DUID, and Kay Scarpetta" at <https://www.leelofland.com/heading-to-the-laboratory-toxicology-duid-and-kay-scarpetta/>.

See "How to Write a Book in 6 Steps" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-write-a-book-in-6-steps/>. This is ostensibly for a nonfiction book. Please take specific points with a large grain of salt, especially in Steps 5 and 6.

Finally, see "The More The Merrier: J.T. Ellison on Publishing Anthologies" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/the-more-the-merrier-j-t-ellison-on-publishing->

[anthologies.html](#). The idea she lays out in discussing A Thousand Doors intrigued me. Hmmm. An anthology that's actually a novel written by several authors? What a concept! Stay tuned.

Fiction Words: 3082

Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 3632

Writing of Consequences (Nick 4)

Brought forward..... 36193

Day 11... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 37446
Day 12... 3595 words. Total words to date..... 41041
Day 13... 2493 words. Total words to date..... 43534
Day 14... 3082 words. Total words to date..... 46616 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 46616
Total fiction words for the year..... 425146
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8070
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 159176
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 584072

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, November 15](#)

[November 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

My new all-time favorite quote:

“The faster I write, the better my output. If I’m going slow, I’m in trouble. It means I’m pushing the words instead of being pulled by them.” ~ Raymond Chandler

Hey, even if you don't believe me or Dean, you have to believe Raymond Chandler, don't you?

The above is not because Raymond Chandler was an experienced fictionist who knew all the "tricks." (There are none.)

It's because he learned to trust his subconscious and allow the characters to tell the story. After all, they're the ones who are living it. (grin)

To write a fiction (short story, novella or novel) put your fingers on the keyboard and write the first sentence that comes to you. Then write the next sentence, then the next, etc. Repeat until your character(s) lead you through to the end. It really is that simple.

And another quote I had to share, this one from my first reader (for the Nick Spalding series) when I sent her Consequences less than a half-hour after typing the last word:

"The best donuts are still dripping glaze...." ~ Nan Dozier

And yet another favorite quote:

"There are 4 kinds of homicide: felonious, excusable, justifiable, and praiseworthy." ~ Ambrose Bierce (I must add, I agree wholeheartedly.)

I announced to my bride this morning that I would spend part of the day prepping Nick 4 for pre-publication release on January 15. In other words, I would prepare the cover and promo doc, then upload it to D2D, Amazon, and Smashwords. Then I would take the rest of the day off.

She reminded me that she's off this afternoon. So that was a good fit. Back to writing tomorrow.

Topic: The Most Important Advice I Can Give You About Writing (Seriously)

Yesterday I published my 35th novel and the fourth in a series. I also have 2 books in another series (SF), 10 in another (Wes Crowley Western), and 9 in another (Pulp). And then there are all the stand-alones and novellas.

I also am closing in on 200 short stories, many of which are included in 31 collections. So below is what I can share with you about writing.

First, a disclaimer: Many folks write only to cross an item off their bucket list or to leave a family record or simply as a hobby. All of that's fine. But the advice that follows is not for you.

If you think of yourself as an aspiring professional writer (or as a professional writer), please read on. I'll present my advice in a moment.

But first, one more disclaimer: Whether or not you call yourself a professional writer, if writing isn't absolutely the most fun you can have with your clothes on, don't do it. Seriously. Life is

short. If writing is tedious for you, go find something fun to do. Again, what follows is not for you.

Okay, if you're still reading, here's the rest:

1. Follow Heinlein's Rules 1 – 4 and then write the next story. (To see my personal experience with Heinlein's Rules, [download them here.](#))

2. Don't hover over one work (rewrite). If you do, at some point you will experience a sinking feeling in your gut. That's because you're stripping your original voice and anything else that's good off of it.

3. Instead of hovering, practice. Practice will never make "perfect" (nor will rewriting) but it will make you a better storyteller. Rewriting won't. Writers write.

4. Never stop learning from people who've been there. (Don't listen to advice from people who aren't farther along the road than you are.) What your conscious mind takes in will seep into your subconscious and come out through your fingers as you write.

5. Don't be a control freak. You are not the General Manager of the Universe. Let the characters tell the story. They're living it, after all. Instead of directing them from your Authorial Ivory Tower, roll off into the story and run through it with them. I promise, you'll enjoy the trip.

6. Find a good READER to be your first reader, preferably one who is interested in your work. His/her only job will be to note (and report to you) typos, misspellings that your spell check misses, and inconsistencies. At no time should your first reader tell you how you "should" have written something.

7. If you don't know punctuation and pacing (especially these two), get thee to a good, conscientious copyeditor. His/her job will be to extend the reach of (or replace) your first reader. If the copyeditor you find does not provide a free sample edit, or if s/he charges more than two cents per word, [email me.](#)

8. Create and maintain a professional website. Most often, the "free" ones look shabby, and they'll nickel and dime you to death with "extras." A professional website is an investment, and a good one.

9. Create (or commission) a good, attention-grabbing cover that's appropriate for the genre. You CAN judge a book by its cover, and readers do so every minute of every day.

10. Force yourself to take the time to follow Heinlein's Rule 4: Submit or publish your work. This is the one I most often fall off of, and I always regret it. Readers can't buy it if it isn't available.

11. When it's time to publish, go traditional if you must (be wary of the contract), or go indie. But stay the hell away from subsidy publishers. Every one of them is a scam. They exist only to separate you from your money. (If your first thought begins with “But,” read this one again.)

12. Publish wide. Avoid exclusivity. Most of my sales come from Amazon. But I also receive a nice check every month from Biblioteca (libraries), Kobo and Barnes & Noble. The others will come, but they can't if the books aren't available to wide segments of readers.

Okay, that's all I can think of for now. Enjoy!

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Announcing Custom Carousels – A new away to customize your D2D Author Pages!” at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/>.

Some great comments on “A Question I Got” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-question-i-got/#comments>.

See “Business Musings: Positive, Pleasing, and Optimistic” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/14/business-musings-positive-pleasing-and-optimistic/>.

In keeping with the season, see “Thanksgiving in Space” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/11/15/thanksgiving-in-space/>.

Via The Passive Voice, see “The Continued Decline of Author Solutions” at https://accrispin.blogspot.com/2018/10/the-continued-decline-of-author_19.html. I can only repeat, PLEASE stay away from subsidy publishers. You don't need them. They exist ONLY to separate you from your money.

See “Key Ways to Give a Mystery Room to Breathe” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/key-ways-to-give-a-mystery-room-to-breathe-first-page-critique-the-good-neighbor.html>. As you read this, do so with a grain of salt. The “original” opening grabbed me. Ms. Dane's rewrite does not.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1090 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1090

Writing of ()

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 46616
Total fiction words for the year..... 425146

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9160
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 160266
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 585162

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, November 16](#)

[November 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, another tidbit on traditional publishing. In the fourth item in “Of Interest” today, two crime novelists are chatting (like a mutual interview).

Early in that exchange, one says, “Both of us started writing our books after the 2016 election. This fall is really the first season when novels written after the election will be released....”

Wow. Two years. From November 2016 through the present they were each writing one novel and waiting for it to come out.

In that same amount of time, I wrote and published 16 novels, 4 novellas, and 23 short stories. The last three novels will be released later this month and in December and January. Just sayin’....

I like to plan ahead a little too. I don’t know what I’ll write next, or whether I’ll start anything new today.

I know what I want. I’d like to skip Nick and Marie ahead in time a little and write Nick 5. But for each of those books, the first line just happened. It came to me, I wrote it down, and didn’t look back.

Then again, I don't really want to wait until that first line occurs to me to continue writing. I could easily lay off until the Monday after Thanksgiving but that's far too long for me.

So I hope I'll write today, through the weekend and up through next Wednesday. That will enable me to drop a few new short stories or get a good start on my next novel or novella.

We'll see. Maybe I'll reread Nick 1 – 4 today and see whether something pops out at me. If I'm able to put down even an opening today, I'll be happy with that.

For now, it's almost 8 so I'll head up to the house for a break. Back to the Hovel at 9.

After poking around awhile, I decided to do a redraft of an idea I had a month or two ago. The idea hasn't let go yet. That's a very good sign.

In four sessions, I wrote a little over 3700 words. A great start. Of course, a lot of the stuff was already in my head. I liked the title and the character names, so I retained those.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "A Rewriting Metaphor" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-rewriting-metaphor/>. This is a great post.

See "56 Best Writing Websites of 2018" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/best-writing-websites-2018/>. I do not vouch for these. I haven't vetted them, though I plan to look them over in coming days. If you find something of value, good. Please just beware of myths, and advice to keep doing the same old things that haven't worked before.

See "200+ Writing Prompts to Inspire You" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/>.

See "[Crime Writers] Molly Tanzer and Amy Stewart on History, Crime, and Politics" at <https://crimereads.com/molly-tanzer-and-amy-stewart-on-history-crime-and-politics/>.

Fiction Words: 3706

Nonfiction Words: 480 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4186

Writing of Dread

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706

Total fiction words for the month..... 50322

Total fiction words for the year..... 428852

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9640
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 160746
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 589348

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, November 17](#)

[November 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Got to the Hovel at 3, then decided to republish Dean's post from yesterday as a guest post (with permission) over on the main site. So I did that.

Then I created another post on the big site (the "Advice" I posted here on 11/15).

I also decided to work on the site a bit. For one thing, I removed the Become A Patron page from my website. There, I offered a lot of bonuses for patrons, but nobody took me up on it. (I do have a list of a few regular donors, for whom I am eternally grateful.)

So then I went through all the scheduled posts and changed my standard note at the bottom to ask folks either for a one-time donation through PayPal or to at least share any posts they found useful with other readers/writers.

By the way, I updated c9ver for Consequence, then update the [Action-Adventure Novels](#) page of the website a couple of days ago, and added a book page for the latest novel, [Consequences](#). If you have time, stop by and take a look.

So not a productive first hour, at least as far as writing goes. But then, my first hour (or two) seldom is.

Ah. Usually when I'm in the midst of a new novel, I wake up each morning excited at the prospect of getting back to it. It's literally all I can do to slow down and make a cup of coffee before I shuffle out to the Hovel for my "fix" of my current characters and story line.

Today that wasn't the case. The story I started yesterday, and especially the premise on which it's based, excites me a great deal. But the characters, not so much.

Usually I can tell after writing only the opening whether a story will take off. Not so with this one.

Yesterday, even with 3700 words written, neither the story nor the characters swept me off my feet, so to speak.

So I'll give it a few hours today. If it doesn't take off, I'll cut my losses and delete the whole mess.

It's also entirely possible that I'm hoping this is a novel when in truth it's a short story or novelette. If that's the case, I'll finish it in a day or two.

This is about the only "agony" I experience as a writer. (grin)

Well, I added another 3000 words to the story. Still not really grabbed by it, but at least I'm interested in seeing where it will go. Guess I'll stay with it for awhile.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

If you're interested in taking Dean's workshops, see "Workshop Special Credit Sale Ending" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/workshop-special-credit-sale-ending/>. If not, you can skip this one.

Also see "Pop-Up Topics Now Available" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pop-up-topics-now-available/>. An excellent opportunity for short story writers. Don't miss this one. (The Pop-Up topics, with feedback from Dean or Kris, are \$150 each or you can get them at a significant discount in bundles.)

See "Giving Thanks" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/giving-thanks.html>.

Fiction Words: 3023

Nonfiction Words: 510 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3533

Writing of Dread

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706

Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729

Total fiction words for the month.....	53345
Total fiction words for the year.....	431875
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10150
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	160746
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	592881
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, November 18](#)

[November 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Glad I wrote early yesterday. Much of the rest of the day was filled with a shopping trip (an estate sale and then groceries) to Sierra Vista and then relaxing.

For that reason, and because I already know the balance of the day will be filled with a major chore, I walked into the Hovel at a little after 2 this morning. Wheee!

I learned from a Tatum NM (population 811 in the 2017 census) high school classmate on Facebook yesterday that our alma mater's 8-man football team will play for the NM state championship on Saturday, November 24th. Go Coyotes! (grin)

We played for the championship (11-man) in the year I graduated (1970) too. I was a defensive back at 5'8" and 131 pounds soaking wet. (grin) We lost, but we showed up. May this year's team go one game better.

At 4 a.m. I'm suddenly feeling under the weather. Think I'll take the day off today. I'll be back to post this.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Say NO to Using Hair and Wasp Sprays for Self-Defense” at <https://www.leelofland.com/say-no-to-using-hair-and-wasp-sprays-for-self-defense/>.

See “William Goldman: A Writing Life in 25 Quotes” at <https://crimereads.com/william-goldman-a-writing-life-in-25-quotes/>. If you have limited time, scroll down to “Writing, and What’s It All About?”

See “Why We Write” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/why-we-write-2.html>. Then ask yourself, why do you write?

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 230 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 230

Writing of Dread

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 53345
Total fiction words for the year..... 431875
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10380
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 161486
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 593111

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, November 19

[November 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Feeling fine this morning.

Also, the second book in the Nick Spalding series launched this morning. You can see the cover and read the description at <http://harveystanbrough.com/transitions/>. The universal link for all retailers is <https://www.books2read.com/u/38r5WO>.

The next two books in the series will launch, respectively, on December 15 and January 15.

If you (or someone you know) enjoy rich settings in action-adventure romantic-suspense novels and being immersed in the characters, you will enjoy this series.

To the Hovel at 3 and spent the first hour+ dinging around the Internet and updating my publisher website. (Much more to do there.)

To the house for a break, and back to the Hovel and the novel at 5. I'm still not overly excited about this one, but I still want to see where it goes.

Today was definitely a keep coming back kind of day. I ended up with four good sessions. Still not overwhelmed with this one, but it keeps leading me along.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Five Biggest Mistakes in Mystery Fiction" (a free webinar) at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/five-mystery-fiction-mistakes-to-avoid-registration-48155322867>. This will lead you to the registration. Did I mention it's FREE? The webinar takes place on Wed, Nov 21, 2018, at 3:00 PM EST.

See "Some Literary Valor" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/18/some-literary-valor/>.

See "Let's Talk About the Skeleton in the Room" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/lets-talk-about-the-skeleton-in-the-room.html>.

See "Holding Cells, Booking, and a Foot Pursuit in a Suit: Processing The Bad Guys" at <https://www.leelofland.com/holding-cells-booking-and-a-foot-pursuit-in-a-suit-processing-the-bad-guys/>.

In case you enjoy pulp noir, see "What I'm Reading — Gil Brewer" at <https://tonydwritespulp.wordpress.com/2018/11/19/what-im-reading-gil-brewer/>.

For fun, see "Recovered Enough" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/recovered-enough/>.

Fiction Words: 4479

Nonfiction Words: 250 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4729

Writing of Dread

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208

Total fiction words for the month..... 57824
Total fiction words for the year..... 436354
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10630
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 161736
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 597830

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, November 20](#)

[November 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I apologize in advance for the long post today. I hope you get something out of it.

I hadn't planned to write a topic today either, but then I wandered across PJ Parrish's post "When Should A Story End?" ("Of Interest") and came across this doozy:

"...writers should strive to make each plot point arise organically from character." Later, she talks about a character living an "unauthentic" life. I don't wonder.

Topic: Let Your Characters Live Their Own Lives

I've seen too many Nationwide Insurance commercials lately. My first thought as I read the excerpt above was "Tiny baby shoes. *So* close." (grin)

If only Ms. Parrish had written "writers should ALLOW each plot point to arise organically from character." Because then it would be truly organic. To the characters. In their story.

But she didn't. And frankly, that whole "strive to make" thing causes me to shudder. Really. Physically.

A very long time ago I was a control freak. I "strived to make" everyone and everything in my life "fit" like I wanted them to. That included "my" fictional stories (before I found the light), pets, friends and even my wife. Honestly, I'm amazed she kept me around.

I remain a very strong-willed individual, but I direct most (I hope "all") of that inward now, to my own self-discipline, sense of morality, etc. And that's where it belongs. After all, what right do I have to tell anyone else what to do or how to do it?

(Disclaimer: Yes, of course you must levy control over your young children, but that's to safeguard them, not to bend them to your will.)

So the answer to "What right do I have..." is None. No right at all. No right and no privilege. I do the actual typing, but my characters' stories are THEIR stories.

I can (and should, and do) control myself, my actions and reactions. For example, I am in charge of how I feel about other people, how I treat them, etc. But THEY are in charge of how they feel about me and everything else in their life.

In my writing life, I am strictly in charge of when and how much I write and even which characters I write about and which stories I choose to tell.

But once I've selected which story to tell, the CHARACTERS are in charge of the story. The CHARACTERS are in charge of their actions and reactions. The CHARACTERS are in charge of their own self-discipline and sense of morality or lack thereof.

When I'm very lucky, they sometimes act "out of character," meaning they do or say something I wasn't expecting. Do I force them back onto the straight and narrow? No. I trust the process, leave it alone, and let them tell their own story. And I've literally never been sorry.

I'm glad I'm no longer a control freak. When you assume control over another entity, you also assume responsibility. I have enough to do just being responsible for myself.

It isn't my place to "strive to make" plot points arise from my characters. And if I did, those plot points wouldn't be "organic," now would they?

Plot points come from and are a component part of Story. And Story comes from the characters. As I've said many times, "After all, the characters are the ones who are LIVING the story. Let them tell it to you."

But again, you're in charge of the keyboard. You can force events and plot points and character actions and reactions in "your" stories if you want to. That's your right as a writer.

You can take responsibility for every plot point, every twist and turn, and every word of dialogue. You can take responsibility for every character, along with his or her sense of morality, his or her actions and reactions.

You can force-feed the reader the whole thing according to how you believe the characters “should” act or react and what they “should” or “should not” do or say.

But then it won't be your characters' authentic story, will it? It will be YOUR story. And the characters will be trudging along, grudgingly, under your whip. And it will show.

Just like when you force your spouse or friend into a particular mold. That part of their life will be an extension of YOUR story, not theirs. And they'll resent you for it.

And so will your characters.

Another excerpt from another item in “Of Interest”: Dan Brown of The Da Vinci Code fame, wrote

“I definitely had a number of weeks when I became self-aware. You type a sentence and say: ‘Wait a minute, how many millions of people are going to read that?’ And you read it again and see the word ‘there’. You suddenly say: ‘I didn’t even spell that right.’ You become the guy trying to swing the baseball bat who’s thinking of how to move the muscles and you’re crippled.

“I think that’s very common across many disciplines when you have success. I was fortunate pretty quickly to be able to say: ‘Wait a minute, you just need to do what you did the last four times, which is to write the book that you’d want to read and if you read this paragraph and you’d like to read it, you’re done.’ I was able to move on from that and write The Lost Symbol, which I was thrilled with and did great and a lot of people like it better than Da Vinci Code.”

Wow. I rolled out late this morning at 5. To the Hovel by 5:30 and wrote the stuff above and much of what’s below. Now it’s a little after 7 and I’m headed to the house for a break.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 8:30. But I had to take care of a few admin tasks relating to websites, contact a few authors, etc. Finally, a little after 9, I’m opening the novel.

One of my sons and his family will arrive late tonight to spend Thanksgiving with us, so I hope to get as much done today as possible. Not sure when or whether I’ll have the opportunity to write for the next few days. (grin)

A great day. Close to my best day ever, if it wasn’t. And the story finally interests me enough that I can barely wait to get back to it. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

To see a bit of Kristine Kathryn Rusch's writing process, see "On 'Joyride'" at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2018/11/14/on-joyride/>.

See "Book Baby Marketing Conference (Part II)" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/11/20/book-baby-marketing-conference-part-ii/>.

See "Da Vinci Code's Dan Brown on how to write a bestseller" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/da-vinci-codes-dan-brown-on-how-to-write-a-bestseller/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Pudgygate" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/19/free-fiction-monday-pudgygate-2/>.

See "When Should A Story End?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/when-should-a-story-end.html>. Yes, I commented.

Fiction Words: 5909

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 7029

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117

Total fiction words for the month..... 63733
Total fiction words for the year..... 442263
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 162856
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 604799

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Asimov's](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, November 21](#)

[November 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I hope each of you in America will enjoy your Thanksgiving Day tradition tomorrow. For those of you who do not live in the US, I hope you will pass a peaceful and lucrative day of your own, filled with joy and productivity.

Time for another gentle reminder. From time to time, I hit upon a URL that's so useful, so informative, so educational for fiction writers of all stripes, that I add it to one or more of the Writers Resources links on my main website.

For a free education, please take time to visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources/>. Then pick a topic and go to that page for a comprehensive listing. You won't be sorry.

And if you find help there, consider making a one-time monetary donation by clicking the Donate button at the top of the sidebar on any page.

If you can't make a monetary donation, please consider sharing this post (or any others) with your writing groups or writer friends.

My son and his family decided not to drive down last night (it's five hours) but to get some sleep instead and head down this morning. So back to the story. (grin)

I finally got to the novel at a little after 8. I read over part of what I'd typed yesterday, cycling a bit. Usually, when I get to where I stopped, I'm back in the story and sentences are backing up in my fingers, lunging at my fingertips, waiting to be released.

This morning was different. I drew a blank. Completely.

So I walked away for a few minutes. When I came back, I put my fingers on the keyboard, and typed the first sentence that occurred to me. A few sentences later I was back in the flow, with the story pulling me along. (grin) I'm still amazed at how well that works.

Pretty good day. I ended it by creating a reverse outline.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "A Happy Holidays Gift From WMG Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-happy-holidays-gift-from-wmg-publishing/>. Take advantage of this, and spread the word!

See “Series, -Ogy, or Stand-Alone?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/series-ogy-or-stand-alone.html>. Well worth reading two or three times.

See “Worlds to Live In: Atmosphere” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2018/11/01/world-to-live-in-atmosphere/>.

See “Setting: The Key to Speculative Fiction” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2018/09/12/setting-the-key-to-speculative-fiction/>.

There are many more valuable essays at Asimov’s blog, and most of them are suited not only to writers of SF but to writers of all genres. I encourage you to visit <https://fromearthtothestars.com/> and scroll down. And yes, I’ve added it to the Writers Resources page on my website.

From the Shooting Yourself In The Face Department, see “Canadian literary prize suspended after finalists object to Amazon sponsorship” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/canadian-literary-prize-suspended-after-finalists-object-to-amazon-sponsorship/>.

See “It’s Never Been Easier—or Harder—to Self-Publish” at <https://crimereads.com/its-never-been-easier-or-harder-to-self-publish/>. An invaluable resource. I added this one to my Writers Resources page.

Then, if you want, see “Six Steps of Self-Publishing (Mostly for Traditional Authors)” at <http://www.libbyhellmann.com/six-steps-of-self-publishing/>. (Referenced in the article above.)

Fiction Words: 3396

Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3896

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117
Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513

Total fiction words for the month..... 67129
Total fiction words for the year..... 445659
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12250
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 163356
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 608765

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Asimov's blog](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Libby Hellmann](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, November 22](#)

[November 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Probably a short day today, but I decided to get some writing done.

To the Hovel at 4, where I spent a little time looking for items for “Of Interest.” There isn’t a lot today.

Got a good session done, then a break up to the house to see when my wife wanted me to start cooking my part of The Meal. (grin)

Back to the Hovel and the novel, with apologies to my wife who’s already slaving away. Just difficult to leave the novel when it’s flowing so well.

Two more good sessions, and it’s back to the house. If I’m not too food-hungover tomorrow, I’ll be back then. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Expect Resistance” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/21/business-musings-expect-resistance/>.

Fiction Words: 3363

Nonfiction Words: 150 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3513

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117

Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513
Day 6..... 3363 words. Total words to date..... 23876

Total fiction words for the month..... 70492
Total fiction words for the year..... 449022
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12400
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 163506
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 612278

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, November 23](#)

[November 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Another short day, probably. No worries.

I was in the Hovel by 3, though after the gorging yesterday around noon, I wasn't in much of a mood to do anything productive. (grin)

But I do mean "gorge," at least for me. We ate Thanksgiving dinner around noon yesterday, and after that had a couple of hours to settle over some TV. (I still can't get back into the NFL after all the flap, so that was off the table.)

We watched a few episodes of a Brit mystery/comedy, and then I got up to get dessert. Understand, as part of the dinner, I'd already had homemade yams covered with a layer of small marshmallows, prepared by my own wife's sweet hands of baked sweet potatoes.

But dessert — we'd forgotten to lay out the cranberry sauce (also home made) and the pumpkin pie and the lemon pudding with vanilla cookies soaking in the bottom of the dish.

So I collected all the necessary things on a small dinner plate. I cut a generous slice of pumpkin pie, then added a large spoonful of the aforementioned yams to one side and lemon pudding to the other.

I hefted a spoonful of cranberry sauce on top of the pumpkin pie, then covered the whole thing — and I mean all of it — with Reddi Whip, the stuff in the can.

Of course, the Reddi Whip was the low-calorie version (I bought it). Which makes about as much sense as ordering a double-double cheeseburger with a large order of fries and then a diet soda to wash it all down. But I digress.

At any rate, being the accomplished individual I am and in line with my personal philosophy of hating the idea of possibly being labeled a quitter, over the next hour or so I downed the whole thing. Nom nom nom. As Andy Griffith would say, It was gooo-ood. (grin)

And surprise! My stomach didn't give me any trouble at all, all night long. Of course, it was probably busy digesting the two Pepcid pills and the four or six (I forget) Tums I sent it as a peace offering.

And here I sit, tapping at my little keyboard, making stuff up. Is this a wonderful country, or what?

After all of that, I won't bore you with details of my various trips to the Hovel. The numbers will speak for themselves if I write anything today.

Well, I wrote for awhile and ended up with just over 2400 words.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: An Attitude of Gratitude (A Thanksgiving Blog)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/22/business-musings-an-attitude-of-gratitude-a-thanksgiving-blog/>.

See "10 Ways to Stop Embarrassing the Hero of Your Story" at <https://www.leelofland.com/10-ways-stop-embarrassing-hero-story/>.

Fiction Words: 2427

Nonfiction Words: 460 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2887

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117
Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513

Day 6..... 3363 words. Total words to date..... 23876
Day 7..... 2427 words. Total words to date..... 26303

Total fiction words for the month..... 72919
Total fiction words for the year..... 451449
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12860
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 163966
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 615165

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, November 24](#)

[November 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

If you remember, Dean Wesley Smith had a challenge during which he proposed writing 10 novels in 100 days.

At first it faltered, so he restarted it. Now, in “Of Interest” below, he’s announced it’s faltered again. (Actually, he says it’s “still going on” but then says the restart didn’t work well.)

I wish him luck on the re-restart, whenever it happens. I suspect he will successfully complete this challenge once he gets going on it.

I can’t know because I’m not there, but I wonder whether Dean’s feeling overwhelmed by the project and allowing his conscious mind to make up reasons to delay writing (all the 5k races lately, etc.). This is the topic for the day.

Topic: Nobody Is Immune to the Elephant Syndrome

It seems like forever ago that I re-learned from Dean Wesley Smith that literally anyone can be intimidated by the thought of writing a novel, much less writing 10 novels in 100 days (his current challenge).

Ironically, the secret to success in novel writing is to realize you can't write a novel. Nobody can.

But you can write a sentence, then another, then another. You can write a scene. Then you write another sentence, another scene, and another.

Or the way I look at it, it takes almost no effort to write 500 words.

If you sit down and put your fingers on the keyboard, then Trust Your Subconscious [this is the huge part because everyone is susceptible to interference from the overprotective conscious mind] and just write whatever comes, you quickly get to the 500 word mark without even realizing it.

After that it's easy to reach 1000 words. Just write another quick 500. And keep going. Write another 500, and another, and another.

I've talked before about the power of a streak. A streak builds on itself and makes you want to keep going. The streak is what drives you to write the next word, the next scene, the next chapter... the next novel.

When you write two words in a row, you've started a streak. The more words you write, the more difficult it is to stop writing and break the streak.

The more writing sessions you spend in the chair, the harder it is to not return to the chair for just one more session.

You simply Keep Coming Back (another lesson from Dean) and before you know it, the day has ended and you've written thousands of words, all in one direction.

You don't have to write fast. You just have to put yourself in the chair, put your fingers on the keyboard, and allow your characters to play. It really is that easy.

And before you say it's easy for me because I've been doing it awhile, it first became easy for me about three sentences into the very first time I tried it. The same can be true for you.

But you have to cede control. You have to realize it's the characters' story, not yours. Then you're free of responsibility for all the characters' decisions. You let them live their own lives.

You roll off the parapet of your story, drop into the trenches with the characters, and try to keep up with them as they race through the story. I dare you.

If you want for some reason to eat an elephant, well, you can't. It's an overwhelming goal. But you can take one bite, then another, then another. Bites are easy. More manageable. And before you know it, the elephant is gone.

Maybe a more apt example is that it's very difficult to eat an entire chocolate cake. But one bite is savory enough to lead you to the next. And the next. And soon, you have to make another cake.

If you're a writer, your job isn't to think about the overwhelming task of writing a novel or the overwhelming task of writing several novels in a given time.

Your job is to record what your characters see, hear, taste, smell, feel, say and do as they live the story.

Yet even at the end of a long writing day, you feel refreshed because you've been entertained; you feel accomplished because you've written much more than you thought you would when you first sat down; and you feel confident because you can only barely wait to visit with the characters tomorrow and record more of their story.

Grab a fork.

In the second "Of Interest" item, you might have to overcome, initially, a minor ironic annoyance: that the author actually makes his living as a direct result of what he calls "the capitalistic orgy."

For me at least, there was much to overlook in his post, but maybe a few gems as well, like recognizing the "obsessions" you keep writing about, or that keep you writing.

I got a little writing done myself, but only a few hundred words. In the past, when I write only a little, I roll it over into the next day totals and count the low-word-count day as a nonwriting day. From now on, I won't do that. Maybe it's as important to show that words add up, even if it's only a few.

Today is a lazy day, following meeting a great new friend yesterday over a delicious meal and a couple of beers at Big Nose Kate's Saloon in Tombstone. (grin) I'll spend much of it with my visiting family.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Writing Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-challenge/>. I've been wondering about this.

See "How Do You Come Up With The Ideas For Your Novels?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/how-do-you-come-up-with-the-ideas-for-your-novels.html>.

Fiction Words: 587

Nonfiction Words: 890 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1477

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117
Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513
Day 6..... 3363 words. Total words to date..... 23876
Day 7..... 2427 words. Total words to date..... 26303
Day 8..... 0587 words. Total words to date..... 26890

Total fiction words for the month..... 73506
Total fiction words for the year..... 452036
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 164856
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 616642

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, November 25](#)

[November 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I was in touch with Dean. He assured me he's dealing with a problem he's never encountered before as he attempts his challenge to write 10 novels in 100 days while coming off a major life roll and tries to get into shape.

I'm not ashamed to admit I was probably wrong in [my musings yesterday about his dilemma](#). It isn't difficult to be humble in the presence of greatness.

He and Kris are working through the problem. I have no doubt they'll succeed in discovering and overcoming whatever it is. He also assured me he'll keep us posted.

Topic: A Preliminary and Premature Obituary

You won't be surprised to know I regard [Dean Wesley Smith](#) as a mentor, a kind of personal hero.

Had I never read his daily blog posts (or his series and books on Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing or his book Think Like a Publisher), I probably would still share in my weekly big blog over on the other site what I know about the nuances of the language.

I would still share what I know about punctuation, sentence structure, the use of fragments, realistic dialogue, characters, dialect and POV. And I would almost certainly still offer my services as a conscientious copyeditor.

But if it weren't for Dean's willingness to share his personal ups and downs in his daily blog post, this Journal probably wouldn't exist. At all.

I probably also never would have attempted Harlan Ellison's "writing in public." And I might not have learned and been able to share anything at all about Story or Writing.

I wouldn't have gleaned the tons of gems I've found over the years in his daily blog.

And most importantly from a purely selfish, personal standpoint, I wouldn't have written nearly 200 short stories, 7 novellas, and 35 (soon to be 36) novels.

In short, I probably would still be a poet, but only a wannabe fictionist.

As with all great instructors, not all of what Dean shares is original to him. After all, he had to learn it too.

Think about it. There was a time when Hemingway or Shakespeare or Hammet or Chandler or Márquez (or Smith or Stanbrough or You) didn't even know the alphabet existed or how to create a capital letter A from two longer lines and a shorter one.

Without Dean's posts, I might never have stumbled onto Heinlein's Rules or learned to trust my subconscious. I might never have learned to trust my characters to tell their own story.

I might still be struggling to "figure out" everything in an outline first and then force myself to write and rewrite and polish my manuscript until there was nothing left of my unique, original voice.

I might still be worried about my own "style" or "voice" instead of simply allowing it to flow. I might never have learned to allow my characters to entertain me before they entertained my readers.

And I'd be poorer in so many ways I don't even want to try to count them.

Thanks, Dean.

To the Hovel at 3. I spent the first few hours on administrative endeavors. I probably will write today, but if so it will be a keep-coming-back day.

At the beginning, I wrote most of the stuff above. I also updated my writer's website over at <http://harveystanbrough.com>. Mostly I revised my Patronage page and added it back on my website. (If interested, [take a look at the new rewards.](#))

After I originally took that page down a week or two ago, a well-meaning friend emailed me to say I should leave it up so folks would at least have the option. Made sense to me.

Anyway, I added a few more rewards. Each reward tier now is worth a lot more than the patron will spend each month.

I also decided to add the final statement to the end of this and future Journal posts. Hey, you never know. (grin)

To the house for a break at 6:30. My son and his family got away at 9:30, and I headed back to the Hovel at 9:45. It feels like it probably will be another short day.

Nope. In fact, today will be a non-writing day. I'll spend the rest of today with my wife and babies.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "What I Wish I'd Known When I Started Writing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/what-i-wish-id-known-when-i-started-writing.html>. I added this one to my Writers Resources page.

See "Some Writing Goodies" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/24/some-writing-goodies/>.

Wow. See "One Writer's Personal Struggle with Pain" at <https://www.suecolletta.com/one-writers-personal-struggle-with-pain/>. Even through the personal stuff, Sue Colletta manages to deliver some gems on writing.

See "Thanksgiving: Black-Eyed Peas, Pigs Feet, and the Trip South" at <https://www.leelofland.com/thanksgiving-black-eyed-peas-pigs-feet-and-the-trip-south/>. Not so much about crime here as Southern cuisine this time.

To check out a rising Pulp star, See “Chapter One – Everything is Broken” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/11/25/chapter-one-everything-is-broken/>.

Finally, for a laugh over an incredulous (at least to me) situation, see “Girl Scouts Sue Boy Scouts for Trademark Infringement” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/girl-scouts-sue-boy-scouts-for-trademark-infringement/>.

The article excerpt leaves me wondering exactly what the GSUSA wants: the “right” for girls to join the BSA or the right to segregate the genders. The OP continues with “In the event the case proceeds, GSUSA seeks monetary damages and a permanent injunction against the Boy Scouts’ use of their trademark.”

Not surprisingly, however, they do not ask that the BSA return to recruiting only males to their ranks. Can the GSUSA have it both ways? Common sense would say not. But probably, in our bizarro world, they can.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 910 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 910

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117
Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513
Day 6..... 3363 words. Total words to date..... 23876
Day 7..... 2427 words. Total words to date..... 26303
Day 8..... 0587 words. Total words to date..... 26890
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 73506
Total fiction words for the year..... 452036
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14660
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 165766
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 617552

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Note: This Journal and my Pro-Writers blog will always be free and are funded only by your gracious contributions. To make a one-time donation, click the Donate button under the clock at the top of the Journal page. If you'd like to become a patron, click [Patronage](#) and have a look at the rewards. If you can't make a monetary donation, please consider sharing this post with your friends. Thanks!

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Monday, November 26

[November 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I thought I'd found a new writers resource in an "author and writing teacher" named Marilyn Byerly.

So I went to her blog. No books were listed, so I did a search for her name on Amazon. I found only 6 novels listed. That kind of put a damper on things.

I returned to her blog and read a few articles. Frankly, I was hoping lightning would strike and that I would find it a valuable resource.

Umm, nope. Just regurgitation of the same old stuff I've heard for years in public school, stale writers' groups, etc. Nor was there a way to contact Ms. Byerly to ask about her publications, etc. In other words, I was denied due diligence.

So I can't personally recommend Ms. Byerly. The best I can do for her is list her name in this post so you can look up her website for yourself just in case you might find something of value.

Topic: Be Accessible

If you don't have a writer website, put one up. I can help if you like.

If you'd rather not put up a website, at least reach out to your prospective readers through your D2D, Amazon, Smashwords, and Facebook (and probably other) Author Pages.

If you DO have a writer website, be accessible, as follows:

1. List your books. (Duh.)

And do your best to make it an alluring presentation, including the cover, a synopsis, and at least one buy link. Update the information regularly and quickly.

There's an excellent free WordPress plugin that will help you create a "book table." See <https://www.authormedia.com/all-products/mybooktable/>. This wasn't yet available when I created my various genre and individual book pages, so I didn't use it. But I wish it had been available.

2. *If you don't want to do all of that,* at least make the cover a buy link to a place off your site where readers can read about your book, "look inside," etc. And fix it so the buy link opens on a new tab or page. (So your website is still there after they click the link.)

3. *Some writers want to sell directly from their own site. That's fine.* But don't cut out the major Etailers. I get maybe 60 or so visitors per day to my writer website. Amazon (et al) get millions. Just sayin'.

4. *In your website menu, put tabs to your writing up first.*

If you offer other writerly services, those menu tabs should come *after* the tabs that lead readers to your books.

5. *Be Accessible.*

Put your contact information (email address) everywhere so potential readers (and who knows? publishers, film makers, et al) can reach you. While I'm on the subject, it's also a great idea to have your name in your email address. For example, harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Make it easy for people to reach you.

My own email address appears regularly in my blog posts and on many pages of my website. I also include it on any author pages and in my Facebook profile.

Even with that, I occasionally receive requests for my email addy through Facebook or FB Messenger. Go figure. But I don't get snippy. I welcome every opportunity to talk about writing, and especially about my own writing.

6. *Be accessible elsewhere.*

If you're fortunate enough to be invited to speak to professional groups (Lions, et al), writers groups, critique groups, or at writer conferences or conventions, Plaster Your Contact Information Everywhere (handouts, bookmarks, whatever).

If you speak at a conference or convention, don't disappear into your room after your session. Hang out afterward for awhile, and toward the end of your talk, make sure the audience knows you'll be available in the lobby or lounge afterward. You can sleep when the conference is over.

Do these things (and anything else you can think of to promote your work and yourself) and you will be successful.

To the Hovel around 4:30. Typical routine, then up to the house at 6 for a brief break.

Frankly, after the long weekend, I fully expected to get a lot of writing done today. Maybe even four or five thousand words. But it didn't work out that way.

A Bit of Humor: It's "Cyber Monday"

My cell phone (Motorola Razor) is old. It's gotten to the point that the battery drains overnight even when I haven't used the phone. It's been doing that for awhile now, and my wife and I both have been saying for a few months that I need to upgrade.

So this morning I saw an add from my cell service vendor announcing their Cyber Monday sale.

Okay, so I took a look. I found a whale of a deal on exactly what I was looking for. Another Motorola, this one a Moto Z3. All of which means nothing to me.

But what did matter is that this one has a large screen (a little over 6" tall by 3" wide), the battery lasts up to 28 hours, and it was inexpensive. Yes!

But the sale was valid only today and only online.

When I start something, I like to finish it. I wish I could say that's because I'm steadfast or something, but it's because of my mental faculty. If I don't do it "right now," chances are I'll forget.

I've always been that way. To be gracious to myself, I say I have an overactive sense of urgency. (grin) That sounds so much better than "I'm anal" or "I'm simple-minded and too stupid to focus on more than one thing at one time." Whatever.

So I jumped through the various hoops and ordered the thing. It all started out just fine. The vendor even waived the activation fee because I was buying it "online" and "today".

Then I got to the checkout page and hit a wall.

They couldn't ship my new phone to my PO Box so they asked me to update my shipping address. Only there wasn't a way to do that. And oh yes, I looked. I read everything on the page, twice. (See the "I'm anal" reference above.)

So I clicked "Deliver to Store." That worked, I thought, until they told me the store I'd selected (10 miles away) wasn't available to accept and deliver that particular phone. I guess my chosen store is on phone-delivery probation or something.

I spent the next hour getting them to understand I wanted to select another store (30 miles away). Finally, finally, I got my point through. They accepted the choice of a store.

Then I tried to pay for my phone.

They said the credit card I added wasn't valid. I added it three more times, double-checking every number, but they kept insisting it wasn't valid.

So I clicked the PayPal button. And eventually got the message, "Something happened. Please try again later."

Nope. Later's no good. If I go off and do something else for awhile, I won't remember to come back and do this.

I thought maybe the problem was the (possibly) intermittent internet connection in the Hovel. So I went to the house, logged in on my other computer, and started the process over again.

Only the page I finally got to was different. They weren't waiving the activation fee, and other fees applied besides. At least the phone was still at the same Cyber Monday sale price.

So I restarted that computer (that'll teach it!) then stomped back out to the Hovel. I went through the process for what I thought would be a final time. (It's the Homer Simpson Syndrome: the thought that something that has never worked will work *this* time.)

Unfortunately, I got the same "Please try later" message.

So I very calmly (yeah right) unplugged by big monitor, **slammed** gently closed my writing 'puter, picked it up and headed to the house with the order page still open.

And finally, FINALLY, after over 3 hours of this nonsense, I was able to click the right buttons, have the thing shipped to the store of my (second) choice, and make my payment.

Which flashed blatantly on the screen as "Nothing due today." Sigh.

Now it's after 1 p.m., and historically I don't write much in the afternoon unless I've gotten a good syphoning action going in the morning. I was able to write a little before all of this started, so those few words are reflected below.

Tomorrow I'll write in the morning, then drive to Sierra Vista around noon or so to pick up my phone and some other stuff.

I just hope some grim, nasty little over achiever with a mischievous look in his eye isn't busy in a back room somewhere planning a Cyber Tuesday.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "I Wrote Romance" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/i-wrote-romance/>.

See “Former Inmate #12345-678...” at <https://www.leelofland.com/former-inmate-12345-678-my-time-in-a-federal-prison-camp/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Space Between Hope and Dreams” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/26/free-fiction-monday-the-space-between-hope-and-dreams/>.

Fiction Words: 1057

Nonfiction Words: 1280 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2337

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117
Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513
Day 6..... 3363 words. Total words to date..... 23876
Day 7..... 2427 words. Total words to date..... 26303
Day 8..... 0587 words. Total words to date..... 26890
Day 9..... 1057 words. Total words to date..... 27947

Total fiction words for the month..... 74563
Total fiction words for the year..... 453093
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15940
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 167046
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 619889

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, November 27](#)

[November 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A new favorite quote:

“Don’t ever write anything you don’t like yourself and if you do like it, don’t take anyone’s advice about changing it. They just don’t know.” — Raymond Chandler

And another one:

“The more you reason the less you create.” — Raymond Chandler

Topic: Learning and Being Reminded

Professional athletes, first responders and others work in occupations where strength and flexibility are necessary.

For those who are conscientious in those jobs, training and exercise never stop. If they do, strength and flexibility reach a plateau, then begin to decline. Muscles begin to atrophy as they are used less and muscle memory “forgets” how to do certain things.

Less than one year after I left the Marine Corps (and stopped exercising regularly) I tore a ligament in my right shoulder while attempting to move a log that apparently preferred to remain where it was.

That was 26 years ago, and I still have trouble working a screwdriver (the tool, not the drink) with my right hand.

It wasn’t a large log, and it wasn’t all that heavy. I just employed a bad technique and hadn’t used my muscles in that particular combination for a long while.

Professionals in any endeavor also never stop learning. Pro athletes, first responders, military members and others continually learn new strategies, tactics and techniques and refine how they do what they do.

For the professional writer, it’s the same. Moderate exercise — doing what we are able to do — keeps us healthier and more able to sit in the chair for longer periods of time. Hence, physical exercise directly translates into greater productivity.

Likewise, ongoing learning applies for the professional fiction writer. When we continue to actively learn new techniques, we exercise and strengthen the mental synapses that keep us up on our game.

The only difference — and it's a huge difference — is that better, more original storytelling is a creative endeavor. It's a function of the subconscious mind.

The conscious mind does have a role to play. We take in new information with the conscious mind.

We “decide” which techniques we want to learn, which classes to take, which instructors to trust. We listen attentively, take notes, and consider how the technique will improve our stories.

Afterward, we apply what we've learned, but we do that with the creative, subconscious mind. Before we begin to write a new story, perhaps we consciously choose to practice using the five senses at least once in every major scene.

And when we begin to write, **WITHOUT FURTHER CONSCIOUS THOUGHT ABOUT IT**, suddenly our POV character is noticing things about the setting that none of our POV characters before noticed. And he's expressing those things via his opinion of the physical setting.

The character also seems to know inherently when to describe (through his opinion) a setting in detail and when to skip over it, maybe touching only the high points or maybe describing it with only a single word or phrase or sentence.

For example, a protagonist will notice and describe in detail (through his opinion of the setting) the station house or apartment where he spends a lot of his time.

He'll do the same the first time he enters a formal library in a mansion that is also a crime scene.

But when he gets out of his car and goes into a building, he might provide only a vague description of the front of the building itself (brick or block or wood slat, double or single door, chrome and glass or wood, etc.), and probably no description at all of the sidewalk he crosses on his way in.

You know. The details that pull the reader into the scene and ground him in the story.

But the five senses are only one technique to take on board. There are a million other things to learn.

You've learned with your conscious mind hundreds or thousands of things that your subconscious, creative mind employs every day without thinking about them.

When to use a period or a question mark at the end of a sentence, for example. How to recognize and create a group of words that contain a subject and a verb (a sentence).

Maybe even when to omit a subject or verb and write a fragment, like every group of words in this and the previous and the next paragraph, when it will have a stronger impact on the reader.

All unintentionally. All without actually thinking about it. All with the subconscious, creative mind.

You learned all of those things in school with your conscious mind. But you apply them, without conscious thought, with your subconscious, creative mind.

So trust yourself. Choose with your conscious mind what to learn next about this wonderful craft of writing. Apply your conscious mind to take it in.

Then stop thinking about it, shift into the creative subconscious mode and practice. What you've learned will come through and your writing will improve.

And maybe best of all, if you also are occasionally reminded of techniques you learned previously, those skills will remain fresh and new. And yours. And they won't atrophy.

I rolled out way early this morning at 1 a.m. I awoke from a very brief dream in which I was looking at my writing 'puter. My fingers were on the keyboard, and my WIP was on the screen.

As I watched, the screen went dark. That's what woke me up, with a bit of a jolt.

So I got up, got dressed, made a cup of coffee, and padded out to the Hovel. When I sat down, the screen came up fine. Then I glanced down and noticed the power cord was still unplugged from yesterday, when I carried this 'puter up to the house.

The subconscious mind is a wonderful thing. (grin)

I spent the first two-plus hours basically waking up, writing the long topic above, and scanning the internet for items of interest.

To the novel, finally, at 4:30.

I got some writing done. I have to head to Sierra Vista now.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Too Much and Too Little" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/too-much-and-too-little/>. The biggest gem I took away from this is "I am focused on this writing challenge ... because it will get the writing back into complete focus for me." His post led to the topic above.

See "First Page Critique – Zip & Millie: Siberian Adventure" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/first-page-critique-zip-millie-siberian-adventure.html>. Of particular value, "In all genres, pictures from the writer's vivid imagination must translate to the page" and "By physically acting out the movements, rather than simply visualizing them in your head, you'll have a better idea how to explain each step to the reader." But there's much more.

See “No One To Talk To” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2018/11/no-one-to-talk-to.html>. I’ll check this blog from time to time and if I see something I think might help, I’ll add it here.

See “How to Make a Website in 2018” at <https://firstsiteguide.com/make-website/>. This is a useful guide full of tips even if you already have a website.

For a great deal more, see “First Site Guide” at <https://firstsiteguide.com/>.

See “BookBaby Marketing Conference (Part III)” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/11/27/bookbaby-marketing-conference-part-iii/>.

Fiction Words: 2798

Nonfiction Words: 1210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4008

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 3706 words. Total words to date..... 3706
Day 2..... 3023 words. Total words to date..... 6729
Day 3..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 11208
Day 4..... 5909 words. Total words to date..... 17117
Day 5..... 3396 words. Total words to date..... 20513
Day 6..... 3363 words. Total words to date..... 23876
Day 7..... 2427 words. Total words to date..... 26303
Day 8..... 0587 words. Total words to date..... 26890
Day 9..... 1057 words. Total words to date..... 27947
Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Total fiction words for the month..... 77361
Total fiction words for the year..... 455891
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 168256
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 623897

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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the rewards. If you can't make a monetary donation, please consider sharing this post with your friends. Thanks!

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [First Site Guide](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, November 28](#)

[November 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

This might be the earliest I've ever posted an edition of the Journal. Today will be a non-writing day. I wasn't able to go to Sierra Vista yesterday, so I'm going this morning while it's too cold for my babies to go outside and play.

When I get back, in addition to setting up my new phone, I'll return to Nick 4 for awhile. My wonderful first reader got her input back to me this morning. So I want to finalize Nick 4 and upload the finalized document to all the right places.

That novel doesn't release until January 15, but once I'm finished with it I can move on to other things (and back to my WIP). And of course, my donors will get the finished product early.

Yet another favorite quote, pointed out by my friend, Robert Sadler:

“The key characteristic of the human mind is that we're creative. As Albert Hirschman, the Princeton Economist, once put it, ‘creativity always comes as a surprise to us.’” — George Gilder (discover.org)

In other words, you can't be creative with your conscious mind. (grin)

For some reason, Gilder's quote put me in mind of three turning points that freed up my own writing.

Probably those three points are what enabled me to be a storyteller and a professional writer. They freed me from my authorial ivory tower and let me roam free among the masses. (grin)

Topic: Three Great Turning Points in My Development as a Fictionist

The first great turning point in my development as a fictionist was a realization: It isn't "my" story. It's the characters' story.

They're the ones who are living it. They're the ones who populate whatever fictional world I'm about to drop into. They're the ones who walk into settings and interact with other characters.

I would never allow anyone to control me and my decisions regarding how I act or react or what I say or do, so why should I levy control over them?

It's true that consideration for others helps me decide all those things in my own life, but they are still my decisions, no one else's.

And of course, the protagonist and antagonist and others in the stories consider the input and feelings of other characters in their fictional world. But their decisions regarding their actions/reactions etc. are still their own.

So this first turning point freed me from responsibility for how the characters act and interact and react and what they say and do.

The upshot is that I am constantly surprised as I write because the characters (not I) are living their own lives. I'm only the recorder.

The second major turning point was an understanding. It finally came to me after a LOT of conscious thought (learning, trying to understand), and in light of what I realized in the first turning point.

The second turning point was my understanding that Everything I put on the page HAD to come through the POV character's physical and emotional senses and opinions.

Nothing in the stories I write — not one word of dialogue, not one word of description — comes from me as the writer/narrator. It all comes from the characters who are living in the story.

The dialogue, of course, is easy. In dialogue, the characters simply say what they say and I write it down.

But letting go of the “narrative description” (a misnomer) is more difficult. Like all fiction writers young in the craft, I thought it was my job to show (or enable the reader to see) the setting.

It isn't.

Anytime the author pokes his head out through the writing, it's from outside the story and it interrupts the reading experience.

Again, the characters (not the writer) are living in the fictional world. They all have a past and “baggage” (even if it doesn't appear in the story) and they're the ones who are experiencing the setting physically and emotionally.

So again, every word in the description of any setting in the story MUST come through the POV character's physical and emotional senses. And it must be expressed through his or her opinions of that setting.

In an example I use often, the setting is a formal library in a mansion. Inside it smells of pipe tobacco.

One POV character might say the room “reeked of the stench of tobacco.” Another might say “the heady scent of cherry pipe tobacco reminded me of my grandfather.”

If the lighting in the library is dim, one POV character might describe it as “cold, dark and forbidding.” Another might say “in the dim light, the room seemed smaller. It closed in around me like a warm flannel blanket on a cool night.”

Each of those are a POV character’s description, expressed through that same character’s opinion of the setting. See?

And that’s only two physical senses (smell and sight) and one emotional sense (the fear expressed in “forbidding”).

As a bonus, each time the POV character describes a setting, a little more is revealed to the reader about that character’s past experiences and about who he or she is.

That realization (that it’s the characters’ story, not mine) and that understanding (that every word must come through the POV character’s physical and emotional senses and opinions) are what finally forced me to ‘let go’ and just enjoy the story as it unfolds.

And somewhere along the line, I came upon the third major turning point: Pacing.

I’ll define pacing as the intentional slowing of the reader by the writer through the use of longer paragraphs (generally, over 5 lines on the page) and the speeding-up of the reader through the use of shorter paragraphs (generally, up to 5 lines on the page).

Every genre requires a certain pacing.

In the current definition of Thriller (as opposed to the old Hitchcock thrillers, which are now considered psychological suspense or psychological horror), the pacing is fast almost all the way through.

A thriller is a roller-coaster ride, with rising action to a climactic event. During the rising action and the event, the pacing will be faster with shorter paragraphs to drag the reader through that part of the story at almost breakneck speed.

Then comes a terse drop-off (usually a cliffhanger at the end of a scene) to a period of calm (inhabited by longer paragraphs), then more rising action to another climactic event, followed by another drop-off.

But that can be said of any commercial genre: westerns, science fiction or fantasy, high fantasy, romance, crime, police procedurals, mysteries (including cozies), and so on.

Even magic realism, which is most often lumped into “literary” fiction, follows this kind of flow.

They all have periods of tension where you want the reader to fly through the paragraphs, and they all have periods of rest, where the reader is forced by the paragraph lengths to slow down and catch his or her breath.

And be more deeply immersed in the fictional world.

Often, the “period of rest” occurs while the character is describing a scene (maybe the protagonist enters the library in the mansion), often enroute to a quick period of rising action (maybe the antagonist is hiding in a corner behind a desk and about to launch an attack).

Of course, there are interesting and important differences among genre structures too. But that’s a topic for another post. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “The Five Most Common Mistakes in Writing Mystery” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/live/mistakes-in-writing-mystery>. This is both a video and a transcript (in case you’d rather read it) of a recent free Reedsy webinar.

Then see “Colombo and ‘Just One More Thing’” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=biW9BbWJtQU&authuser=0>. This is also from Reedsy to go along with the webinar above.

See “Seven at Odds: First Page Critique” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/11/seven-at-odds-first-page-critique.html>. Just in case fantasy is your cuppa.

Via Tony DeCastro, see “Free Fiction – The Dump” at <http://www.joerlansdale.com/stories.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1300

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 77361

Total fiction words for the year..... 455891

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18450

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 169556

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 625197

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Joe Lansdale](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, November 29](#)

[November 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, yesterday was a very productive day, though not in writing.

The trip to Sierra Vista took only a couple of hours. When I got back I activated my new phone, which is about the size of the flight deck on a small aircraft carrier. (grin) Then I played around with it for a little while.

Afterward I read over the very valuable comments of my first reader on Nick 4 (Consequences) and applied most of them.

Finally I uploaded the document to D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. It's available at all three places for pre-ordering, and it will release to the public on January 15. For more info or to preorder at your favorite vendor, see <https://www.books2read.com/u/3yDnyL>.

Then I remembered Book 2 (Transitions) came out earlier in November, so I uploaded it to Bundlerabbit. Almost forgot about them.

So that was my day. That and a couple of easy loads of laundry. I'll be back on my WIP today. Probably I'll release that one into the wild in February.

I'm still looking for a first reader for my current WIP. It's a hardboiled, twisted mystery and police procedural. If you're interested, let me know.

I told a friend recently, regarding my WIP, that it feels like it's going to run to 70- or 80- or 100-thousand words. I really hope it doesn't. I can't imagine enjoying a cast of characters over that long of a stretch.

If years (or even months) were the only way to measure writing a novel, I'm pretty sure I'd be doing something else, both for a living and for fun.

The longest story I've told to date is the Wes Crowley Saga at about 500,000 words. But that was spread over 10 books.

In the interim between publication of the first and last novel in that saga, I wrote 80 short stories, 6 other (not in the saga) novels, and 1 novella. I also compiled 13 collections of short stories. No character boredom for me. (grin)

Quote of the Day

“Beginning writers sometimes think they have to include giant conflicts in their stories[...]. I try to show them that a character who is looking for his lost keys is enough conflict to drive a story forward.” — N. West Moss on writing short stories at <https://www.atonesitting.com/single-post/2017/08/13/Conflict-Isnt-A-Big-Deal-An-Interview-With-N-West-Moss>.

I found out just before I went to bed last night that a beloved aunt passed away. Her husband, my paternal uncle, died in January of this year. The two of them had been married for 62 years. No condolences necessary, please. I just need a little down time.

I got out to the Hovel at 4:30. I did a lot of reading (see “Of Interest”) and finally got to the novel at around 9.

I wrote awhile, but had trouble getting into the story. Too much other stuff on my mind at the moment. Still a pretty good day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Your Basket is Leaking” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/11/28/business-musings-your-basket-is-leaking/>.

See “Snitching to the Snitches: When a Cop Goes Bad” at <https://www.leelofland.com/snitching-to-the-snitches-when-a-cop-goes-bad/>.

See “How a US Marshal Inherited an Iconic Spy Fiction Series” at <https://crimereads.com/trained-to-protect-foreign-dignitaries-hunt-fugitives-and-write-tom-clancy-novels/>.

See “All Fiction Is Speculative” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2018/11/28/all-fiction-is-speculative/>.

See “Envy Jujitsu” at <https://nwestmoss.wordpress.com/2015/08/22/envy-jujitsu/>.

See “Too Much and Too Little” and the comments at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/too-much-and-too-little/#comments>. Some helpful stuff there.

Fiction Words: 1738

Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2288

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483

Total fiction words for the month..... 79099

Total fiction words for the year..... 457629

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19000

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 170106

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 627485

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [From the Earth to the Stars](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [N. West Moss](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, November 30

November 30, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Last day of the month already! In November! In 2018! What in the world happened? How is it not still the 1980s?

Okay, long post today. But I think you'll find it interesting.

My new favorite quote: "Stages of development' are for people who write one book a year." — Robert J. Randisi (who is one year older than I and has written over 600 novels).

Topic: Genre Structure

Recently my first reader made a few recommendations that, had I applied them, would have switched the first two genre tags of my novel *Consequences*. The genre tags are Action-Adventure (War) and Romantic Suspense.

The relationship between the two protagonists (male and female) figure large in the story, but that relationship and those characters are not the primary focus. And that's the difference.

Her questions prompted me to write this post. So thanks to her for that. (grin)

I won't touch on all the genres in this topic. Dean Wesley Smith does that in a six-week online seminar titled "Genre Structure." I recommend it.

All fiction books have in common the same four elements: Story (plot, including conflict and resolution), Character, Setting and Pacing. (For my definition of Pacing, see <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-tuesday-november-27-2/>.)

These elements are more or less important depending on the genre. That relative importance speaks directly to what readers expect when they select a book in a particular genre.

I'll talk about Romance first because it's easily the largest genre out there. I don't write it personally, though many of my books have a romantic element. And then I'll talk about the genres I do write.

In Romance, the all-important focus is on the Character, specifically the protagonists.

Setting and Story are secondary. The description of the setting goes deep only when the lovers are together. Every conflict serves only to frustrate them and keep them apart, something for them to strive against as they try to get together.

Typically there is a meet-cute early in the story, where two people meet and are attracted to each other. After that, everything that happens is a stumbling block that keeps them from getting together.

The action in a Romance is slower, reflected in the Pacing, which is indicated with a sprinkling of longer and shorter paragraphs. The scenes are not necessarily intense (shorter paragraphs) unless one or the other is in danger.

The resolution is always the two getting together and living happily ever-after.

In Action-Adventure, though there may be a romantic element, Story (conflict, then setting) is the focus.

Even if there is a relationship between the two main characters (as in *Consequences*), they're already together and sharing in the adventure. The conflict is something they must overcome together, not something they must overcome so they can *be* together.

The pacing is slower when they aren't involved in a conflict. It's faster when they're in conflict, whether emotional conflict between the characters or physical conflict in the midst of action.

The resolution is the successful completion of the overall mission. Then, at least in a series, the characters move on to the next big conflict, still together but working as a team. (This is the same even if there's only one "lone-wolf" protagonist and no romantic element.)

In Mystery (the second largest overall genre), the main focus is shared between Story (the mystery to be solved) and the Character(s) who will solve it. (In the *Cozy Mystery*, the characters take on a stronger role and are more slowly and fully developed.)

It's important that the readers root for the protagonist(s), but slightly more important that he, she or they solve the mystery.

The pacing overall is faster because the spectre of the unsolved mystery overshadows everything. (In the *Cozy*, the pacing is usually very slow through the first chapter or two, the first 2000 to 3000 words, as the reader gets to know and like the protagonist[s]. Then everything kicks into gear.)

The resolution is almost always upbeat and involves the unforeseen solution to the mystery.

In Science Fiction or Science Fantasy (and Westerns), Setting takes center stage and is the focus.

I should also mention that SF is the dominant genre. By that I mean if your story has an element of SF, the main genre is automatically SF. (Per Robert Heinlien, in *Science Fiction*, you have to follow the laws of physics. In *Science Fantasy*, those laws may be set aside.)

Character and conflict are important in SF but they still take a second seat to setting. After all, every story in every genre (even in technology-laden “hard” science fiction) is not about the science but how the characters react to the science (setting and the conflict).

Pacing depends on what’s happening. Faster in action/danger scenes. Most often, the resolution in SF is upbeat.

In Crime fiction (often but not always presented from the antagonist’s POV), Setting and Story (the crime itself) take center stage. Character is secondary. Pacing is generally fast. The resolution is almost always upbeat and involves the unforeseen solution to the crime.

Police Procedural bears a close resemblance to Mystery and Crime, but the focus is shared between the mystery or crime to be solved and the actual procedures (in detail) the character uses to solve the mystery or crime. Don’t write these unless you or your first reader knows real-life police procedures. Pacing slows when you’re describing police procedures, but readers of these lean-in. Again, the resolution is almost always upbeat.

In Noir PI or Detective stories, the tone is mostly dark (duh, it’s noir) and the pacing is generally fast. Character and Setting share center stage. The PI has to be a guy or gal who’s barely hanging on financially and hoping for his or her next big case. “Big” often means a lucrative payday, the proceeds of which never last as long as they should. The pacing is mostly fast. The resolution is typically upbeat, but still with the sense (in a series) that the PI might lose his/her office and be put out on the street if the next big case doesn’t come along.

The Detective, because he works for some level of the government, has it a little easier where finances are concerned. This can contain elements of the police procedural, but not so deeply described. The Detective in Noir is often not only trying to solve a case, but fighting corruption in the government he serves (for example, the police commissioner is “dirty”). Often, the corruption is tied directly to the case the detective is working on. The pacing is generally fast and the resolution is almost always upbeat.

In the Thriller, Story and Character are the focus. Setting is secondary.

As I mentioned a couple of days ago, the Thriller is a roller-coaster ride, with rising action to a climactic event. During the rising action and the event, the pacing will be faster with shorter paragraphs to drag the reader through that part of the story at almost breakneck speed.

Then comes a terse drop-off (usually a cliffhanger at the end of a scene) to a period of calm (inhabited by longer paragraphs), then more rising action to another climactic event, followed by another drop-off, etc.

The pacing is generally fast, with long periods when the reader will have trouble catching his breath. The resolution, again, is almost always upbeat, often with the character (in a series) heading off to the next adventure.

Overall, as I mentioned the other day, all fiction has periods of tension where you want the reader to fly through the paragraphs, and periods of “rest” where the reader is forced by the sentence and paragraph lengths to slow down and catch his or her breath. What differentiates the pacing among different genres is how much is fast and how much is slow.

As to pacing, in the faster-paced genres (thriller, mystery, crime, etc.) chapters are also short, often between 800 and 1200 words. In other words, one major scene per chapter. By contrast, in “literary” fiction, including magic realism, chapters (and paragraphs) are often longer unless something exciting is going on. In literary fiction, the language (voice) matters more than even Story, which unfolds more slowly than in the commercial genres.

I hope this helps.

I’ve mentioned before that my WIP is a truly twisted mystery/police procedural. It’s chock full of things to investigate and minuscule clues and bits of evidence. And more keep cropping up. Detail, detail, detail. And a lot of psychology.

I had a long writing day today, but also a very slow writing day. Just as I finished typing a sentence, I realized something wasn’t quite right. I reread it a few times and finally realized what it was.

So I checked my reverse outline, then spent the next few hours moving around in the novel (cycling) adding a bit here and taking out a bit there to make everything right again.

Of course, while I was doing that, I found a few other small glitches, but glitches that might loom large for a reader.

So it took some time, but without the reverse outline it would have taken a LOT longer. And I might not have caught all of the glitches at all.

So only around a thousand new words today, though the story is considerably more cohesive. Man, I hope it’s a long time (or never) before I write another story with as many twists and turns as this one. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “CS Gas and Crying Cops” at <https://www.leelofland.com/cs-gas-and-crying-cops/>. I can vouch, loudly, for this one.

If you’re into pulp, see “What I’m Reading — Robert Randisi” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/11/30/what-im-reading-robert-randisi/>.

See “Fantastic Offer!” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fantastic-offer/>.

Fiction Words: 1054

Nonfiction Words: 1580 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2634

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483

Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537

Total fiction words for the month..... 80153

Total fiction words for the year..... 458683

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20580

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 171686

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 630119

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, December 1](#)

[December 1, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I'm a little under the weather today. Blah.

New Quote of the Day:

“Like all great travellers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen.” ~ Benjamin Disraeli

Isn't that what we, as fictionists, do? Remember more than we've seen?

Topic: He Knew

Anytime I see that phrase in a book (or “she knew” or “they knew”) it jerks me straight out of the story. It ruins the story for me and shatters any suspension of disbelief.

That phrase is a direct result of the author's voice coming through the work. Not the authorial voice — the way the writer writes, the way he or she turns a phrase — but the actual author's voice.

It's intrusive. It's the author wagging a finger at the reader, telling her something she can learn on her own. Don't tell me “he knew”; let me see why he knew.

Here's an excerpt I received via email recently. I won't divulge the name of the author or the title of the book. I'll say only that the excerpt is derived from a thriller/espionage series novel. My intent is not to embarrass the writer, but to use this as an example of what not to do:

She stumbled into the bathroom and shut the door behind herself. A moment later, Noah heard the shower begin to run.

He rose from the bed and began laying out clothes for himself and Sarah. He knew that she liked it when he chose her clothing and so he tried to do it every day when they were not on mission. This would be the last chance for a while, he was sure, so he decided to make it count. When she came out a few moments later and found the low-cut blouse and short skirt he had selected, she stared at him as he walked past her into the bathroom, but then put them on.

Now here's how I would have written the same scene. Notice that I've also reparagraphed it to improve the pacing and flow:

Sarah kissed Noah on the cheek, then smiled softly. “I'm going to get a shower. Will you pick out what you'd like me to wear?”

Yes, he would. Of course he would. She didn't like to select her own clothing, so he tried to do it every day when they were not on a mission.

He watched as she went into the bathroom and shut the door. A moment later, the sound of the shower filtered out.

He rose from the bed, went to the closet, then the dresser and made his selections. This might be the last chance for a while, so he would make it count.

She came out a few moments later. A low-cut white peasant blouse and a short rose skirt were draped neatly over the back of the chair. On top was a trim pair of rose panties. Perfect.

As he moved past her into the bathroom, she glanced at him and smiled again. The door closed and she began putting them on.

When the author/narrator uses emotional or physical sense verbs (knew, thought, felt, saw, heard, smelled, tasted) he overreaches.

The original passage is 116 words. My scene is 168 words. Which is more interesting and reveals more about the characters?

And that's about all the writing I'm going to do today.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Missing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/missing-2.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 580

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745
Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483
Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537
Day 13... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 458683
Total nonfiction words for the month... 580
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 172266
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 630699

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, December 2](#)

[December 2, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

This morning (to my delight) I was pleased to note James Scott Bell mentioned yours truly in the Kill Zone blog (in "Of Interest"). The article is all about Heinlein's Rules (Heinlein's Business Habits for Writers). Of course, I replied. Couldn't help myself. (grin)

Not a lot else to talk about this morning. It's Sunday, and the outside temperature is perfect.

It's in the mid-40s, so cold enough to stand-up your nerve endings and make you feel very much alive, but not so cold that a grave, by comparison, might feel warm.

Yet another quote:

"Had my books been any worse I would not have been invited to Hollywood and if they had been any better I would not have come." — Raymond Chandler

Now to the novel. Turned out I wrote only one session.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See James Scott Bell's take on "Heinlein's Rules for Writers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/heinleins-rules-for-writers.html>. Oh and please take the time to read my response. (grin)

See "What's it Really Like to Work as a Detective" at <https://www.leelofland.com/what-its-really-like-to-work-as-a-detective/>.

See "Another Fun Run" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/another-fun-run-2/> (pictures).

Just in case some of you might like it, see "Recommended Reading List: November, 2018" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/02/recommended-reading-list-november-2018/>. I believe Kris publishes a similar list each month.

Fiction Words: 1411

Nonfiction Words: 220 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1631

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483

Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537

Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948

Total fiction words for the month..... 1411

Total fiction words for the year..... 460094

Total nonfiction words for the month... 800

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 172486

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 632330

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, December 3

[December 3, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Another good quote: "I am what I am. To look for reasons is beside the point." — Joan Didion

And another one from Chandler:

“I have a sense of exile from thought, a nostalgia of the quiet room and balanced mind. I am a writer, and there comes a time when that which I write has to belong to me, has to be written alone and in silence, with no one looking over my shoulder, no one telling me a better way to write it. It doesn’t have to be great writing, it doesn’t even have to be terribly good. It just has to be mine.” — Raymond Chandler

Amen. Mine. Not mine and some editor’s. Not mine and some publishing company’s. Not mine and some critique group’s. Mine. Mine and then my readers’.

Most, if not all, of the writers who contribute to the Kill Zone blog are traditionally published. Some of them even still refer to traditional publishing as “The Forbidden City.” Both dramatic and telling, that.

Still, I continue to refer you to items from the Kill Zone blog in “Of Interest” from time to time because some of their advice is valuable. When I do, and when you read what they have to offer, keep a salt shaker nearby.

Take what you find valuable and leave the rest. It’s up to you to make that determination.

Topic: Heinlein’s Rules, Revisited

In the “Of Interest” item on Heinlein’s Rules that I mentioned yesterday, the author of the article mentioned “Heinlein was primarily thinking about short stories here, so the act of finishing was an easier task. With a novel, there’s always a moment when you think it stinks.”

In [my original comment](#), I let that pass.

But in his replies to other comments, he more fervently made the same assertion, that “Heinlein was talking about short stories.”

That assertion is dangerous to those who aspire to be professional writers. Professionals who entertain readers with stories.

I have the original essay (and book) in which Heinlein laid out his Business Habits for Writers.

He included them, almost as a seeming afterthought, in an essay in 1947 in a book called *Of Worlds Beyond: The Science of Science Fiction Writing*. There are still copies available.

What have become known as Heinlein’s Rules are deceptively simple yet, in Heinlein’s own words, “they are amazingly hard to follow—which is why there are so few professional writers and so many aspirants.”

I couldn’t ignore the author’s continued erroneous, harmful assertion, especially because it doesn’t even make sense. The myths run deep, and the sooner you learn to ignore them and shove them aside, the more you’ll enjoy writing.

Without assuming I know Heinlein's intent myself (and who would do that?), nowhere in the essay or in the rules themselves did he write or even hint that they are only for short stories. They don't refer to length, but only to the process of writing fiction.

*Let me say that againL Heinlein's Rules don't apply to any particular length of story,
and they don't apply to any particular genre.
They apply, broadly, to those who endeavor to write fiction.*

Now, before anyone jumps on me about that, in the essay, Heinlein does refer specifically to the writing of speculative fiction (that was the topic of the book, after all), but once you've read the "rules," even that assertion falls to the wayside.

A couple of years ago, when I told another writer about Heinlein's Rules, she immediately protested (without reading them) that they would never work for her because she wasn't a writer of speculative fiction. That's just silly. And worse, it's self-defeating.

If I could amend the rules (but who am I to amend something written by such a successful writer?) I would simply add "No matter what fiction you write" to the beginning of each rule. If you want to be a professional fiction writer,

Rule 1. No matter what you write, you must write.

Rule 2. No matter what you write, you must finish what you write.

Rule 3. No matter what you write, you must not rewrite except to editorial demand.

Rule 4. No matter what you write, you must put it on the market.

Rule 5. No matter what you write, you must keep it on the market until it sells.

Again, in Heinlein's own words regarding his Business Habits for Writers, "they are amazingly hard to follow—which is why there are so few professional writers and so many aspirants."

To download your own free copy of Heinlein's Business Habits for Writers, [click here](#). To see more of the original essay (in Heinlein's own words) click <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-thursday-march-8/>.

I rolled out late at 5. I scanned the Internet and wrote much of what appears above, then went up to the house around 6.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 9. But honestly, I piddled away most of the day with some Christmas prep, a few chores, and very little writing. Sounds like I need to crawl back up on Rule 1. Maybe I'll do better tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See “Using Lands and Grooves to Solve Murders” at <https://www.leelofland.com/using-lands-and-grooves-to-solve-murders/>. For once, not a lot of new information here.

See “First Page Critique: The Arthani Prince” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/first-page-critique-the-arthani-prince.html>.

Via The Passive Voice, see “Six Myths (and a Few Facts) About Traditional Publishing” at <http://blog.bookbaby.com/2018/11/six-myths-and-a-few-facts-about-traditional-publishing/>. BookBaby also offers “The Hybrid Author Game Plan,” which you can get at <https://www.bookbaby.com/free-guide/hybrid-author-game-plan>.

Also see “Draft2Digital, Baker & Taylor, and OverDrive” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/draft2digital-baker-taylor-and-overdrive/>.

See “What I’m Working On” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/12/02/what-im-working-on/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Moorhead House” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/03/free-fiction-monday-the-moorhead-house/>. For the few of you who are new to this Journal, Kris Rusch is one of the better fictionists and short story writers out there. Studying her work is always a smart thing to do.

Fiction Words: 1056

Nonfiction Words: 870 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1926

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483

Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537

Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948

Day 14... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 36004

Total fiction words for the month..... 2467

Total fiction words for the year..... 461150

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1670

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 173356

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 634256

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, December 4](#)

[December 4, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I think, having gone to bed early last night and risen early again this morning, I'm finally over whatever funk has mastered me during the past few days. Today should be a good one.

Paraphrasing Dean Wesley Smith from "Of Interest" today, "We need to make our writing process like our reading process. When you're reading and you reach the end of a chapter, do you put the book down and try to figure out where the story's going next? Or do you just keep reading to entertain yourself. Do the same thing with your writing."

From another YouTube video that popped up by a guy who's profiling "prolific" writers in an effort to mine gems on how to increase our productivity:

"The first person I want to look at is Anthony Trollope, a hugely prolific creator. He wrote 47 novels over a 38-year period."

Holy crap. Seriously?

I'm always comparing myself to others. That one made me do some math.

If I could write novels for 38 years (October 2014 through October 2052) at my current average pace (32 novels in 4 years, or 8 novels per year), I will have written 304 novels. That doesn't include novellas or short stories.

And I consider myself a slacker. (grin)

You can find the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdbuA6lByBE>.

Keep learning, and keep pushing yourself to have fun.

In my heyday, I once presented at 18 conferences in one year. If you are invited to speak or otherwise present sessions at writers conferences or conventions, here's some advice from an old guy with tons of experience doing exactly that: When your talk or presentation is finished, don't disappear into your room for any reason. You can rest/recuperate/sleep after the event.

Hang out in the lobby or the lounge between your commitments. Smile and be pleasant no matter how you feel. If you have to be carried out on a stretcher, that's fine. But if you are able to walk out, don't.

Instead, make yourself available to the writers who came to hear you speak and to the readers who might want to meet their favorite author.

Do you "owe" them this face time? No. Or maybe yes. But you definitely owe it to your checking account.

The conscious, critical, protective mind is a beast without a conscience. It comes at me (us) from various angles.

After I viewed the video I talked about in the second and subsequent paragraphs above, a thought popped into my head:

I don't have to write every day. I'm already a prolific writer, especially by that guy's standard. So what harm would it do to slow down a bit and take it easy?

My immediate response? Well, taking a day off wouldn't necessarily do any harm. But then I wouldn't have the fun of writing and playing with the characters in my WIP. Get thee hence, conscious mind! (grin)

To the novel at 5 a.m. A good first session, and to the house for awhile. A good second session, and that's about it for the day.

The writing on this one is going slowly right now. A lot of little twists and turns, and a lot of new characters popping in. Once it settles down, I should be able to blast out a few good days.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Writing into the Dark Speech” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-into-the-dark-speech/>. This is a YouTube video, about 40 minutes. I encourage you to watch. I got something new from it, even though I’ve been WITD for 5 years now.

See “How To Increase Your Daily Word Count — Stop Eating!” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/how-to-increase-your-dailyword-count-stop-eating.html>. Or just, you know, spend more time in the chair. Really, this one is good, including a quote from Lee Child that, I suspect, shot right over the author’s head.

See “Guest Panelist at ChessieCon” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2018/12/04/guest-panelist-at-chessiecon-2/>. In her newsletter, she also offers some great advice re sources for details a character might see in different places. I wish she’d done a blog post on this. I recommend signing up for her newsletter while you’re at the site.

By the way, most of the Raymond Chandler quotes I post here are from https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/1377.Raymond_Chandler. It’s pretty much a free education if you want to learn to write a tough guy “who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid.”

See “Q&A with Megan Engelhardt” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2018/12/04/qa-with-megan-engelhardt/>. Note especially how glad she was that she didn’t pre-judge the poem she wrote that was accepted by Asimov’s. We really are the worst judges of our own work. Submit or publish it and let the readers decide.

Fiction Words: 2160

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2940

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745
Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483
Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537
Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948
Day 14... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 36004
Day 15... 2160 words. Total words to date..... 38164

Total fiction words for the month..... 46277
Total fiction words for the year..... 463310
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 174136
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 637196

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [From Earth to the Stars](#), [Good Reads](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, December 5](#)

[December 5, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Topic: A Realization or Epiphany

Dangerous as it sounds, sometimes I feel as if I've been through it all as a writer.

“Dangerous” because such a feeling is the surest way to stop learning and reach a plateau. Which is to say it's the surest way to death as a writer.

When we reach a plateau, a flattening-out of the attempt to keep learning, little things we've learned but haven't yet tried tend to sift down through the holes and cracks in our knowledge. Without having practiced them, we forget them and have to be reminded.

That's the biggest reason to keep learning and to keep practicing, by which I mean keep putting new words on the page and releasing new stories to the world.

When we stop learning or re-learning and reach that plateau, that's when we're most susceptible to doing other things we find pleasurable. It's the easiest time to stop writing.

Usually the stoppage first manifests as a waning of interest. After all, we've learned and applied everything we believe possible. The writing becomes boring so that it also becomes easier and easier to set aside.

In fiction writing, there's an old saw: When in doubt, have a man come through the door with a gun (Raymond Chandler).

There ought to be another one: When boredom starts to creep in, when every story feels like the previous one, learn something new.

Fortunately, having “been through it all” as a writer includes having been across a plateau and down the other side. It means having been through feeling my stories are flagging and finding a way to dress them up.

In every case, dressing-up my stories means finding something I’ve never applied or haven’t applied in awhile and applying it.

And that means continuing to learn and practice.

I learn by reading or listening to almost anything: Raymond Chandler (or other writers’) quotes; other novels and short stories in the genres that interest me; notes from lectures and workshops I’ve taken in the past; other professional writers’ blogs; or taking notes as I listen to new lectures or workshops, and so on.

I practice by showing up (almost) every day, sitting at my writing desk, putting my fingers on the keyboard, and writing the first (or next) sentence.

And that’s what it all boils down to if you want to avoid death as a writer. Either the death that manifests as wandering across an endless plateau or the one that manifests as abandoning writing altogether:

1. You must continue to learn.
2. You must continue to practice.

And on that note, yet another quote from Raymond Chandler:

“Shakespeare would have done well in any generation because he would have refused to die in a corner; ... If some people called some his work cheap (which some of it was), he wouldn’t have cared a rap, because he would know that without some vulgarity there is no complete man. He would have hated refinement, as such, because it is always a withdrawal, and he was too tough to shrink from anything.” — Raymond Chandler, *Raymond Chandler Speaking*

And one more:

“That’s the difference between a champ and a knife thrower. The champ may have lost his stuff temporarily or permanently, he can’t be sure. But when he can no longer throw the high hard one, he throws his heart instead. He throws something. He doesn’t just walk off the mound and weep.” — Raymond Chandler, *The Raymond Chandler Papers: Selected Letters and Nonfiction 1909-1959*

Got a few good sessions in today. Not a bad day at all.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Every Commercial Writer is His or Her Own Small Business” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/19877.html>. This is a very good article. Of course, I added a comment.

See “Ammunition: Is Your Writing Out of Bullets?” at <https://www.leelofland.com/ammunition-is-your-writing-out-of-bullets/>.

See “Is Crime Fiction Allowed to Be Funny?” at <https://crimereads.com/is-crime-fiction-allowed-to-be-funny/>.

See “How to Write Small Town Crime Fiction” at <https://crimereads.com/how-to-write-small-town-crime-fiction/>.

See “We Got Crazy” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/we-got-crazy/>. I picked up new tips and reminders just from reading the descriptions for the new Pop-Up workshops he’s scheduled.

In case you missed it yesterday, you owe it to yourself to watch Dean’s “Writing into the Dark Speech” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnNYQZbrtDU>. Even as long as I’ve been WITD I picked up a new perspective or two.

Fiction Words: 3684

Nonfiction Words: 730 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4414

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745

Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483

Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537

Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948

Day 14... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 36004

Day 15... 2160 words. Total words to date..... 38164

Day 16... 3684 words. Total words to date..... 41848

Total fiction words for the month..... 8311

Total fiction words for the year..... 466994

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 174866

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 641610

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Thursday, December 6

[December 6, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Tomorrow is Pearl Harbor Day, though I think, sadly, it's no longer taught in schools. Here's a quote for the day:

The carrier Enterprise sailed into Pearl Harbor the day after the attack. Surveying the wreckage from the bridge, Adm. William Halsey could not hide his anger. "When this war is over the Japanese language will be spoken only in hell."

For an excellent article about that fateful day, see <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-japan-failed-pearl-harbor-18638>.

Wow. Remember I released Book 2 of the Nick Spalding series, Transitions, back in November?

One of my donors, a voracious reader, sent me an email late yesterday afternoon. In part it read,

Transitions is in desperate need of a session with spell check. Also, it looks like you hadn't decided whether to indicate some of the distances in yards or meters....

I looked, and of course, he was right. How embarrassing.

I checked my files and realized I had uploaded the wrong version. Of course, I quickly rectified the error.

If any of you received that flawed version, either from me or through a purchase, please [let me know](#) and I'll send the new one free of charge.

On the up side, the reader also wrote

The [Nick Spalding] books are good. They held my attention and the protagonist had my loyalty. But have to say, although I liked these, I love your detective stories and will always compare everything else to them.

Guess I need to write more detective stories. (grin) Good thing I have a dozen in print. Also, fortunately, my WIP comes under that heading.

Good writing day today. Not the best, but it's only a half-day and I stopped in the middle of a fast-moving scene. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "One Helluva Launch" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/one-helluva-launch/>. And condolences to Mrs. PG. Be sure to read the comments there too.

See "Stay Away From Traditional Book Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/stay-away-from-traditional-book-publishing/>. Preaching to the choir indeed, but the choir needs to be reminded on occasion too.

I also direct you back to the last two comments (of 15) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-into-the-dark-speech/#comments>.

See "Would Sir Isaac Newton Reject Your Shooting Scene?" at <https://www.leelofland.com/would-sir-isaac-newton-reject-your-shooting-scene/>.

See "Holiday Food for Thought on Character Conflicts" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/holiday-food-for-thought-on-character-conflicts.html>.

Remember your grain of salt.

See "Business Musings: Generations" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/05/business-musings-generations/>. Be prepared for some politics, but she settles down after awhile.

Fiction Words: 3558

Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3928

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745
Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483
Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537
Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948
Day 14... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 36004
Day 15... 2160 words. Total words to date..... 38164
Day 16... 3684 words. Total words to date..... 41848
Day 17... 3558 words. Total words to date..... 45406

Total fiction words for the month..... 11869
Total fiction words for the year..... 470552
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 175236
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 645538

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, December 7](#)

[December 7, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

An odd start to the morning. I opened my email to find one person had unsubscribed. In the very next email, the subscriber (a regular donor) wrote "Man, The last two issues are worth an extra \$ or so! Thanks."

So I emailed him back to say thanks and ask him what I had done right. (grin)

I wish I had the kind of attitude that would enable me to email the one who unsubscribed and ask her what I did wrong.

When I look up her subscriber account later and see the reason, I hope it's simply "no longer interested" for whatever reason. "Spam" is the worst (and untrue) and "I receive too many emails" is almost as bad.

If you find this Journal useful, entertaining or educational but something about it annoys you to no end, please [email me](#) to let me know that.

I can change anything except the appeal for donations and the display of numbers. But then, both of those come at the end of the email, long after all the important, meaty stuff is over.

One reader of my Pro Writers blog over on my author site a long while back wrote that having the "tags" in the sidebar bugged her. She said she never used them.

So I moved them to the widget across the bottom of the page. They're still available there if a reader wants to click on a particular type of topic (for example, if you want to see everything I've written about Cycling) but they aren't so in-your-face up alongside the post.

Of course, everyone is different. The reader who unsubbed might simply not care for any of it. But if she's a writer who enjoys learning, she's cutting off a rare, valid (if not valuable, to her) resource.

Then again, she might even still be around. Maybe she chose to switch to taking the Journal via RSS instead of email. Or maybe she'd rather check in manually from time to time.

When I do have an unsub, I don't get all anguished over it. I just kind'a wish I knew.

Quote of the day, which I believe is from the television series Outlander:

"There will come a time when you believe everything is finished. Yet that will be the beginning." (Thanks, Sam T.)

Puts me in mind of a great attitude for a writer. When you finish one, start another.

Today I received my Reedsy newsletter, the topic of which was "[Full-time indie author part 3]: The power of series & universes." I can't refer you to a link (the author didn't list one), but he did list the first two in the series, which you can find at

Part I: [How to find your niche.](#)

and

Part II: [Researching and “rapid-releasing” in your niche.](#)

The author also writes “there’s a great video on YouTube of a talk by Michael Anderle at the 20BooksVegas conference that offers some fantastic tips on series writing, and dissects the whole universe philosophy. [Here’s the link.](#)”

Wow. While adding a new post to my author website, I found out WordPress has just made posting a lot more difficult.

Their most recent (suppository) update includes “blocks.” To get back to some semblance of what you’re used to seeing, in the upper right corner of the screen when you go to add a new post, click the Document tab. (It defaults to Blocks.)

I have no idea why every new Business Major who comes down the pike feels the necessity to reinvent a perfectly round, smooth-rolling wheel. Except maybe to justify their salary. Sigh.

Not a big writing day today. The story continues to flow, but there are rocks and many rapids in the stream.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Some Numbers on Income” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-numbers-on-income/>.

See “Ten Tips on Pace & Structure of a Thriller” at <http://jordandane.com/for-writers/ten-tips/>. I don’t agree with everything Ms. Dane has to say, but these are some valid tips.

Via Linda Maye Adams’ newsletter, see “Christmas at the White House” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tM4T4dDOtng>. Enjoy the decorations and your beautiful, gracious First Lady.

Finally, if you’re of a mind, see the very humorous “Christmas PC is Outta Control!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/christmas-pc-is-outta-control/>. I personally love it when a guy rants with his tongue firmly lodged in his cheek.

Fiction Words: 1826

Nonfiction Words: 740 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2566

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745
Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483
Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537
Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948
Day 14... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 36004
Day 15... 2160 words. Total words to date..... 38164
Day 16... 3684 words. Total words to date..... 41848
Day 17... 3558 words. Total words to date..... 45406
Day 18... 1826 words. Total words to date..... 47232

Total fiction words for the month..... 13695
Total fiction words for the year..... 472378
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4290
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 175976
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 648104

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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[The Journal, Saturday, December 8](#)

[December 8, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Not a lot to report today. My son visited and left yesterday to attend a funeral in NM, and today my two sisters-in-law will arrive shortly for a visit.

I wrote for awhile this morning. As has been the case throughout this very twisted mystery/police procedural novel, I did a lot of cycling and added some new words.

It wasn't a great day, but good enough considering it's a Saturday. I also feel as if I'm approaching the end game of this one and maybe dragging my feet a little.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “How To Make Your Novel Seem Real” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/how-to-make-your-novel-seem-real.html>.

See “December Workshops Starting” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/december-workshops-starting/>. Much more than just the workshops.

Fiction Words: 1789

Nonfiction Words: 130 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1919

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2798 words. Total words to date..... 30745
Day 11... 1738 words. Total words to date..... 32483
Day 12... 1054 words. Total words to date..... 33537
Day 13... 1411 words. Total words to date..... 34948
Day 14... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 36004
Day 15... 2160 words. Total words to date..... 38164
Day 16... 3684 words. Total words to date..... 41848
Day 17... 3558 words. Total words to date..... 45406
Day 18... 1826 words. Total words to date..... 47232
Day 19... 1789 words. Total words to date..... 49021

Total fiction words for the month..... 15484
Total fiction words for the year..... 474167
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4420
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 176106
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 650023

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [DeanWesleySmith.com](#), [KillZone Blog](#)

The Journal, Sunday, December 9

[December 9, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

YAY! (grin) Reading “Of Interest” items can be SO valuable in SO many ways!

In reading The Passive Guy’s recent post about troubles with his website, I stumbled across a post that mentions a new WordPress plugin called “Classic Editor,” which apparently enables WordPress users to go back to posting without those ugly, time-consuming “blocks” (Gutenberg).

I also found “Disable Gutenberg.” I installed that one. Then I clicked Add a New Post and voila! my old posting screen was restored in full. I can’t say enough what wonderful news this is.

If you like “blocks” for some things (pages, for example, or posts) that’s fine. You can disable what you don’t want Gutenberg to affect. Or you can disable it entirely.

Happy blogging!

Not sure how I missed this a few days ago. Sometime or other, please revisit Dean’s “Stay Away from Traditional Book Publishing” and read the comments. You can find them at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/stay-away-from-traditional-book-publishing/>.

In other news, I’m understanding more and more the point Dean made to me long ago: Paraphrased, he wrote, “If you try to convince most writers to abandon the search for an agent and actually BE a writer, you’re spinning your wheels. It’s a complete waste of time.”

I posted that as probably the final comment at the above link. I also mentioned the (almost) daily Journal, that it’s mostly an over-the-back-fence chat with friends.

All of that to say I’m glad you’re out there, you who read this stuff. Thanks for being there.

[A few days ago](#), I mentioned a guy (Paul McCarthy) who did a YouTube video about “prolific” writers and the comment I left below the video.

Mr. McCarthy responded to my comment, placed me in the “prolific” column (despite my concerns that in reality I’m a slacker) and asked my advice about productivity for a friend.

Natch, I filled him in, albeit very briefly because I remembered the note Dean sent me a few years back. (grin) But I still hope the guy takes my advice.

I probably won't get a lot of writing done today, if any. My two sisters-in-law are visiting and they're a lot of fun. And I figure since I've officially been labeled "prolific" now (grin) it won't kill me to enjoy the time with them and miss one day of writing.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments on "Some Numbers on Income" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-numbers-on-income/#comments>.

Then see "Straight to Discount" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/straight-to-discount/>. Invaluable.

See "Practical and Science-Backed Self Development Strategies that Actually Work" at <http://warriorhabits.com/>. Interesting site. Explore.

See "Female Serial Killers Unmasked" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/female-serial-killers-unmasked/>.

See "Officer Rudy Kramer and the Hackberry Tree" at <https://www.leelofland.com/officer-rudy-kramer-and-the-hackberry-tree/>.

See "The Writing Books That Helped Me At The Start" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/the-writing-books-that-helped-me-at-the-start.html>.

Fiction Words: 1030

Nonfiction Words: 470 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1560

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 19... 1789 words. Total words to date..... 49021

Day 20... 1030 words. Total words to date..... 50051

Total fiction words for the month..... 16014

Total fiction words for the year..... 474697

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4890

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 176576

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 651023

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, December 10](#)

[December 10, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I had an interesting question re the new Gutenberg “blocks” that WordPress shoved upon us recently. The long and short of it is this:

If your website is hosted on WordPress.COM, you have to pay extra to be able to add plugins to your website. That's one of the things I don't like about WordPress.com. It's “free,” and then they nickle and dime you to death. Same with a lot of the other so-called free providers.

ALSO and more importantly, if your site is hosted on any of those, be absolutely certain to read the terms of service. Closely. On many of them (including WordPress.com) THEY, not You, own the content that's on your website.

If you have a self-hosted website powered by WordPress.ORG on a webhosting provider (I use JustHost, but there are a ton of them out there), YOU own all content.

Just sayin'.

And if any of you need help switching your site over (or building one in the first place), please let me know. I can help, and I'm a LOT less expensive than you can get anywhere else.

Well, it's a mixed-blessing day. My wife just took off with her sisters to visit the Grand Canyon (in the dead of winter yet: groan). So I have a few days during which I can write and shop, watch all my favorite TV shows, etc.

I wrote for only a little over an hour this morning, then went up to the house to spend time with my wife before her sisters showed up.

Then there was the hour-long last-minute frenzy that always happens no matter how well you pack or plan. And finally they were off.

Soon after that I went to the grocery to get a few things I missed yesterday. Then I realized I had to gas up my truck. Then the post office, and by the time I got home, it was almost noon.

Then I decided to write this stuff, file this edition of the Journal, and take the rest of the day to do nothing but spend it with the babies. They all find it a bit odd that their mom isn't here.

Tomorrow I hope to get a good run at my WIP.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For laughs and some great writing, see "Everything Old is New Again" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/everything-old-is-new-again/>.

To get three thrillers free, see "Ethan's Exclusives – Secret Intel, Bonuses and More" at <https://ethanjonesbooks.com/index.php/free-ethan-jones-spy-thrillers/>. I was first turned on to this offer by thriller writer Kevin Tumlinson.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Three Wishes Before a Fire" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/10/free-fiction-monday-three-wishes-before-a-fire-2/>.

See "Attention Those in the Anthology Workshop" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/attention-those-in-the-anthology-workshop/>. Of course, it's not all about that.

From the Grumbling About Agents department, see "Literary agent Selwa Antony ordered to pay author more than half a million dollars" at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-10/selwa-antony-bid-for-extra-royalties-backfires/10600540>.

Fiction Words: 1385

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1835

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 19... 1789 words. Total words to date..... 49021
Day 20... 1030 words. Total words to date..... 50051
Day 21... 1385 words. Total words to date..... 51436

Total fiction words for the month..... 17899
Total fiction words for the year..... 476582
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5340
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 177026
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 653358

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, December 11](#)

[December 11, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Again, nothing much to report. I do want to welcome any new subscribers.

The novel still seems to be approaching the end game, but I thought the same thing around 10,000 words back. (grin) The characters continue to throw twists and turns, none of which I can foresee. It's entertaining as all get-out, but still a little annoying when the ending seems to move two steps farther away for every step I take.

There's a lot of cycling with this one too. Whenever the characters toss in a new twist, it seems to require foreshadowing in one place or another. So I cycle back in the moment and let my characters tweak what they told me earlier.

I spent the whole first session cycling back through and eventually got two good sessions of writing done today.

Just a reminder...

Many believe “cycling” and “editing” and “revising” are all the same thing called by different names.

They aren’t.

When I cycle back through part of the story — either to a specific place to add a bit of foreshadowing or at the beginning of the first session of the day, reading over what I wrote the day before — I’m in my subconscious, creative mind.

If you believe you’re cycling and you hear a critical or negative thought during that process, you aren’t cycling. You’re editing. And chances are, you’re editing some of the originality out of your writing. The conscious mind can only be critical. When you hear a critical or negative voice, walk away from the keyboard for awhile.

Basically, when I “cycle,” my fingers rest on the keyboard in case my characters want to add something as I read. If they do, I let them. But there’s nothing critical or negative about it

“Editing” and “revising” are similar to each other, in that both are done from the conscious, critical mind. In both of those you worry about things. You fret over words and sentences instead of simply letting your characters tell their story.

Some would say, “But what’s wrong with editing the story AFTER I let the characters write it?”

When you tell a story to a friend, if another friend comes in and says, “No, it went like this,” do you enjoy that? Or is the second friend being an intrusive jerk?

The story belongs to the characters. They’re the ones who are living it, so let them tell it. And after they’ve told it, leave it alone. Publish it (or submit it), go back to the keyboard and wait for a new set of characters to tell you another story. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “A Bunch of Workshops Moving to Classic” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-bunch-of-workshops-moving-to-classic/>.

Via Linda Adams, see Margie Lawson’s “Deep Editing, Rhetorical Devices and More” at <https://www.margielawson.com/product/deep-editing-rhetorical-devices-and-more/>. It’s only \$22 and per Linda, valuable. Because it might apply to cycling (creative voice) and pacing and because I’m strong in avoiding the myths, I’ll try this one.

See “Interview with cozy author Leslie Budewitz” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/interview-with-cozy-author-leslie-budewitz.html>.

See “A Brief History of Spy Fiction” at <https://crimereads.com/a-brief-history-of-spy-fiction/>.

Fiction Words: 2029

Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2529

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 19... 1789 words. Total words to date..... 49021

Day 20... 1030 words. Total words to date..... 50051

Day 21... 1385 words. Total words to date..... 51436

Day 22... 2029 words. Total words to date..... 53465

Total fiction words for the month..... 19928

Total fiction words for the year..... 478611

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5860

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 177546

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 655907

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, December 12](#)

[December 12, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I'm a little depressed.

I post regularly here and over on my Pro Writers blog about writing, both Story and Mechanics. I post regular warnings, too, about the endless abyss that is traditional publishing today.

But this little Journal reaches fewer than 100 readers that I know of. Even my “big” Pro Writers blog reaches only several hundred.

Frankly, you who read this Journal have a much better deal. You get a lot more information. That’s why many of the posts on the Pro Writers blog are reprinted topics from the Journal.

Yet every day, as I scour the Internet for items “Of Interest,” I see professional writers lauding the benefits of traditional publishing.

You see those too. Every writer and every would-be writer out there sees them day after day on websites, blogs, and message boards. You see them on social media. They’re everywhere.

Added to that are the untold thousands (or millions) of would-be writers who’ve never published so much as a grocery list. Yet they feel not only qualified but obligated to share advice on writing and publishing.

It boggles the mind. Sometimes it makes me want to hide myself away in a monastery somewhere. If I could find one that would allow me to have my laptop.

Welp, I thought I was finally in the end game of my WIP. By noon, I’d written the final climax and about 2800 words. Now all that’s left is the ending. Feels good.

If you do ever happen to make a donation, please let me know which book or books or series you would like as a thank you (and the format).

I don’t offer these books because I’m the world’s best writer (although I am) but because I make certain assumptions based on my own personality.

For example, when I invest time or money in learning from another writer, I always read some of his or her books. It tells me quickly whether the guy or gal is a Writer who applies what he or she teaches or is just another theoretician.

Natch, I assume those who learn from me would jump at the chance to see whether I have even a clue what I’m talking about. (grin)

If you make a donation but choose not to ask for (or accept) books, I’ll go along, but I won’t pretend to understand.

My bride is due home soon from her short vacation, so I’m going to leave the denouement for tomorrow and finish my WIP then.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For those who haven't seen it here, I recommend "The Most Important Advice I Can Give You About Writing (Seriously)" at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/the-most-important-advice-i-can-give-you-about-writing-seriously/>.

Via the Passive Voice, see "The (Un)Glamorous World of Publishing Revealed" at <http://www.aboutmyjob.com/3049/the-un-glamorous-world-of-publishing-revealed/>.

See "Stay Away From Traditional Book Publishing" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/stay-away-from-traditional-book-publishing/>. I referred to Dean's post a day or two ago, but I like TPG's addenda.

For fun (and to be amazed!) see "The Writer Automaton, Switzerland" at <https://www.chonday.com/15454/the-writer-automaton/>. This very early computer was built in the 1770s.

Via Linda Adams, see "Scientists Have Created A Star Trek-Like Plane That Flies Using 'Ion Thrusters' And No Fuel" at <https://www.iflscience.com/technology/scientists-have-created-a-star-treklke-plane-that-flies-using-ion-thrusters-and-no-fuel/all/>.

See "Basically, it's fun" at <http://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/12/12/basically-its-fun/>.

Fiction Words: 2869

Nonfiction Words: 549 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3418

Writing of Dread (novel, tentative title)

Day 19... 1789 words. Total words to date..... 49021

Day 20... 1030 words. Total words to date..... 50051

Day 21... 1385 words. Total words to date..... 51436

Day 22... 2029 words. Total words to date..... 53465

Day 23... 2869 words. Total words to date..... 56334

Total fiction words for the month..... 22797

Total fiction words for the year..... 481480

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6400

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 178086

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 659316

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 9

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 35

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Note: *This Journal and my Pro-Writers blog* will always be free and are funded only by your gracious contributions. To make a one-time donation, click the Donate button under the clock at the top of the Journal page. If you'd like to become a patron, click [Patronage](#) and have a look at the rewards. If you can't make a monetary donation, please consider sharing this post with your friends. Thanks!

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, December 13

[December 13, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the would-be novel previously (and tentatively) titled Dread is now finished and titled Situation Solved. It's a hard-nosed police procedural mystery. It came in at 58,000 words. See the numbers below.

I completed the "second draft" (spell check) in about ten minutes and it's now winging its way through the ether to my first reader, a retired Tucson police detective. She's also a woman, which helps since my protagonist this time around is a woman. (grin)

Topic: On (My) Manners

A few days ago I mentioned that when you are invited to present sessions at a writers conference or convention, you should not disappear into your room after your session. Instead, you should make yourself available to those who attended. After all, they attended at least in part to see you.

It always pays to respect others, and especially those who go out of their way to respect you. It pays in your own sense of self-worth, your reputation with others, and sometimes even monetarily.

Yesterday, I received a comment (on the Journal) that alarmed me. The commenter, who is also a long-time friend, said he'd commented several times and that I hadn't responded.

I've since cleared that up with him. But let me 'splain. As I wrote in an email to that friend,

Your question about me responding intrigued me. It annoys me when I take time to comment on a post and the writer doesn't reply. For that reason, I value those who take time to comment on my posts. So I reply to (almost) every comment I allow through.

That being said, it floored me that my friend hadn't seen my replies to his comment. But that's something over which I have no control.

If you have commented on a post, the only way to see my response is to go back to the post a little later (say, the next day), scroll to the bottom and check. There, more than likely, you will see my response.

If you comment via email, of course I'll respond via email.

I appreciate each of you. Please don't ever believe I'll leave you hanging when you reach out to shake my hand.

I also received an email from another long-time friend from back in my poet days. In part, she wrote

My god, Harvey: 200 short stories, 31 collections, 35 novels, 2 books in one series, 10 westerns, 9 pulp fictions! When, dear man, do you have time to sleep?

Never passing up an opportunity to teach (grin), I replied

Honestly, I write (on average) about 4 hours per day, including breaks. The rest of the day I do chores, watch TV, read or whatever. (grin) When I'm writing a novel and I get my teeth deep into a good storyline, I generally write 3000 (average) to 6000 words in sessions of about 1000 words each. (That's only 17 words per minute.) I "cycle back" about every thousand words as I go, always in creative mind, and when I've finished, I've finished. My "second draft" is the spell check. (grin)

I also talked briefly about writing short stories, and about my poetry collections and nonfiction titles.

Seriously, folks, it really is that easy. If you want to write, you have to start. Sit in your chair, put your fingers on the keyboard, and let the story come through.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Mentor Program" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/mentor-program/>. If you want to be a successful long-term writer, I can't urge strongly enough that you seriously consider this. It's an absolutely incredible opportunity.

See "Business Musings: Sales People, Hype Machines, Big Fish, And The Music Man" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/12/business-musings-sales-people-hype-machines-big-fish-and-the-music-man/>.

See “Test Your Knowledge: Traffic Stops, Lights, and Officer Safety” at <https://www.leelofland.com/test-your-knowledge-traffic-stops-lights-and-officer-safety/>.

See “Bestseller: A Self-Publishing Podcast” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/podcast>.

Fiction Words: 1713

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2273

Writing of Situation Solved (novel)

Day 19... 1789 words. Total words to date..... 49021

Day 20... 1030 words. Total words to date..... 50051

Day 21... 1385 words. Total words to date..... 51436

Day 22... 2029 words. Total words to date..... 53465

Day 23... 2869 words. Total words to date..... 56334

Day 24... 1713 words. Total words to date..... 58047 (done, averaging 2418 words per day)

Total fiction words for the month..... 24510

Total fiction words for the year..... 483193

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6960

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 178646

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 661589

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#),

[Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Friday, December 14

[December 14, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Topic: On Challenges (It's That Time of Year)

In Dean's post today (see "Of Interest") he's talking about restarting his challenge on January 1 to write 10 novels in 100 days.

His plan is to write 10 50,000 word novels in that time. It will "stretch" him (and hence, be a challenge) because he isn't sure he can write 5,000 words per day consistently for 100 days.

I'm considering joining him in that challenge, but with a twist. I would write 10 novels in 100 days, but probably in a particular world, so a series. Or maybe two.

I recently received some great kudos on [my detective/PI mystery fiction](#). The "world" surrounding that fiction is somewhat dark and seething with seedy characters and unseen danger.

Another world in which I enjoy writing is the military/paramilitary (mercenary) war environment. Nothing says love like a bombed-out building or a collapsing bridge. (grin)

Yet another is the period western (or the period SF), in which the world is huge, new, and riddled with possibilities for conflict.

And there are other worlds on the edge of my mind, like the "future-Earth" world in which [In the Siberian Fields](#) and [The Claim](#) are situated. Still a lot to do there, and some of the possibilities overlap with the war stuff above.

Between now and January 1, I'll give some thought to which world I want to write in.

Then, if I participate in the challenge, I'll endeavor to write 10 novels in 100 days. In a few of those worlds, previous novels have come in at around 40,000 words.

This would be a stretch (a challenge) for me because for the past few years my daily production comes out to around 3,000 words per day. To succeed at this challenge I would have to turn out 4,000 words per day on average.

Can I do that? Of course. There's no question I can write 4,000 words per day. The question is whether I can do so for 100 days straight (on average). (grin)

I encourage you to consider jumping into this (or a similar) challenge yourself. Especially if you need to jumpstart your writing or increase your production or just add to the titles you have out there.

More titles means more discoverability, more sales and more success as a writer.

And of course, I also fully expect to turn out one more novel BEFORE January 1. (grin) No reason to waste the 18 days left between now and the new year.

And really, it's only 16 days. I'll probably want to take Christmas and New Year's Eve off. The former for obvious reasons, and the latter to give me a day of rest before I begin the challenge. And it's only 15 days if I don't start a new novel today. (grin)

Still easily doable though. Plus it'll give me some practice at hitting 4,000 word days before I start the challenge. I suspect I'll need to adjust my day again a little. Maybe go to bed an hour earlier and get up an hour earlier. Then spend no more than an hour on morning stuff before I start writing for the day.

We'll see how it goes. (grin) I'm very excited to realize I could have 37 novels by year-end and 47 novels 100 days later, on April 10.

For those of you who are into numbers, if I can pull off my challenge, in the first 100 days of 2019, I will have written 400,000 words of fiction.

By comparison, from January 1 through December 13 in 2018, I wrote just over 480,000 words of fiction. (grin)

Onward!

Rolled out at 3:30 and spent the first 2+ hours writing the above and a similar post on the Pro Writers blog (for release on December 18) over at HarveyStanbrough.com. Then I spent a couple hours up at the house before returning to the Hovel.

I didn't start writing until 9, but I had a great day on the new novel. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

There are still two (of three) spots left in Dean's "Mentor Program." See <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/mentor-program/#comments>.

See "How to Think About a Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-to-think-about-a-challenge/>.

See "Defining Your Characters: 150+ Character Mannerisms" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/characters-mannerisms/>.

See "What Makes a Compelling Romance Novel?" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/compelling-romance-novel/>.

See "The Power of Series" at <https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=13026cbe4253ebdc8419567b4&id=a15d73fba7>. This is an archived copy of a newsletter from Reedsy.

See “Create Fast, Free, Festive Images in Seconds with PhotoFunia” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/create-fast-free-festive-images-in-seconds-with-photofunia/>.
NOTE: The large green oval “start” buttons have nothing to do with PhotoFunia. They’re there to scam you into downloading other things.

Fiction Words: 4917

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5677

Writing of “Cazadores” (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917

Total fiction words for the month..... 29427
Total fiction words for the year..... 488110
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7720
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 179406
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 667266

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, December 15](#)

[December 15, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. My fiction number was so good yesterday it almost scared me off. (grin) Then I calmed down.

I'm also practicing with what's left of this month and year to write 4,000 words per day. So far, I have almost 1000 words in the bank. Not too shabby.

The third novel in the Nick Spalding action-adventure romantic-suspense series released this morning. If you're interested, you can find it at <http://harveystanbrough.com/coincidence/>.

Topic: Pet Peeves That Matter

Pet peeves — you know, those little flaws and inanities that grind away on the nerves and cause me to close novels and put them in the Goodwill box?

They're horrible. Mostly because they keep me from continuing to read what otherwise might be a good story.

I don't look for problems while I'm reading. I just read for pleasure. Like any other reader, when I buy a book, I automatically suspend my sense of disbelief. All the writer has to do is not put it back in place. Especially with a suppository.

I want to be transported to the writer's fictional world and I want to enjoy the experience. I don't want my conscious mind engaged with obvious problems.

But when I've been interrupted the second or third time, especially with the same problem, I'm done.

Sometimes the problem is large. Continual misspellings and typos, for example. But sometimes it boils down to a repeated wrong usage. One that displays the linguistic ignorance of the writer.

But hey, kicked-out of a story is still kicked-out, no matter the reason. And often it's the little things that kick me out of a story.

So I guard against those in my own writing, and I pass my thoughts on them along so maybe other writers will guard against them too.

In every case, it is the writer's responsibility to hold the reader's interest. Or looking at it in the negative, it's the writer's responsibility not to drive the reader away.

The particular pet peeves for this time are those annoying little signs that the writer doesn't know the difference between a noun and an adjective.

When I read "She slipped into the backseat" it drives me nuts. Same thing with "He went into the backyard."

When you write “backyard” or “backseat” as a single word, it’s an adjective. It should be followed with a noun (the one that it describes), such as “backyard garden” or “backyard swingset” or “backseat driver.”

When you use those words to indicate a certain location, they become a two-word phrase. So it would be the “back yard” or the “back seat.”

Other similar words and phrases include “sometime” and “some time.” I’m sure you can think of many others.

For some folks, it might take some time to understand this. But sometime or other, they’ll get it if they’re just a little diligent. (grin)

Another problem, and one less easy to catch (hence the need for a first reader and/or a copyeditor) are homophones.

When I read “He slipped his arm around her waste,” (waist) I’m done. Likewise when a rancher goes into town to buy some “hey” (hay) for his horses. Likewise when a character says “Everything will be alright” (all right).

That last one might not bother me if it’s used in a more appropriate context. For example, (the character quickly dusts his palms against each other and says), “Alright, we’re done here.” Or in dialect, having concluded a bit of distasteful business in southern Louisiana, says “A’ight t’en,” and walks away. (grin)

Some will argue that many readers wouldn’t notice or catch a misuse such as those above. My take is, knowing the difference is part of the craft of writing. And why risk it?

Well, I’ll have to get used to adjusting my morning ritual. I rolled out a little early and was in the Hovel by 2. But I hit a snag.

When Coincidence released, I went to view the book. And frankly, the blurb was stupid. So I rewrote it.

Then I uploaded it to Smashwords, D2D, and Amazon, then uploaded the whole thing to BundleRabbit (can’t do pre-orders there). And that took up the whole first hour, which I had hoped to spend on searching for items of interest, etc.

Of course, that “emergency” won’t arise every day. So I’ll try the new revised morning schedule starting tomorrow. Testing — that’s what this December transition period is all about. (grin)

I did do the “Of Interest” thing, of course, and then took a break at 4.

Back in the Hovel at 4:20, and I wrote the little topic above. Then I decided to cross-post it to the Pro Writers blog. It will appear there in late February.

So I finally got to the novel at 5. (grin)

I wrote for a couple of hours with only a short break, then took another longer break. My wife and I are planning a trip to Sierra Vista today.

Up at the house, I told her I'd like to write for another hour or so and she was amenable. Then I got back out here and realized that isn't what it's supposed to be.

This morning's SNAFU was my own fault for not having the blurb right for my book in the first place. And my take is that when I make a mistake, I, not she, should pay for it. So I'm calling it a day at almost 2000 words.

I guess that'll teach me to be all happy when I have a thousand words in the bank. (grin) Besides, I still have the rest of December to practice.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments (other than mine) on "How to Think About a Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-to-think-about-a-challenge/#comments>. Some great stuff.

See "Various Stuff" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/various-stuff/>. Especially the last paragraph about gift boxes closing soon.

See "The Organ Recital" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/the-organ-recital.html>.

Fiction Words: 1873

Nonfiction Words: 990 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2863

Writing of "Cazadores" (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917

Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790

Total fiction words for the month..... 31300

Total fiction words for the year..... 489983

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8710

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 180396

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 670129

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, December 16](#)

[December 16, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Quote of the day (to consider, on distractions):

“...email [is] an infinite hamster wheel powered by other people’s priorities.” — Jake Knapp on Medium (see “Of Interest”)

And another: “...write excellent books. That’s the only ironclad, long-tail secret to a career.” — James Scott Bell (see “Of Interest”)

And one more: “Don’t let *being* a writer interfere with actually writing.” — John Gilstrap (see “Of Interest”)

Just in case seeing my own reckoning with this “test” of December might help you, I’ll lay it out here each day in detail (when the detail matters).

I rolled out just after 2. By 2:20 I was in the Hovel with my coffee, and by 4 I’d read and posted the items in “Of Interest” below. Sigh. Still long over the “hour” I’d planned for. And to the house for a short break.

Back to the Hovel at 4:10. Although this “one hour” rule is more important for the weekends (so I can spend non-writing time with my wife and babies) I’m going to continue it through the upcoming week in order to fine-tune it. I’m trying to build a new habit, after all.

And another thought occurred: Sometimes it takes less than an hour to find items of interest and sometimes longer. To give myself more writing time in the uninterrupted morning hours, I might consider moving that necessarily fluid “one hour” to the end of my writing day just before I post the Journal.

Finally to the novel at 4:20. I wrote for a little while, then realized I hadn't started a reverse outline. Those things are invaluable, especially as I realized this might be the introductory novel for a series. (grin)

So I stopped, read back through what I've already written, and started my reverse outline. With a little over a thousand words on the day and the reverse outline started, I headed to the house for a break at 6:30.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 7:30.

After another thousand words, I took a break, then back to the Hovel at 9:30.

At 11:15, I decided to call it a day. I'm stopping short of my noon deadline and short of my planned-for 4000 words, but that's all right. It's early in the retraining process and I'm happy with my progress. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Turn Browsers Into Buyers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2018/12/turn-browsers-into-buyers.html>. To skip the self-promo, scroll down to "So let's talk a bit about marketing...."

See "Book tours and signings and such" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2011/06/book-tours-and-signings-and-such.html>.

See "Meet the Safecracker of Last Resort" at <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/12/professional-safecracker-reveals-his-craft/577897/>. A lot of story (and research) ideas here.

See "How a Dubious Forensic Science Spread Like a Virus" at <https://features.propublica.org/blood-spatter-analysis/herbert-macdonell-forensic-evidence-judges-and-courts/>. (I also emailed this one to Lee Lofland of The Graveyard Shift blog.)

Via The Passive Voice, see "Six Years With a Distraction-Free iPhone" at <https://medium.com/s/story/six-years-with-a-distraction-free-iphone-8cf5eb4f97e3>.

Fiction Words: 3453

Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3943

Writing of "Cazadores" (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917

Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790

Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243

Total fiction words for the month.....	34753
Total fiction words for the year.....	493436
Total nonfiction words for the month...	9200
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	180886
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	674072
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, December 17](#)

[December 17, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I rolled out a little before 2 this morning and was in the Hovel by 2 to start my day.

I haven't explained for awhile why I run such "odd" hours, and we've had several new folks join us in following this Journal.

For me, my hours aren't odd at all. It's a matter of balancing writing time with family time, chores, etc.

We all have 24 hours in each day, and we all have physical bodies. So the first basic division of our time is between Sleep and Living.

I don't personally care for sleep, and I don't like that I have to sleep. Being inert is not living. The sleeping human has no more impact on the world than does a rock or a twig fallen from a tree.

So for me, sleep is the least important aspect of life, but after food, water and shelter, it's also the only true requirement. I have to sleep (grudgingly) so I can function adequately while I'm awake and living.

But regardless of others' expectations, when I sleep and what I do with my waking (living) hours is up to me.

So I prioritize.

Back when I started this schedule, we had cable TV. There were literally hundreds of channels, yet far fewer well-written, intelligent shows than we had when there were only three channels.

So I decided to put myself into the Little Death (sleep) earlier and give myself more quiet, possibly productive time while the rest of the world was asleep.

And here I am at (now) 3:15 a.m., having found items for the “Of Interest” section and having written this much of the Journal.

Now I’m headed to the house for a brief break.

At 3:25, I’m back in the Hovel and headed to the novel. Sometimes the story doesn’t come as smoothly. Sometimes I have to wait for it. On those days (like today) I cycle back through to get myself back into the story. I read and I piddle, adding this and that.

It would be easy, on days like this, to just not write. But as long as I’m in the chair and engaging with the story, most of the time it comes.

That’s what I’m doing this morning. At a little after 5 (including another short break up to the house) I’ve added only about 300 words to the manuscript.

This one is a little different than my usual novel, too. The subtitle is “Chapters from the Life of a Fixer,” and each chapter is a self-contained short story ranging from 1200 words to (so far) 5000 words. I’m pretty sure I said once before I wouldn’t do this again, yet here I am.

This one is also an “origin” novel, setting up what I hope might be a series. The series will be told from the points of view of various “operatives” from an organization called Blackwell Ops.

Aaaargggh! Well, the writing finally broke free. Then, with a little over 2000 words done, I went up to the house at about 8 to change clothes and get some breakfast. I’d started a load of laundry a little earlier.

I should have known better. I came back to the Hovel and wrote a little more, then went back to the house to put the first load of laundry in the dryer and the second load in the washer.

Only on my way into the kitchen to make another cup of coffee, I looked up and realized I needed to take out the recycling. The cardboard stuff was overflowing.

But while my coffee was brewing and before I took care of the recycling, I made a quick visit to the bathroom. Which reminded me I needed to repair the part in the tank that drops to seal the tank so it can fill. Otherwise it just keeps running.

So I jury-rigged that (took almost an hour) and completely blanked the recycling and my coffee. I was headed out the door when the dryer shut off. The first load of laundry was dry.

Well, I was standing right there, so I folded the first load and put it away, then put the second load in the dryer. Then I remembered the recycling.

So I took that out, tore down the cardboard so it would lay flat in the drums, and took the recycling box back in.

While I was there, I cleaned the lint trap, then reset the dryer. (The second load was heavy stuff. It takes two cycles to dry.) I remembered the coffee, but by then it was cold, so I dumped it and opted for water instead.

And finally, I went back to the Hovel. It's now 11 a.m. Sigh. One of those days. (grin)

All the “stuff” that happened today made me determined to reach my goal. So overall, a good day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “New Pop-Up Available” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-pop-up-available/>. “Remaining Focused” — All about setting goals and challenges. This should be a good one.

See “The Measures That Matter” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-measures-that-matter/>. For my money, the safest course is to STAY AWAY from any publisher to whom you have to pay money to publish your work. Paying an up front fee for SERVICES (editing, covers, etc.) is legitimate as long as they know what they're doing and don't require you to share your royalties with them. Period.

See “Pay-to-Play Publishing” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/pay-to-play-publishing/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Last Christmas Letter” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/17/free-fiction-monday-the-last-christmas-letter/>.

See “A gender-neutral Santa with tattoos? Survey gauges how to rebrand St. Nick” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-gender-neutral-santa-with-tattoos-survey-gauges-how-to-rebrand-st-nick>. Sigh. I have officially lived too long.

See “Dictionaries chose 3 different words of the year for 2018” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/dictionaries-chose-3-different-words-of-the-year-for-2018/>. I personally suspect if all men were masculine and all women were feminine, there would not be a “discourse over masculinity.”

Fiction Words: 4191

Nonfiction Words: 980 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5171

Writing of “Cazadores” (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917

Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790

Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243

Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434

Total fiction words for the month..... 38944

Total fiction words for the year..... 497627

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 181866

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 679243

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, December 18](#)

[December 18, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. I stayed up to watch about 3/4 of the football game last night. It was difficult to watch the Saints pitted against both the Panthers and the referees (grin), so I finally gave up.

But by then it was late. I couldn't sleep, so I stayed up even later and didn't roll out this morning until almost 5. Ugh. So a late start to the day.

No Internet in the Hovel this morning, so I did the preliminary “Of Interest” stuff and this bit of the Journal up at the house with my first cup of coffee.

Excerpted from Linda Maye Adams' newsletter:

“For years, I wondered exactly how you could be on a panel at a con. ... I didn’t know you could ask, and when I did, I appeared at Chessiecon. ... [F]ind the con you want ... and submit 3-4 workshop topics, including one that hits your research specialties, [one that addresses the topic of the con, for example] science fiction, and [one that addresses] writing.”

Good advice. You can find Linda’s blog and sign up for her newsletter at <https://lindamayeadams.com/>.

For what it’s worth, the Kill Zone blog is on a two-week hiatus, to return on January 1. Ironically, the farewell advice was to “keep writing.” (grin)

Finally to the Hovel at 9, where I initially continued my morning prep. Another late start to the day.

I thought it might be interesting to see how it all turned out, but in the end it wasn’t interesting at all. Today was a no-starter. No fiction writing at all. Fortunately, that doesn’t happen to me very often. But hey, it happens, and if I’m gonna share, I want to share warts and all.

The story itself is fine, sitting there waiting for me to go at it again. No issues there. I’m not “stuck” or anything like that. I’ve had a couple of rough days on matters not related to writing. I think I just need to regroup.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “A Post Very Much Worth Reading” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-post-very-much-worth-reading/>. Follow the link in Dean’s post, then scroll down to “The Hero’s Dead-End Journey.” Worth the effort.

See “Relax, It’s Just a Story” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2018/12/18/relax-its-just-a-story/>. Basically, he makes Bradbury’s point that an SF story is not about the science or the tragedy or the Utopia but how the characters REACT to those things.

See “Children in Need of Services ... and Love” at <https://www.leelofland.com/children-in-need-of-services-and-love/>.

As reported by Kevin Tumlinson, to get some FREE 5-star rated thriller novels from now through Dec 30, click <https://philwbooks.com/five-star-thrillers/>.

Reedsy has developed a new pen-name generator. You can see it at <https://blog.reedsy.com/pen-name-generator/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 420 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 420

Writing of “Cazadores” (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 38944
Total fiction words for the year..... 497627
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10600
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 182286
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 679663

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, December 19](#)

[December 19, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

J. L. Parker left a myth-riddled comment on Dean’s post about traditional publishing a few days ago (see the second item in “Of Interest”).

Dean addressed a couple of points in his response. But J. L. also wrote “if you want your book available in book stores and libraries as well as online ... [you] have to go the traditional route.”

This is the kind of misinformation that drives me crazy and can send untold numbers of writers awry. So in response, I left the following comment:

For J. L., I can also say recently a LOT of my fiction and nonfiction sales have been through Biblioteca and other library resources. And all of my books are indie published. (My first two nonfiction books were traditionally published. The best deal I got back then was a 10% royalty and a short run. I'll never go back.)

Today, I get royalty statements every month (minimum 70%). I get about 1/4 of my writing income through Amazon, about 1/4 (currently) through library sales, and the other half from booksellers both in America and around the world through Kobo, B&N, Apple, Tolino, Overdrive and others.

So it's not only possible but actually happening, even as dozens or hundreds or thousands of would-be writers sit on their hands waiting for a traditional contract.

Folks, the truth is, traditional publishing can give you NOTHING that you can't get as an indie publisher except a nominal advance, and even that only happens when lightning strikes.

More importantly, taking an advance in exchange for selling all rights to the publisher for the life of the copyright is just flat-out stupid.

Just don't do it.

Topic: Traditional vs. Indie Publishing: A Brief Comparison

I've had two books (my first two nonfiction titles) traditionally published. The best royalty rate I received was 10%. I will never go back to traditional publishing.

Frankly, indie publishing is so wonderful I honestly don't understand why ANYone is still pursuing agents and traditional publication.

The Traditional Publishing Route:

You write a book, then sit on your hands while you rabidly pursue agents, eventually (maybe) find one, then endure endless rewrites until you've polished all the originality off your story.

The agent you've unfortunately found lands a publisher (maybe), and you endure more rewrites.

Eventually, if the publisher finally gives you a contract in exchange for all rights for the life of the copyright, your book is scheduled for release three-to-five (or so) years after you wrote it.

Of course, you receive an advance (maybe), of which your agent takes 15%. And your book appears all over America, mostly in the (now-failing) Barnes & Noble stores.

Then the marketing begins, at your publisher's behest. Yes, you, not they, do the marketing.

But hey, at least you've "made it." If you're more concerned with landing a New York publisher than you are with writing, you should probably quit now and save yourself some heartache down the line.

Or, you can go The Indie Publishing Route:

You write a book, publish it, and start your next book.

Your book is distributed by D2D and Smashwords. It appears all over America and in every other continent on Earth, including Europe, Africa, Central and South America, and the Far East. All within a week or so.

You finish your second book, publish it, and start your next book.

Following that discipline, say you write only four novels per year. (Writing four 60,000-word novels per year means you're averaging 658 words per day over that year, yet most will consider you "prolific.")

When your traditionally published contemporary's first novel is released in three years, she will have written and published one novel. You will have written and published twelve novels.

If her traditionally published novel is released five years after she wrote it, she still will have written one novel. You will have written twenty.

As a bonus, during that three-to-five year period while your traditionally published counterpart is sitting on her writing hands, you've been learning and practicing your craft. While her writing skills atrophy, yours are growing and improving.

And five years after publication of her one book, she might have earned out her advance and begun receiving her tiny royalty (4-10%), paid semiannually or annually (if at all). And of course, her agent still takes 15%.

In the meantime, your books have been earning a steady 70-80% royalty every time you sell one from the first book you released through the last.

Any questions? Seriously, if you have any questions or comments, please share them with me. I'll respond. I promise.

I caught up on some much-needed sleep last night. Basically I crashed and burned for close to ten hours. Very unusual for me.

Still, another slow start to the day, mostly because of the stuff above. Totally worth it.

It's almost 6 a.m. as I write this. Soon I'll take a break up to the house, then return for the writing day.

I started writing at 9:30, and with a few breaks in between I wrote 2500 words by a little after noon. Then a longer break to the post office.

Turns out one of the segments I'm writing as part of this novel wants to be a novel on its own. (grin) I've had short stories that popped out of novels before, but this is the first time I've had a novel come out of another novel.

Well, I fell a little short today. I could have hit 4000 words, but if I had I'd have been forcing myself to do so. And that isn't my goal.

My goal beginning January 1 is to write 4000 words (on average) per day, but they have to be during the normal course of writing, not forced. I'd rather "fail" at the challenge than suck the fun out of it.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Last Hours On Two Things" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/last-hours-on-two-things/>. In this, Dean mentions one comment in an older post he did. That post is listed below.

See the (82) comments on "Stay Away From Traditional Book Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/stay-away-from-traditional-book-publishing/#comments>. (The comment he mentions above is by J. L. Parker.)

Via Linda Maye Adams, see "What if Somebody Steals Your High Concept Book Idea?" at <https://annerallen.com/2018/12/high-concept-book-idea-protection/>. I don't often mention Anne R. Allen here because she's so often dangerously wrong. But she makes a few valid points here. Just bring along your salt shaker.

See "Stuff it in Your Underwear, and Other Details to Add Sizzle to Your Tale" at <https://www.leelofland.com/stuff-it-in-your-underwear-and-other-details-to-add-sizzle-to-your-tale/>.

Fiction Words: 3527

Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4557

Writing of Cazadores (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... 3527 words. Total words to date..... 17961

Total fiction words for the month.....	42471
Total fiction words for the year.....	501154
Total nonfiction words for the month...	11630
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	183316
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	684220
Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date.....	10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date.....	11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily Journal Tags Dean Wesley Smith , Lee Lofland , Linda Maye Adams , Professional Writer Series , the writing life	

[The Journal, Thursday, December 20](#)

[December 20, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Very strange goings on here at the Stanbrough Camp for Odd People.

Two days ago, I didn't write any fiction at all. The story was there, but I wasn't.

Yesterday, I stopped a few hundred words short of 4,000 because I just ran out of steam. My fingers were beginning to hit the wrong keys.

Today, just before noon, I had 4,967 words and was NOT out of steam.

Part of it's because the story is really flowing. And the part I finished today is a novellette at 9500 words. It's the story that wants to be a novel. It might someday, but it won't be one of the 10 novels I plan to write during the first 100 days of 2019. (grin)

Anyway, then I wrote the stuff below. Now I'm going back to the novel for one more (probably short) session. I want to at least get a new section started so I can leave a ragged end. Then I'm done for the day.

And a very good day (for me) it's been.

We've had two new subscribers join us in the past two days. Well, maybe three, but two new email addresses (grin).

Welcome to Sean and Carolyn and Steve. (You know, IF that's their real names. You know how writers are. grin)

For you new folks, I don't often have 4000+ word days. If you look at my numbers below the current WIP (left column) you'll see that the numbers are all over the place.

I'm using the current novel to practice so I can get myself up to speed to write ten 40,000+- word novels during the first 100 days of 2019.

And for goodness' sake, don't let any of my nonsense about numbers intimidate you or bother you. Just Write and keep it fun and you're well ahead of the game. Whatever the game is.

A kind of neat quote:

“I had always carried the intrinsic suspicion that Los Angeles is a concrete collision between fiction and reality.” — Nicolas Obregon on why L.A. and its crime fiction still grips us.

Sounds to me like a good reason to write more of it. Just sayin'.

A Dog Tale: Puppy Jail and Writing

About an hour ago I was writing along just fine when my chihuahua exploded.

I hadn't heard the UPS guy come up (that'll set him off) and I hadn't heard the trash truck (that happens on Mondays). Now, when my chihuahua barks, he sounds like a rottweiler who's standing right behind you.

His entire body literally leaves the ground. And even when I'm out here in the Hovel (about 200 feet away) with the door closed, I can hear him plainly. It's hard to write through that.

So I went outside to see what he was barking at.

Turns out, the friendly neighborhood vet was visiting at the corral to take care of the hooves of my neighbor's horses.

Yeah, that's all. And my doglet was going nuts.

So I went to the yard and told him to stop barking. (You know how well that worked.)

So I put him in the house and closed the door.

As soon as I was out through the gate, he started barking again.

I was afraid he might shatter the windows (he really is that loud), so I went back to the house and told him to go to bed. He sleeps in a kennel.

He bargained with me, ran into the bedroom and flopped himself on a big pillow on the floor.

So I said, “Okay,” (pointing at him) “but if you start again, you’re going to bed.

Soon as I was out of the gate.

Now, his kennel is in my wife’s office, but that was fitting. After all, the lady cats were in the bedroom watching all the drama, and I saw no reason to punish them for his transgression by closing him (and them) in the bedroom.

So I went back in, picked him up, and carried him to Puppy Jail. It still his kennel, but since it’s in my wife’s office (not the bedroom) it’s a kind of solitary confinement.

Then for good measure, I closed the door to my wife’s office.

No more barking. I went back to the Hovel and the novel.

About an hour later, it was time for a break, so I peeked outside.

The vet was gone, so I ambled up to the house again singing “Time to let the Casey out the Puppy Jail.”

He was thrilled to hear it, and when I let him out, he looked at me as if he’d been locked away for 25 to life.

I went to my business computer to send my wife an email to tell her what I’d done, and guess what?

The instant he got outside, his inner rottweiler came out again and he started barking. At absolutely nothing.

So I gave up and came back out here. Sigh.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “List of Classic Workshops and Lectures” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/list-of-classic-workshops-and-lectures/>.

See “Business Musings: I Had No Life (The December Process Blog)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/19/business-musings-i-had-no-life-the-december-process-blog/>.

See “The First Step Act ... and Second Chances” at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-first-step-act-and-second-chances/>.

For last week’s Reedsy newsletter on marketing, see <https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=13026cbe4253ebdc8419567b4&id=193f9690d4>.

The Reedsy newsletter that came in today is titled “[Series marketing Part 2]: The #1 mistake authors make with ads.” I STRONGLY urge you to visit <https://www.reedsy.com> and sign up for their newsletter. I won’t always remember, a week after the fact, to pass along what they wrote the week before.

Fiction Words: 5534

Nonfiction Words: 920 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6454

Writing of Cazadores (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... 3527 words. Total words to date..... 17961
Day 6..... 5534 words. Total words to date..... 23495

Total fiction words for the month..... 48005
Total fiction words for the year..... 506688
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 184236
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 690674

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, December 21](#)

[December 21, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

If you're part of Draft2Digital, yesterday you received a very nice Christmas poem from them.

I always find it interesting when a company does something they don't "have" to do. D2D didn't have to send out that holiday greeting. After all, it went out (at least via email) only to those who are already signed up. It isn't even on their blog.

To see the poem, click [This Link](#).

D2D is a vibrant young innovative distribution company, still at the stage where they actually care about writers. If you aren't using D2D yet, I hope you'll jump on board.

In "Of Interest" there are a couple of posts from a company called Asian Efficiency. The more I read, the more I suspect some folks will be "offended" at that name.

Silly. Saying they can help writers be "Asian efficient" is a compliment to those of Asian descent. Anyway, I recommend you check it out.

I no longer watch the propaganda that passes for news in this country, and I'm on Social Media a lot less than I used to be (like almost never) so I've kind of insulated myself from the nonsense.

Actually, my kitten taught me that. One day I realized, no matter who's in power, she simply continues being who she is, continues to improve herself and live her life, and doesn't fret over things she can do nothing about. I'm totally on board with that.

A Topic, Sort Of

A day or two ago, I received an email from a long-time friend. He wondered whether sometimes (maybe) it's all right for writers to assign human traits to human parts: e.g., "His nose pressed up against the window" or "Her legs raced down the street" or "His eyes flew around the document." Things like that.

The short answer is, No, it isn't. I mean, you're the writer and the Creator of your fictional world, so you can do whatever you want.

But it's important to remember there are readers on the other side of the typed page. The wise writer is aware of anything that might run them off.

Or, as I put it to my friend, "In every case, the writer draws the line in the sand; in every case, the reader decides how many lines he can cross before he closes the book and moves on to something else."

For just one example (from the email), say the character is hurriedly viewing a document to discern it's importance.

My friend's possible solution was to write "If eyes could fly, his flew around the document."

My own solution was "He quickly scanned the document for important information."

For me, it's important not to risk having the reader see the character's eyes literally "flying" around the document.

My solution evokes in the reader's mind (maybe) not only the movement of the character's eyes, but maybe the character grabbing the document and holding it up or his bending over it and maybe even small motions of his head as he scanned it. In some small measure, it evokes a mood.

I was going to address this in much greater depth in a topic soon. Then I remembered I already had done in two earlier posts.

To see my rationale, first please visit "On Specificity and Clarity in Writing" at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/on-specificity-and-clarity-in-writing/>.

After you've read that, please visit "Human Parts Do Not Have Human Traits" at <http://www.asianefficiency.com/>.

Of course, if you WANT to write "His eyes flew across the room," by all means please do. Especially if the character was just slapped on the back of the head. Hard. With a shovel.

Comments on those two posts are probably closed, but feel free to email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com with any comments or questions.

Finally to the novel at 8:40.

I actually shot past 4000 words today without realizing it. A good day. Maybe there's hope. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "A Christmas Offering – Free Books" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/12/21/a-christmas-offering-free-books/>. I've already bought the ones he mentions in .mobi format, though I haven't read them. But I read an excerpt and I can tell you he's a good writer.

See "7 Simple Steps to Start Building Your Personal Brand from Scratch" at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/7-simple-steps-to-start-building-your-personal-brand-from-scratch/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see “How to Get the Most Value Out of Conferences and Implement What You’ve Learned” (podcast) at <http://www.asianefficiency.com/podcast/225-conferences/>.

See “Donadio & Olson Files for Bankruptcy” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/donadio-olson-files-for-bankruptcy/>.

Asian Efficiency also has a blog. See “The Top Productivity Articles and Podcasts of Asian Efficiency in 2018” at <http://www.asianefficiency.com/blog/>. Or you can see the top 10 posts listed at <http://www.asianefficiency.com/start-here/>.

See “Been Reading and Watching Movies” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/been-reading-and-watching-movies/>.

Fiction Words: 4350

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5100

Writing of Cazadores (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... 3527 words. Total words to date..... 17961
Day 6..... 5534 words. Total words to date..... 23495
Day 7..... 4350 words. Total words to date..... 27845

Total fiction words for the month..... 52355
Total fiction words for the year..... 511038
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 184986
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 695774

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Asian Efficiency](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, December 22](#)

[December 22, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Happy Winter Solstice yesterday. I forgot. (grin)

Topic: The Importance of Paragraphs

While glancing over the internet this morning for items of interest, I checked in on a blog I'd saved in my bookmarks but hadn't looked at recently.

When I save one in my bookmarks, it's because I hope it will provide valuable, or at least valid, information.

A writer posed this implied question:

I have trouble trying to figure out when to begin and end paragraphs and when to have dialogue included in the paragraph and when to have it stand on its own as an independent paragraph.

The author of the blog, Marilyn Byerly, was correct as far as she went. I refer you to her "rules of thumb" in the post (see "Of Interest") and her summation:

As long as the reader is clear about what is happening and the page isn't covered by long paragraphs, he won't even notice when you paragraph.

However, I disagree with her penultimate statement:

On the whole issue of paragraphing, don't be too uptight about it.

Certainly the use and length of paragraphs isn't something to "be uptight" about to the point that you lose sleep, but pacing is important.

In fact, pacing is easily among the more important factors to consider in writing every commercial genre of fiction.

Since paragraph use and length go directly to pacing, here's my own addition to Ms. Byerly's rules of thumb:

For reference, I define shorter paragraphs as 5 lines (not sentences) or fewer. Medium paragraphs are 5-8 lines. Longer paragraphs are, well, longer than 8 lines.

Readers read more quickly through shorter paragraphs. Or another way to say it, shorter paragraphs draw readers through a story more quickly. Hence their widespread use in thrillers.

You will also find a lot of medium paragraphs in thrillers. When you find longer paragraphs (lengthy descriptions, mental/psychological stuff), the writer is giving the reader a “break” from the breakneck pace.

I hasten to add, this is not a “conscious” decision while the writer is writing. It’s something he “feels” or senses as he’s writing. It comes out through his subconscious, creative mind as he types.

But he can only sense it because he learned it (with his conscious, critical mind) in the first place. In all things writing, learn with the conscious mind and apply with the creative mind.

At the opposite end of the scale from thrillers, “literary” works (Latin magic realism, for example) is filled with medium and longer paragraphs and sentences and more poetic prose. Again, there’s a purpose. The longer sentences and paragraphs force the reader to linger.

(I tout my own magic realism stories as those that occur on that far horizon where reality folds into imagination.)

In a well-paced mystery (including cozy) the paragraphs will be a more “normal” smattering of shorter (dialogue and tense situations) and medium. Chances are, you will find very few (if any) long paragraphs.

Most of the other commercial genres are paced about the same, though you might find a few more long paragraphs in mainstream and period (bosom-heaving) romance.

And just in case you’re wondering, the above is valid for short stories as well as novels.

I hope this helps.

I haven’t mentioned this for awhile, but with Christmas coming up it seems the perfect time:

You can get ANY of my books absolutely free of charge. As many as you want. And yes, you can request them for someone else as a gift if you want.

Simply visit HarveyStanbrough.com to read the descriptions, then email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com to let me know which book(s) you would like.

If you prefer short fiction, I recommend selecting one or more collections.

I’ll send you a coupon code so you can purchase the book(s) free at Smashwords. I only ask that after you’ve read it, you leave an honest review at Smashwords and at least one other place. (However, this is not a requirement.)

It's Saturday, so I got up a little before 1 a.m. The goal is to get whatever fiction I'm going to write done early and then spend the day with my bride.

I started and ended the writing day with a long cycling session, going back through the whole thing to adjust the age of my protagonist and a few other details.

A good short day overall.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Critical Voice Kills Everything" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/critical-voice-kills-everything/>. I left a comment on this one. If it gets through, I recommend you read it. If it doesn't (or maybe even if it does) I'll try to make it a topic for a future Journal entry.

See "Paragraph Lengths" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2018/12/paragraph-lengths.html>.

See "Character Descriptions: How To Write Them (in 3 Steps)" (but bring your salt shaker) at <https://blog.reedsy.com/character-descriptions/>.

Fiction Words: 2089

Nonfiction Words: 810 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2899

Writing of Cazadores (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... 3527 words. Total words to date..... 17961
Day 6..... 5534 words. Total words to date..... 23495
Day 7..... 4350 words. Total words to date..... 27845
Day 8..... 2089 words. Total words to date..... 29934

Total fiction words for the month..... 54444
Total fiction words for the year..... 513127
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14110
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 185796
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 698673

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Sunday, December 23

[December 23, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the Dean/Harvey discussion continues. (grin) See the post (and comment) in today's "Of Interest."

Up early again this morning at 2 a.m. But today I shouldn't have as much cycling to do, which means I can write more new words.

Yesterday I wrote only about 2000 words, then hit a snag that caused the necessity to cycle back through the story and adjust the timeline (hours within a two-day period) and ages of the actors.

I'll finish that this morning, then pick up where I left off.

Topic: On Readers' "Taste" and Writers' Ability

I do understand Dean's point. If something simply isn't to your taste as a reader, there's nothing the writer can do about that. After all, how can the writer account for the taste of every reader?

So should the writer strive for perfection? Of course not. Especially in writing, perfection really, seriously doesn't exist.

But the writer should strive for improvement of his or her own abilities in the writing and storytelling craft.

Writing is nothing more than communication. For just one example, if you use a lot of extraneous commas in your work, you will run off fewer readers if you learn (with your conscious, critical mind) how to use them to direct the reader in the reading of your work.

Then when you understand that use, your subconscious creative mind will apply commas in a way that will run off fewer readers. Your stories will resonate more clearly and attract more readers.

Of course the same thing goes for word choice, sentence length, paragraph and chapter length, pacing, and so on.

You learn what you need with the conscious, critical mind. Then you apply it with the creative subconscious as you write.

I think of it as a kind of naturalization, in that once you learn and understand a concept, you will apply it “naturally,” meaning without giving it a first thought.

And we know that is possible. It’s why you put a period at the end of a sentence without having to think about it. It’s why when writing by hand we “naturally” or automatically cross the lower-case T and put a dot above the lower-case I.

The use of punctuation, sentence length and all the rest is just as natural or automatic once we’ve learned it and understand it.

In the spirit of full disclosure for those of you who are following the exchange between Dean and me, when I read something by a bestselling writer that pretty much sucks canal water from all 50 states, the main reason it annoys me personally is because I know my own stories are so much better.

In his initial response to me, Dean wrote in part, “...you are asking a lot of that bestseller to always write a book you love, and not make some choice you do not like. Sort of a large ego there, don’t you think?”

But that was a misunderstanding of my intent, or maybe a misreading of what I wrote.

I don’t expect any writer, even a bestseller, to “always write a book I love.” I only expect him not to use fake details that throw me out of the story after I’ve already suspended my sense of disbelief and spent money for his book. As a reader, I should be able to expect that level of care for the craft.

To me, the large ego is the one the writer engages when he marks up my unintentional notice of his bad writing to a matter of my personal taste rather than to room for improvement in his ability.

As an aside, I don’t know of anyone who doesn’t like works by Ray Bradbury or Raymond Chandler. Just sayin’.

Just always remember one thing: The reader doesn’t need you or me.

There are millions of writers out there from whom the reader may choose. We, on the other hand, need every reader we can get.

We can't afford, figuratively or monetarily, to run off even one that we could have retained by the simple application of correct details in our writing.

Well, I used the first three hours of the day writing the stuff above this and also posting a slightly revised version of it to the Pro Writers blog. It will appear in early March.

Finally to the novel at 5:30.

A fairly good day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Critical Voice Kills Take Two" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/critical-voice-kills-take-two/>.

Fiction Words: 3890

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4640

Writing of Cazadores (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... 3527 words. Total words to date..... 17961
Day 6..... 5534 words. Total words to date..... 23495
Day 7..... 4350 words. Total words to date..... 27845
Day 8..... 2089 words. Total words to date..... 29934
Day 9..... 3890 words. Total words to date..... 33824

Total fiction words for the month..... 58334
Total fiction words for the year..... 517017
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14860
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 186546
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 703313

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, December 24

[December 24, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. Up way earlier than I expected to be, again.

But being up a couple hours earlier than my version of normal gives me time to “wake up” etc. and still have a good writing day, so I don’t mind.

Hey, happy Christmas Eve. And just in case I don’t show up in your inbox tomorrow, I hope you will all have a fun, joy-filled Christmas Day no matter what particular holiday you celebrate.

After we swap gifts, my wife and I will share a semi-traditional Mexican Christmas dinner with our neighbors. No tamales (nom nom nom) but other things made with shredded beef and salsa. (grin)

In the ongoing saga of *As the Typewriter Ribbon Turns*, Dean has agreed with Harvey’s last statement and even congratulated him on saying it well. (Sounds like a soap opera, doesn’t it?)

In the most recent episode, one respondent (Filip) agreed with me, sort of (don’t blame readers for writers’ glitches) and went on to say he writes into the dark.

Then Filip wrote

“I’m writing along, and the story stops. It doesn’t help no matter how much I rip out of the story, how far back I go to start over, the story is dead because I’m not good enough to see what I need to put into it in order to create the kind of story that I like.”

So in actuality, he doesn’t really write into the dark at all, though I guess he believes he does.

I responded to him with something that I thought maybe some of you might also need to hear. Just in case, here it is as a short topic:

Topic: It Isn’t Your Story

Let your characters tell the story. After all, they're the ones who are living it.

You can write in one of two ways:

1. You can be that almighty Author on High, controlling every little aspect of what your characters say and do, or
2. You can get over yourself, roll off the parapet into the trenches of the story and run through it with your characters.

The second way is a lot more fun. It's also writing into the dark.

I don't even see myself as a storyteller. I'm only the recorder whom the characters have invited along to record their story.

I run through the story with them, just trying to keep up. I write down what they say and do, and every thousand words or so the characters take pity on me (I'm an old guy so it's difficult for me to keep up) and we all take a break.

Just before we're ready to race back into the story, I cycle back through the previous thousand words to let the characters add anything I missed as we were racing along. Then we're off and running into the next scene, and the next, and the next.

And seriously, after "follow Heinlein's Rules" and "trust your subconscious," the best advice I ever got from Dean (or anywhere else) is "when you get stuck (or the story 'stops'), Just Write the Next Sentence."

All writers are different, but this has worked for me through 37 novels and counting.

I got stuck on a detail for awhile today, and didn't have as good a day as I'd liked. On the upside, I left off at a place that should enable me to jump back into the story quickly when I return to it.

Have a great Christmas.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the new comments on "Critical Voice Kills Take Two" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/critical-voice-kills-take-two/#comments>. (For the one I talked about above, scroll down to the first instance of "Filip" and read from there.)

See “The Writer’s Vision for 2019” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-writers-vision-for-2019/>. All I can really say on this one is the writer of the OP is confusing Dreams with Goals. To see the difference, see the next item.

Scroll down to “A Quick Discussion of Goals vs. Dreams” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/setting-goals-2016-is-almost-here/>.

Fiction Words: 2629

Nonfiction Words: 670 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3294

Writing of Blackwell Ops (formerly tentatively titled Cazadores, novel)

Day 1..... 4917 words. Total words to date..... 4917
Day 2..... 1873 words. Total words to date..... 6790
Day 3..... 3453 words. Total words to date..... 10243
Day 4..... 4191 words. Total words to date..... 14434
Day 5..... 3527 words. Total words to date..... 17961
Day 6..... 5534 words. Total words to date..... 23495
Day 7..... 4350 words. Total words to date..... 27845
Day 8..... 2089 words. Total words to date..... 29934
Day 9..... 3890 words. Total words to date..... 33824
Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453

Total fiction words for the month..... 60963
Total fiction words for the year..... 519646
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 187216
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 706612

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, December 25

[December 25, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I guess I'll continue my streak of writing (almost) every day. It really is easy when I have a WIP.

It's much easier to take a day off between stories than to take a day off when a story's still unfolding. (grin) That's the main reason I'm glad I was able to make the process of writing fun.

When I enjoy being surprised and entertained by the characters in their story, that expectation drives me back to the computer to write when I might not otherwise go.

Which of course is why I'm so frantic to start a new story when the one I'm working on is over. It's a kind of Ouroboros, the writing itself working to make itself whole.

Once I start, it's difficult to stop because it's so much fun to see what unfolds. And once a story ends, it keys my hunger for the next one.

I suppose I also don't like the idea of the characters standing around, arms crossed over their chests, their toes nervously tapping on the floor as they cast glances at their watches and wonder where the hell the Recorder is and why he's late.

I won't write for long today. Just a few enjoyable hours while I wait for my wife and son to rise. Then we'll have the gifts and hot coffee and laughs and all the rest.

My son, faced with spending Christmas alone, drove down from Flagstaff to spend the day with us and enjoy dinner with us and the neighbors. Nobody should be left completely alone on Christmas day.

On this day, too, please remember those souls who serve in harm's way so the rest of us can enjoy leisure time. They're out there right now.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "One Week Until The New Year" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/one-week-until-the-new-year/>. Interesting approach to his goal of writing 10 novels in 100 days.

See "Impression" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/impression/>.

See "Interesting things About Interesting Links" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/12/25/interesting-things-about-interesting-links/>. Tony mentions me, but also some with whom you probably aren't familiar. Check them out.

For fun, see "Ouroboros" at <https://www.tokenrock.com/explain-ouroboros-70.html>.

Fiction Words: 1322

Nonfiction Words: 360 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1682

Writing of Blackwell Ops (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453

Day 11... 1322 words. Total words to date..... 37775

Total fiction words for the month..... 62285

Total fiction words for the year..... 520968

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15890

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 187576

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 708294

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Token Rock](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, December 26](#)

[December 26, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Good morning! I hope all of you had a wonderful Christmas. I'm looking forward to the new year, and I hope it will be a prosperous and healthy one for all of you.

Of course, the new year (or anytime, really) is a great time to learn new techniques.

I was listening this morning to part of Dean's workshop on Secondary Plot Lines. I've written 36 novels. I've used secondary plot lines a lot. But there's always something new to learn.

And the course was basically free. I bought one of the Writers Gift boxes (\$50) from WMG Publishing, so I got a dozen or so books, a lecture, and a classic workshop.

I chose Secondary Plot Lines (normally \$150 alone) mostly because the description read that it was an “expansive” workshop covering a ton of information. Dean ALWAYS provides more than he expects to provide.

So while I was listening to the first few videos, as he often does, Dean referred to various television shows and movies to watch first for pleasure, then for study.

And for some reason, I remembered you can also download television and movie scripts, often free, to read and study on your way to learning new techniques you can use in your fiction writing.

To find some sources of free scripts, key “Free Hollywood Scripts” into your search engine.

But I’ve listed a few sources of those scripts in “Of Interest” below. Just FYI, I use “scripts” and “screenplays” interchangeably.

And for goodness’ sake, don’t dismiss the thought of studying scripts just because you have no desire to write screenplays. That would be as silly as assuming Heinlien’s Rules won’t work for you just because you don’t write science fiction.

After a rough night, I rolled out at 3 this morning and spent the first hour on the stuff above. I’ll listen to more of the workshop during times when I’m not writing, like the afternoons after the writing day is finished. For now, to the novel.

For the next hour, I cycled back a bit, added about 500 new words, then headed up to the house for a break. Still not feeling all that well after last night, so it was a little difficult to focus on the characters.

Back and forth after that with writing and breaks.

Anyway, I had two goals for the last half of December: One, I wanted to complete an 11th novel for the year. Two, I wanted to practice hitting 4,000 words in a day.

I know the novel will end well before the end of the month, and I know I can hit 4,000 words without too much trouble when the novel is running. (grin) So that’s already a win-win.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

To see the description of the Secondary Plot Lines online workshop (and others) visit “Online Workshops” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/online-workshops/>. You’ll have to scroll down.

See “10 Great Websites To Download Movie Scripts” at <https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/10-great-websites-download-movie-scripts/>.

See “50 Of The Best Famous Movie Screenplays To Read And Download In Every Genre” at <https://www.scriptreaderpro.com/best-screenplays-to-read/>.

If you ARE interested in writing screenplays, visit “Script Reader Pro” at <https://www.scriptreaderpro.com/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see “7 Things Professional Writers Know That Amateurs Don’t” at <https://goinswriter.com/professional-writers/>. All I can say is Truedat.

Fiction Words: 2013

Nonfiction Words: 520 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2533

Writing of Blackwell Ops (novel, tentative title)

Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453

Day 11... 1322 words. Total words to date..... 37775

Day 12... 2013 words. Total words to date..... 39788

Total fiction words for the month..... 64298

Total fiction words for the year..... 522981

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16410

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 188096

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 710827

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, December 27](#)

[December 27, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I got into a short email discussion with a fellow novelist who also writes off into the dark.

The upshot was, he wondered whether maybe — when a character does something that's unexpected and out of character — it's all right or even necessary to create a history for that character that would explain the unexpected action, a kind of character sketch (my term, not his).

I decided to copy my response here as a topic.

Topic: Writing Into the Dark, Take 2

I did a post on Writing Off Into the Dark over on the Pro Writers blog [here](#) some time back. If you're not familiar with the term, take a look.

What is in your (the writer's) brain is split into knowledge (aka, facts based on experiences) and imagination (aka, would-be facts), which is also based on knowledge and experiences.

The things you believe to be true comprise knowledge. The things you believe might be true or that you wish were true, based on your knowledge, comprise imagination.

What we call knowledge is accumulated by the conscious mind. What we call imagination is accumulated by (or "seeps into") the subconscious mind. The former is a result of cognitive thought and learning, direct functions of the conscious mind. The latter is a result of letting go and NOT thinking, not only a function of but the sole purpose behind the subconscious mind.

The conscious mind, when you're accidentally about to touch the hot burner of a stove, causes you to jerk your hand away. It protects you. Left to its own devices, the subconscious mind would say "Go ahead. Might be a trip." (grin)

Of course we write what we know or what we want to know or wish we knew. We write the way things are (knowledge) and the way we wish they were or imagine them to be (imagination).

When we write a story off into the dark, we don't know the way. It's like we're making our way through a pitch-black house we've never been in before. (Hence, we're going "into the dark.") And even if we suspect there are signposts along the way, we can't see them in advance. And we don't want to. That's why we don't outline. When we write into the dark, those signposts appear, at the behest of the characters, as they are needed.

Likewise, our character, like every other living creature, has a history, a backstory. But, like all other human beings, he reveals only the part that's necessary. More importantly, he reveals it only when doing so becomes necessary.

So we (the writers who practice writing into the dark) are surprised when the character suddenly pulls a knife. Gasp! He isn't who we thought he was! (grin)

It isn't that the knife or his ability to use it never existed. On the contrary, it's that it did exist but we didn't notice until he whipped it out.

So at that point, we know he pulled a knife, but we don't know why. And we are faced with a choice.

The first choice is to stop writing, or become "stuck." We succumb to our critical, conscious mind and become mired in wondering why he would do something that, to us, is out of character.

We might even sink farther into that trap and decide we need to create a history for that character that would explain why he could and would pull a knife so easily. If we create a character sketch, complete with traits, quirks, and history, including his uncle Jake who went to prison for slashing a competitor for a love interest to death, the character certainly won't surprise us like that again.

And when we're finished, we can breathe easy. But we're also a little bored and maybe a little annoyed with ourselves.

Because we've exerted external influence on the story. We've climbed up out of the trenches of the story, mounted our authorial ivory tower, and bent the character to our will.

Or we can take the second choice. We can trust the character that the reason for the knife and his ability to use it will eventually become clear. Then we cycle back, bow to the character's will by inserting the knife at some appropriate earlier point, then move forward in the story again and write the next sentence (the one that occurs after he pulls the knife).

The next and ensuing sentences will show us why he pulled the knife and why he knows how to use one. And we're a little glad he withheld the information until it was necessary because we're still being surprised and entertained.

Maybe the character's a good guy who's using the knife as a threat to defend the honor of his fair Felicia.

Maybe he's a good guy with a bad memory of something the other character did in the past and he'll use the knife to seek retribution, either by holding the other character at knife point while he waits for the police to arrive or by exacting revenge by plunging it into the other character's heart. (Or kidney. Kidneys are fun.) After all, even the kindest, nicest, most upright protagonist has a dark side.

But the point is, to advance the story in its true-to-life form, we have to simply trust the characters to tell the story.

Which means we have to set aside all conscious thought. Why? Because the conscious mind belongs solely to the human being who happens to be a writer. It belongs to his or her life, to his or her story, not the character's story.

And that means our only option is to Write The Next Sentence. And the next. And the next.

And before we realize it, we're happily "unstuck" and the story's moving along fine again.

Best of all, we haven't screwed up the character's story by "forcing" something on it that maybe didn't belong.

And that particular "maybe" is the most fun part of all. If something belongs in the story, the characters will reveal it when it's necessary. If it doesn't, they won't.

Either way, the story will still be theirs, and you'll be the richer for it.

I did a little cycling (mostly to get back into the story), then wrote one good session and took a break.

After my wife headed off to work, I wrote another session, then went across the street to let the neighbors' dogs out. So if anyone sings that annoying question at you, you can tell them it was me. (grin)

Pretty good day today. Actually, I could easily have kept going, but I think I'm nearing the end with this one and I don't want to finish too soon. (grin) I almost hope the characters throw me a curve or two to keep the story going.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Via Linda Maye Adams, see "Appealing to the Senses" at <http://davidfarland.com/2018/03/appealing-to-the-senses-2/>. (Or as DWS puts it, include the five physical senses in every major scene.)

See "Appealing to the Senses, Part 2" at <http://davidfarland.com/2018/03/appealing-senses-part-2/>.

You can actually sign up for David Farland's writing tips (blog posts, I believe) at <http://mystorydoctor.us11.list-manage1.com/subscribe>. I just did.

See "A Pig's Head for New Year's Day: Burglary vs. Robbery" at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-pigs-head-for-new-years-day-burglary-vs-robbery/>.

See "Business Musings: The Current State of Disruption (Planning for 2019 Part 1)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/26/business-musings-the-current-state-of-disruption-planning-for-2019-part-1/>.

See "It's Christmas, So Let's Pull a Fat Guy Through a Car Window" at <https://www.leelofland.com/its-christmas-so-lets-pull-a-fat-guy-through-a-car-window/>.

Fiction Words: 4626

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5806

Writing of Blackwell Ops (novel)

Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453

Day 11... 1322 words. Total words to date..... 37775

Day 12... 2013 words. Total words to date..... 39788

Day 13... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 44414

Total fiction words for the month..... 68924

Total fiction words for the year..... 527607

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 189276

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 716633

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [David Farland](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, December 28](#)

[December 28, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Merry Second Christmas to me. My excellent first reader returned her input on Situation Solved this morning. (huge grin) So it will release on February 15 as scheduled. Thanks, Alison!

Alison Naomi Holt is an accomplished writer and screenwriter in her own right (see <https://alisonholtbooks.com/>). She is also a personal friend. A retired detective from the Tucson PD, Alison writes the Alex Wolfe mysteries (four books so far) as well as epic fantasy and psychological suspense.

I particularly enjoy her Alex Wolfe mysteries, and you can get the first one (Credo's Hope) FREE just by signing up for her newsletter.

Now I'm torn between continuing my WIP this morning or applying Alison's fixes to my manuscript. But yeah, I'll continue with the WIP first. (grin)

If you want to design your own covers and you aren't quite sure where to start, I strongly recommend WMG Publishing's two lectures on cover design.

These are taught by a professional designer. They're only \$50 each (one for mystery/thriller and one for SF) and they cover only the basics, but they're a great investment in your education.

I've been designing covers for five years, yet I learned things I didn't know from the one I'm taking now. (And of course, even if you don't write in those particular genres, you'll pick up knowledge that will translate to other genres. Just sayin'.)

Topic: On Cycling

I know, right? I've talked about this before. But sometimes saying it a different way gets through to more folks.

In response to a blog post about yours truly and writing into the dark this morning, I posted the following comment and thought it would make a great, if very brief, topic:

One way to "fix" words and punctuation, and it goes hand-in-hand with writing into the dark, is to cycle back every so often and give your characters a chance to add-to or change what you've just written. I think Dean does this about every 500 words. I do it about every 1000 words.

Say I finish a writing session. When I come back for the next session, I read through what I wrote in the previous session AS A READER (not critically). This keeps me in the creative subconscious.

As I read, my fingers rest on the keyboard, and when the characters want to fix something or add something, they do.

Then when I reach the place where I left off, I'm back in the flow of the story and I write another 1000 or so words. Lather, rinse, repeat. End of topic. (grin)

To the Hovel at 3, wrote the stuff above and in "Of Interest," then up to the house for a short break.

To the novel at 4:45. Cycling, then a break around 6 for a shower and breakfast.

Finally back to the novel at 8:40. I probably won't write for the whole morning. It's bowl season, and I want to watch at least part of the game that's starting at 11:30. (grin)

I'm sure I'll hate myself in the morning, but I'm calling it a little before noon. (grin) A short day, but pretty good. I'll take it.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Wow. See "The Future of Crime-Fighting is Family Tree Forensics" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-future-of-crime-fighting-is-family-tree-forensics/>.

See "Five Reasons a Writer Should Run From Social Media" at <https://alisonholtbooks.com/five-reasons-a-writer-should-run-from-social-media/>.

See "Different Strokes" at <https://alisonholtbooks.com/different-strokes/>.

See "10 Ways to Start Your Story Better" at <https://www.writersdigest.com/writing-articles/by-writing-goal/write-first-chapter-get-started/10-ways-to-start-your-story-better>.

See "Soaking Up Story" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/soaking-up-story/>.

See "What I'm Reading – Smith's Monthly" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2018/12/27/what-im-reading-smiths-monthly/>.

Fiction Words: 2101

Nonfiction Words: 590 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2691

Writing of Blackwell Ops (novel)

Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453

Day 11... 1322 words. Total words to date..... 37775

Day 12... 2013 words. Total words to date..... 39788

Day 13... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 44414

Day 14... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 46515

Total fiction words for the month..... 71025

Total fiction words for the year..... 529708

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18180

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 189866

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 719324

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writers Digest](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, December 29](#)

[December 29, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, another day, another lesson. From now on, when I'm ending the writing day early for some special reason, I'll check to make sure the special reason is worthwhile before I send off the Journal. (grin)

Yesterday I shut down a little before noon. The football game I wanted to watch was well into the first quarter by then. So I sent off the Journal, closed the Hovel and headed for the house.

Turned on the TV and saw the score was already 42 to 6. Oh my.

Even though I like both teams (Auburn and Purdue), I saw no reason to watch the rest. My only regret about all that was that I didn't continue writing and hold off on publishing the Journal. So from now on....

A day or two ago I mentioned a couple of WMG Publishing's lectures on designing book covers. The lecture I took (on thriller and mystery covers) is very good, but basic. Each lecture consists of several videos and costs \$50.

This morning I remembered another resource. See "12 Free Ways to Learn Design" at <https://creativemarket.com/blog/12-free-ways-to-learn-design>.

Topic: Writing Prompts vs. Story Ideas

Reedsy puts out a weekly newsletter with writing prompts. Sometimes, the prompt is an actual story idea. Other times, it's only a prompt.

What's the difference?

Here's a story prompt:

A person coming home late from a New Year's Eve Party stops by a McDonald's. A person staying home for New Year's Eve goes to McDonald's for a late night snack.

And here's a story idea:

As the countdown on New Year's Eve reaches midnight, you look around to find all your party guests have vanished. You think it's a clever prank until you glance at your phone and see the date is listed as, "January 0th."

See the difference?

In the first, the prompt, you're given an interesting (maybe) situation, but no problem, so no conflict.

In the second, all the necessary ingredients are there: you have a character with a problem (conflict) in a setting.

If you want to write a story based on the McDonald's thing, you have to come up with a conflict.

1. Maybe both people are tired or tipsy or both.
2. Maybe there's a minor fender-bender in the McParkingLot.
3. Maybe one customer accidentally jostles the other at the counter.
4. Maybe the two people were sweethearts in high school and haven't seen each other for 30 years. One is widowed and the other divorced, having sworn off taking on another wife or husband.
5. One is wearing a custom-made necklace that was stolen during a burglary at the other's home a few months earlier.

So with a little imagination, you can turn a "prompt" into an idea. All you have to do is add the missing ingredient: character, setting or (in this case) the problem (conflict).

If any of these ideas strike you, feel free to write it. Then submit it to Reedsy's short story contest if you want to. The winner gets \$50 cash. (For more on this, see <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests>.)

A few good football games coming up today, so I'm in the Hovel early. (grin)

As I had hoped a day or two ago, the characters have thrown me a few curve balls. (grin)

I still know I'm in the final push of this one and nearing the end of the story. But as a result of those curve balls I've had to do a lot of selective cycling (going back to foreshadow something the characters suddenly come up with in the present).

Well, at 9 a.m. the WIP is all but finished. I still need to cycle back a bit and make sure I got some things right, and I still need to write a denouement, but I can take care of all that tomorrow. That will leave me one extra day in case something goes wrong.

Thanks for being there, folks. It's nice to be able to share stuff like this with someone.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Looking at Gaining Energy" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/looking-at-gaining-energy/>. If this stuff (elephants) still bothers Dean, isn't it all right that it still bothers you and me? (grin)

See "No Flashlight and No Ghosts: A Murder by Hanging" at <https://www.leelofland.com/no-flashlight-and-no-ghosts-a-murder-by-hanging/>.

Fiction Words: 5903

Nonfiction Words: 710 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6613

Writing of Blackwell Ops (novel)

Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453
Day 11... 1322 words. Total words to date..... 37775
Day 12... 2013 words. Total words to date..... 39788
Day 13... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 44414
Day 14... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 46515
Day 15... 5803 words. Total words to date..... 52418

Total fiction words for the month..... 76928
Total fiction words for the year..... 535611
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18890
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 190576
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 725937

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 36
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Sunday, December 30

December 30, 2018 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

If any of you would like to serve as the first reader for my current novel, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

This is an origin novel that I expect will introduce a series. It isn't so much a mystery novel (though there is some mystery and many twists and turns) as a crime novel. It's an accounting of one operative's life as he makes his way through various assignments for a secretive organization called Blackwell Ops.

I probably won't write any fiction tomorrow, but I'll do a wrap-up on the Journal with some year-end numbers and some goals for 2019. And of course, whatever I can find for "Of Interest."

I hope you'll continue to follow along.

There's an exciting young writer out there who accomplishes things and shares. His books have really good covers, and he created those himself too. In fact, I wrote him to ask where he gets his cover art. (grin)

I think this is going to be a writer to follow for his short stories, his forthcoming novels, and the knowledge he shares. See Phillip McCollum's site at <https://phillipmccollum.com/>.

I guess I'm going to stretch this month to the last day. For all practical purposes, I finished the novel this morning. I'll still want to glance over the last bit later today or tomorrow and touch it a little, but it's finished.

I'll spend the balance of today and tomorrow making the corrections my first reader recommended on my previous novel, then create a cover and get it uploaded for pre-release. It will go live on February 15.

I'll plan to launch this one on March 1 or 15th.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Sixth Pop-Up Launching" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sixth-pop-up-launching/>.

For fun, see "alynh" comment at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/looking-at-gaining-energy/#comment-193397>. Miss the point much? (grin)

Fiction Words: 2151

Nonfiction Words: 310 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2461

Writing of Blackwell Ops (novel)

Day 10... 2629 words. Total words to date..... 36453
Day 11... 1322 words. Total words to date..... 37775
Day 12... 2013 words. Total words to date..... 39788
Day 13... 4626 words. Total words to date..... 44414
Day 14... 2101 words. Total words to date..... 46515
Day 15... 5803 words. Total words to date..... 52418
Day 16... 2151 words. Total words to date..... 54569 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 79079
Total fiction words for the year..... 537762
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19200
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 190886
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 728398

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 11
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
Calendar Year 2018 Short Stories to Date..... 11
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, December 31](#)

[December 31, 2018](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out early this morning, excited to get started on covers.

I started the day by downloading several photos from Unsplash at <https://unsplash.com/>. I can't recommend them highly enough. Great royalty-free stock photos and they're free.

I redesigned the cover for Nick 4 (Consequences), which will release on January 15. Then I designed the cover for Situation Solved, which will release on February 15. Later today, I hope to design a cover for Blackwell Ops. It will be with my first reader as soon as I find one. (grin)

I haven't decided yet whether to release Blackwell Ops on March 1 or March 15. Given my upcoming novel-writing challenge, I might release it earlier rather than later to make room for earlier releases of the ones I've yet to write.

We aren't planning any special festivities around our house tonight. Yes, a new year begins tomorrow. But a new year begins with every sunrise, doesn't it? (grin)

As promised, the year in review....

First, the maybe boring stuff:

In 2018, I managed 11 novels, 3 novellas, and 11 short stories. That was wrapped up in 537,762 words of fiction, give or take a few that fell away unreported.

I also managed 191,726 words of nonfiction for a total of 729,238 total words on the year. I'm a happy lad. (grin)

On top of that, I started or revised a few new programs for other writers:

A free, honest critique of the first page of your story (up to 500 words — email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com).

A free sample edit if you're considering hiring me as your copyeditor (see <http://harveystanbrough.com/copyediting/>).

A constantly growing list of writer resources (see <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources/>).

A little history of the journey so far....

But before I write anything else, Thank You all for following along on this journey for the past year. Many of you have been with me since the beginning, back in April 2014 when I started writing a short story every week. That streak lasted for 70 weeks, and I learned a great deal more than I thought was possible.

Then in October 2014 I started writing my first novel. Leaving Amarillo was based on a short story I wrote during the streak, one titled "Adobe Walls." And it turned into a trilogy. Leaving Amarillo continued in Longing for Mexico and then South to Mexico.

Then, of course, the characters tugged on my sleeve and said "What about the early days?"

And along came three prequels: Rise of a Warrior; Comanche Fire; and Wes Crowley, Texas Ranger. And then four sequels to the original trilogy: The Marshal of Agua Perlado, The Battle of Tres Caballos, The Scent of Acacias and The Right Cut.

So from one event (the climax) in that one short story, I wrote a series that spanned 415,000 words and some 50 or 60 years in the life of Wes Crowley.

After The Right Cut, though I longed to write more in that world, I knew the story was finally finished.

Along the way to The Right Cut (a journey of a year and eight months), I also wrote 6 other novels in three genres, 79 short stories and a novella.

During that time, I also managed to write another nonfiction book (Writing the Character-Driven Story) and compiled 13 collections of short stories. Plus two blogs, posting weekly on one and (almost) daily on the other. And I haven't looked back.

As our favorite mentor, Dean Wesley Smith says, keep moving forward.

Yesterday, I finished my 11th novel on the year (a personal record) and my 37th novel overall. In four years and two months. And frankly, I still feel a little like a slacker. (grin)

Tomorrow, I'll begin my 38th novel. My goal is for that one to be the first of ten novels I'll write in the first 100 days of 2019. We'll see how that goes.

I have a vague idea that I might revisit Nick and Marie in their pre-World War I world. Maybe with some time travel to move them to a new setting.

I might also revisit the contemporary world of Blackwell Ops and/or a contemporary detective or PI world. Or the magic-realism future-kingdom world stemming from the origin novel Keeper of the Promise. Or the future-Earth SF world of The Consensus. I'm not hurting for ideas. (grin)

But what I write isn't important. At all. What's important (to me) is THAT I write.

And most importantly, I won't allow the process to exhaust me. I'll keep it fun. If it becomes "work," I'll call it a win, take a day off to reset my attitude, and move forward. If I encounter a life roll, I'll reset the goal and start again when the life roll passes. (shrug)

Of course, I'll post the journey here. I hope you'll follow along, and I hope it will spur you onward on your own journey. Because that's what really matters.

Now I'm gonna head up to the house for breakfast. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Novel and Short Story Challenge Again” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/novel-and-short-story-challenge-again/>. An excellent opportunity. And Dean’s older than I am, folks. This won’t keep coming around indefinitely.

See “Party tricks and naked writing: the eccentric life of Victor Hugo” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/party-tricks-and-naked-writing-the-eccentric-life-of-victor-hugo/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 840 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 840

Writing of (novel)

Day 1..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 79079
Total fiction words for the year..... 537762
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 191726
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 729238

Calendar Year 2018 Novels to Date..... 11
Calendar Year 2018 Novellas to Date..... 3
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Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Year in Review](#)