

The Journal, 2019

The Journal, Tuesday, January 1

January 1, 2019 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

Be patient. There's a LOT in today's Journal and in the "Of Interest" section. I hope you will find most of it entertaining and/or useful.

Happy new year, everybody! May we all have a year filled with peace and good health. I don't mention prosperity because, after all, we really can't take it with us. My strongest personal urge is to live as long as I can and leave a legacy of sorts. As they say down south, can I get a big "Hell yeah!"?

Like so many, I'm personally glad 2018 is behind us. Without belaboring the point, during the year, I lost three uncles, an aunt, and two first cousins. Two of the uncles were paternal, and their loss also left me as the eldest male in the family. I don't mind telling you that was a little startling on a whole other level.

Then to cap off the emotional roller-coaster, my lifelong friend and high school classmate Kenneth Flowers succumbed to COPD on December 29. He was at once the most intelligent, most humble, and gentlest man I've ever known. Frankly, I'm still reeling a little from that one.

But life, as they say, goes on.

Today I begin my challenge to write 10 novels in 100 days. A couple of the chapters I wrote in Blackwell Ops wanted to be novels, and I could easily expand them, but I don't want to do that.

I want these 10 novels to be completely separate of that one. Some of them might be in that world and in that series (after all, it was an origin novel), but I don't want them to be derived directly from that book.

Yesterday I wrote 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." (Kenneth enjoyed my detective fiction.) "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."

Kenneth, an avid reader, was particularly fond of those last two. So maybe I'll start with one of those. At 6 a.m., I have no idea what I'll write today.

Wow. I read a post this morning that left me shaking my head. Not at the messenger—I respect him for his point of view—but at the implied message. I included it in “Of Interest,” as it might ring true for some of you. And yes, I left a comment, briefly, then chose to make the rest of my thoughts a topic.

Topic: On Being “Offended” (not political)

It's important that writers hold the line (no pun intended) regarding censorship. I predict that the writer who bends to the whims of people who feel it's their “right” to demand the writer write something in a particular way (right down to word selection, including pronouns) will not be writers very long. And even if they are, they'll appear ignorant to anyone with ears and a brain.

There, I said it. If you're “offended,” my daily Journal probably isn't a blog you should be reading. I'm here to help writers, not to force them to my will.

The fact is, we live in a world in which a great deal more weight is given (and wrongly so) to Perception than to Intent. If a slight is intended, shame on the speaker or writer. If it was not, shame on whoever chose to perceive wrongly and take “offense.” That person should take a course on Getting Over Yourself, and soon.

But what about the audience? Knowing your audience is important. But kowtowing to it is futile, and kowtowing to one segment of it is partisan, divisive, and self-defeating. And frankly, a little cowardly.

As all of you know, I write to entertain myself first, then those who enjoy my work. From what I can tell, those who are so wrapped up in themselves that they take “offense” at practically everything don't read anyway, so....

I will never personally use “they” as a singular pronoun for the same reason I won't allow any other censorship of my work. Well, that and because whether or not I “accept” and finally get used to using “they” as a singular pronoun, using it still makes me sound ignorant. It also makes me sound as if I've knuckled under to some Thought Police somewhere. And that just isn't going to happen.

As to politics, I'm not going to slip into that crapshoot because it does no good. People are simply bent one way or another. I'm convinced they can't help it. Some are the protectors and some are the protected. Thus has it ever been, and thus shall it ever be.

We used to have a saying: If you want to see who the aggressor is, look at which direction the refugees are running. Yes, I know I'm dating myself, but It's an accurate method of assessment.

In politics, there's a similarly useful assessment: If you want to see who's attempting to destroy the nation and who's attempting to save it, compare each side's actions with their words. Compare what they say with what they do.

All that being said, I'm from the sticks-and-stones generation. We didn't feel a need to call attention to ourselves by feigning "offense" at something that obviously was not meant to be offensive.

So today I'm likely to bust out laughing (or into authentic applause) when I see or hear someone making a complete "look-at-me" ass of themselves over a false perceived slight. And no, I'm not the slightest bit concerned that I might further offend the person with my laughter or applause. Because my INTENT is to reward an excellent performance.

Oh, but wait. Oh my, did I actually write the word "person?" I'm terribly sorry. "Person" has "son" in it, and that's obviously masculine, so maybe I should have used "perit" instead. Yeah, I'm gonna tie myself into knots over that one. Or stitches. You know. I'll tie myself into something. Well, or not.

No biggie. To each his (or her) own. But I do wish a certain segment of the population would find a different verb to demolish into an adjective than "woke." Frankly, its current widespread use offends me. (I joke. Frankly I couldn't give a sh— darn less about their foolishness.)

But they really should get a clue. Until they've woke suddenly to the sound of a fire alarm or a dispatcher's call to race into harm's way, or to disentangle themselves from a sleeping bag and grab a rifle to keep someone from REALLY being "offended" with flames or a knife or a bullet, they don't really understand what "woke" means.

And I'll probably continue to not take their ranting demands too seriously. As for offending them, I don't have time to do so intentionally. And I wouldn't bother anyway. Frankly, I wouldn't give them the time of day if my middle finger was a watch. (grin)

Although I didn't write anything yesterday, I got a ton of work done.

I revised the cover for Consequences so it LOOKS like action-adventure instead of teen-queen romance. See <http://harveystanbrough.com/consequences/>. I didn't revise the elements of the cover though. I got lazy. I didn't want to have to revise the elements on the other three in the series, so....

Then I created a cover (with the new knowledge I gained re covers from the cover lecture I took) for Situation Solved and for Blackwell Ops. The difference is amazing.

I also got both of those published for pre-orders. Situation Solved will be released on February 15, and Blackwell Ops will be released on March 1. I added those to the site this morning. Yeah, I'm releasing the second one only two weeks after the first, but I'm currently involve in a challenge to write 10 more in 100 days. (grin)

You can see and read about Situation Solved at <http://harveystanbrough.com/situation-solved/> and you can see and read about Blackwell Ops at <http://harveystanbrough.com/blackwell-1/>.

Finally I updated the universal link for both to include Amazon and Smashwords. So that's done until I write more stuff.

Which I'm about to do. (grin)

From about 2:30 for a little over 2 hours I wrote the stuff above, fiddled with my website, and found the "Of Interest" items. Now to the house for a break, then back here to write.

At 5:20, I returned to the Hovel and wrote more of the stuff above this. Then at a little after 6, I decided to set up my 2019 Annual Production spreadsheet and relegated the 2018 spreadsheet to my Old Stuff folder. How quickly it passes....

Undaunted, finally, at 6:45 I started the search for the subject of my next novel. (grin)

At about 7:15 I hit on an idea (a photo and the one word it evoked: farmhand) and started writing. So at least I already have cover art and a title for this novel. (grin) Now all I have to do is the fun part: write it.

About 7:45, having written a 600 word opening that seems to want to be a novel, I headed up to the house to change clothes and start the day.

8:15 a.m., back in the Hovel and back to the novel.

Well, with the back and forth, I only got a little over 1600 new words total, but it's a start, and I'm already excited about this first novel. So I'll take it. (grin)

My bride's home today, there's college football on the TV, and there's a pot full of blackeyed peas waiting.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Via Tony Decastro, see "Default pronouns for the modern writer" at <https://dgalloway.wordpress.com/2018/12/31/default-pronouns-for-the-modern-writer/>. I do recommend some of the topics in David Galloway's blog, though I don't recommend taking this particular one seriously.

See "2019 Book Industry Predictions: The Butterflies Will Flap Their Wings" at <http://blog.smashwords.com/2018/12/2019-book-industry-predictions.html>. A long but excellent post.

See “Thank You, Dear Friends: 2018, a Super Tough Year, is Almost Behind Me” at <https://www.leelofland.com/thank-you-dear-friends-2018-a-super-tough-year-is-almost-behind-me/>.

See “Damn It All” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/damn-it-all/>.

See “2019 Publishing Predictions from Agent Laurie McLean” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/2019-publishing-predictions-from-agent-laurie-mclean/>. I like the Passive Guy’s take.

See “Local children’s book authors find new ways to reach readers” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/local-childrens-book-authors-find-new-ways-to-reach-readers/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Dragon Slayer” at <https://kriswrites.com/2018/12/31/free-fiction-monday-dragon-slayer/>.

See “Roundup of 2018 Goals and What’s New For 2019” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/01/roundup-of-2018-goals-and-whats-new-for-2019/>.

And finally, if you use Scrivener (I don’t), via Linda Maye Adams see “How To Change The Editor Font In Scrivener For Windows” at <https://kaitnolan.com/2012/05/07/how-to-change-the-editor-font-in-scrivener-for-windows/>. For me personally, Microsoft Word is the perfect writing tool. (I much preferred the old WordPerfect, back when it was worth a flip.)

Fiction Words: 1628

Nonfiction Words: 1721 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3349

Writing of The Farmhand (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1628 words. Total words to date..... 1628

Total fiction words for the month..... 1628

Total fiction words for the year..... 1628

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1721

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 1721

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 3349

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Challenge](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, January 2](#)

[January 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Our second snowfall of the year (yes, here in the desert) started this morning. Creating, of course, the illusion that the world has shifted on its axis and it's going to snow every day during 2019. (grin)

This is a "real" snow, with about 4" on the ground at the moment and plenty more coming. My wife's considering granting herself a 2-hour delay if she goes in at all.

Fortunately, my own commute to the office is only about 200 feet outside my back door. (grin)

We have one little hummingbird who stays with us year-round. He often perches on a guy-wire out back and looks around, as if wondering where everybody else went. Of course, everybody else went to Mexico or maybe even farther south.

We're happy to have him, and I keep his feeder clean, filled and de-iced through the winter. But I hate that the little guy is apparently so lonely.

I hope he isn't, of course. I hope he simply enjoys the solitude.

So, on Day 2 of the challenge, guess who's already adjusting his first major goal?

It dawned on me that I've never written even ONE novel in ten days. Not that I can't, but the purpose of a challenge is to drive productivity and reach new personal heights, not to introduce pressure. I want to keep the writing fun.

If I remember right, the shortest time it took me to write a novel was 15 writing days. The most recent took 16 writing days (out of 17 calendar days).

So I'm adjusting my challenge. My overall goal now is to write 10 novels in 150 days. And remember, those are calendar days. So on average, a novel every 15 calendar days.

That's a much more sensible goal for me, but it's still a pretty good stretch. And in a way, it's even a little more difficult because it will require (almost) daily writing for a longer period of time. Though I personally have no real problem with that.

So the challenge started yesterday. The last day will be May 30.

I'm going to leave the daily goal where it is (4000 words per day) because that's what I practiced. I'm comfortable with it, yet it remains a minor stretch. So it's all good.

How about you? Any new daily/weekly/monthly writing goals? A particular number of short stories or novels or poems or publications you'd like to hit? Any writing-related bucket-list items you'd like to cross off your list?

I stayed up to watch most of the Sugar Bowl last night. I'm pleased to report 15-ranked Texas beat 5-ranked Georgia, but it wasn't really an "upset." Texas led from the beginning. Hook 'em horns! (grin)

Rolled out a little late this morning, shortly after 3. I took a few hours (with breaks) to write all of this stuff and wander the Internet for items of interest.

I headed for the novel at a little after 6.

And something happened. It wasn't necessarily bad, but it's definitely not good.

I'm stuck. There, I said it.

I'm stuck in a big way. Maybe it's the excitement of a full-on snow day with more to come or maybe it's the boredom I felt as I cycled back through the would-be WIP this morning.

Maybe I'm feeling some pressure from the challenge, though I don't think so.

Maybe right now just isn't the right time to write this one. I honestly don't know.

But whatever it is, I'm stuck.

I won't bore you with details, but through the next few hours I did other things, returning to the would-be novel each time.

Nothing.

Something's bothering me about this one. That isn't unusual, though it is rare. But what IS unusual is that I can't figure out what's bothering me about it.

What's even worse, yesterday I was excited about this story, and today I'm just not. That's unusual too, and a little frightening.

So now, at not quite 1 p.m., I'm calling this a nonwriting day and taking the rest of the day to basically do nothing.

Tomorrow morning I'll either pick up on this one again or I'll start something new. Not a great start to the year. I hope yours was better.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments (please) on yesterday's Journal entry at <http://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-tuesday-january-1/#comments>.

See "2018: D2D's Year of Discoverability & Empowering Authors" at <https://www.draft2digital.com/blog/2018-d2ds-year-of-discoverability-empowering-authors/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, if you're interested in yet another way to market your work, check out the FREE option on "Prolific Works" (formerly Instafreebie) at <https://www.prolificworks.com/plans>.

See "Theme" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/01/02/theme/>. Wow. Great, very succinct, post.

See "Networking For Writers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/networking-for-writers-2.html>.

See "On Morning Pages and Self-discipline" at <https://dgalloway.wordpress.com/2018/11/26/on-morning-pages-and-self-discipline/>.

See "Does Your Cover Need a New Year's Makeover?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/does-your-cover-need-a-new-years-makeover.html>. I recommend skipping down to "The only two you have any control over...."

For fun, see "Madam Zelda's Top 14 Predictions for 2019" at <https://www.leelofland.com/madam-zeldas-top-14-predictions-for-2019/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 820 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 820

Writing of The Farmhand (novel, tentative title)

Day 1..... 1628 words. Total words to date..... 1628

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX (stalled)

Total fiction words for the month..... 1628

Total fiction words for the year..... 1628

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2541

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 2541
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 4169

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [David Galloway](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

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

[January 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Today's "Of Interest" is long and loaded with great links. I encourage you to read them. You'll learn a ton.

I considered pasting an excerpt of Kris Rusch's post on Pricing here, but I decided against it. All you have to do is click the second link below and you'll get the whole thing. And it's good. To see what I was going to paste, scroll down to "Here's [sic] the other things you need to do on setting the right price".

Whether or not you decide to use BookFunnel (mentioned recently by Kris Rusch), for some great ideas on marketing with exclusive content, I recommend visiting <https://blog.bookfunnel.com/>. A lot of great ideas there.

If you haven't visited the Writers Resources page recently at <http://harvestanbrough.com/writer-resources> I suggest you take a look. Some great stuff over there.

Topic: On the Challenge

Thanks for all the kind comments via email re my current writing conundrum. Overall, I'm not worried in the slightest. I'm a fiction writer, which means writing fiction is what I do.

For me, writing is fun. Being deep in a story with my fingers poised on the keyboard ready to record what the characters say and do is the most relaxing, enjoyable thing I can do.

So I'm not afraid the words have dried up or any silly thing like that.

I only shared my whiny take on my own current problem yesterday because I promised early-on to share everything about my writing process, warts and all. (grin) In other words, I wanted you to see I'm in the same boat you're in. We all have our problems.

At the moment (I rolled out a little before 2 and it's currently 4 a.m.) I'm still in the middle of writing this Journal entry.

Until a few minutes ago, I wasn't sure at all what I was going to do about my challenge. Then I re-read what I typed in yesterday's Journal: "Not a great start to the year."

That was just silly and very negative. Remember this:

***Negative thoughts ALWAYS come from the conscious, critical mind
and they are NEVER helpful.***

Besides, a new year, a new beginning, starts every time we roll out of bed.

I realized I was giving too much power to a particular date that's really just like all the other dates. That power-drain sucked all the fun out of writing and froze me solid, like a Popsicle at the North Pole. (grin)

So I made a decision.

Rather than forging ahead with the same start date (January 1) and writing-off the first couple of days of the challenge, I'm simply going to restart.

So I'm tossing out what I've written on The Farmhand. Period. Just to show it who's the boss. There's no reason to struggle with something that should flow naturally. Maybe I'll start it over someday, and maybe not. No biggie.

What matters is that now I can breathe again. (grin)

When I start a new novel, whatever it is, I'll restart the challenge from that date.

The challenge will remain the same: to write 10 novels in 150 days (inclusive) from that start date. When that happens, I'll update it here so those of you who are interested can follow along.

Just in case you're wondering, the 15-day per-novel time constraint won't add any pressure either. Once I begin, I'll just write, aiming for 4,000 words per day. Some days I'll hit it, and some days I won't. Some days I'll shoot past it like it's nailed to a tree.

Some novels will finish sooner than 15 days and some will take more time. The average is what matters, and 150 days after I start, I fully expect to have 10 new novels to my credit. There's absolutely no reason I shouldn't.

The plan is to spell-check each new novel and get it straight out to my first reader, then begin the next one. I won't worry about designing covers, creating a promo file and all that until the challenge is over.

Anyway, you can watch it all unfold right here and judge for yourself how well it works.

For today, no fiction writing. Today I'm going to do a little marketing, and that probably will continue tomorrow and through the weekend.

Today I'll at least set up a D2D author page and see about setting up some book tabs. With 37 novels published or coming soon, I figure it's about time. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Sales (Planning For 2019 Part 2)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/02/business-musings-sales-planning-for-2019-part-2/>. If you're serious about selling your books, read this. It also has some great links in it.

See "The Business Rusch: Pricing (Discoverability Part 7)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2014/01/15/the-business-rusch-pricing-discoverability-part-7/>.

See "Wednesday Musings: A Faulty Hip and MurderCon" at <https://www.leelofland.com/wednesday-musings-a-faulty-hip-and-murdercon/>.

See "A Dirty Dozen of Dos and Don'ts For Your CSI Characters" at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-dirty-dozen-of-dos-and-donts-for-your-csi-characters/>.

See "My Life As a Psychopath" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/my-life-as-a-psychopath/>. This can be invaluable if you write crime fiction.

See "What 2018 Looked Like Fifty Years Ago" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-2018-looked-like-fifty-years-ago/>.

See "You Tell Me: How Often Do You Buy a New eReader?" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/you-tell-me-how-often-do-you-buy-a-new-ereader/>. My own experience is identical to the Passive Guy's.

Via Dean Wesley Smith, see "Public Domain Day 2019" at <https://law.duke.edu/cspd/publicdomainday/2019/>.

See "Mentoring and Workshops" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/mentoring-and-workshops/>.

See “Tips on Writing a Domestic Thriller” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/tips-on-writing-a-domestic-thriller.html>.

Via Jordan Dane, see “123 Ideas For Character Flaws” at <https://writerswrite.co.za/123-ideas-for-character-flaws/>.

Finally, a new resource. Take along a salt shaker, of course. Use what works for you and discard the rest. See “Writers Write” at <https://writerswrite.co.za/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 880 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 880

Writing of (novel, tentative title)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 1628
Total fiction words for the year..... 1628
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3421
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 3421
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 5049

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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 Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writers Write](#)

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

[January 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Yesterday, I went to D2D and found I already had an author page set up. That was kind of neat. Then I realized hardly any of my books were grouped together. Most of my novels were grouped with my short stories in “Other Books.”

I'd failed to put the series tags and numbers on actual series, and the other books were just all over the place.

So I put series tags and numbers on the books that are in actual series. Then I started lumping all the mysteries together into a Mystery "series" (group), SF into an SF group, etc. until I had all of my novels, novellas and short story collections done.

That was a lengthy process (3+ hours). From now on I'll be careful to put each major work in a series or group when I publish it.

Okay, since I screwed up the link yesterday, here it is again (grin):

If you haven't visited the Writers Resources page recently at <http://harveystanbrough.com/writer-resources> I suggest you take a look. Some great stuff over there. (Thanks for the heads-up, Scott.)

Fairly early this morning I decided to bring my publisher website (StoneThreadPublishing.com) up to date. That ate up a few hours. Eventually, probably, clicking a book cover on my main author website will bring up the page for that novel or collection on my publisher site.

Then when I went up for breakfast, my bride asked innocently whether I'd ever transferred ownership of Confessions of a Professional Psychopath from my persona, Eric Stringer, to myself.

Well, no, I hadn't. But I have now. I revised the metadata in both documents, revised the promo document, created a new cover and uploaded the whole mess to D2D, Smashwords, Amazon and BundleRabbit.

And that's the day up to about 11 a.m. Whew! Then to the PO, then back to revising the publisher and author websites with the new Confessions cover and description and some other things.

And so will go the rest of the day. But I have to tell you, I'm already feeling withdrawal pangs and jonesing to write something. So my original plan to carry my sloth impression through the weekend probably will fall by the wayside.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Why Small Towns Are So Perfect for Crime Fiction" at <https://crimereads.com/why-small-towns-are-so-perfect-for-crime-fiction/>. These posts are notoriously short, but there's still a little food for thought in this one.

See “My Challenge” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/my-challenge/>. I gotta say I love it.

See “What Christmas Songs Can Teach a Writer” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2018/12/what-christmas-songs-can-teach-writer.html>. She omitted Elvis’ version of “Blue Christmas.” She included the emotion-wrenching “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” but kind’a missed the point, IMHO. Anyway, more food for thought.

See “What I learned About Writing from Space 1999” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/04/what-i-learned-about-writing-from-space-1999/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 389 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 389

Writing of (novel, tentative title)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 1628
Total fiction words for the year..... 1628
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 3810
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 5438

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Marilynn Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

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

[January 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A long post this morning, so consider yourself warned. (grin)

This morning, writer Mark Alpert over at the Kill Zone blog titled his post “Five Ways to Become a Happier Writer.” All well and good. I thought I was in for a real treat.

Uh, no.

The more I read, the more depressed I became.

The five points he laid out are valid. But the stuff he wrote below them, for the most part, was “not to my taste,” as Dean says. (grin)

Now, I’m aware all writers are different. But frankly, Mark’s post left me wondering why he’s a writer at all. If you read it, I think you’ll see what I mean.

I’ve included his post in “Of Interest” below, mostly so you can see for yourself what I’m talking about.

I don’t like wasting my time posting a comment where I suspect it won’t do any good whatsoever so I didn’t leave a comment there.

If you’ll allow me a metaphor by way of pre-emptive explanation, I can’t swim very well, but I’d still do my best to save someone who’s drowning. Unless I know he chose on purpose to dive into the raging waves. Once I realize that, hey, the guy’s on his own. I’m about nothing if not personal responsibility.

But his post stirred me to include a topic here based on his five points. You can call it a rebuttal, maybe.

Topic: Five Ways to Become a Happier Writer

I could just list Heinlein’s Rules here, but that would almost be cheating. Besides, been there, done that. In fact, I need to climb back on them myself.

1. Don’t let your happiness depend on things that are beyond your control.

Like landing an agent or a traditional publishing contract. Sure, you can work toward that end if you’re of that stripe, but whether either one actually happens is not your decision. The decision is up to the agent and the traditional publisher. In that way, striving to land an agent or a traditional publishing contract is a dream, not a goal.

I won’t go into depth about whether it’s a good dream or a nightmare. You already know my thoughts on that.

Suffice it to say re agents that a) agents aren’t licensed and b) it’s never wise to give someone you don’t know intimate control of your money. And re traditional publishers, a) the contracts suck and b) you’re only fodder to them.

The worst thing about going that route is that writer too often attach their self-esteem to whether some stranger (the agent) agrees to take 15% of your royalties for life plus 70 years and whether

another stranger (the publisher) “likes” what you send him enough to pay you a pittance in exchange for all rights to your copyright, again, for the duration of your life plus 70 years.

So I agree with Mr. Alpert. Don’t let your happiness depend on things that are beyond your control. Base your happiness on goals, not dreams. If you’re a writer, write. Then get what you’ve written out there so others can read it while you’re writing the next thing.

2. A writer’s happiness is not proportional to his or her number of readers.

Well, sometimes it is. I would revise the title of this section: Don’t attach your happiness to how many readers you have. Attaching your happiness to how many readers you have is like being continually miserable because you haven’t won the lottery yet.

How many readers you have is a dream, not a goal. It’s outside your control.

If you keep learning, keep practicing (writing), and keep putting your work out there, the readers will come.

3. Write about things that make you happy.

Okay, I’d revise this one too, but only slightly: Write what you want to write.

That being said, Mr. Alpert got this one right. To quote him directly,

“f you love to write about serial killers, go right ahead. If zombies or vampires are your thing, take a stab at it. It’s much better to give free rein to your fictional passions, whatever they are, than to force yourself to write about a subject you hate, no matter how commercially appealing it may be.”

Yep. Just like it’s much better to get the work out in public so readers can find it than it is to tie it up for years while you search for an agent.

As a side note, in his next paragraph Mark describes his latest novel. And immediately turns off at least half of his would be readers, including me. Just sayin’.

4. Figure out how important writing is to your happiness, and adjust your life accordingly.

Well, I can’t argue with this one, but that it came from a professional fiction writer surprised me a little. It also made me think Mark Alpert is on the endangered writers list. Within a few years, he’ll be one of those “whatever happened to” guys.

You’ve heard me say many times, if I writing wasn’t the most fun I could have, I’d find something else to do.

If you write strictly as a hobby, that's fine. But if you want to be a prolific writer, you have to write. And frankly, if you don't enjoy writing, you won't make it. No way. You might as well stop now.

5. When good things happen in your writing career, celebrate like crazy.

I agree completely. Surprised?

Though Mr. Alpert and I have different notions of "good things." (Ah, there it is.)

When I finish a story that's particularly difficult — like the third book (chronologically) in the Wes Crowley series, during which I had to tie the story into books 4, 5, and 6, which I'd written previously — I'm glad and relieved because it frees me up to write the next one.

But most of the time when I finish a novel I almost grieve. I'm leaving behind characters and a storyline that I grew to love as I was writing it.

So when do I celebrate? When I start a new one.

Writing a story brings me great joy, so why would I celebrate coming to the end of it? But I know writing the next one will bring me joy too, so I celebrate new beginnings. Doing that also helps me get over the grief of finishing the previous one.

I suppose it's all a matter of attitude, and that's what this topic is really all about.

I'm never happier than when I'm writing, so most of the time, Heinlein's Rules 1, 2 and 3 are easy for me. Rule 4 is a bit of a stretch sometimes because it forces me to cling to what I've finished a little longer, but I do it. Grudgingly. And I do it mostly because I enjoyed the story so why not let my readers enjoy it too?

As I say at the end of every post over on the author site, Happy Writing! And I wish Mr. Alpert the same.

If you aren't familiar with Heinlein's Rules, you can [get an annotated copy free right here](#).

I spent the first couple of hours of the day dawdling and writing the stuff above. Then I spent another hour adding a few new posts (culled from this Journal) to the Pro Writers blog at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

After that, I opened a Notepad document and talked to myself a little about what I want to write next. I had three immediate ideas:

A return to Nick Spalding and Marie for Book 5. They're on their way to their next adventure, talking about things winding down (even among humans, only so many wars can take

place in one time period). And something transports them to a different time period. Of course, I won't know what transports them until I write it. When they "land," they do what they do while getting used to the time shift. Over the course of the book, they also learn how they came to be transported and how to use the device (or whatever) intentionally, thus opening up the possibility of more books.

A return to Blackwell Ops in the same structure (stories within a novel) but with a different main character. A place like Blackwell Ops has several major operatives, each skilled in a different specialty. This could go on for awhile, letting one character per book tell his or her story (though maybe bringing in another character to assist at times). And of course, in the future we can return to Jack Tilden and other characters, but all under the umbrella of Blackwell Ops.

A return to Stern Talbot, PI. A little over three weeks before he succumbed to COPD, my friend Kenneth Flowers wrote "I love your detective stories and will always compare everything else to them." Is that a good catalyst, or what? And to be off and running with Stern Talbot, all I have to do is ask another character to drop by his office and give him an interesting case. And of course, I know who the next Talbot book will be dedicated to.

And another budding series (futuristic magic realism) was born in *The Keeper of the Promise*, and a few of my SF novels are practically begging for sequels if not series.

So as I wrote a few days ago, I'm not hurting for ideas.

For today, though, other than feeling my way into a few of these ideas, I won't do much in the way of writing fiction. I'll see what my bride has planned and we'll do that.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See Mark Alpert's "Five Ways To Become A Happier Writer" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/five-ways-to-become-a-happier-writer.html>. Go in with a container of rock salt under your arm.

See "Walking the Moors With Agatha" at <https://alisonholtbooks.com/walking-the-moors-with-agatha/>.

See "A Typical Day" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-typical-day/>.

NOTE: Writer Chuck Wendig uses rough language liberally and often unnecessarily. Consider yourself warned. Just in case you might get something useful from it, see "In 2019: Persist, Persist, Persist" at <http://terribleminds.com/ramble/2018/12/31/in-2019-persist-persist-persist/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1600 (Journal)
So total words for the day: 1600

Writing of (novel, tentative title)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 1628
Total fiction words for the year..... 1628
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 5410
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 7038

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [Chuck Wendig](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Mark Alpert](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

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

[January 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I've decided I'm going to write another Blackwell Ops story. Not because I'm not interested in Nick and Marie anymore, or in Stern Talbot, or in [the other ideas I listed yesterday](#).

I want to start the challenge with another Blackwell Ops book because I don't want to take the time to read over the last Nick Spalding book to refresh my memory about the main characters. (grin) I'm just that lazy.

And if I start with another Stern Talbot book, I'll have to include a new technique I re-learned recently. I'm not sure I want to do that at the beginning of a challenge.

As always, the writing, not specifically what I write, is what's important.

As yesterday, a post I read online (see “Of Interest”) keyed a topic for today’s Journal. This topic is a revised version of my comment on Mr. Bell’s post.

Topic: Word-Count Goals

Hello. My name is Harvey Stanbrough, and I’m addicted to word-count goals and writing fiction. (grin)

My word-count goal is daily, but if I miss or fall short, the sun still comes up and the goal resets the next morning. (grin) I usually meet it, and I often go over. Sometimes way over.

When I’m writing a novel, I generally write every day. I also usually take a few days off between novels, but only until I’m jonesing to put words on the page again (like I am today).

During that lag time, I’m doing admin stuff (covers, making any changes my first reader recommends, publishing, etc.). I’m also usually involved in online workshops where I learn new (to me) techniques.

Though I’m happy to report that more and more often, as was the case with the most recent workshop, I’m finding I already know and use the techniques from the workshops. (grin) Sometimes the validation is worth the price of the workshop.

I keep track of my writing on a productivity spreadsheet one year at a time. (This takes about five minutes at the end of the day.)

My spreadsheet shows the titles in the left column with dates of the month across the top.

The first column to the right of the title is a Carried Forward column in case a book crosses from one month into the next.

At the bottom of each month are daily totals and the annual total, automatically updated each day for fiction.

At the far right are totals for each project (usually fiction, occasionally a nonfiction book), a total for my daily nonfiction (my Journal), plus the updating annual totals for fiction, nonfiction and overall words.

The screenshot below is of part of my 2018 productivity spreadsheet. (Click to enlarge image.)

	A	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE
1	Title	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
60	Consequences (Nick 4)										
61	Situation Solved	5909	3396	3363	2427	587	0	1057	2798	0	1738
62	NONFICTION	1120	500	150	460	890	910	1280	1210	1300	550
63	Total November 2018	5909	3396	3363	2427	587	0	1057	2798	0	1738
64	Annual Totals	442263	445659	449022	451449	452036	452036	453093	455891	455891	457629
65	Situation Solved										
66	Blackwell Ops	5534	4350	2089	3890	2629	1322	2013	4626	2101	5903
67	NONFICTION	920	750	810	750	670	360	520	1180	590	710
68	Total December 2018	5534	4350	2089	3890	2629	1322	2013	4626	2101	5903
69	Annual Totals	506688	511038	513127	517017	519646	520968	522981	527607	529708	535611
70											

This isn't the only way of doing it, but it works for me. At a glance, it shows my daily, monthly and annual progress, and most importantly it keeps driving me back to the keyboard.

I rise very early to write so I don't miss much family time, and my wife is very supportive.

In this way, I've written 37 novels, 7 novellas, almost 200 short stories and 17 nonfiction books. And I wrote all of that but two nonfiction books and a few short stories after I went full time in April 2014.

I'd be happy to send a copy of last year's spreadsheet to anyone who might find it useful, either to copy and use (for the formulas) or to set up their own. Just email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Weird start to the day. I rolled out at 2 a.m., got dressed and started making coffee.

While standing at the coffee maker, I glanced up to see the clock on the wall of the kitchen showed it was 4 a.m.

So I went in to let the pup out of his kennel about an hour early, so I wouldn't have to go to the Hovel and come right back.

After he went out and came in, I gave him his morning treat, then went back to retrieve my coffee and head out.

But I glanced at the clock again and noticed it was still 4 o'clock. The second hand was ticking at one spot, stuck.

So I went into my office to check the time. It was shortly after 2. I'd let the pup out a full 3 hours early. No wonder he was confused. Sigh.

But I had my two missing hours back, so I went to the Hovel to begin my day.

After doing the Internet stuff and writing most of the stuff for this edition of the Journal, I was searching through some old manuscripts (other novels) to find names I want to bring forward into the Blackwell Ops series. (Yes, you can do that.)

I also copied and pasted descriptions of the characters I might bring forward. I never do detailed character sketches, but I always write detailed character descriptions (height, weight, hair, eyes, body shape) so they remain the same no matter where the character appears.

During that process, I decided to change my protagonist's name from Stern Richards (in one book) to Stern Talbot to bring it up to date. I had to make changes to two manuscripts (Smashwords and Everyone Else) then upload those documents.

By the way, Smashwords "meatgrinder" engine used to recognize numbers-only as chapter heads to create an automatic TOC. But they've changed it. Now it requires "Chapter" followed by the numbers. Sigh.

Anyway, it's a little after 5 now. Maybe I can get in one good session on my 38th novel. After that, well, it's Sunday, so for the rest of the day, we'll see. (grin)

Well, the best-laid plans. I was all set to start writing a Blackwell Ops novel, but when I put my fingers on the keyboard a snippet of conversation from a few years ago popped into my head. Next thing I knew, my subconscious had created a few characters and I was knee-deep in my next Stern Talbot PI novel.

Today will be a short day as I'm on my way in to watch football, but not a bad day at all.

So the challenge begins today (writing 10 novels in 150 days). The last day of the challenge will be May 5.

Onward.

Talk with you again soon. 21 weeks

Of Interest

See "On Setting Word Count Goals" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/on-setting-word-count-goals.html>.

If you enjoy Hemingway, see "Reconsidering Hemingway's World War II Legacy" at <https://strandmag.com/reconsidering-hemingways-world-war-ii-legacy/>.

For more, see "Revisiting Paris: The Story Behind Ernest Hemingway's Unpublished 'A Room on the Garden Side'" at <https://strandmag.com/revisiting-paris-hemingway-unpublished/>. This short story is now published, by the way, and available at Strand Magazine.

See “10 Settings to Give you the Creeps” at <https://strandmag.com/10-creepy-settings/>.

See “Five Ways to Begin Your Book” at <https://strandmag.com/five-ways-begin-book/>.

For more writing tips see “The Strand Magazine” at <https://strandmag.com/category/writing-tips/>. Take your salt shaker along. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2784

Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3914

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784

Total fiction words for the month..... 4412

Total fiction words for the year..... 4412

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6540

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6540

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 10952

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Ernest Hemingway](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [Strand Magazine](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Monday, January 7

[January 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A fairly short Journal entry today. I’m sure you’re relieved after the past few days. (grin)

Wow, what a day. A dear friend asked yesterday for a copy of a short story I wrote a couple of years ago titled “Ila and the Piñon Tree.” She wanted to review it for me. So I sent it to her.

This morning, she emailed to say some of the text was missing.

She was right.

What made it even worse is that this edition also contained the Spanish translation by the editor of [EstePaís](#) magazine.

After about a 20-minute search (yeah, I left the WIP at that point), I realized the American text didn't match the translation. At all. I'd somehow managed to publish the wrong version of the original story!

So I rushed around, got the right version done, then uploaded it to Smashwords, D2D and Amazon. Tragedy averted. I'm just glad it was only a short story.

Well, and another tragedy appeared. While I was working on that, I got an email from D2D saying I needed to review one of the anthologies I released a long while back. Seems one or more of the retailers didn't like that I had listed myself on the cover as the editor but hadn't listed all the authors.

Fine. So I redid the cover, then uploaded that. About a half-hour gone. So an hour total at that point.

And while I was at Smashwords to upload Ila, I found that another anthology required review. Seems one of the retailers didn't want any hyperlinks included At All. (My other anthologies with Smashwords have hyperlinks, no problem.)

So I went through and deactivated all the hyperlinks, then resubmitted that. Another hour gone. (The upstart is that I won't be editing anymore anthologies for other authors. WAY too many weird proprietary rules, and they're far too arbitrarily applied.)

I was going to do a load of laundry today, but I think I'll put that off until tomorrow and go limping back to my WIP now. Sigh. At least there I can be among friends, no wolves nipping at my heels, and enjoy myself.

Got a fairly good day, but missed my 4000 word day for the second day in a row. That's all right though. The magic of a daily goal is that it resets every morning. (grin) And with the time lost and all the gnome encounters this morning, I don't feel too bad.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "An old typewriter and a big idea" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/an-old-typewriter-and-a-big-idea/>.

See "How Could 1 Body Decompose at 3 Different Rates?" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/how-could-1-body-decompose-at-3-different-rates/>. Just wow.

See “Morality and the Modern Writer” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/morality-and-the-modern-writer.html>. Yet one more reason, offered by a traditionally published author, to avoid traditional publishing.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Local Knowledge” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/07/free-fiction-monday-local-knowledge-2/>.

Fiction Words: 3250

Nonfiction Words: 430 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3680

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784

Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034

Total fiction words for the month..... 7662

Total fiction words for the year..... 7662

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6970

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 6970

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 14632

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37

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](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, January 8

[January 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Numbers, numbers, numbers...

I just realized, since I adjusted my goal from writing 10 novels in 100 days to writing 10 novels in 150 days, I don't really need the daily goal of 4000 words per day. (grin)

Most of my novels are in the 35,000 to 50,000 word range.

For example, if I write at least 3000 words per day (on average) for 150 days, that's 450,000 words. More than enough.

But I'm gonna stay with the 4,000 words per day goal anyway because it stretches me a little. And if I can write 4,000 words per day (again, on average) for 150 days, that's 600,000 words of new fiction I'll have in the bank by May 5. Woohoo!

That's 12 50,000-word novels on the high end of my normal range and 17 35,000 word novels on the short end.

Heck, even if I could live with characters long enough to write a series of 100,000-word novels, I'd write 6 in the first 4 months and 5 days of the year.

FYI, that isn't going to happen. Just for discoverability alone, I'd much rather have 12 50,000-word novels out there than 6 100,000-word novels. (grin)

Topic 1: Cycling Is Valuable in Two Ways

I had an email question about cycling from a writer friend in France recently. (Thanks, Céline.) I thought I would elaborate further here.

Cycling, as you all know, is different from revising or editing. The main difference is that the former enables you to stay in your creative subconscious and the others invoke and involve your conscious, critical mind.

For more on that, see my earlier posts on cycling [here](#) and [here](#). And there are others.

Cycling is valuable in two ways. Here's the first way:

I generally write one scene (and one chapter) of about 1200 words per session. Then I take a break.

When I come back for the next session, I sit down, scroll back to the beginning of the previous session, and start reading.

I don't read critically. I read as a reader, not "looking" for anything in particular. My fingers are poised on the keyboard.

As I read, I allow my subconscious (my POV character) to add whatever he or she wanted to add the first time through that I missed in my weak mortal efforts to record what was going on.

In this way, when I type "The End" the short story or novel is finished. I take a break, come back and cycle through the last session, then run a spell check and send the thing off to my first reader, usually within minutes of typing "The End."

And here's the second way:

As I'm writing along, I'm not telling the story. My characters are. They have full rein. After all, it's their story, not mine.

As a result, often a character will suddenly do something completely unexpected. For example, say I'm in Chapter 28 (of around 45 chapters) when kindly old Aunt Marge pulls a .32 caliber revolver from the pocket of her pink robe and levels it at the man standing in her living room.

(Maybe he's a burglar who just forced his way through her front door. Maybe he's a detective whom she allowed admittance and who wants to ask her a few questions about a murder that happened down the block. Maybe it's her nephew and he just asked her about Uncle Mort's old .32 caliber revolver.)

Whoa! I didn't see that coming! But the real problem with this is that I didn't see Aunt Marge slip the revolver into her pocket in the first place. She can't pull out what she doesn't have.

Now if I were an outliner with the whole novel planned in advance, I'd probably get rid of the revolver and "find another way" (conscious mind) to write the scene.

But I'm not. I write into the dark, trusting my characters to tell their story.

(If this seems contra-indicated to you, consider: When a friend is telling you what happened along the highway during her last trip into the city, do you know in advance what happened?

Of course not. And when you're writing into the dark, you don't know in advance what your characters are going to do or say either.)

So when something happens that I wasn't expecting, I just trust the characters.

I stop writing, cycle back to a previous scene (maybe Chapter 9 or Chapter 14 or even Chapter 27) and add a sentence that lets the reader see Aunt Marge slipping the revolver into the pocket of her robe.

Then I either read forward from there (still cycling) and fill in any other missing tidbits or I just go back to where I left off and continue the scene.

Which one I do depends on the story. I hope this helps clarify things. Any other questions or comments, please ask.

Topic 2: On Books with Baggage

Weird. I've talked here before about how timely Dean Wesley Smith's posts are at times. It's almost like the guy's hiding in my closet.

The novel I started two days ago will be the 10th in my Stern Talbot series. It was inspired by a brief, eerie conversation I had with a widow after the funeral of her husband.

As a friend of the deceased, I'd been invited by his adult children to read a poem I'd written on the occasion of his passing. (The widow, who was not the mother of the children, had no problem with that, but she and I had never met.)

Toward the end of the writing day yesterday I hit a bump in writing that novel. I'm not "stuck" at all, but I am a little mired. There's a section I have to work through by just writing the next sentence, wiping the mud off my boots, then repeating the process again and again.

In other words the writing on this one isn't flowing at the moment, and of course I prefer the writing to flow.

But that's fine. It happens. Most often it results in slower writing, meaning shorter sessions during which I write maybe 500 or 600 new words per hour instead of my usual 1000 to 1200.

Then Dean's post appeared this morning and slapped me with the reason: The book has baggage. Duh.

I'll stick with the book through today, but if I continue to slog through mud with every step, I'll set this one aside, write another novel in another series, then return to this one later in the challenge.

To the Hovel at 3. I wrote everything above and most of what's below by 4:20. Now for a brief break, then to the novel.

The novel picked up steam again, so I'm staying with it. But I have a feeling it's going to be slow going for awhile. Stories like this have a lot of psychological stuff, and that takes care and a lot of cycling back. So for the coming days, my writing numbers will probably be all over the place as I slog through the soft middle ground of the novel.

Then again, that's why the average, not the individual daily word count, is what's important.

For today, I'm calling it at 2:45.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "The Book With Baggage" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-book-with-baggage/>. Not long but a little enlightening.

See "When the web started" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/when-the-web-started-2/>.

See "Hip Replacement: The Ins and Outs of It" at <https://www.leelofland.com/hip-replacement-the-ins-and-outs-of-it/>. A hysterical piece, reflecting retired detective Lee Lofland's refreshing sense of humor.

See “My Writing Process Start to Finish” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/08/my-writing-process-start-to-finish/>.

For time-management, goal-setting and other productivity tools you might find useful, see <https://infostack.io/ybyy/>. NOTE: This is only an announcement, not an endorsement.

See “I Lost a Femur the Easy Way, She Did Not” at <https://www.leelofland.com/i-lost-a-femur-the-easy-way-she-did-not/>. NOTE: This post is graphic, both in textual description and photos.

Fiction Words: 2507

Nonfiction Words: 1330 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3837

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784

Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034

Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521

Total fiction words for the month..... 10169

Total fiction words for the year..... 10169

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8300

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 8300

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 18469

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37

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 Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

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

[January 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, the beat goes on. Just as I ended last year with the passing of my lifelong friend Kenneth Flowers in late December, this month was marred by the passing of my dear friend Penny Porter.

Probably you've never heard of Penny, but she was a major help to writers around the globe as well as an excellent writer herself.

Penny, along with her friend Dale Adams, was instrumental in starting the Society of Southwestern Authors (SSA) in Tucson Arizona. In its heyday, the SSA held an annual conference rivaled by few others in size and quality. In some years, they had to turn away would-be walk-in participants at the door of the hotel.

I was a regular presenter at the conference for several years beginning in 1989 or 1990. Penny was the seemingly tireless conference coordinator for several years. Penny, sporting a head full of blazing red hair, always had a ready smile and she was a walking information booth.

She will be missed.

Topic: On Series Style Sheets and Reverse Outlines

Yesterday in her newsletter, Linda Maye Adams talked about creating and using what she calls a "series story bible."

In it, she notes "details mentioned in the books that are repeated later."

I assume those details include descriptions of recurring characters, descriptions of various settings that will be revisited, the specific spellings (including exact capitalization) of streets, businesses, and other locations that will appear more than once, and so on.

This is all about being consistent through a series and, for that matter, through a novella or novel.

When I was editing full time and encountered a series, I did the same thing. The only difference is that I called it a "style sheet."

Now, in my own writing, I do exactly the same thing with my reverse outline.

Note: I never outline anything in advance. If I've already written the story in outline form — if I know the major plot points, the major twists, and the ending — why bother writing it? That would just be majorly boring. Besides, if I did that, I'd be forcing my will on the characters, and that's just wrong.

But I do create a reverse outline, meaning I outline after the fact. I keep it open in a Notepad (text) document off to one side.

In the reverse outline, I keep a running list of character names and place names (cities, towns, businesses, pubs, etc.) at the top of my reverse outline as they appear in the story.

Then, as I finish each chapter, I take a few seconds to jot down a few notes about what happened in the chapter. I also note any descriptions of characters or settings.

If a character first appears and her physical characteristics are described in Chapter 5, in my notes on that chapter I include “DESC, Jane Doe.”

I do the same thing (“DESC, Jane Doe’s office” or “DESC, Old Town Pub” etc.) in the chapter notes the first time my POV character enters (and describes) a major setting.

So when I need to refresh my memory of a character or a setting, I can see at a glance which chapter holds the description.

If I know I’ll need the description often, sometimes I include the actual description directly in the reverse outline.

Hope this helps. Any questions, as always, please either ask in the comments section or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Just as I don’t create (or recommend creating) an advance outline, I also don’t recommend creating “character sketches.” I much prefer allowing the characters to reveal who they are as they appear in the story.

That being said, I understand not everyone subscribes to my way of doing things. With that in mind, I listed the first item in “Of Interest” below in case some of you might find it helpful.

I started to keep the typical diary-like notes about the day, but I kept getting distracted. Suffice it to say I wrote. Sort of.

A lot of cycling (the psychological stuff) by noon I had written only a little over 1000 words.

Then I got the notes back from my first reader on my Blackwell Ops book, so I took the diversion and read over them, made the changes I agreed with (almost all of them), then revised and uploaded the documents. It will release to the public on March 1.

So a very light day today.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Creating Characters: You Can Always Start With the Car” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/creating-characters-you-can-always-start-with-the-car.html>.

Note: This is not a technique I recommend or endorse.

See “Why I Disagree With the Konmari Tidying-Up Method for Books” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-i-disagree-with-the-konmari-tidying-up-method-for-books/>. You can click through to the original post too, but TPG’s take is hilarious.

See “Schedule Price Changes and Promos with Draft2Digital!” at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/schedule-price-changes-and-promos-with-draft2digital/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see “New Writing Scams to Look Out for in 2019” at <https://annerallen.com/2019/01/new-writing-scams-2019/>.

Via Anne R. Allen, see “Army of Clones, Part 2: Twenty-One (More) Publishing and Marketing “Services” to Beware Of” at <https://accrispin.blogspot.com/2018/12/army-of-clones-part-2-twenty-one.html>.

Also via Anne R. Allen, see “The State of the Publishing Union – 2018 Edition” at <https://russellblake.com/the-state-of-the-publishing-union-2018-edition/>.

For Anne R. Allen’s most popular posts, see <https://annerallen.com/archives/>.

Fiction Words: 1049

Nonfiction Words: 890 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1939

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784

Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034

Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521

Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570

Total fiction words for the month..... 11218

Total fiction words for the year..... 11218

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9190

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 9190

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 20408

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anne R. Allen](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

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

[January 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Wow. I rolled out at 3:45 after the first really good night's sleep I've had in a while. Almost 9 hours. (grin)

I breezed through the stuff in the "Of Interest" section (a GREAT section today, by the way), then took a short break, and I'm turning to the novel at 5.

Topic: Some Special Book Deals

I interrupt our regularly scheduled topics to offer you, my readers, a special deal on some brand-new books. (grin)

Yesterday I got everything finalized for **Blackwell Ops: Jack Tilden** (action-adventure thriller novel) and got it up for pre-publication sale. It's scheduled for release on March 1. Of course, I've already sent it to my donors. You can [see the cover and read the description here](#).

The regular price of Blackwell Ops: Jack Tilden is \$5.99, but if you'd like a copy, you can order it directly from me for a limited time for only \$2.99 via personal check or PayPal. Just email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and let me know. Be sure to let me know whether you want it in Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF. I'll send it right out.

I'm also offering my previous novel, **Situation Solved** (police procedural, hard-boiled mystery) for only \$2.99. You can [see the cover and description for that one here](#). It's set to be released on February 15, but you can get it now. Same terms as above.

Finally, I'll also offer the first four books of the **Nick Spalding series** (action-adventure romantic-suspense) as a bundle deal for \$11.96 (\$2.99 each) under the same terms. Or you can opt to purchase any of them for \$2.99. All are currently priced at \$5.99 and the last one, **Consequences**, is scheduled for release on January 15. But you can get all four novels now. You can [see each cover and read the descriptions by starting here](#)

We have a necessary trip to Sierra Vista this afternoon, and I have to attend, so limited writing time today.

I caught up on my reverse outline, then started cycling through the manuscript again. It feels like something's missing.

Found it. The characters kept wanting to hand me a new twist and I wasn't listening. But I listened during my last cycling session and now the novel's flying along again. Woohoo!

Unfortunately, it's on a short day. But I'll be back bright (well, dark) and early tomorrow morning.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Special Stories” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/special-stories/>. This post is so good I’m adding it to my Writers Resources page. Don’t miss it.

See “Listening to Your Characters” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/listening-to-your-characters/>. What Phillip says is absolutely valid for novels too.

See “Know What You’re Writing” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/know-what-youre-writing.html>.

See “Why brands need to make 2019 their most human year ever” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-brands-need-to-make-2019-their-most-human-year-ever/>. Read TPG’s take. He lists some reference books.

See “Publishers Endanger Free Speech” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/publishers-endanger-free-speech/>.

See “Business Musings: Bookstores and Libraries (Planning for 2019 Part 3)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/09/business-musings-bookstores-and-libraries-planning-for-2019-part-3/>. I’ve made a LOT of sales through libraries over the past few months.

Fiction Words: 2459

Nonfiction Words: 210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2669

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029

Total fiction words for the month..... 13677
Total fiction words for the year..... 13677
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 9700
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 23377

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37

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](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, January 11](#)

[January 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

You'll notice above it says The Daily Journal. That's right. I have a new goal. The goal is to make this a truly "daily" journal again. That will ensure I write something every day, even when it's only this little Journal.

I hope you enjoy it, and I hope you'll come along for the ride. Or continue the ride. You know, whatever. (grin)

The last time I missed a day was back on October 12, 2018. (Closer than I remembered.) So the plan is not to do that anymore.

I started the day with a marketing effort. I created a fan of six books covers, basically copied and pasted what I sent you last night, then put the whole thing into a "note" on Facebook. That and Internet stuff took up the first couple of hours of the morning.

I used the same program to create this cover fan that I used to create each cover: PagePlus X6 from Serif. You can find their exceptional (and very moderately priced) products at <https://www.serif.com/en-us/#legacy>. They also have a full range of newer "Affinity" products at <https://www.serif.com/en-us/>.

I didn't write a lot again today, but I will. Maybe not in this novel, but I will. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "No One Cares" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/no-one-cares/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see the incredibly informative "Astronaut Chris Hadfield Debunks Space Myths" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6rHHnABoT8>.

Also see “Astronauts Answer 50 of the Most Googled Space Questions” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dikG4vMJG1s>. But be ready with your cursor on the pause button.

See “Bookstores and Libraries (Planning for 2019 Part 3)” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/bookstores-and-libraries-planning-for-2019-part-3/>. This is a reference to Kris Rusch’s latest Business Musings post, which I hope you’ve already read. However, PG has a great take on the whole thing.

Fiction Words: 2723

Nonfiction Words: 300 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3023

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752

Total fiction words for the month..... 16400
Total fiction words for the year..... 16400
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10000
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 10000
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 26400

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Saturday, January 12

[January 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

First, to new subscriber M. Shephard, thanks for jumping in! Good to have you along.

I made a new friend (well, acquaintance) early this morning. A guy wrote me out of the blue to request all six books from my current special offer.

He went on to say he graduated high school a year before I did (different school) and knew several people from my hometown.

He also said he'd only recently found my books and had just finished reading The Wes Crowley Saga (all ten books in one edition) and loved it.

Talk about a great way to start your day. (grin)

Topic: Why I Have a Publisher Website

This topic won't appear over on the big site, so it's exclusive to you.

More and more often, as borne out by posts from such major players as Kristine Kathryn Rusch, booksellers are ordering books directly from the publisher.

They do so primarily because they'll receive what they order more quickly than if they order from distributors.

But they also expect to get the same or similar volume discounts from the publishers as they get from the distributors.

At StoneThread Publishing, I no longer do print books. It just isn't practical, given how many folks buy ebooks instead of print books, often because of the price difference.

So chances are I'm not going to land many (if any) bookseller orders.

On the other hand, readers deserve discounts too. And yes, volume discounts.

Not because a reader might order multiple copies of the same book, but because, as long as they're on the site, they might prefer to order multiple books.

On StoneThreadPublishing.com (and now on HarveyStanbrough.com), I make that an attractive possibility.

For instructional purposes, my Reader Discount Schedule is as follows:

Any single title, 12% discount (retail price x .88)

2-4 individual titles, 15% discount (retail price x .85)

5-9 individual titles, 20% discount (retail price x .80)

Additional copy as a gift, 35% discount (retail price x .65)

Notice that I stress “individual titles.” That’s to be sure they understand they can order 2-4 (or more) separate, individual titles and still get the discount.

Also notice I give them a discount if they order even one title directly from StoneThread (or me).

Why?

Because if they pay the full retail price of \$6 (rounded) at Amazon, I get \$4.20 royalty (70%).

If they pay the same retail price at the tiny Smashwords store I get an 80% royalty (\$4.80). (This is why I sometimes push buying at Smashwords.)

But if they buy that single title directly from me, they pay less (\$5.28) and I get more (also \$5.28).

That doesn’t seem like much difference. But if I sell 100 \$6 titles through the various sellers, the difference becomes more obvious.

From Amazon my royalty would be \$420. From Smashwords it would be \$480. But from StoneThread Publishing it would be \$528. Over \$100 more than I would get if I sold the same books through Amazon.

And if I got lucky and sold 1000 books? Just add another zero.

So if you’ve written more than a few novels, consider setting up a publisher website. Especially if you also publish to paper. In that case, there’s a good chance you’ll attract not only readers but booksellers to your site.

I should also mention that I pretty much mimic my publisher site on my author site. In fact, this morning I added a [Reader Discounts page](#) to my author site.

I won’t talk about bookseller discounts here, but I had them back when I had paper books in stock. You can see those discounts at <http://stonethreadpublishing.com/for-booksellers/>. But look quick. That page will be coming down in the next few days.

However, that’s been awhile ago. Rather than mimicking me in that regard, I recommend going to some other publisher sites and seeing what they offer for bookseller discounts.

Hope this helps.

Not a good writing day. I allowed for too many distractions. I'm calling it early. Back at it tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments on "No One Cares" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/no-one-cares/#comments>. Some great stuff in the comments, especially Dean's responses.

Also see the comments on "Special Stories" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/special-stories/#comments>. For the same reason. Some great stuff here.

See "Comic Relief" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/comic-relief.html>. Interesting take on fonts.

See "Why I don't outline" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/01/12/why-i-dont-outline/>.

Fiction Words: 1355

Nonfiction Words: 740 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2095

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107

Total fiction words for the month..... 17755
Total fiction words for the year..... 17755
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10740
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 10740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 28495

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, January 13](#)

[January 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Some good stuff in today's "Of Interest," as in the purloined topic, "Crappy First Drafts," which I blatantly stole from my friend, Dan Baldwin and his Writing Tip of the Week.

One note on James Scott Bell's examples at the Kill Zone blog:

Nobody, and I mean nobody, says "ta" for "to" or "ya" for "you." Folks in Minnesota say "ya" occasionally for "yeah," but even they never say "ya" for "you."

When writing intelligently (meaning with the reader in mind), dialect and accents are not rendered "over ta the saloon" or "What ya doin'?" (Read them aloud. You'll see what I mean.)

Instead those two example would be written the way they actually sound:

"There's somethin' goin' on over t'the saloon" (or simply "over at the saloon") or "What y'doin'?" (or the ever-popular "What'cha doin'?")

If you want to write dialect and accents well, I recommend listening closely t'yer characters and then sayin' some'a them things out loud 'fore (or "afore") y'commit 'em to the page.

Just sayin'. (grin)

And from my friend Dan Baldwin, by permission:

Topic: Crappy First Drafts

In just a single day earlier this month I came across two references to authors writing crappy first drafts. (Each writer used a much stronger term.) One, an agent, expects them. The other, a novelist and author on writing, wrote that the only way she gets anything written is to write "really, really, s****y first drafts.

I have problems with this line of thinking.

One, it's an automatic easy out for sloppy writing. "It's only a first draft. I'll fix it later." Like old dad rewiring the kitchen toaster; the "fix" is never as good as the original product.

Back in my corporate video days, when a mistake occurred on location, we'd say "No matter. We'll fix it in post (production)." I've seen projects ruined by sloppy directors directing sloppy productions that turned out to be unfixable in post.

Two, that attitude actually encourages writing crappy first drafts. A bad first draft becomes a goal and not a means. "My first draft is supposed to be crappy, so I'd better write it that way."

I read an interview with an author who bragged that he never sent in anything until he completed 20 drafts of his work. Really? Every project requires exactly 20 rewrites? That's not writing; that's ritual.

You have had more than a decade of English study. You've read books on writing, attended seminars, and have cross-pollinated with fellow writers. You know how to write a publishable first draft.

Why, then, settle for less? The idea that your first draft automatically must be crappy is, in fact, just a load of crap.

Please note that I send my first drafts to my first readers and my editor. And I do revise that first draft, but only according to editorial direction and then only if I agree. If they don't comment on something, I don't "fix" it. The first draft version stands as is.

Finally, my personal belief: the first draft is the closest to the writer's heart and with very few (editorial) exceptions, every change takes the work further from the heart, diminishes its power, and robs the reader of a more satisfactory experience.

Thanks, Dan. Folks, to get Dan's weekly writing tip free, email him at baldco@msn.com and put Writing Tips in the subject line of your email. He'll sign you up tout de suite. (grin)

Well, at last, something broke loose in the novel. Fairly good day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Magic Bakery Workshop Moved to Classic" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/magic-bakery-workshop-moved-to-classic/>. A smattering of good stuff.

See "Rendering Dialects and Accents in Dialogue" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/rendering-dialects-and-accents-in-dialogue.html>.

If you're into fonts, see the comments on "Comic Relief" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/comic-relief.html> (scroll down).

Fiction Words: 3151

Nonfiction Words: 590 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3741

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107
Day 8..... 3151 words. Total words to date..... 19258

Total fiction words for the month..... 20906
Total fiction words for the year..... 20906
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 11440
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 32236

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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 Daily Journal, Monday, January 14](#)

[January 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

In today's "Of Interest" DWS talks about trusting your character(s). As usual, he's spot-on, and with a very timely post.

And there's an absolute must-read from The Kill Zone blog. Enjoy.

Topic: Averting a Conscious-Mind Attack

Yesterday, in addition to what I wrote and reported here, I also took a wrong turn in the story and wrote 560 words that I didn't report.

How did I know it was a wrong turn?

Because the writing began to trudge along.

I'd write a sentence, then stop. Then I'd think "Just write the next sentence," and I did. And then I'd stop.

I kept wanting to think ahead, figure out how to make it fit, figure out where the scene was going next. And it finally dawned on me (duh) that was all conscious-mind stuff. I consider myself lucky I caught it only 500+ words in.

So if I was "just writing the next sentence," why didn't it work out?

Because I'd already taken that wrong turn without realizing it.

When I'd written the first few hundred words of the scene, it was like the character crossed her arms and stopped talking to me. I could almost see her standing there, glaring at me with one of those "Okay then, YOU figure it out, smart guy!" looks on her face.

But as I wrote above, I forged ahead. Sure enough, the scene finally sputtered and died, in the middle of a sentence, at 560 words.

The whole experience was miserable. I was reminded why writers who outline and hold their characters to the writer's vision of the story consider writing drudgery.

I only know it was 560 words because I glanced at the word count when I highlighted the scene just before I hit the Delete key.

I just deleted what I'd written in that scene, then took a short break. And when I came back to the novel, I surrendered to the character. I read back over about 1000 words before the part I deleted, and started writing again.

I began with having that same character (Stern's secretary) come into his office. This time the scene flowed naturally. And it was completely different than the part I'd written and then deleted.

This isn't something you have to think about while you're writing. When you have that nagging little feeling in the back of your mind that something isn't right, trust it. If you feel like you're pulling teeth to make the story come, most often it's a character telling you that you've taken a wrong turn.

Topic 2: Writers Write (But....)

Sometimes I say things about writing and meeting goals and publishing that others apparently take as harsh. Like everyone, maybe, I have moods. But my comments are never intended to be anything but motivating.

My comments are certainly not meant to be demeaning or demotivating. And I certainly never intend for my comments to indicate to any other writer that I believe he or she is a failure.

The fact of the matter is, Writers Write. It's just what we do.

And when we aren't writing, when we're doing something else, we're still writers, but we're writers who are doing something else at the moment. Does an automobile mechanic stop being a mechanic when he plays in a park with his children on Sunday afternoon?

When we aren't writing, we're writers doing research, or writers being parents, or being day-job workers or students or musicians or whatever.

We all have had those or similar pursuits "interrupt" our writing.

Everything is a matter of priorities. Sometimes, maybe even most of the time, writing is our priority. Hence the tag "writer."

But sometimes other things take priority, either in an emergency kind of way, like a death in the family or Dean's recent move or my recent health scare.

And then sometimes other things take priority just because we want them to. Like reading or doing chores or practicing a hobby.

There's nothing wrong with any of that. And taking the necessary time, in an emergency situation or otherwise, to follow other pursuits certainly doesn't make any of us a failure as a writer.

The only thing that might be misconstrued as "failure" in writing is if we stop writing. But even then, that word is actually a misnomer.

Consider, my own productive output is pretty good. By most standards, I'm considered "prolific," although most of the time I feel like a bit of a slacker.

But the point is this: Even if I stopped writing today, right this moment, just over 22,000 words into my 38th novel, and if I never wrote another word of fiction, could I realistically be considered a "failure" as a writer?

As an old Marine Corps buddy would have put it, "I don't ****ing think so."

A note on my process...

Of course, I'm not going to stop writing until I have no choice. I love writing, and I love being a writer. I mean, think about it. My "job" is to sit alone in the Hovel and make stuff up, just writing off into the dark. Just writing down what my characters say and do.

It really is that simple, and by any standard, it's a pretty great gig.

It isn't work, and it definitely isn't drudgery. Mostly because I don't outline and "tell" my characters what to say and do, and I don't rewrite to "correct" what they say or do.

Are there mistakes in my stories? Of course. I've yet to put out a perfect manuscript, one in which there are zero inconsistencies, zero typos, zero timeline glitches, etc. I just do the best I can at the current point in time, run it past a first reader, publish it and move on to the next story.

And I'm fortunate that most readers seem to enjoy my work. The same story that entertained me originally as my characters conveyed it to me entertains them as well, to the point that they happily overlook the glitches, forgive them and buy the next book.

And that's what I wish for you, regardless of your method of getting there.

If I were in an advice-giving mood, I would say I hope you'll trust yourself (and your readers), publish your books, and let your readers decide how they feel about them as you move on to the next story.

After all, reading and judging your work is the reader's job. Your job is to write.

But if you choose not to do it "my" way, that's fine too. Do it however you want. You certainly don't need my permission. Your process is your process.

But please don't ever see yourself as a failure. And if someone else does, mark it up to them not having a clue what the hell they're talking about and then go back to your writing.

You really are that good.

Pretty good day today. Could have been better, could have been much worse. I'll take it.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Trust the Character" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/trust-the-character/>. This is SUCH an important post on many levels.

See "TKZ Members Weigh In on Series Writing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/tkz-members-weigh-in-on-series-writing.html>. Oh my. Oh yes. This one is definitely going into Writers Resources over on my author site.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Still Life 1931” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/14/free-fiction-monday-still-life-1931/>.

Fiction Words: 2803

Nonfiction Words: 1230 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4033

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107
Day 8..... 3151 words. Total words to date..... 19258
Day 9..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 22061

Total fiction words for the month..... 23709
Total fiction words for the year..... 23709
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12560
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 12560
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 36269

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, January 15](#)

[January 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, Consequences released today. Woohoo! I got an email from Amazon letting me know that, so it released at D2D and Smashwords as well. I'll upload it to BundleRabbit later today.

Frankly, I'd forgotten what day it was, and at the moment I can't remember what the story was about, except that it's in the Nick Spalding series. How's that for not making a particular book "special"? (grin)

While I'm rambling, let me recommend Linda Maye Adams' newsletter again. In it she occasionally drops a real gem. You can sign up by visiting her website at <https://lindamayeadams.com/>.

Topic: What We Love vs. What We Profess to Love: A Parable

Characters have a great deal to teach us.

A thought struck me this morning as I considered a character, a genderless writer whose once often-professed passion was writing.

The character-writer's productivity used to bear that out. Now, though, not so much. At first, s/he was turning out new work at an alarming pace.

Then s/he listened to some outside comments and decided to pull down and rework some of the stories s/he'd published. S/he did that while continuing to turn out new stories, albeit a lot fewer new stories.

Understand, the character-writer never said s/he no longer has a passion for storytelling.

But over time his/her actions belied that as s/he eventually turned all efforts toward revising things already written. As a result, over time, writing new stories ground to a near-halt.

Eventually that character-writer surrendered to the conscious, critical mind to the point that s/he hasn't even re-released the stories that were previously published and that s/he took down to "improve" them.

Personally, as a writer, I can't imagine a more miserable existence.

The thought that occurred was this: Writing part-time beats writing no-time until it doesn't. And actually, that applies across the board.

I had to think about that awhile. I believe it means that doing something we profess to love only part-time because we give other things a greater priority is a kind of slow death, a slow but steady march toward not doing what we profess to love at all.

Sadly, I've seen that time and again among some really good writers just in the short time I've been writing full time (5 years). In that time, I've seen some great writers whose works I admired fire up like a Roman Candle. And later, fizzle out and die away to obscurity.

Maybe their priorities simply shifted and what they truly love doing (vs. what they profess to love doing) shifted along with them. So naturally, they aren't writing as often or as much as they say they want to. Or at all. Of course, that's fine too.

I learned a long time ago, what doesn't directly affect my own life span, productivity or income doesn't matter. (I need to remember that more often.) Still, it makes me a little sad.

As to setting priorities, Ray Bradbury said it best: "I love to write. It's all I do."

Of course, he did other things too, but writing was the One Big Thing to which he always returned. That bore out his statement and his passion.

Time is our most valuable asset. And like our priorities, it continues until one day it just doesn't anymore. I hope you're spending yours doing exactly what you want to do.

For me personally it's all very cut and dried. Indecision expressed as warring passions/priorities is the worst possible waste of time.

So for me, there will never be a long, drawn-out decline from writing with passion to writing every now and then to fading into obscurity.

Like ol' Forest Gump with his running, I'll keep writing until I figure I've written enough, and then I'll stop. Period.

May that event occur a long way down the road. And frankly, I hope it coincides perfectly with when Time itself runs out.

Wow. I used a lot of time (almost 3 hours) writing the stuff above, adding a new post to the Pro Writers blog, and reading the stuff in "Of Interest." I guess my "big" priority is split between writing fiction and chatting with my friends. (grin)

Finally, at 6 a.m., to the novel. But I allowed interruptions. Unnecessary interruptions. A lot of them.

Still, all in all, a fairly decent day.

I seem to be constantly reinventing myself, or at least how I use the hours in the day.

On a typical morning, I'm up at 2 or 3 and I use the first hour or so to create this Journal. That's all well and good. It limbers up my fingers and my mind and gets me ready for the writing day. (grin)

But then, I usually check for items of interest, and that often leads me to other things, distractions. I'll bet you know that drill.

The problem is, although I can write in the afternoon, my best writing hours happen before about 11 a.m.

Now from 2 or 3 a.m. (plus an hour), I have ample time to write. If I start at 3 or 4 a.m. (an hour after I get up), including taking a break about once an hour, there are at least 7 hours left before I get to 11 a.m.

So I should have no trouble turning out half a boatload of words, especially when a story is flowing.

So I'm going to try something new starting tomorrow morning. I'll do my usual wake-up exercise (writing most of the Journal), then go straight to the novel.

Then I'll do all the "Of Interest" stuff after the writing day is over.

I know this is mostly for me, but I thought I'd share it here in case it gives any of you some ideas.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Second-Hand Sales" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/second-hand-sales/>. This has me rethinking (again) maybe taking my novels to paper.

See "Harlan Ellison" at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2018/06/harlan-ellison.html>.

See "Cracking The Big Mystery Behind The Bestseller Lists" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/cracking-the-big-mysterybehind-the-bestseller-lists.html>.

See "Keeping track of everything: Series Bible" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/15/keeping-track-of-everything-series-bible/>. You might want to check my followup comment too. (grin)

Not specifically about writing, but see "12 Thrillers and Crime Movies We're Excited to See in 2019" at <https://crimereads.com/12-thrillers-and-crime-movies-we-cant-wait-to-see-in-2019/>.

Fiction Words: 3070

Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4100

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784

Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034

Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521

Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107
Day 8..... 3151 words. Total words to date..... 19258
Day 9..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 22061
Day 10... 3070 words. Total words to date..... 25131

Total fiction words for the month..... 26779
Total fiction words for the year..... 26779
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13590
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 13590
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 40369

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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](#), [Neil Gaiman](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, January 16](#)

[January 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I learned from Linda Maye Adams' newsletter that the 2019 Superstars Seminar will run from February 7-9 this year. So I looked it up. (grin)

The seminar focuses on the business side of writing, but according to the website they'll also have a separate writing craft day on February 6. You can attend that as well, or separately.

According to Christine Mandeville, the conference co-director, some sessions are full but there are a lot of extras. I recommend it.

To see the lineup of instructors, the curriculum and the schedule, click <http://superstarswriting.com/>. To see the fees, visit <http://superstarswriting.com/fees/>. Ms. Mandeville also said anyone who has never been to Superstars can get a \$100 discount as "New Member" or "Student/Military" with code CMANDEVILLE. And she said their definition of "student" and "military" are very flexible.

Linda May Adams says if you're interested in attending, you can also use "the referral code LADAMS."

Rolled out early this morning at 2. For the first hour, as I planned yesterday, I found a few items for "Of Interest."

A little after 3, I started cycling back through the last few chapters I wrote (around 4600 words) and updated my reverse outline to get my head back into the story. While cycling, I added only about a hundred words, which tells me the story's pretty tight so far. (grin)

I picked up where I left off in the novel at about 4:20. It should be a good writing day.

I've taken a few breaks off and on. Now, at 6:30 with about 1600 words (it was a slow two hours), I'll take an extended break for breakfast, then get back at it.

At 8:45, back to the novel, and at 10:30, off for lunch.

Some back and forth with the Superstars stuff, then back to the novel at a little after 11.

Still haven't quite got the knack of leaving everything else alone so I can just write in the morning. I was distracted a few times, but not as bad as yesterday. Still, today was a pretty good day. I'll work on it again tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "First Page Critique – The Halcyon Vengeance" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/first-page-critique-the-halcyon-vengeance.html>. Some great tips in here for writing openings and setting.

Just in case you missed it a few months ago, see "An Evening with Ray Bradbury" at <https://www.uctv.tv/shows/An-Evening-with-Ray-Bradbury-2001-5533>.

To watch and listen to an excellent 20-minute interview with Lee Child, see <https://library.okstate.edu/friends/>. Thanks to my friend, Robert Sadler for sharing this.

See "Two New Pop-Up Workshops" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/two-new-pop-up-workshops/>.

Fiction Words: 4460

Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4870

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107
Day 8..... 3151 words. Total words to date..... 19258
Day 9..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 22061
Day 10... 3070 words. Total words to date..... 25131
Day 11... 4460 words. Total words to date..... 29591

Total fiction words for the month..... 31339
Total fiction words for the year..... 31339
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14000
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 14000
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 45239

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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 Child](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [Superstars Seminar](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, January 17](#)

[January 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Oof. Rough night. The moon was big outside I guess, seeping through and around the venetian blinds that cover all our windows.

So the ladies (our two cats) played tag all night.

Most often the tag consisted of the tagger pouncing unannounced and landing on the taggee as if dropped from six feet up. And most often it occurred right next to my midsection.

When I am jarred awake, I usually can't get back to sleep for an hour or so, and last night was no different. So I think I got maybe 4 hours of sleep last night, but maybe not.

Looks like I'll actually finish this first novel within the 15 days allotted, despite my lackluster performance recently. (grin) One or two more good days of writing and it should be finished.

I haven't reached the end game quite yet, but I can feel it coming. So we'll see.

Took what turned out to be a long break at a little after 10 and talked with a writer friend for about an hour and a half. Great discussion, and not only because he did *not* think one of my recent novels sucked canal water from all 50 states. (grin)

One epiphany came from that talk: I'm always right until I find out I'm not. (grin) Keep learning, folks.

So at noon, with about 2400 words on the day thus far, back to the novel.

Looks like I'll finish my WIP tomorrow. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Wow. See "Mystery Elements and Sass Are the New Black – First Page Critique-The Dangerous Dame" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/first-page-critique-the-dangerous-dame.html>. If you enjoy or write noir or PI or police stuff, you'll love this, and the advice is spot on.

See "Business Musings: Audio (Planning For 2019 Part 4)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/16/business-musings-audio-planning-for-2019-part-4/>.

See "Make 100 Short Story Paperbacks Launched" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/make-100-short-story-paperbacks-launched/>. Think of all he does for us and consider supporting this Kick Starter.

See "My Violent Friend: Growing Up With The Psychopath Next Door" at <https://crimereads.com/my-violent-friend-growing-up-with-the-psychopath-next-door/>.

See "John McPhee: Seven Ways of Looking at a Writer" at <https://lithub.com/john-mcphee-seven-ways-of-looking-at-a-writer/>. A lot of gems here, though you might have to dig a bit.

See "Wall Street Journal Comments" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/wall-street-journal-comments/>.

See "Tor Books: "Golden Age Is Now" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/https-www-shelf-awareness-com-dedicatedshelf-2019-01-17-tor-books-golden-age-is-now-html/>.

Finally, see “‘They Own the System’: Amazon Rewrites Book Industry by Marching into Publishing” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/they-own-the-system-amazon-rewrites-book-industry-by-marching-into-publishing/>.

Fiction Words: 4105

Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4485

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107
Day 8..... 3151 words. Total words to date..... 19258
Day 9..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 22061
Day 10... 3070 words. Total words to date..... 25131
Day 11... 4460 words. Total words to date..... 29591
Day 12... 4105 words. Total words to date..... 33696

Total fiction words for the month..... 35344
Total fiction words for the year..... 35344
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14380
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 14380
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 49724

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
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](#), [John McPhee](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lit Hub](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Frisday, January 18](#)

[January 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I guess my inner child is more interested in finishing my WIP today (a Stern Talbot PI mystery) than I am. (grin) The mind controls the inner clock, and despite a relatively late night (for me), I came wide awake and rolled out at 1 a.m. this morning.

This is a perfect example of the 2 year old subconscious mind standing at your bedside, tugging at your hand, and stage-whispering (so as not to wake up the person in the other side of the bed) “C’mon! Let’s go play!”

I suspect, as he has all along, my 2 year old wants me to help load the moving van that will enable the WIP family to move out of town. When they do, I’ve already promised him he can go play with his friends at Blackwell Ops again.

Whaddya gonna do? I got up, made a cuppa joe, and headed for the Hovel. Got the “Of Interest” stuff added and now I’m on my way to the WIP.

So I’ll finish that one today (Day 13 of 15). If I start the next one tomorrow, I’ll do so with two days in the bank. So that’s kind’a cool.

Just a math note re what is possible...

There are 365 days in this year. There are 21.47 17-day periods in this year. During the first 17 days (so not counting today), I’ve written 35,344 words of fiction, or 2,079 words per day. (That includes 4 days when I wrote zero.)

If I can maintain the same average daily production every day through the year that I’ve maintained through the first 17 days of this month, I will have written 758,856 words of fiction on December 31. Cool, right? With just a little over 2 hours per day.

What’s even better, since I started the challenge on January 6 to write 10 novels in 150 days, I’ve written 33,696 words of fiction in the last 12 days, an average of 2,808 words per day (again, not counting today).

If I can maintain THAT average (3 hours per day) through a 365-day period (Jan 6, 2019 through Jan 5, 2020) I will have written 1,024,920 words of fiction in a calendar year.

Amazing, the difference 800 words a day can make.

I finished Stern Talbot PI: The Case of the Mourning Widow this morning just before 6 a.m. It will release on March 15. Then I headed up to the house for breakfast and a shower. (grin)

Today is one of those rare times that those who pay any attention to the numbers below will see two “Writing of” entries. First for the last day of the Stern Talbot novel and then for the first day of the Blackwell Ops novel. Both were today.

Shortly after I got back to the Hovel at 7:30, I started prepping to write the next Blackwell Ops novel that's been burning in my mind for the past two weeks. Woohoo!

By "prepping" I mean gathering character descriptions into a series bible, coming up with new title character names, etc.

And then writing, of course. (grin)

From my friend, Dandy Dan Baldwinovich

For those inclined to be so kind, my new book is out and I would appreciate the efforts of anyone willing to share the link with his or her friends and associates:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07L5WXBJB/>

(My Note: If this book were fiction, I wouldn't promote it to you. But it's nonfiction and very interesting, especially if you're into ghosts or the old west. Take a look and you'll see what I mean.)

As a thank-you for helping promote the work, Dan offers a free short story to be released to an unsuspecting public later this week. To get your copy, email Dan at baldco@msn.com.

I finally started writing Blackwell Ops 2 at 10 a.m. It will feature Charles Claymore "Charlie" Task as the primary operative and narrator. If any of you have read Confessions of a Professional Psychopath, that name is familiar. Yep, the same guy who started his previous novel with the immortal lines,

"Of the three wingback chairs in my library, only one is upholstered in human skin. There's a reason for that." (grin)

A great day today, partly because I chose not to take a break after finishing the first novel of the challenge.

But wow is this Blackwell Ops novel twisted. In a psychological way. I'm not sure I want to read it. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Nate's Big List of Free & Paid Book Promotion Websites" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/01/21/nates-big-list-free-paid-book-promotion-websites/>.

See “Learning How to Learn Fiction – Introduction” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/learning-how-to-learn-fiction-introduction/>. This looks very interesting. It also looks (to me) like he ‘s putting together a book on the topic. (grin) You might as well get it here a slice at a time.

See “Why “Self-Promotion” Is B*****” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-self-promotion-is-b/>. Mostly for PG’s intelligent take. The OP boils down to the rantings of a spoiled (it seems to me), brand-new baby author.

Fiction Words: 5048

Nonfiction Words: 790 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5838

Writing of The Case of the Mourning Widow (novel)

Day 1..... 2784 words. Total words to date..... 2784
Day 2..... 3250 words. Total words to date..... 6034
Day 3..... 2507 words. Total words to date..... 8521
Day 4..... 1049 words. Total words to date..... 9570
Day 5..... 2459 words. Total words to date..... 12029
Day 6..... 2723 words. Total words to date..... 14752
Day 7..... 1355 words. Total words to date..... 16107
Day 8..... 3151 words. Total words to date..... 19258
Day 9..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 22061
Day 10... 3070 words. Total words to date..... 25131
Day 11... 4460 words. Total words to date..... 29591
Day 12... 4105 words. Total words to date..... 33696
Day 13... 2643 words. Total words to date..... 36339 (done)

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405

Total fiction words for the month..... 40392
Total fiction words for the year..... 40392
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15170
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 15170
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 55562

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 37
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Phillip McCollum](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Saturday, January 19

[January 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Even though it's a Saturday, I didn't get up until almost 3. There's a ball game starting at 1 that I want to watch, and if my wife wants us to do anything together, I will give that precedence. So possibly a short day today.

Days like this are why it's good to have a few days in the bank. (grin)

This WIP is filled (thus far) with psychological minutae, so up to this point it's necessarily slow going. This one will fluctuate, but I'm hopeful.

The first novel in this series came in at around 53,000 words. On the other hand, the "deadline" for this one, if I'm to stay on track with my challenge, is February 4th.

So in all I have 18 days to write this one (counting yesterday). That's just under 3000 words per day. So anything over that should put days in the bank.

Topic: About the Challenge

As most of you know, I'm involved in a personal challenge right now. My challenge is to write 10 novels in 150 straight days.

I started on January 6, so the target dates are Jan 20, Feb 4, Feb 19, Mar 6, Mar 21, Apr 5, Apr 20, May 5, May 20, and Jun 4.

I finished the first on Jan 18, thereby adding two days to the bank. But I started the second on Jan 18 as well, thereby adding another day to the bank. (grin)

I give myself the full 15 days for each book, plus any days in the bank. That way I can retain the original end dates and keep everything within the overall 150 days.

So if I finish the second novel on or before Feb 4, I'm at least even. If I go beyond Feb 4, the bank has a minus balance until I catch up.

This really is fun. About halfway through the first novel, I wasn't at all sure I would finish in by Jan 20. So I briefly thought maybe I should chuck the whole thing and just keep writing novels anyway.

Then I realized I might as well keep the challenge going as long as I can. So that's what I'm doing.

That also has the benefit of removing any pressure, except the pressure to get to the chair in the first place. But I'm a writer, so that's where I want to be anyway. (grin) We'll see how it all works out.

If, on June 4 I've written only 9 novels or even only 2, will that be a failure? Not really. I'll still have that many more titles out there for readers to find, and that can only be a good thing. That's a complete win in my book.

And if I've written at least 6, I'll still have at least a novel per month. So no matter how you look at it, it's a win.

Finally, if I succeed at the challenge, that means I'll have 10 new novels on or before June 4, that means I have 10 more titles out there for readers to find.

Understand too, these are all written in only 3 drafts. In the first draft, I write, cycling back occasionally to let the characters add what I missed the first time.

The second draft is an automated spell check. That takes all of five minutes. Then I send it off to my first reader (bless his or her heart). The third draft is me "correcting" whatever the first reader finds that I agree with. Then I publish.

One note: The lengths of my novels can range anywhere from a short novel (25,000 to 44,999), to a novel (45,000 to 79,999) to a long novel (over 80,000 words).

My current maximum daily word count is 6,000 words, so any of those are in range. But my current sustained daily rate is around 4,000 words, so chances are, all of the novels in this challenge will come in at 35,000 to 60,000-word range.

Not as good a day as I'd hoped, but not bad for a short day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Kickstarter Funded!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/kickstarter-funded/>.

See "How Many of Me" at <http://www.howmanyofme.com/search/>. An interesting way to research your own name or the name of a prospective character.

See "The Ultimate Taboo: Killing The President" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/the-ultimate-taboo-killing-the-president.html>. NOTE: Be forewarned, as he does all too often, Alpert goes political with his opinion. I can't imagine his assessment of the message of the scene in the play being the same if the "Caesar" depicted was a caricature of Obama. But here it is, for your leisurely perusal.

Fiction Words: 2695

Nonfiction Words: 770 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3465

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405

Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100

Total fiction words for the month..... 43087

Total fiction words for the year..... 43087

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15940

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 15940

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 59027

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38

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 Daily Journal, Sunday, January 20](#)

[January 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

My apologies if you went looking for Mark Alpert’s post on “The Ultimate Taboo: Killing The President” at the Kill Zone blog yesterday. I went back this morning to see whether he replied to my comment, and apparently he’d taken the post down. It wasn’t there.

That was not my intention.

Free speech is perhaps the most important freedom guaranteed by our Consitution, and I value it even when I disagree with the speaker. That’s why I passed along the link to Mr. Alpert’s post in the first place.

If you didn’t get to read it, in the post, he talked about a stage play in New York and the backlash it received after depicting Julius Caesar as a President Trump look alike, complete with the

blonde coiffure. (Frankly, in the current political climate, I'm amazed it received any backlash at all.)

Mr. Alpert defended the play, saying it wasn't about killing President Trump. He said (I'm paraphrasing) it was an allusion to the political turmoil that ensued in the Roman Empire after the original Julius Caesar was slain. According to Mr. Alpert, the play was only a warning that the same kind of turmoil might occur after the slaying of any prominent leader.

Just so you know, in my comment I only wondered whether his assessment of the play would have been the same had the Julius Caesar on stage had been depicted as a caricature of President Obama (as I added in a note in [yesterday's Journal](#) after I posted the link).

But as I said earlier, apparently he took the post down. And as I said, that was not my intention. At all.

My job for many years was to support and defend the Constitution, including the rights guaranteed therein. I would never do anything knowingly or intentionally to impinge those rights.

I know that not everybody, even among regular readers of The Daily Journal, agrees with my political views, and that's fine. I am fortunate to have friends and acquaintances on both sides of the political divide. Telling others what to believe is not in my bailiwick (though like many others, for a time I thought it was).

To me, it's vastly more important to pass along my own knowledge about writing and lessons-learned to other writers and aspiring writers than to try to convince others to vote the way I vote.

Mr. Alpert was speaking his truth. I'm sorry he bowed to criticism and (apparently) to unintentional censorship, and I've sent him an email to tell him so.

Generally, though I hit a snag this morning, I think I've almost mastered spending less time on other pursuits in the morning and more time writing. So I'll keep practicing that, but I also have a new task:

With having recently finished the first novel of my challenge, I was tempted — sorely tempted — to start looking for cover art, doing the promo doc, etc.

I also have a good friend who's going to design paper covers for me so I can take my books to paper as well as ebook. At least until I learn to do it myself. (Maybe more on that at another time, but briefly I decided to do this for my legacy and to save my heirs having to do it.)

But I don't want anything else to take up my writing time, so I've decided to try to stick to writing in the morning, then turn to the other things in the afternoon.

My personal afternoon begins anywhere from about 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. I figure two or three hours a day of that stuff should be plenty. If I'm a writer, I should spend most of my productive time writing. Duh.

A Very Brief Topic on DRM (Digital Rights Management)

First, understand the following, like all of my topics, is only my opinion.

DRM, everybody thought, was a great idea.

It isn't. Period.

The advent of DRM was meant to stop piracy.

It didn't. If bad guys want to steal your work and make pirated copies, they will. Look at it on the bright side: you'll gain new readers who will then go and buy other works of yours.

All DRM does is tell legitimate readers you don't trust them. And that is never a good idea.

Yer Uncle Harv

I rolled out shortly after 2 a.m. and was in the Hovel before 2:30. I'd hoped to spend an hour or so waking up, and have my first thousand words written before 4:30 or so.

But I was derailed a bit. Some things are more important than writing, and when I found Mark Alpert's post missing, that took priority.

So at 5 a.m., finally, to the novel. Probably this will be another short day. It's Sunday after all.

Some spot research was required as my character decided to travel to Montreal and I haven't been there. So in the first session I wrote only about 700 words, then took a breakfast break.

At 8:30, I was headed back to the novel when I got sidetracked. I wrote the brief topic above, and then I wrote one on Daily Word Counts and one on Writing Description (as in, how much is too much). There are some widespread misconceptions out there on both topics. So you'll see those over the next couple of days.

Full disclosure, though, I'll post the number of nonfiction words for those other two topics when I post them, not today. (grin)

Now, finally, at 10 a.m., back to the novel. And I'll be watching the NFC Championship game at 1 my time so....

Fairly good day today. Game starts in 15 minutes or I'd write another thousand or two thousand words. The story's moving along great now. I expect big days from here on out.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Unsnagging Your Plot” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/unsagging-your-plot.html>. James Scott Bell makes some valid points, especially if you’re a plotter. When my story gets “snagged,” I personally just write the next sentence.

Fiction Words: 3016

Nonfiction Words: 1020 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4036

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405

Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100

Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116

Total fiction words for the month..... 46103

Total fiction words for the year..... 46103

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16960

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 16960

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 63063

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, January 21](#)

[January 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Update: I talked with Mark Alpert via email. He did not take down his post at the Kill Zone blog. According to Alpert, unspecified others at TKZ took it down because it was “too political.”

I can understand that, given that the stated purpose of the blog is to provide “Insider perspectives from top thriller and mystery writers.” But I still don’t like censorship.

Oddly, I lost a long-time (over a year) subscriber yesterday too. I believe she left because of my response. Possibly I wrote too much re the Alpert column. I can't apologize for that.

This Journal exists as a non-political forum to pass along what I know and learn about writing and to provide hopefully helpful tidbits of my life as a writer.

In that pursuit, occasionally I will include links to articles with which I disagree in "Of Interest" because you might find value in them.

I and the Journal will continue in that regard. Below you'll find a topic on writing description. Soon I'll write a bit regarding the purpose behind daily word count goals. If there are any topics you'd like to see me cover, please send me an email harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

There's a new cover designer out there. Her name is Mary Baldwin and you can email her at mel3478@msn.com. Mary can create both ebook and paper covers, so if you're in the market, send her an email.

Did anyone else see the full lunar eclipse last night? I guess the eclipse was full at about 10:30 my time. I first saw it as the shadow was just beginning to move off the moon. It was a strange night.

Then I was wide awake, so I came out here to the Hovel to work on the Journal a little. I finally sacked out again a little after midnight.

Topic: Writing Description (Too Much or Too Little?)

The comment I get most often on my writing is that the reader felt like s/he was there in the scene with the characters. For me, at least, doesn't get much better than that.

You've often heard the common wisdom that writing description is a tightrope. You want to write description so your reader can see the scene. But you don't want to write so much description that it bores the reader.

A related bit of common wisdom says to only write description that matters to the story. Again, that's good advice.

Now for some uncommon wisdom, or at least wisdom not often found on the writer boards and in most other venues:

Yes, writing description is a tightrope — well, sort of.

You DO want to write description so your reader can see the scene. But frankly, pretty much everybody does that. After all, a scene very seldom happens in a white room with white walls and a white floor and ceiling. (Nothing to see here folks. Move along.)

But most writers, including many bestselling authors, write ONLY visual description. And most often, those stories feel “thin” to readers. Those are the stories about which readers will never say they felt as if they were in the scene with the characters.

The point is, you ALSO want to write description so your reader can smell, hear, taste (sometimes) and feel (physically and emotionally) the scene.

So use the five senses at least once in every major scene. It shouldn't be a laundry list, of course. The sentences containing those five senses can be combined (if appropriate) or worked in through the scene as appropriate. But all five senses should be there.

Is it a cool morning (Montreal) or a warm or hot morning (Tucson)? Is it muggy (Indianapolis or the deep south) or dry (the arid west)? Does the character have an itch on his arm? Let him scratch it. Does he smell fresh-baked bread on the air through his open car window? Does it remind him of the bread his mama used to make and how it tasted (good or bad)? And have him react to the memory. He might smile, or he might gag a little. (grin)

You get the point. Doing this will pull the reader into the scene.

Another reason for using the five senses as above is to GROUND the reader at the beginning of every scene. Give the reader a sense of place and, if appropriate, a sense of the level of tension (again, using the five senses).

So there you go. Two reasons to add description, both of which will “matter to the story”. The first will pull the reader into the scene and advance the storyline. The second will ground the reader and keep him in the scene.

But I don't want to write so much description that it bores the reader.

No, of course not. But here's a well-kept secret to keep that from happening:

As you describe the setting using the five senses, make sure it's the POV character's five senses. Every word you put on the page should be filtered through the POV character's senses and his or her opinion of the setting.

When you describe the setting through the POV character's senses, you won't bore the reader. If you describe it through YOUR senses, chances are the description will seem gratuitous and you will bore the reader. After all, you aren't in the story.

So if you want to avoid boring the reader, don't add description yourself just because you heard that adding description is a good idea. Do it for a reason, and always do it through the senses of

the POV character.

Rolled out at 4 despite the odd night. I have to admit, my initial urge was to publish this Journal and do no other writing.

But if I had some other job I would still be expected to show up after an “odd” night, wouldn’t I?

To the Hovel by 4:15. I wrote much of the stuff above, began creating a post for the Pro Writers blog, etc. then took a break at 6:30.

To the novel, now, at 7:40. By 8:45 I had 1200 words and took another break. Back at 9 a.m.

Not a bad day, especially considering last night. Now I’m going to go rest. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Still Working On A Writing Schedule” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/still-working-on-a-writing-schedule/>.

See “100% Diy: Interview with Cellist Zoë Keating” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/100-diy-interview-with-cellist-zoe-keating/>. Not about writing specifically but about how many of us do business.

See “2019 Goals Recap – Week #3” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/2019-goals-recap-week-3/>. Phil McCollum often includes items about food in his posts. If you don’t care about that, scroll down to “As for the writing....”

See “You must refrain from rewriting, except to editorial order” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/01/21/you-must-refrain-from-rewriting-except-to-editorial-order/>.

Fiction Words: 3521

Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4651

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405

Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100

Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116

Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637

Total fiction words for the month.....	49624
Total fiction words for the year.....	49624
Total nonfiction words for the month...	18090
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	18090
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	67714
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date.....	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	38
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](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, January 22](#)

[January 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

First, thanks to my new donor and the first person to take advantage of my Patronage program. Thanks, Scott T!

This morning during my wake-up period, I remembered a friend wrote me recently to request a “Search this site” feature on my website.

She wanted to see whether I’d talked about Digital Rights Management, but didn’t find it in the tag cloud at the bottom of the site or anywhere else.

That request served initially as a catalyst for [my brief topic on DRM a couple of days ago](#).

This morning, I added a search feature to both this Journal website and to the main website at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

So now you can visit either site, key in “DRM” or “cycling” or “topic” or whatever else you might want to find and see every reference to that in every post that contains it. (grin)

I hope you will find it useful.

Topic: On the Purpose of Setting a Daily Word-Count Goal

Recently I received an email from a friend and colleague who had been having trouble putting her fanny in the chair and writing.

She realized, she said, that having a daily word-count goal was counter-productive for her. If she didn't feel like she would reach her goal, rather than sitting down and trying she would sometimes just skip it.

Now she's vowed to write fiction every day, no matter how much or how little. If she writes only 300 words, that's fine. If she writes 3000, that's good too. But she no longer feels the pressure that sometimes kept her from writing at all.

I said good for her, and I meant it. I was glad she found what worked get her back to her writing. She's an absolutely excellent storyteller; trust me, the world would be sorely lacking if she stopped altogether.

But then, thinking she might have misunderstood the purpose and practice of my own daily word-count goal, I explained the following:

Even when I had a firm 3,000 words-per-day goal, it was only a goal, not something mandatory. Same now with my 4,000 words-per-day goal.

Setting a precise goal gives me something to reach for. And in reaching for it, I often go over. Sometimes way over.

Others (James Scott Bell springs to mind) use a weekly word-count goal (JSB's is for a 6-day week) or a monthly word-count goal.

But no matter what you choose to use, it's still only a goal, not a mandatory number.

With my own daily goal, whether I go over or hit it exactly or don't even come close, it's no big deal. Because the goal resets to 0 the following morning anyway. (grin)

So I don't really worry about it and I feel no pressure from it, except the pressure to get my butt into the chair.

Here's what's really important:

Whether you use a daily (or weekly or monthly) word-count goal or just demand of yourself that you write **SOME** fiction every single day (or every weekday or every weekend day), do what suits you. Whatever fits your life.

Personally, even if I used a weekly or monthly word-count goal, I would end up dividing it by the number of days I wanted to write during that week or month so it would become a daily goal anyway. (grin)

And of course, you don't have to set a word-count goal at all, even though I strongly recommend it.

The key is to do whatever will drive you to the chair and make you successful. That's all that matters.

I rolled out at about 3 and spent the first few hours writing the stuff above, fiddling with my websites, and poking around on the Internet.

At 6:15, I took a long break. I came back to the novel about an hour later, but I couldn't seem to stop piddling around. Four hours after I came back, I'd written only about 900 new words.

Sigh. I think maybe I'm still suffering ill effects from a couple of nights ago. How's that sound for a whiny excuse? (grin)

Okay. I'm giving it up a little before 3. As ol' Wes Crowley once said, "Sometimes things just don't line up right. That's why they make tomorrows." (grin)

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Surveillance by Keystrokes – Giving Permission to Snoop" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/surveillance-by-keystrokes-giving-permission-to-snoop.html>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Skin Deep" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/21/free-fiction-monday-skin-deep-2/>.

See "Good, Bad, or Just Opinion?" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/22/good-bad-or-just-opinion/>.

See "Some Other Great Kickstarter Campaigns" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/some-other-great-kickstarter-campaigns/>. I was looking pretty hard at the IP Tracker, but I already have a handle on all of that myself.

Fiction Words: 2478

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3258

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405

Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100

Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116

Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115

Total fiction words for the month..... 52102
Total fiction words for the year..... 52102
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18870
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 18870
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 70972

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38
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](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, January 23](#)

[January 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Rolled out at 3 this morning after a good night's sleep.

To the Hovel shortly afterward where I visited some sites that are new to me and did the "Of Interest" thing.

One of those new sites is of former traditionally published, now indie-published, romance writer Terry Odell.

I didn't find anything there today for "Of Interest" but that doesn't mean you won't find something there that rings your personal bell. Check it out at <https://terryodell.com/>. Or go directly to her blog at <http://terryodell.com/terrysplace>.

Topic: Speaking of Challenges and Goals

I love setting writing challenges for myself, mostly to see what happens.

I realized only this morning that in setting my personal challenge, I've also inadvertently set two long-range goals. One for the first half of this year, and one for the whole year.

As a result, this should be my most prolific, productive calendar year since I started writing.

If I successfully complete my current challenge (the final day is June 4), I will have written 10 novels in 150 days.

If I can write 10 novels by June 4, there's no reason I can't write another one before June 30. (grin) With 26 days to play with, that should be easy.

So by extension, my 6-month goal is to complete 11 novels before June 30.

Then, again by extension, even if I slack off and write only one novel per month after that, at the end of the year I will have written 17 novels on the year. Woohoo!

If you're considering something similar, don't look at the elephant. Look at your writing speed times the number of hours you're able to spend in the chair.

I write an average of 1000 words per hour (that includes cycling) and I am able to spend 4 hours a day (or longer) in the chair actually putting words on the page.

If you have the same writing speed (it's only 17 words per minute) and your novel is 60,000 words, all well and good. If you spend those 60 hours in the chair in one month (2 hours per day) it will take you one month to write a novel.

If you confine those hours to a two-week period (4 hours per day) you'll write a novel in two weeks. And if you spread those same hours over a year (about ten minutes per day), you'll write the same novel in a year.

Somewhere down the line I need to sit back, look at the overall year realistically, and set a firm annual goal.

There are 23.73 15-day periods in 2019.

So if I decided to keep the same challenge and my "streak" going after I finish the original challenge on June 4, I could ostensibly write 23 or 24 novels on the year.

If I do that, I might have to consider going back to letting some of my personas take credit for them. (grin)

My very first challenge (back in April 2014) was to write at least one new short story every week. That one created a streak that lasted for 70 weeks. One week, to keep it going, in the last few hours I wrote a story called "Deadline." (grin)

Then, foolishly, I broke the streak — on purpose. Don't ask why. I don't have any idea.

What writing challenges and goals have you set for yourself? I'd really like to hear about them, and you might give the rest of us an idea.

To the house for a brief break at 4:30.

Back to the Hovel for an hour of writing and around 800 words. Coming up on an action scene, so things will pick up. (grin)

I'm loving this novel. Like Blackwell Ops 1, each chapter or two in this one is a complete short story in addition to being part of the novel. Great fun.

Pretty good day today.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Cold Poker Gang Novel Going Great" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/cold-poker-gang-novel-going-great/>.

See "Learning How to Learn Fiction: Can You Get Better at Art?" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/can-you-get-better-at-art/>.

For fun, see "Process, Schmoess" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/process-schmoess.html>.

See the comments on "Surveillance by Keystrokes..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/surveillance-by-keystrokes-giving-permission-to-snoop.html>.

See "News! (Are you ready for epic fantasy battles fought by strong, capable women?)" at <https://alisonholtbooks.com/>.

Fiction Words: 4410

Nonfiction Words: 720 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5130

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405
Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100
Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116
Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115
Day 6..... 4410 words. Total words to date..... 18525

Total fiction words for the month.....	56512
Total fiction words for the year.....	56512
Total nonfiction words for the month...	19590
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	19590
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	76102
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date.....	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	38
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, January 24](#)

[January 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I think a lot of you didn't receive the Journal yesterday. My apologies. A glitch in the system. I hope now it's been corrected.

There's a topic in yesterday's post ("Speaking of Challenges and Goals") as well as some great stuff in "Of Interest." If you want to see it, please visit <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-wednesday-january-23/>. At least for Phillip McCollum's post in "Of Interest."

Since I was involved in cleaning up that mess, I also added a new RSS feed from from Pro Writer Blog to the left sidebar of the Journal. If you aren't subscribed to Pro Writer Blog you can now see post titles at a glance.

A quick note... When you leave a comment on a blog post, that helps the website gain attention. That's one reason I almost always comment on any post I read and like.

I certainly appreciate the personal emails, and I'm aware most of you see the entire post in your email account. But if you have a minute and want to comment, please drop by the website and leave a comment there. As I said, every little bit helps, and your comment might also be of value to others reading the Journal.

I rolled out very early this morning, but with a chapter nicely wrapped up yesterday, the novel is back to dragging. So we'll see what happens.

If you're keeping up with the challenge, I currently have 11 days to finish this novel. That feels easy enough, so the first part of today I'm going to catch up on some admin work, then turn to the story later in the day. Maybe. (grin)

I am shocked. Before 9 a.m., I finished writing the promo doc and creating a cover for the latest Stern Talbot novel (The Mourning Widow), then uploaded it to D2D, Amazon and Smashwords.

I also adjusted a few release dates. With all the novels I'll turn out with this challenge, I think it would be better to release books every two weeks instead of once a month.

So Situation Solved will now release on Feb 1 (not Feb 15), Blackwell Ops: Jack Tilden will release on Feb 15 (not Mar 1), and Sern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Mourning Widow will release on Mar 15, not Apr 15.

Whew! Of course, all of that adds impetus to the challenge too, since I still have to write the books I want to release on the 1st and 15th of succeeding months. (grin)

Have I said I love this new world of publishing?

It isn't in my nature to anticipate crashing and burning, but if I do, it should be one hell of a fireball. (grin)

Anyway, since it's only a little after 9, I guess I'll go ahead and start the next chapter of my WIP. It's slow going at the start, but I have to get through the slow stuff to get to the fast stuff, and I really don't want to break my streak of writing fiction every day.

Well, I did start the next chapter, but only barely. I think only to keep the fiction-writing streak going. (grin) I wrote just a little over a thousand words on the day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Some Stuff Happening" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-stuff-happening/>. Especially see the info re the stretch goal under "Smith's Stories: Make 100...." Seriously, I have zero idea where this guy finds time to write.

See "Business Musings: Tidbits (Planning for 2019 Part 5)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/23/business-musings-tidbits-planning-for-2019-part-5/>.

See "A Tool for Cops: Tiny Pink Gloves" at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-tool-for-cops-tiny-pink-gloves/>. A tip as well as some GREAT description.

See "Tips for Working in [Microsoft] Word" at <https://terryodell.com/tips-for-working-in-word/>.

See “The Chaos Character” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/01/the-chaos-character.html>.

For any SF writers out there, via Linda Maye Adams, see “Can Spaceships Actually Explode Like They Do In Movies?” at <https://www.scienceabc.com/nature/universe/can-spaceships-actually-explode-like-they-do-in-movies.html>.

Fiction Words: 1252

Nonfiction Words: 640 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1892

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405
Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100
Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116
Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115
Day 6..... 4410 words. Total words to date..... 18525
Day 7..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 19777

Total fiction words for the month..... 57764
Total fiction words for the year..... 57764
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20230
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20230
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 77994

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38
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](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, January 25](#)

[January 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Well, I’m in the hunt for another laptop. I like the 14” size and I like HPs. I’ll use the new one up at the house.

I've noticed more and more I'm not liking the one I have up there and doing most everything on this one, which is supposed to be my writing 'puter. That can be a little distracting, to say the least.

Calling the writing early today to do other things.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "What is Adipocere?" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/what-is-adipocere-or-corpse-wax/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see (video) "10 Scientifically Impossible Places That Actually Exist" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3ksC_8jGuc. *Note:* You'll have to click "Skip Ad" a few times, and nowhere do they show or talk about the ocean splitting, despite the lead-in. Still very interesting for any writer.

Fiction Words: 2551

Nonfiction Words: 140 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2691

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405
Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100
Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116
Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115
Day 6..... 4410 words. Total words to date..... 18525
Day 7..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 19777
Day 8..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 22328

Total fiction words for the month..... 60315
Total fiction words for the year..... 60315
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20370
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20370
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 80685

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, January 26](#)

[January 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

I think maybe the water in Vegas is affecting Dean's brain. For as little as a \$20 pledge to his Kickstarter, you can now get a credit for a \$150 classic workshop as well as two books.

And at least one of those books is chock full of blog entries that can't help but be informative. Check it out in "Of Interest." I recommend making a \$20 investment in your writing.

Well, I bought a computer, an HP ProBook 11. It's basically the same machine as my writing 'puter but with a tiny, 11.6" screen that I'll never use.

When it arrives, I'll load Microsoft Office only, then bring it to the Hovel and plug my big monitor into it. Voila! New writing 'puter with no distractions.

And my former writing 'puter (Hal) will move up to the big house, which he so richly deserves as he approaches his retirement years.

At least that's the plan at the moment. We'll see what happens.

Recently I made both my main websites secure with an SSL certificate. They are now both <https://>. That's what led to the initial glitch of the Journal not showing up in your inbox for that one day. (Though nobody seemed to notice, so....)

Now I'm going to make another change, effective tomorrow (he said, just as if everyone who subscribed is actually reading the Journal today). (grin)

Beginning tomorrow, I'm going to display only an excerpt of the Journal in the email edition. Then there will be a link to "Read More" or something like that.

This will serve three immediate purposes:

1. It will help me organize the Journal a little better. (I'll have to let you know early what's in each edition of the Journal.)
2. It will give you the choice of whether or not to read the full post.
3. If something in the post tugs at you, good or bad, it will be more convenient for you to leave a comment.

I'll try that for awhile and see how it works. I hope you'll let me know what you think.

Finally started on the novel at 6. Cycling and only 700 words in the first session. Now up to the house for a brief break and to see what's planned for today, if anything.

Well, a short day, but I got just under 3,000 words so I'm happy.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Just Over \$600 Left..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/just-over-600-left/>.

See "Three Movies...and What We Can Learn from Them" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/three-movies-and-what-we-can-learn-from-them.html>.

Via CrimeReads, see "James Lee Burke on Art, Addiction, and Making Movies" at <https://crimereads.com/james-lee-burkes-louisiana/>.

Fiction Words: 2929

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3379

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405
Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100
Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116
Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115
Day 6..... 4410 words. Total words to date..... 18525
Day 7..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 19777
Day 8..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 22328
Day 9..... 2929 words. Total words to date..... 25257

Total fiction words for the month..... 63244
Total fiction words for the year..... 63244
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20820
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 20820
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 84064

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38

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](#), [James Lee Burke](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, January 27](#)

[January 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Be sure to click through and read the whole post. Some great “Of Interest” items, not to mention a topic and the other stuff.

Yesterday, Scott Thrall commented that he hopes Dean keeps drinking the water in Vegas that’s making him go nuts with prizes for his KickStarter campaign. Apparently he drank another tall glass. Read about it in “Of Interest.” A great deal, not to be missed.

Topic: Are You a Self-Saboteur?

Have you ever sabotaged yourself?

I don’t mean with the usual conscious mind stuff: doubting your abilities, feeling you’re a pretender, worrying about where the story is going and so on.

Those tend to pop in more, on me, at least, when the writing is going slowly or when its ground to a halt for some reason I haven’t yet discerned.

But that isn’t what I’m talking about here.

I’m talking about the times when the writing was going great and maybe even building momentum the last time you sat down.

Yet this time when you sit down, even as you’re actually looking forward to getting back to running through the story with your characters, you find a way to sabotage it.

Maybe you intentionally spend longer on the internet than is necessary. Maybe you play an online game. Maybe you write a topic like this one, that probably only you can relate to.

The person who occasionally sabotages himself needs an antagonist in his life. He needs something to strive against. Maybe to make success a bigger deal than it would already be. Or maybe just for the sake of the struggle, for the sake of having more adversity to overcome.

Is anyone else out there trapped in that sort of silliness? I understand if you don't want to answer, especially if you're one of the self-saboteurs.

After all, it's something that only you know. Well, unless you're in counseling for the problem, but that doesn't count really because of doctor-patient privilege. So it's really the same as nobody else knowing.

Anyway, that self-sabotage thing is just one of my problems. So I kind of wondered whether it afflicts any of you too.

Now, understand, I'm not complaining. The self-sabotage thing is just part of who I am, so that's fine. It's been with me since I was a child.

I should also tell you, the writing version of this self-sabotage isn't a problem that I would have to go all Superman and leap tall buildings to overcome.

Not that I could. These days I'm pretty sure I couldn't leap out of a spring-loaded chair if I woke up to find the room was on fire and a bomb was ticking in the corner.

But this problem, this self-sabotaging my writing, is one I could overcome easily by summoning just enough discipline to hop over a very low speed bump. I could do that.

Yet all too often, I don't. Instead, I just keep the sabotage going.

It's as if I know I'm going to succeed at writing this novel and probably at the challenge, so maybe it's all too easy. So maybe I want to make myself earn it. But I honestly don't know.

When I left the Hovel yesterday, the WIP was picking up speed. I intentionally stopped at a place where the POV protagonist had one foot inches off the ground, just about to step into a maelstrom: the kind of maelstrom that enables me to turn out 1200 to 1500 words per hour.

When I left the house this morning to return to the Hovel, I was anxious, almost giddy, looking that forward to getting back to the WIP.

Yet when I sat down, I opened the internet to read an article I'd found but didn't take time to read yesterday. Then I searched for items for "Of Interest" for today and read those. Then I took a break to the house, then returned and played a few games of spider solitaire, etc.

And before and after each of those self-sabotaging delays, I thought, "Man I can't wait to jump back into the story!" Seriously.

But apparently I could. Wait, I mean. After all of that, I went to the house for another break and another cup of coffee, thinking all the way up and back how great it would be to finally get back to the WIP.

Then I sat down, answered a few emails and wrote this. Go figure.

NOTE: When I changed this to show an excerpt instead of the whole thing this morning, MailChimp showed a message that indicated they might skip a day. If they do, I'll mention tomorrow that you need to find this post at the website. After that it should run fine.

In the meantime, let me know what you think of this new excerpt-only email format.

Finally to the WIP a little after 6. A little over 4 hours after I got up and came to the Hovel.

Wrote just long enough to get back into the story, then took a long break for a shower and breakfast.

Back to the novel at 9. Wrote a couple of sessions (with a short break in between) then ate a light lunch while my wife and I walked. It was a short walk, less than a mile, mostly to test my back.

Back to the novel at 12:30.

A couple more sessions and closing it out at 2 with a good day. Special thanks to my bride, Mona, for putting up with my habit of writing on weekends.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Kickstarter Pop-Up Starting” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/kickstarter-pop-up-starting/>. Made my heart thump faster. (grin)

See “MurderCon 2019: It’s Never Been Done Before, and You’re Invited to Attend!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/murdercon-2019-its-never-been-done-before-and-youre-invited-to-attend/>.

Need story ideas? Via CrimeReads, see “The Long, Violent Fall of Tanning Mogul Todd Beckman” at <https://www.riverfronttimes.com/stlouis/the-long-violent-fall-of-tanning-mogul-todd-beckman/Content?oid=29509097&showFullText=true&>.

See The Passive Guy’s take on “Book Tours Are More Than Just Showing Up” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/book-tours-are-more-than-just-showing-up/>.

See “Here Be Merfolk” (new book bundle) at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/26/here-be-merfolk/>.

Fiction Words: 3860

Nonfiction Words: 980 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4840

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405
Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100
Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116
Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115
Day 6..... 4410 words. Total words to date..... 18525
Day 7..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 19777
Day 8..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 22328
Day 9..... 2929 words. Total words to date..... 25257
Day 10... 3860 words. Total words to date..... 29117

Total fiction words for the month..... 67104
Total fiction words for the year..... 67104
Total nonfiction words for the month... 21800
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 21800
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 88904

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38
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](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, January 28](#)

[January 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Some amazing stuff in “Of Interest” today, and maybe a topic on a new writing exercise you can try.

But first to the novel. I rolled out a little late this morning, and I’m anxious to get to it. (grin)
Though I did take a brief side-trip to share an excerpt from it on Facebook this morning.

Topic A New Exercise to Try

A few years ago, when I first became convinced one of the most important components of a story is the opening, I designed an exercise for myself.

I wasn't in the middle of a novel or a short story. In other words, I had no other fiction tugging at me.

First, I prepared my subconscious. I told it (yes, aloud),

“All right, today we're going to write openings. We don't even want to write a whole story from any of them, at least not today. For today, it's openings only.

“In those openings, we're going to ground the reader. That means we're going to invoke all five of the POV character's physical senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

“We are also going to practice writing into the dark, in that we're going to write an opening on whatever idea occurs to us at the time.”

And I sat down and came up with an idea. Then I wrote the opening. Then I came up with another idea, and I wrote another opening.

From there, my subconscious went nuts.

Remember, an idea is only a character with a problem (doesn't have to be “the” problem of the story — it might be only an untied shoelace) dropped into a setting.

I wrote two openings in the first session, took a short break, then came back and wrote two more in the second session. Each was 400 to 600 words long.

Toward the end of writing the fourth opening, the characters in that one handed me characters and situation for the fifth. The protagonist in the fifth was a friend of one of the characters in the fourth.

And I was off and running. Most of the rest of the way through the exercise, that same thing kept happening. I had ideas coming at me from every direction.

Before I stopped, I'd written 11 openings in five sessions, scattered through the day. I stopped every hour or so for a break of at least a few minutes. Once, I was gone for a little over an hour to eat lunch.

But at the end of the day, by doing that exercise, I had shown my subconscious what it could do.

[Grounding the reader](#) in every opening is essential, not only at the beginning of the story, but at the beginning of each new major scene or chapter. It's how you draw the reader into your

story. It's one way to cause the reader to feel he's in the scene with the POV character and feel empathy for the character. And frankly, it isn't that difficult.

This exercise also showed me (and my subconscious) that [writing into the dark](#) not only WORKS, but it actually leads you to write more and have more fun (no "work" involved) as you're doing it.

I hope you'll try this exercise for yourself. I welcome any comments or questions. But PLEASE don't comment unless you try it. There's little I dislike more than someone who says, "That will never work for me" when they haven't tried it. (grin)

After all, what do you have to lose? And believe me, you have everything to gain.

As you have time, please let me know what you think of this new format, in a comment or [via email](#). I'm not pleased that the excerpt is jammed together in one paragraph (a MailChimp thing) but otherwise it seems all right.

If you publish through Amazon Kindle, you are probably aware they've come up with a new "eBook Quality Dashboard." I received the announcement on January 22.

If you didn't get that notice, you can read about it at https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/GWCUU33VBJHFSRYN.

This morning I received a "Kindle Quality Notice – Open Quality Warning or Suppression" email from Amazon. My breath caught in my throat.

Fortunately, the email read

Below is the weekly status of titles with quality issues in your eBook catalog as of 28 Jan 2019, 06:38:55 -0500.

Number of titles removed from sale: 0
Number of titles with quality warnings: 0
Number of titles with open issues: 0

Please address the quality issues Needing Your Review on the Quality Issues Dashboard by clicking here [link] or from the notification at the top of your KDP Bookshelf [link].

Whew! Guess I'm one of the lucky ones. At least so far.

I suppose this is a good thing, but don't they check for "quality issues" (whatever those are) when you first publish your book?

This might be one more non-writing thing to keep an eye on. Like we needed more of those.

Well, in my first session, I cycled back and wrote only around 300 new words. Then a break. In the second session, I wrote about 800. Then a longer break, then one more session.

Then a break for a walk (only a mile). When I came back I wrote two more sessions, both about normal. A pretty good day today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Keeping Track – It’s in the Details” at <https://terryodell.com/keeping-track-its-in-the-details/>. Deja vu, eh? (grin)

See “2019 Goals Recap – Week #4” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/2019-goals-recap-week-4/>. Very interesting post.

See “Focus on the Words” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/01/28/focus-on-the-words/>.

See “Could Alexa Solve Murders?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/could-alexa-solve-murders.html>. An amazing and universal story idea. Don’t miss this.

Fiction Words: 4218

Nonfiction Words: 950 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5168

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 2405
Day 2..... 2695 words. Total words to date..... 5100
Day 3..... 3016 words. Total words to date..... 8116
Day 4..... 3521 words. Total words to date..... 11637
Day 5..... 2478 words. Total words to date..... 14115
Day 6..... 4410 words. Total words to date..... 18525
Day 7..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 19777
Day 8..... 2551 words. Total words to date..... 22328
Day 9..... 2929 words. Total words to date..... 25257
Day 10... 3860 words. Total words to date..... 29117
Day 11... 4218 words. Total words to date..... 33335

Total fiction words for the month..... 71322

Total fiction words for the year..... 71322

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22750

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 22750
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 94072

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, January 29](#)

[January 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

A rather troubling topic today, one of those things for which, before you pick it up, you should pull on a pair of latex gloves. And so much in “Of Interest” that I almost want to apologize.

A thought struck me last night. Things are looking good so far for the challenge. I’m almost certain to finish this one before February 4, putting me ahead of schedule once again and keeping spare days in the safe.

Topic: Crap, This Is All About Racism and (Other Forms of) Prejudice

Racism, bias and prejudice, whether intentional or subconscious, run in several directions. It isn’t all black and white (absolutely no pun intended).

Here’s my advice: If it doesn’t directly affect the storyline, strive to keep it out of your writing.

Prejudice is not a problem that is unique to the United States. We all have our biases and prejudices, but it’s important not to let those sway our judgement as writers.

Obvious prejudice (including obvious so-called “reverse” prejudice) can directly affect sales of your work.

Of course, you should also keep your personal biases at bay when you’re seated on a jury.

In a post on the Kill Zone blog, which I follow regularly, the blogger mentioned her jury duty over the years and outlined a few cases.

In one case, “a cop” (the blogger didn’t mention the cop’s race) accused “a black teenager” of assault after a “routine traffic stop.” The blogger offered zero details but wrote that “the cop’s case didn’t hold water” and the jury decided the teenager didn’t do it.

If I were sitting in judgement of that particular jury (which any reader of that post is invited to do by implication), I would like to have seen a few details, especially given that the blogger included details of other cases she mentioned.

I’d like to know whether the cop and the teenager had a history.

I’d like to know whether there were witnesses, and if so, I’d like to know what the witnesses said in their statements.

I’d like to know whether the cop’s cruiser had a camera, or whether the cop him/herself wore a shoulder cam.

And if so, I’d like to know why either camera wasn’t running or, if it was, why it hadn’t been allowed into evidence. (If it had been, the case would be open and shut either way.)

And because the blogger brought up the race of the teenager, I’d like to know definitively (not presumptively) the race of the cop. Prejudice isn’t all one-direction. If the teenager’s race matters, so does the cop’s.

Had the blogger either accounted for the race of both parties (or of neither party) **EQUITABLY**, I’d still want to know about the camera, witness statements, etc., but race would carry no weight, as it shouldn’t. After all, isn’t the big argument in society about racial equity?

And finally, since as a reader I’m sitting in judgement of the jury that decided the cop’s case “didn’t hold water,” I’d ask one question of the those jurors:

What did the cop have to gain by falsely accusing a teenager of assault during a “routine traffic stop?” (I have no way of knowing whether any jurors in the original case asked that question, but I strongly suspect they didn’t. After all, they deliberated for only “about an hour.”)

And at the end, after asking and receiving answers to those questions, either way I’d feel a lot cleaner in rendering my decision.

For illustrative purposes only, I’ve included the original post as the last item in “Of Interest” below.

Because I like to believe the best of people in general (yes, regardless of race, gender, etc.), I don’t believe for a second the blogger intentionally mentioned the race of the teenager and intentionally failed to mention the race of the cop.

But there it is.

Wow. I got an email from D2D this morning saying “Amazon now requires that we keep a Confirmation of Copyright letter on file for authors [distributing] to their site.” And so on.

This email came in the nick of time. I had planned to switch all distribution of all my books to D2D, to include distribution to Amazon. I won't do that now.

I'll continue to distribute my own files directly to Amazon, and allow D2D and Smashwords to distribute to all the other vendors.

Here's my response to D2D's email:

Well, I know this wasn't D2D's idea of a good time, and it's just silly.

After all, both D2D and Amazon both already require assurances that the writer verify s/he holds the copyright to his or her own work.

I've always distributed my books to Amazon myself, with one exception. I published one novel (Keeper of the Promise) to Amazon via D2D as an experiment. I was happy with the results, but (thankfully) forgot to add distribution to Amazon on the eleven novels that followed.

Rather than jump through this additional hoop, I visited my dashboard at D2D today and removed Keeper of the Promise from distribution to Amazon. I'll wait a week or so, then upload the file to Amazon myself in the usual way. Sigh.

Thank you for all you do. Sorry the bully in the business is being such a taskmaster, and unnessecarily so.

I rolled out very late this morning after becoming involved in watching the first half of a lengthy live cop show. I didn't get to the Hovel until 5 a.m.

I finished all of the above by 7. Now a break to get myself back on my regular schedule.

After the break, I updated my HarveyStanbrough.com author website, removing the Copyediting menu tab and adding it to the Professional Writer Resources page. I also renamed a few menu items. I think it's better. See what you think.

I also added a link to Writer Resources (duh) to the Daily Journal menu.

Then I got a few emails and added a few items to “Of Interest,” so I remain behind in the fiction-writing curve this morning. I'd like to say days like this are built into the challenge, but they aren't. Still, I believe I'll finish ahead of time.

Finally to the novel for the first time today at 10:15 a.m. (See? It isn't all peaches and roses for me either. Is that a thing? Peaches and roses? Either way, it sounds good.)

With about 1000 words done, out for a short walk at 11. Back at noon and did some other things. Finally back to the novel at 2. It's definitely going to be a short day of writing.

Tomorrow might be short too. I'm at a place in the novel where it will slow again as I bounce back and forth between writing and researching to add verisimilitude (one of my favorite words). (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

In case you missed it back in August in the Journal, see "How to Write Like I Do" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/how-to-write-like-i-do/>.

See "Growth Mindset and Goals" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/growth-mindset-and-goals/>.

See "JUDGMENT: Five Questions with Joseph Finder" at <https://therealbookspy.com/2019/01/27/judgment-five-questions-with-joseph-finder/>.

See "Tim Dorsey and the Wild Crime Fiction of Florida" at <https://crimereads.com/tim-dorsey-and-the-wild-crime-fiction-of-florida/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Love and Justice" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/28/free-fiction-monday-love-and-justice-2/>.

See "Respecting the Readers" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/01/29/respecting-the-readers/>.

By the way, Linda Adams' "Digital Minimalism: Reduce Clutter on Your Computer Now" is available now at <https://books2read.com/u/47xZNR>. I don't always announce other authors' new releases, but this one seems like something we could all use.

See "Pop Culture's Black Dahlia Obsession" at <https://crimereads.com/pop-cultures-black-dahlia-obsession/>. I have it on good authority this crime was actually solved in 2003, though the article says otherwise.

See "Greenlight Bookstore Responds to Paid Vacation Legislation" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/greenlight-bookstore-responds-to-paid-vacation-legislation/>. I'll just leave this right here without comment.

Finally, see "Our Flawed But Fab Jury System..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/these-are-a-few-of-my-favoritereally-weird-oddball-things.html>.

Fiction Words: 1660

Nonfiction Words: 1310 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2960

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 10... 3860 words. Total words to date..... 29117

Day 11... 4218 words. Total words to date..... 33335

Day 12... 1660 words. Total words to date..... 34995

Total fiction words for the month..... 72982

Total fiction words for the year..... 72982

Total nonfiction words for the month... 24060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 24060

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 97042

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [The Real Book Spy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, January 30](#)

[January 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Another pretty good “Of Interest” section and a topic on one way to lose readers. Be careful out there.

Topic: One Way to Lose Readers

I wasted a lot of time today writing a lengthy topic (around 1500 words) that, in the end, seemed inane to me. So I trashed it.

The words weren’t “wasted” though because they brought me to this.

So I’ll just say a few quick things, because my main job is to tell stories, to entertain, and I want to get back to it.

My secondary job is to pass along what I know about writing, both techniques and (in this case) cautionary tales. But my job is not to tell you what to write.

In today's news climate, I suppose it's difficult for many to imagine that most people — regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, skin color and so on — are just good, run-of-the-mill, normal people trying to get by. But they are.

If you recognize that, you can stop reading now. If you don't, this cautionary tale is for you.

Maybe those of us who have lived and worked in close proximity with people of various races, skin colors and so on have a head start on those who haven't. I don't know.

Most people (black, white, red, yellow, brown, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, native-born, naturalized, and legal and illegal immigrants and so on, ad nauseam) really do just want to get along with everybody regardless of human divisions.

These are the people who don't make the evening news. They don't feel downtrodden to any degree. Nor do they feel superior to any degree. Some are successful. Some are rich and some are poor. But they all have two things in common: They're human beings and they're just trying to live their lives.

Are there exceptions? Of course. As Robert E. Howard put into the mouth of his character, Conan the Barbarian, "There's scum and scut in every folk and nation."

You see them on the news almost every night. Well, subject to the prejudices and biases of the news director.

But back to the rank-and-file. Back to the vast majority of good people who are just living their lives. When they buy a book or a short story collection, they just want to be entertained. They don't want the writer to "right social wrongs," especially if that writer hasn't shared directly in their experience.

So we come down to it:

1. Enter the writer whose sole purpose (or strong side purpose) is not to simply tell a good story, but to right what s/he perceives as social wrongs, especially those of which s/he has not personally been a victim.

That writer will lose readers. And s/he will lose as many (or more) from the group s/he's trying to "defend" as from any other group.

2. Likewise, if a writer shows his or her blatant prejudices (including "reverse" prejudices) in social media, s/he will lose readers, or never gain them in the first place.

In my humble opinion, it's better to remember your job is to entertain. Nothing more, nothing less.

Again, be careful out there. Or better yet, don't be careful. Just tell the story your characters give you to tell.

From Kevin Tumlinson (a great thriller writer who also works for Draft2Digital,

If you'll use this link BookHip.com/DBXDHP, you can download a free copy of "The Jani Sigil," an original Dan Kotler archaeological thriller that isn't available anywhere else in the world!

This is for folks on Kevin's mailing list, so it might ask for your email address. I recommend it.

Rolled out at 2 this morning. Then I was sucked into wrestling with the beast above. Finally to the novel almost 4 hours later. Sigh.

After one session and about 1000 words to the house for breakfast etc. at 7.

Back to the novel, briefly, at 8.

A pretty good day today. I wrote, walked, and wrote some more.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Some great comments on "How to Write Like I Do" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/how-to-write-like-i-do/#comments>.

See "The Teflon Hero" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/01/the-teflon-hero.html>.

In an incredible coincidence, to me, via Linda Adams, see "The Evolution of Harry Bosch" at <https://crimereads.com/the-evolution-of-harry-bosch/>.

Also in the same vein, see Marilyn Byerly's comment on the Kill Zone blog post from yesterday at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/these-are-a-few-of-my-favoritereally-weird-oddball-things.html#comment-66507>.

See "Reading for Pleasure, This Writer's Tool" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/01/30/reading-for-pleasure-this-writers-tool/>.

See "Q&A with William F. Wu" at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2019/01/30/qa-with-william-f-wu/#more-349>.

See "Where Inspiration Comes From" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/01/where-inspiration-comes-from.html>. A rare post that has little to do with writing but you might find a gem or two.

Fiction Words: 4117

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4877

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 10... 3860 words. Total words to date..... 29117

Day 11... 4218 words. Total words to date..... 33335

Day 12... 1660 words. Total words to date..... 34995

Day 13... 4117 words. Total words to date..... 39112

Total fiction words for the month..... 77089

Total fiction words for the year..... 77089

Total nonfiction words for the month... 24820

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 24820

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 101919

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Marilynn Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, January 31](#)

[January 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

Probably my best day of writing fiction ever. (grin)

Today we have an absolute must-read as the first item in “Of Interest.” Read it a few times, even. Be sure you understand it. Especially you younger writers who have the potential for a long-term (20+ years).

Plus there’s a lot more in “Of Interest” and a short topic today. Today is a built-in short day for me (ends around noon) so I’m in the Hovel early today.

Topic: Writing in Challenges and What’s Truly “Special”

Be sure to see Dean's new challenge (the second item in "Of Interest"). Absolutely excellent.

My own current challenge to write 10 novels in 150 days ends (at the latest) on June 4. Dean's first challenge (or the first third of his overall challenge) ends on June 14.

That's close enough. I might jump into the second part of his challenge with him. And who knows? Maybe even the third. (grin)

I'd love to see some of you jump into this too. But caution:

If you're an outliner or one who feels you "must" rewrite, etc. don't even try this. If you want to try this, there are only two requirements, but those are essential:

1. To complete a challenge like this, you have to be confident that your stories are good.

The 20/60/20 rule applies: 20% of readers will flat love your novel; 60% will like it; and 20% will not like it. Nature of the beast and reader taste.

2. You have to release the desire for perfection. It doesn't exist in writing.

You have to be confident that you've written your best story at your current level in one clean pass, and that you haven't placed any special significance on the story itself.

THAT you write is special. After all, it's your chosen profession (or hobby). But WHAT you write is not special, nor is it for you to judge. (See the 20/60/20 rule above.)

Individual stories (short and novels) are not special gems. They're simply your product. They're what you turn out as a result of what you do. (Again, see the 20/60/20 rule above.)

For more on this, and another take, see Dean Wesley Smith's "Special Stories" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/special-stories/>. Be sure to read the comments too.

Good luck!

Rolled out a little before 2, in the Hovel a little after. To get my fingers working, I checked for items for "Of Interest" and wrote the stuff above.

Now to the novel at 3:30. By 4:20, I had around 900 words and took a break up at the house.

Back to the novel at 4:45 for another session and another 1000 words, then to the house around 6 for a slightly longer break.

Back to the Hovel at 7, got tied up chasing more "Of Interest" items, and returned to the novel at 7:30. After that, I wrote off and on, folded laundry and put it away, wrote some more.

Okay, a GREAT day today. (grin) What a way to end the month!

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: The Growing Importance of Intellectual Property (Planning For 2019 Part 6)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/01/30/business-musings-the-growing-importance-of-intellectual-property-planning-for-2019-part-6/>.

See “Making a Challenge Sane (Sort of)” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/making-a-challenge-sane-sort-of/>.

See “Cover Mockups – No Hassle and No Cost” at <https://terryodell.com/cover-mockups-no-hassle-and-no-cost/>.

See “Meet Your 2019 MurderCon Instructors!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/meet-your-2019-murdercon-instructors/>.

See “9 Common Types of Fantasy Characters (With Examples)” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/fantasy-characters/>.

See “What is Urban Fantasy? A Guide for Readers and Writers” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/what-is-urban-fantasy/>.

See “How to Start a Publishing Company in 2019” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-start-a-publishing-company/>.

You can also download my free “Quick Guide to Self-Publishing & FAQs” by clicking <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Quick-Guide-to-Self-Publishing-FAQs.pdf>.

You can also download my free “A Fact Sheet Toward Efficiency in Epublishing” by clicking <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/A-Fact-Sheet-Toward-Efficiency-in-Epublishing.pdf>.

Fiction Words: 6304

Nonfiction Words: 590 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 6894

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 10... 3860 words. Total words to date..... 29117

Day 11... 4218 words. Total words to date..... 33335

Day 12... 1660 words. Total words to date..... 34995

Day 13... 4117 words. Total words to date..... 39112
Day 14... 6304 words. Total words to date..... 45416

Total fiction words for the month..... 83403
Total fiction words for the year..... 83403
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 25410
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 108813

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 38
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, February 1](#)

[February 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

Hey Folks,

In today's Journal

The Full Version of the Journal Is Back (topic).

For those interested in the challenge

Situation Solved released today

Looking for a first reader

The daily diary ramblings

Of Interest

The numbers

Topic: The Full Version of the Journal Is Back

The excerpted version of the Journal was an experiment, as I said up front. Turns out it was a failed experiment.

The specific purpose was to get readers to go to the website. Those who read in email don't often go to the website to leave a comment. I understand that. Why should they?

But comments help with search results, which helps the site grow. If readers get something of value from the Journal, clicking that link on the screen, reading the Journal on the website, and leaving a comment is a non-monetary way to help the Journal. Of course, I understand some folks would just rather not leave comments. (grin)

(For the record, I do practice what I preach. I subscribe to several writing blogs. You often see them in "Of Interest." I always click through when the blog is delivered as an excerpt, and I always leave a comment if I feel I have something of value to say.)

So that's why I did it. And my sincere, heart-felt thanks to those few of you who have taken the time to leave a comment on the Journal. I appreciate it more than you know.

I also invited subscriber input. I asked readers specifically what they think of the "excerpt" form that requires them to click through in their email to read the whole post.

Yet despite having 60+ subscribers (yes, that few despite having published this Journal for four years), only a few responded.

Still, I appreciate those who weighed-in with their thoughts on the excerpt version vs. the full version. As you can see, your input was valuable to me.

Of the two with the strongest opinions, one was for the excerpted version and one was against it.

The positive respondent said she enjoyed seeing the excerpt so she would know at a glance whether she would want to click through. (The problem on my end is that the excerpt wasn't large enough to let folks know what was really in that day's edition.)

But the other respondent said there was "something negative" about having to click through to the website to continue reading. That tells me maybe the content of the Journal, to some readers, might not be worth the extra effort of that click.

So for the first respondent (and anyone else who liked the excerpt version), I've added the bulleted "In Today's Journal" segment at the very top. That will save readers even having to scan down to see whether there's a topic and whether anything in "Of Interest" actually interests them.

And for the other respondent (and anyone else who didn't like the excerpt version) I've restored the full version.

So that should fix everything.

Not that everyone will know, of course.

Of those 60+ subscribers, I suspect only a handful actually read the Journal regularly at all. Another handful scan it once a week or so and catch up. Or just read the one they happen to catch every now and then.

That's a little depressing, given that I spend (easily) an average of two to three hours a day on just the Journal. But then, that's on me, not the subscribers.

That's also the main reason most of my Pro Writer blog posts over on the big site come from topics that originate here. At least that way I know more than 5 or 6 folks are actually reading them and maybe getting something out of them. (grin)

Frankly, most of the time I feel like I'm on stage talking to an empty theater. It's easy to wonder how much good I'm really doing for other writers when I hear only crickets in response.

Anyway, the full version is back. Read, enjoy, and if you find something in the Journal helpful, I'm glad.

More to the point, if you find the Journal of value, I would appreciate you sharing it with others, recommending it, and/or leaving comments.

If you do leave a comment, and if I let it through, I'll always respond. If I don't let it through (too personal, etc.) I'll respond via email.

'Nough said.

For those interested in the challenge, I feel like I'm in the end game of the WIP. I'd love to finish the book today (Day 15) but I don't know that I will.

If I finish it today, I'll still have three days in the bank against the next one. (And no, I don't have even a clue what the next one will be.)

If I finish this one on February 4, I'm on track with my challenge. (Two novels in 30 calendar days.)

If I finish the WIP after February 4, the challenge will continue, but I'll be into negative days.

I hope to keep the bank going, of course. Mostly because my youngest son invited me on a two-day road trip in mid-February. And I'm going. (grin)

Situation Solved, my first true police procedural, was released today. You can read about it at <https://www.books2read.com/u/3J8avB>.

I was actually approached by a New York literary agent who wanted to represent this book to traditional publishers. I declined.

I wonder how many literary agents would cease being literary agents if they were required to be licensed?

I also wonder when state and federal legislatures will enact laws to require licensing for literary agents, and to protect unwary authors from unlicensed agents and overreaching publishing contracts? I suspect we're way down on the list.

I'm looking for an extra first reader for the WIP, a crime novel told in interrelated short stories. Charlie Task is my favorite psychopath. He's also a Blackwell Ops operative. Some possibly disturbing graphic violence, some (very) light cursing in some dialogue. Email me if you're interested.

Benefits: you get to read it first, you are mentioned in the credits, and you get a free copy of the finished product.

Rolled out (again) a little before 2, aided by the two lady cats, who decided it was time for a minor skirmish in the middle of my bed.

I have a late-morning or early afternoon drop-in appointment later today anyway, so I don't mind.

Spent the first two hours writing the stuff above and researching and reading items for "Of Interest."

Now, my first cigar is almost gone, so I'm going to play a little Spider solitaire to fill a few minutes, then take a break.

Back to the Hovel at 5. To the novel at 5:15.

Finished the novel today. I'll go take care of my appointment and then cast about for the next novel idea.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See PG's take on "The Growing Importance of Intellectual Property" at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-growing-importance-of-intellectual-property/>.

See "Six Days Left" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/six-days-left/>. This is an unbelievable offer. I recommend you take advantage of it.

For fun, an advance look at Amazon's Super Bowl ad, see
“<http://www.thepassivevoice.com/amazons-super-bowl-ad-2/>.”

Fiction Words: 3122

Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4252

Writing of Blackwell Ops: Charles Claymore Task (novel)

Day 10... 3860 words. Total words to date..... 29117

Day 11... 4218 words. Total words to date..... 33335

Day 12... 1660 words. Total words to date..... 34995

Day 13... 4117 words. Total words to date..... 39112

Day 14... 6304 words. Total words to date..... 45416

Day 15... 3122 words. Total words to date..... 48538 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 3122

Total fiction words for the year..... 86526

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1130

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 26540

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 113065

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

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 Daily Journal, Saturday, February 2

February 2, 2019 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

First, Welcome Aboard to my newest subscriber, whom I know (at the moment) only as Super Primitive. (grin)

In today's Journal

Ramblings about setting up Hal 2

On the challenge

The daily diary (more ramblings)

Of Interest

The numbers

Well, I got my new 11" computer in yesterday. It's a refurbished, solid-state drive HP (so no noise or overheating) and it cost me a cool \$109.00. (That isn't a typo and the decimal is in the right place.)

So instead of casting about for the next novel idea I spent most of the afternoon and into the evening getting it set up as my new writing 'puter, Hal 2.

Part of that setup involved loading Microsoft Office 10 (my favorite version) and getting used to Edge as my temporary browser since I haven't installed Firefox on this one yet.

Fortunately, I have Dropbox, so transferring files and folders was a snap, though I still have to position many of them. I'll do that as I need them.

Naturally, the keyboard is a little different too, but only a little. It's easier to use because I don't have to reach as far with my fingers, but I'll get used to that pretty quickly. I'd literally worn the letters off several keys on Hal.

I also have my large monitor (I think it's 22") attached to it. And when the screen is open on this laptop it's below the big screen, not covering part of the bottom the way Hal did.

Here's hoping I can put as many (or more) novels through Hal 2 as I put through Hal. (grin)
Cheers!

So as I write this, I'm not sure what the day will hold. But I'm very glad I have those three days in the bank on the challenge.

The first thing I noticed this morning was the slight tug of an urge to take the day off.

But why? What would I be taking a day off from? It's only typing. It's only attempting to keep up with my characters as I record what they say and do. And besides, I take a break roughly every hour when I'm writing anyway.

Silly, isn't it? If it were work — by definition, "something I don't want to do" — it would be easy to take a day off. Or several. Or forever.

So the plan is to spend a little time this morning off and on continuing to set up some things. Then later I'll write down any first lines that occur to me. If one sticks, I'll write an opening. If it takes off, I'll be on the way to my 3rd novel of the challenge and my 40th novel overall. (grin)

On the challenge, it's not just about writing. It's also about publishing and getting the novels up for pre-publication sale.

I had planned to release Blackwell Ops 2: Charles Claymore Task on March 15, but I might have to put it off until later.

As it stands at present, I'll have to first-read it myself, which means reading it aloud as my fingers rest on the keyboard. That's too time-consuming when I'm in the middle of a challenge.

But it's also no big deal. I'll have another novel finished in about two weeks, so I'll plug that one into the March 15 slot, then the next into April 1 (or maybe 2 would be better), then April 15 and so on.

Yesterday I did the second draft (spell check) on Bl. Ops 2 but forgot to send it off to my first reader. So I did that this morning. But due to the subject matter and the fright she received from the first one, she decided to pass on this one.

So I'm still taking "applications" for first readers, for this one and in general.

Here's the scoop:

I write war/action-adventure, black-ops stuff, crime stuff, detective stuff, SFF (science fiction/fantasy) and a few other genres. including magic realism and period westerns.

Though my novels often contain a romance element, they are not in the Romance genre, either contemporary or bosom-heaving Regency. And I also don't write anything I would call Young Adult or Chick Lit.

My novels tend always to contain some psychological suspense.

So that's what I write. If you would like to apply as a first reader, let me know which genres you enjoy, and I'll let you know what I require from a first reader. (It isn't much. Possibly a topic on that tomorrow.)

The benefits to you are these:

you get to read the book second only to me reading it as I write it

you are mentioned in the credits (along with your website if you have one), and

you get a clean copy of the book plus any other already-published book of your choice.

So let me know.

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning and made my way to the Hovel shortly thereafter. I sat down and wrote much of the stuff above.

Not long after sunrise, Mona and I decided a trip to Sierra Vista was in order. And I decided I would spend the balance of the day setting things up on my new writing ‘puter.

We were gone all morning, so no fiction writing today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Three Writing Rules to Disregard” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/three-writing-rules-to-disregard/>.

Some great comments on “Making a Challenge Sane (Sort of)” at

<https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/making-a-challenge-sane-sort-of/#comments>.

See “Day Two: Meet Your 2019 MurderCon Instructors!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/day-two-meet-your-2019-murdercon-instructors/>. MAN I hope I can manage to go to this.

Fiction Words: XXXX (sigh)

Nonfiction Words: 930 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 930

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3122

Total fiction words for the year..... 86526

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 27470

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 113995

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, First readers, Lee Lofland, Non-Writing Day,

Professional Writer Series, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Sunday, February 3

February 3, 2019 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

In today’s Journal

On the challenge

A brief topic on Productivity and Being Prolific

Topic on What to Require of a First Reader

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

On the challenge, the good news is, after today I still have 1 day in the bank on my challenge. The bad news is I have only 1 day in the bank. Not that I'm complaining At All.

But what can be foreseen can be remedied. So in the back of my mind is the determination to spend a lot of time in the chair once I get going again, with the hope of putting more days in the bank. (grin)

However, I can spend only so many hours in the chair today, and most of those have gone into things other than fiction.

Brief Topic: Productivity and Being Prolific

Productivity and being so-called "prolific" is all just numbers, folks. There is no such thing as "fast" writing. Seriously. There is only the number of hours you dedicate to the chair.

If I spent only 60 hours per year writing a 60,000 word novel (so one novel per year), I wouldn't be considered prolific.

If I spent 60 hours every six months writing a novel (so two 60,000 word novels in a year), some would call me prolific.

If I spend 60 hours every two weeks writing a novel (26 novels per year), I'm considered hyper-prolific by some.

And that's still only a 30-hour work week. Compared with almost any of the old pulp writers, I'm pretty much a slacker.

See? Numbers.

Topic: What to Require of a First Reader

I think I wrote about this a long while ago, but it wouldn't hurt to touch on it again.

This isn't only what I need from a first reader, but what any writer should require.

First, what writers don't want:

We don't want to know how you would have written the story. Save that for your peer critique groups.

We don't want you to suspect or critique our political or religious beliefs. More than likely, what you read in the book are the beliefs of the characters, not the writer.

We don't want you to criticize any "bad" language. Unless you see it as gratuitous and unnecessary to the tension of the scene. In that case, you can mention it, but don't wear out the topic. Again, it's probably in dialogue and therefore belongs to the character, not the writer.

We don't want lessons in grammar and sentence construction. For example, we don't want a discussion of how many times we used "that" vs. "which." (They aren't interchangeable.)

We don't want you to tell us not to begin a sentence with And or But (unless it's done so often that it disrupts your reading). It's called a sentence fragment, and it happens often in great fiction, in both dialogue and narrative.

Here's what writers DO want:

Read for pleasure, period. You're a first reader, not a first critiquer. Read as a reader. Expect to enjoy the story.

If necessary, read it twice: once strictly for pleasure, and the second time to point out where we went "wrong."

If, as you're reading for pleasure, you aren't able to finish for any reason (in the story), let us know that. Let us know where and why.

If, as you're reading for pleasure, some inconsistency or inanity (or anything else) flat jerks you out of the story, tell us that, and tell us where. (Page numbers don't help. Quote a few words from the passage and tell us what caused your confusion.)

If, as you're reading for pleasure, an inconsistency leaps off the page at you (e.g., the character's eyes were blue in an earlier chapter and now they're brown; the morning is cool, but later in the same scene it's dark outside and/or hot; the character's clothing suddenly changes

without him or her actually changing clothes) again quote a few words where that happened and tell us what the inconsistency is.

One of my first readers doesn't take separate notes. She highlights the questionable passage in a striking color (blue or green or red is best, but avoid yellow please), maybe makes a note directly in the manuscript, and sends it back to me. If you'd rather not take notes separately, that's a fine way to do it.

Of course, note any misspellings or wrong word usages (waist for waste, a weapons cachet instead of a weapons cache, etc.).

Then ship it back to us as soon as you can. We will be endlessly grateful.

In my case, I'll give you pretty much anything you want for this valuable service: credit as my first reader, free books, publicity, and even assistance with writing things that give you trouble, eformatting help, cover-design advice, etc.

All you have to do is ask.

Rolled out on this Sunday morning at 3:30 and made my way to the Hovel. Groggy this morning for some reason.

Anyway, I wrote the stuff above, modified some of it for a post over on the Pro Writer blog, and otherwise screwed around for three hours.

My wife and I enjoyed watching Fiddler on the Roof last night. A great film that probably couldn't be made today. Sadly.

Up to the house at 6:30 for a break, then back to explore my computer and my mind for my next novel project.

No reportable fiction again today, so only one day left in the bank. I did, however, write a short poem that occurred to me as I was exploring story ideas. That was fun, and something that hasn't happened in a long time.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "No More Platform Anxiety, Please" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/no-more-platform-anxiety-please.html>.

See “Young Adult Author Cancels Own Novel After Race Controversy” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/young-adult-author-cancels-own-novel-after-race-controversy/>.

As a writer who is strictly against any form of censorship, this sickens me. It also makes me angry. Whatever happened to “If you don’t like it, don’t read it”? This young woman is voluntarily losing a six-figure advance because of a “groundswell” of control freaks whose desire is to rewrite history. Shame on them. And shame on her for giving in to them.

See “To The Book Community....” at <https://monsterhunternation.com/2019/01/31/to-the-book-community-go-fuck-yourself-an-anti-apology/>. Warning: Strong language.

An excerpt:

“This transcends politics. It doesn’t matter who is screaming at you, an abusive bully is an abusive bully. Don’t let abusive bullies run your life. That’s not just true for writing, but life in general.

“You want to be a creator? Good. Then go create. Make art. Make people happy. Tell the story you want to tell. And if people like your stuff, they’ll give you money for it. That part is pretty awesome.”

Also see “Choose Your Circles Carefully....” at <https://rawlenyanzi.com/choose-your-circles/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1160

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3122

Total fiction words for the year..... 86526

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3220

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 28630

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 115155

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Censorship, KillZone Blog, Professional Writer Series, The

Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Monday, February 4

February 4, 2019 by Harvey

**Hey Folks,
In today's Journal**

An opportunity for a free writing webinar

Topic: Ramblings on a Minor Crisis

The daily diary

A LOT in Of Interest

The numbers

According to the latest Reedsy newsletter, there's a new live webinar this Wednesday (February 6) at 2 p.m. eastern time.

Ann Leslie Tuttle, who "spent over 20 years as an editor at Harlequin, the world's leading publisher of romance," will present "What Makes the Perfect Romance." For more information or to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-makes-the-perfect-romance-registration-55070670859>. Did I say it's free?

Topic: Ramblings on a Minor Crisis

Yesterday I put out a call for first readers. I'll repeat that call in the Pro Writer blog tomorrow morning. Mostly because it's already pre-posted and I'm too lazy to take it down.

But to be honest, I'm not hopeful anyone will apply to first-read for me. And really, that's fine. At the moment, I'm experiencing technical difficulties. Not my computer. Me.

As I wrote a very long time ago in the poem "Rejuvenation,"

It's time to reconnect some frazzled ends,
unbend a few warped planes, demagnetize
a short in my long circuit. No robot,
I, but in dire need of maintenance. ...

What I'm experiencing (shared publicly here for your edification) is a minor crisis of confidence brought on by the probability that I'm about to lose a long-time first reader.

I understand why, but naturally I don't like it. So bear with me. Or skip ahead. I don't mind.

A recent series of emails has me assessing my work, specifically, my novels. Here's what I found:

Aside from detailed settings that subliminally pull the reader into the scene with the characters, all of my novels have two big things going for them:

The first is that they never contain seemingly rote repetition. Oh, there might be some repeated setting description (though not blatant) from one scene to another to re-ground the reader. But for example, readers will never see the same tense fight scene fought in exactly the same way or in which the character uses exactly the same techniques over and over ad nauseam, as if it's copied from one scene or book and pasted into another.

That sort of thing bores me to tears. In one bestselling author's novels, I've taken to actually skipping over some of his action scenes to get to the next situation in which the hero finds himself. That stuff's new and interesting. But how he gets out of it? Not so much.

And honestly, if that sort of repetition is what it takes to become a bestselling author, I'll have to continue in poverty. I can't bring myself to write that sort of thing.

When I encounter that as a reader, I feel cheated. And if I wrote it, I would feel I was cheating both myself and the reader. So that just isn't going to happen.

The second and more important aspect is that, especially from a psychological and emotional standpoint, the main characters in my novels (like the main characters who make a difference, good or bad, in our lives) are never bland.

Readers most often either like or dislike my characters strongly. That's because my characters tweak the readers' emotions, even to the point that their heart rate will actually increase.

But I don't see that as a bad thing. I actively WANT the reader to experience the sensations of fear, joy, elation, trepidation, love, lust, hatred and so on right along with the character.

Or as I wrote to a friend recently, I like to dance on the reader's raw, frayed emotions. (grin)

Regardless of the genre, I personally enjoy reading on the edge of my seat, unsure what will happen next and grateful to be along for the ride.

So I will never write a story in which the protagonist is a stereo-typical hero or heroine, a flawless Dudley Do-Right. And I will never write a novel in which the "villain" twists his handlebar moustache, ties a virginal young maiden to a railroad track, and has absolutely no redeeming traits. (Yawn.)

So when I hear that my writing is too believable, that the psychological and emotional experiences are too realistic, that only encourages me.

If my writing is so believable that it forces a critic to stop reading a poem I wrote to have a glass of brandy, I see that as a Good Thing. (The poem was from the POV of a squirrel who's about to be run over by a car tire.)

And if it's so believable that it forces a reader to put my novel down and "rest" from the intensity of it for a day or two, I take that as a high compliment.

If that was their reaction because they were bored, that would be a stringent wake-up call for me. But because the writing is too believable? In my book, that's a total score.

News like this will never affect the way I write. I can't allow it to. Frankly, I'd rather give up writing altogether and find something else to do.

But I won't do that either. Maybe instead I'll give up searching for first readers.

After all, writing the stories and being entertained by them is what matters. So maybe I should keep that focus (and the challenge) in mind and just write the next novel.

Rolled out at 2:30 and made my way to the Hovel.

I wrote the stuff above. (It took awhile.)

Later today maybe I'll snap out of my funk and write some fiction. For me. Then again, maybe I'll go ahead and write off this last "bank" day (self-sabotage, anyone?). That'll make the challenge just a little more difficult, hence more of a challenge. (grin)

To the house to change clothes and grab some breakfast at 6:40.

Back to the Hovel at 7 to do a little more computer and document set-up, back to the house at 8:15 to see my bride, then back to the Hovel again at 8:30.

Out for a walk at 10:30, and back to the Hovel at 11.

This is the end of the diary entry. If I write any fiction today (my last "bank" day), the numbers will be below.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "How I Will Do 100 Paperbacks?" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-i-will-do-100-paperbacks/>. No lack of confidence in that man. (grin)

See "Going In: The Fatal Funnel" at <https://www.leelofland.com/going-in-the-fatal-funnel/>.

See "First Page Critique: Death in London" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/first-page-critique-death-in-london.html>.

See "Editing – Proof Listening With Word's Read Aloud Feature" at <https://terryodell.com/editing-proof-listening-with-word-read-aloud/>. Hmm. This might be a viable alternative to either using a first reader or to reading my work aloud myself.

Note: The above is for Word 365. If you use Microsoft Word but a different version than 365 (I use 2010), see "Letting Word Read Your Manuscript" at <https://terryodell.com/letting-word-read-your-manuscript/>. It works!

See “2019 Goals Recap — Week #5” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/2019-goals-recap-week-5/#more-6922>.

Coincidentally, see “You must put your story on the market” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/02/04/you-must-put-your-story-on-the-market/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Without End” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/04/free-fiction-monday-without-end/>. I don’t mention Kris’ fiction because I’m a fan (though I am). I mention it because you can learn a ton about writing by studying her work.

Fiction Words: 1699

Nonfiction Words: 1210 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2909

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Total fiction words for the month..... 4821

Total fiction words for the year..... 88224

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4430

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 29840

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 118064

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Anthony DeCastro, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Lee Lofland, Phillip McCollum, Reedsy, Terry Odell, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, February 5

February 5, 2019 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

In today’s Journal

First readers (revisited, briefly)

Looking for experts

On being a grouch

Topic: How I Hit on What to Write Next

I added the “Eight Tricks” link...

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

As usual, I overexplained about first readers. Let me try to fix it.

All it takes to be a good first reader is to read for pleasure, as if you aren't supposed to give any feedback.

You aren't a teacher reading an assignment. You're a reader, reading for enjoyment. You aren't editing or proofreading. You're just reading a story.

If you're unable to read for the pure pleasure of reading a story, if you go into a story "looking" for things to ding, you'll make a lousy first reader but possibly a good proofreader.

See the difference?

That's really all there is to it. Just read for pleasure and note anything that leaps out at you (like you always do when you read). Then tell the author instead of keeping it to yourself.

Fortunately, I made it out of bed early enough to update the Pro Writers post with some of the above information before it goes live at 8 a.m.

But unless lightning strikes from that post, I'm not personally looking for first readers anymore. I might rely on specific experts when I need someone to look over specific chapters or scenes to be sure I have the right details, but that's it.

Everyone's an expert at something. For example, I know a couple of great retired cops I can ask about police procedures. I might email John Gilstrap if I have a question about contemporary weapons, and so on.

So if you'd like me to add your name to my list as an expert, [email me privately](#) to let me know your field. If you'd rather not, that's all right too.

Likewise, if any of you need help with knowledge about the Marine Corps, machine guns, "assault" rifles, handguns, the English language or writing, email me.

Yesterday I was in a horrible mood. It wasn't so much about losing a first reader as it was about me not having hit on a story to write. I'm 66. Sometimes I get grouchy. (grin)

Now that I'm writing again, everything's pretty much a dreamsicle.

Topic: How I Hit on What to Write Next

I decided to turn this into a topic because it was the first time I'd decided in this particular way.

That's right. After I'd written 39 novels, something over 1000 poems, and almost 200 short stories, there was still a new way to figure out what to write next.

The easiest way to start a new story remains the same:

1. snatch up a character,
2. slap a problem on the character (any problem will do; doesn't have to be "the" problem of the story), and
3. drop the character into a setting.
4. Bam. Sit down and write an opening.

If the opening takes off, keep writing.

If the opening doesn't take off, repeat 1-4.

But I have three series going (Nick Spalding; Stern Talbot, PI; and Blackwell Ops) plus a couple of potential series (SF based on The Consensus, and magic realism based on Keeper of the Promise).

So my 2 year old crossed his arms over his chest and flatly refused the tried-and-true method of starting something brand new. He wanted to write in one of the series.

Naturally, I caved.

So instead of following 1-4 above, I spent two and a half of my three banked days trying to bring up the voices of the different characters in my series and the tone or flavor of the series themselves.

I liked the tone and flavor and odd-and-varied situations of Blackwell Ops. Nothing stagnant there.

Which left me with another problem. Each of the first two Blackwell Ops books featured a different main character.

So I had to come up with a new character.

So I opened my Blackwell Ops Bible folder and glanced over a list of potential operatives' names I'd listed there.

Lo and behold, one name popped out at me. A woman. It was as if she was standing on tiptoe (she's only 5'3", around 110 pound) waving frantically at me.

So I picked her: Marie Arceneaux (AR-cen-o).

And guess what? That led me back to 1-4 above.

By the time I got my fingers on the keys, she was walking away from the security kiosk in an airport toward the gate for her flight. (So there's the character and the setting.)

From somewhere behind her, a man called out her name, trying to get her attention. (There's the initial problem.)

As I typed, I learned just before she'd disposed of her weapon, dropping three pieces into three different trash cans, and made her way through the long line at the security kiosk to catch her flight, she'd eliminated a target in the VIP lounge of the airport.

The opening flew by, and when I looked up I'd written almost 1700 words. Off goes the story.

As it turned out, Marie made the hit in Chicago. Her flight took her to Marseille, France. She lives in a little-known nearby town of Cassis, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

At the moment, that's all I know. I have zero idea who called out Marie's name, zero idea how she came to Blackwell Ops in the first place and so on.

But the characters will tell me more today. (grin)

And I've already told them they have 15 days maximum to tell me the story, starting today.

I added the "Eight Tricks" link in today's "Of Interest" section because all writers are different.

But for my money, the author's opening statement is way off the mark: "The goal is to open a channel between the conscious mind and the subconscious to allow free flow between them."

Uhh, no. The goal is to shut-up the conscious mind and let the subconscious play. And yes, because I was invited, I added a comment. (grin)

Rolled out way late at almost 4 a.m. It's been a stressful few days (not writing).

Let the pup out of his kennel early, then got to the Hovel and wrote all this stuff. Finally up to the house for a break at 6:30.

Finally at 8:30 to the novel to read over what I wrote yesterday. I added about 40 words, then moved to Chapter 2.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

For an ideal height/weight chart for your in-shape characters, see “Ideal Weight Chart” at <https://www.bannerhealth.com/staying-well/health-and-wellness/fitness-nutrition/ideal-weight>.
See “Eight Tricks to Tap Your Subconscious for Better Writing” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/eight-tricks-to-tap-your-subconscious-for-better-writing.html>.
See “Making the Victim Matter” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/02/making-victim-matter.html>.

Touted as “how to write crime fiction about violence and its aftermath with empathy and respect,” see “Is Fictionalizing Crimes Inherently Exploitative?” at <https://crimereads.com/is-fictionalizing-crimes-inherently-exploitative/>.

Fiction Words: 3766

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4926

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Total fiction words for the month..... 8587

Total fiction words for the year..... 91990

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 31000

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 122990

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, KillZone Blog, M. Byerley, Professional Writer

Series, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, February 6

February 6, 2019 by Harvey

Hey Folks,

In today's Journal

Tigritude

First readers abound

On process

I didn't keep a reverse outline

The daily diary

A LOT in Of Interest

The numbers

From The Passive Guy, “A tiger does not shout its tigritude, it acts.” ~ Wole Soyinka

I’m not sure, but I believe “tigritude” is my new favorite word.

I’m amazed (but very pleased) to report I had four positive responses to my request on the Pro Writers blog for first readers yesterday. Should any of them happen to read this, Thank You. Of course, I hope it works out.

On process... I was determined this morning to spend no more than an hour “waking up” (trying intentionally to develop a new habit and get to my WIP sooner). But it didn’t work out that way. (grin)

I got involved with commenting on posts that I encountered while looking for items for “Of Interest.”

Then again, as Laura Benedict reminds us in her post today, “Writing is practice never wasted,” even if that writing is in comments or (bless its heart) this little Journal.

So I’ll continue letting things happen as they should or as they want to. Every now and then I have to take a deep breath and say “It’s working as-is, Harvey. Don’t screw it up.” (grin)

A few times in the past I touted the value of keeping a reverse outline. I stick to that advice.

However, I didn’t keep a reverse outline on the first two Blackwell Ops books because they were basically a collection of stories told by the protagonist for each book.

Some stories were set in the present, and some in the past. Each story was self-contained as well as being part of the overall narrative. So I didn’t need a reverse outline to keep track of names, items of clothing, locations, etc.

The protagonist in Blackwell Ops 3, though, seems to want to abandon that pattern and go back to a more linear novel, telling one developing story from beginning to end.

The protagonist for this one is a female, which is more than fine. She’s also headstrong, which I suspect is why she wants to change things up. (grin)

So I’ll keep a chapter by chapter reverse outline for this one, if for no other reason just to attempt to keep up with her.

Rolled out at a little after 2 this morning. To the house at about 4:30, and finally to the novel at a little after 5 to begin reading through what I wrote yesterday.

I'm signed up for an online seminar at noon today, but the writing will take precedence. Which means if it's going well, I won't stop just for the seminar. (*Update: The seminar presenter will offer a link to the edited seminar later. I'll post the link in the Journal.*)

Added around 300 words to Chapter 2 during the cycling session. To the house for a break, then back to cycle through Chapter 3. I suspect I'll add some there too, then move into the new stuff and the day's writing.

8:30 a.m. back to the novel.

By 11 I'd added only a little over 2700 words via cycling and finishing Chapter 4. A brief break for a walk, then back at it.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Last 24 Hours" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/last-24-hours/>. I personally hope he makes his stretch goal. If you're serious about your writing, this Kickstarter is a great thing to support. One final push.

See "Write Where You Know, or Not, and a New Release" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/write-where-you-know-or-not-and-a-new-release.html>.

Some good comments on "Eight Tricks to Tap Your Subconscious for Better Writing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/eight-tricks-to-tap-your-subconscious-for-better-writing.html#comments>.

See "5 Fully Immersive Novels of Psychological Suspense" at <https://crimereads.com/5-fully-immersive-novels-of-psychological-suspense/>. Gems (and ideas) to be gleaned here.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see "Odyssey Salon" at <http://www.odysseyworkshop.org/salon.html>. Free video workshops.

See "Word Count Guidelines by Genre" at <https://annerallen.com/2018/03/word-count-guidelines-by-genre/>. Bear in mind to let a story be as long or short as it wants to be. Don't pad.

See "How to Name Your Crime Novel" at <https://crimereads.com/how-to-name-your-crime-novel/>.

Fiction Words: 4601

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 5291

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Total fiction words for the month..... 13188

Total fiction words for the year..... 96591

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6280

Total nonfiction words for the year.....	31690
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	128281
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date.....	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	39
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags Anne R. Allen, CrimeReads, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Laura Benedict, Linda Maye Adams, Reedsy, The Passive Voice, the writing life	

The Daily Journal, Thursday, February 7

February 7, 2019 by Harvey

**Hey Folks,
In today's Journal**

Dean's Kickstarter funded

One more note on first readers

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Wow. Dean's Kickstarter funded (for about an hour before one guy pulled out). But he's honoring both stretch goals anyway. That's the kind of guy he is.

So everyone who pledged at any amount gets all the rewards he offered in the Kickstarter stretch goals. Very cool. This is just one more reason I try to support him in his endeavors.

One commenter on yesterday's post mentioned that some folks (especially readers of the Journal) might shy away from offering to first-read for me because of my output.

If that's true, it's completely understandable. And I hadn't thought to address this concern before, but it's a non-issue.

I don't just force-feed one person a new novel every couple of weeks. (grin) Or anytime for that matter. If you volunteer as a first reader, you read only what you want to read and/or have time to read. And I'm pretty lax on the time issue.

Here's what happens:

When I get close to finishing a novel, I email the various folks on my first-reader list, tell them the genre, whether it contains a lot of violence, etc. and ask whether they would like to read it.

If they say yes, I email it to them. In fact, I ended up not having to resort to reading Blackwell Ops 2 aloud. Two first readers volunteered for that one. One of them already got results back to me, and the other is reading it.

So it's all good. If you would like to be added to my first reader list, just [email me privately](#). And if not, that's fine too.

Rolled out shortly after 2 this morning after a fairly rough night. I made burritos for supper last night with a new made-up recipe and an ingredient I shouldn't have added. So totally my fault. It's called "justice." (grin)

Anyway, mine kept me awake and eventually led me to sleep sitting up.

I also have a doc appointment this morning at 9 (unrelated) so a glitch in the middle of the writing day. But it will be what it will be.

To the novel off an on starting at 4:20. With 2000 words on the day, I'm off to my appointment at 8:30.

10 a.m. turns out today was a dry run. The guy I was supposed to see didn't make it out from Tucson. So we'll do it all again next Tuesday.

Cutting the day a little short today. I have to replace an upright on one side of a gate.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "True Confession Time" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/true-confession-time/>. All I can say is Hear hear!

See "Business Musings: Shifting Attitudes (Planning For 2019 Part 7)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/06/business-musings-shifting-attitudes-planning-for-2019-part-7/>.

See "Day Three: Meet Your 2019 MurderCon Instructors!" at <https://www.leelofland.com/day-three-meet-your-2019-murdercon-instructors/>.

Fiction Words: 3535

Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4035

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Total fiction words for the month.....	16723
Total fiction words for the year.....	100126
Total nonfiction words for the month...	6780
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	32190
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	132316
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date.....	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	39
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Lee Lofland,	

Professional Writer Series, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Friday, February 8

February 8, 2019 by Harvey

In Today's Journal

Short Journal entry today

On cycling and first reading and how they're similar

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Not a lot going on today. Got the gate moved and a new upright post in place on the latch side yesterday afternoon. Now I need to rebuild the gate itself. Probably this weekend.

I was talking with a guy the other day (maybe in comments) about cycling. I don't recall the whole conversation, but the take-away point was, cycling is all about Story. It isn't about individual words or sentences. It isn't about how many times you used a particular word or phrase. That's all conscious mind stuff. It isn't even about punctuation unless you just happen to notice something's missing as you're reading.

Cycling is only about Story. It's only about what you inadvertently omitted while you were trying to keep up with your characters.

It dawned on me this morning, that's what a first reader should be doing too. Just reading. Focusing on the story.

I received feedback this morning from a "testing" first reader who spent several paragraphs arguing about a timeline in the already published book she read for me.

Then she spent another paragraph or two arguing about an “inconsistency,” in which I had described a secondary character in maybe medium detail (because she’s someone the POV character noticed) yet nothing happened to the secondary character. So darn it, I guess that description was wasted. (grin)

And there was some other stuff, all going to her personal taste as a reader.

One, the timeline was right and the reader simply didn’t recognize it.

Two, describing a secondary character and then letting that character remain alive is not an inconsistency. Now, if the POV character put three rounds above her left eyebrow, and in the next chapter during the retelling he said he put three rounds above her RIGHT eyebrow, THAT would be an inconsistency.

And Three (and most importantly), the reader’s job is to read for pleasure, not go conscious-mind hunting for things to nitpick. Sigh. Literally anyone can do that to any literary work.

Of course, this particular case is no biggie. I’m glad she chose to give it a shot. Not everybody (especially writers, and more especially beginning writers) can be a good first reader.

First you have to learn to read Just Read for Pleasure. It’s difficult to let go of all the stuff you know, or think you know, about writing. But that’s required in part two. After you learn to read for pleasure, you have to steel yourself NOT to try to teach the writer for whom you are reading how to write. (That’s the same thing as telling someone in a peer critique group how you would have done it.)

Especially if the writer for whom you are reading is making money with his novels and you’ve written a few but haven’t published any yet. Just sayin’.

I should have written a lot more today, but while cycling I caught a glitch and had to fix it. Anyway, I’ll take it.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Some Ideas I Think Might Be Ripe” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-ideas-i-think-might-be-ripe/>.

See “Ever Have One Of Those Days?” at <https://terryodell.com/ever-have-one-of-those-days/>.

See “About Those Robots” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2019/02/07/about-those-robots/>.

Difficult to read (long paragraphs) but interesting if you can get through it.

See “J.D. Salinger’s Family to Publish Trove of Secret Works” at

<https://www.thepassivevoice.com/j-d-salingers-family-to-publish-trove-of-secret-works/>. My first thought was, “Wow, even JD Salinger had trouble with Heinlein’s Rule 4.” (grin)

For a free webinar on “What Makes the Perfect Romance?” (video) click <https://blog.reedsy.com/live/what-makes-the-perfect-romance/>. I haven’t listened to or watched this yet, so I can’t vouch for value.

Fiction Words: 3415

Nonfiction Words: 560 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3975

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Day 5..... 3415 words. Total words to date..... 17016

Total fiction words for the month..... 20138

Total fiction words for the year..... 103541

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7340

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 32750

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 136291

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Asimov's, Cycling, Dean Wesley Smith, Professional Writer

Series, Reedsy, Terry Odell, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Saturday, February 9

February 9, 2019 by Harvey

In today’s Journal

Topic: The Secret to Success...

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Probably another short edition of the Journal today. UPDATE: Nope. Long Journal entry, short writing day. (grin)

Topic: The Secret to Success as a Writer (If You Define “Success” as Yearning to Get Back to the Story)

Okay, that’s a crappy title. It’s too long and maybe too restrictive and it has nothing to do with money. At least directly. Bradbury and countless other luminaries have said if you write what you love, the money will come. I assume the corollary is “And if it doesn’t, so what?”

So the secret to success, with “success” defined either way — yearning to get back to the writing or monetary reward — is loving your current WIP.

Coincidentally, I’m loving the current novel, loving the story as it unfolds. I love everything about it.

Well, except maybe the brief excursions to the internet for the limited verisimilitude I’m able to provide because of the brief research I conduct there.

And I do mean brief. Generally, I plead Fiction to mitigate taking literary license with facts. But if my character decides to fly off to complete an assignment in a nation that’s has a predominantly desert landscape, I can’t allow her to enter a tropical jungle setting to bring justice to the antagonist, now can I?

So I ask GoogleEarth to show me where my protagonist and I are going. And I like using character names that are authentic to a region or country, so I regularly key in “Mozambique first names” or “popular pre-World War II French first names” etc.

I’m loving this WIP so much that I actually look forward to sleeping (which I ususally loathe) so I can wake up and get back to it. This is exactly the same feeling I experienced as a child on the eve of my birthday or Christmas.

I’ve experienced this sensation before, but I can’t break out specific numbers for you. For example, of the 40 novels I’ve written (including the WIP), I can’t say specifically in how many of them I had this sensation. I can only barely remember the storylines from most of the books I’ve written.

But I remember the POV characters and some of the secondary characters. Some of them exhibited such a strong persona that they later appeared as the POV character in a book of their own.

And I remember I loved writing those spin-offs and the stories that were the catalyst for them. And that caused me to realize (finally) that the character and how I feel about the character was the common thread that ran through all the books I loved writing.

Not to bang the drum too loudly (or too often), but I realized this is yet another direct and unexpected benefit of the challenge I’m currently undertaking.

Simply put, the more stories you write, the greater the chance you’ll happen on that perfect combination of Character and Story that makes you want to remain at the keyboard 24/7.

I was telling someone only yesterday that this book makes me wish I could write 18 hours per day. Then I said, “Why can’t they all be like that?”

Which led me to realize... They Can. And that, I believe, is the secret to success.

If you start with a character you love, meaning one who has the right persona (both privately and as presented to the world), how can you NOT want to be around him or her 24/7? How can you NOT love living vicariously through that character? How can you NOT love writing about how that character deals with whatever situation arises as the story develops?

So my new theorem is that loving what you write begins with picking a character you love. If you choose the right character and allow him/her to tell the story, you will love the story.

And of course, the 10/80/10 rule applies. If you love the story, about 10% of your readers will love it too. Another 80% will like it enough to buy your next offering. And then the other 10% will either not like it enough to buy the next one or will wish evil to befall you because you're obviously a spawn of Satan (or whatever).

Don't be afraid to allow your character to surprise you. Loving the character is like loving your offspring or that favorite nephew or niece. You will love him/her even when s/he does things you don't love or things that make you uneasy.

Sometimes, I believe, you will love the character more for doing things that make you uneasy, if for no other reason than because you would not do those same things yourself.

What have been your experiences with characters you love? Is it easier to write those stories or not?

Rolled out at 2:30, looking forward to get back to the story. Then I had that epiphany about characters and wrote the topic above. Go figure.

Got some cycling and a couple of sessions done early, and then we went to the store. I thought we might get back a little sooner, so I left this open. But no more writing today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Wow. See the comments on "Some Ideas I Think Might Be Ripe" at

<https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-ideas-i-think-might-be-ripe/#comments>.

See "Fighting Off the Fog" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/fighting-off-the-fog.html>.

See "Special Weekend Edition – Friday's Heroes: Remembering the Fallen" at

<https://www.leelofland.com/special-weekend-edition-fridays-heroes-remembering-the-fallen/>.

See "2020 Las Vegas Workshops Announced!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/2020-las-vegas-workshops-announced/>.

See "I've always been socially aware..." at <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/i-ve-always-been-socially-aware-because-of-where-i-come-from-1.3776208>.

Fiction Words: 1845

Nonfiction Words: 930 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2775

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Day 5..... 3415 words. Total words to date..... 17016

Day 6..... 1845 words. Total words to date..... 18861

Total fiction words for the month..... 21983

Total fiction words for the year..... 105386

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8270

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 33680

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 139066

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland,

Professional Writer Series, The Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Sunday, February 10

February 10, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Barely caught a gotcha

Topic: Marketing

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Special thanks to Mike Rom, one of my new first readers. Mike is a pure reader. He reads avidly, and as he does, things pop out at him. He notes those things and tells me about them. Perfect.

Topic: A Marketing Thought That Many Miss

We've all seen the pros and cons re marketing our work:

Use social media

Don't use social media

Be aggressive in your marketing

Be passive in your marketing

Have bookmarks printed

Don't have bookmarks printed

Give away your books

Don't give away your books

And so on.

But one marketing thought I seldom see or hear anyone talking about anymore is (to me) the most important of all.

Market Yourself.

By that I don't mean "do your own marketing," though of course we do.

But I mean literally, market yourself. Sell yourself. If readers like You and feel a kinship with you or that they can at least relate to you, there's a greater chance they'll buy more of your books.

So how do you go about marketing yourself?

There are several ways.

If you are so inclined, use social media. But...

Instead of talking constantly about your books, talk about things that interest you (um, other than your books).

Engage with others as if they are your friends, or at least as if you are their friend.

Smile as you type updates or replies in social media, even though nobody can see you. The smile will come through in your update or reply. (Caution: So will a smirk or an angry frown. Stay away from those.)

If you have a strong opinion on a hot-button topic (for example, national politics), keep it to yourself. Your job is to sell yourself, not convince others they don't like you and therefore will certainly not like anything you write.

Besides, your political opinion doesn't matter. All that matters is what the potential reader believes is your political opinion. So keep it to yourself.

(Years back, I was guilty of this one. The only opinions I changed were the opinions of those who started out thinking my books might be worth reading.)

When you talk with others (on social media or otherwise) make it all about them.

Give others something of value, but don't wrap it in the guise of advice. Instead, offer it as something that has worked for you.

Never "should" on people. That alone will set you apart in others' minds from 99% of the people with whom they interact.

And leave comments on posts you enjoy. My commenting on others' posts have led to others finding my website (and my books) as well as me being invited to write guest posts, etc.

Obviously, there's a lot more to this idea of selling yourself, but maybe these few notes will get you started thinking in that direction.

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning, then spent the first two hours on various pursuits.

I quickly corrected a few things Mike Rom found in a novel I have up for release in 5 days. (Thank you, Mike!) They truly were egregious errors (typos all) that I was amazed I'd missed.

Then I looked for items for "Of Interest," left a couple of comments, etc. (My comments on the posts I follow might help others, but they're also part of my overall marketing strategy. See the topic above.)

To the novel, finally, at a little after 5.

With a few breaks in between writing sessions, I knocked out a little over 3000 more words on the story. More than enough for a Sunday morning and my bride at home.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Reading as an Editor” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/reading-as-an-editor/>. Some real gems here for short-story and novel writers. You might want to read it a couple of times.

See “What Bryan Cranston Can Teach Writers” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/what-bryan-cranston-can-teach-writers.html>.

Some good comments on “Fighting Off the Fog” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/fighting-off-the-fog.html#comments>.

Fiction Words: 3093

Nonfiction Words: 690 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3783

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Day 5..... 3415 words. Total words to date..... 17016

Day 6..... 1845 words. Total words to date..... 18861

Day 7..... 3093 words. Total words to date..... 21954

Total fiction words for the month..... 25076

Total fiction words for the year..... 108470

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8960

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 34370

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 142849

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Professional Writer Series, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Monday, February 11

February 11, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

For fun

The challenge.

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

For fun (and with my friend Dan Baldwin in mind), see the excerpt from “A Love Story Between Business Managers, Written by a Business Manager” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-love-story-between-business-managers-written-by-a-business-manager/>. Oh dear god, folks, please don't write like this.

The Challenge

I'm currently on Day 9 of the third novel of my writing challenge (to write 10 novels in 150 consecutive days).

When the first novel ended, I had three days in the bank. I quickly wasted two of those days, which left me one.

To maintain my pace and stay on track with the challenge, my WIP has to be finished on or before February 19, and today is February 11. So including today and the 19th, I have nine days left to finish it.

The good news is I should do that with relative ease, especially if I can keep adding 3000 and 4000 word days. The bad news is a hope: I hope I don't waste anymore days.

If I could save any future banked days, and if I average (remember, everything good in writing numbers boils down to average) twelve days on each novel, I could easily write 11 or 12 novels in that original 150 day time frame. (grin)

I guess when the dust clears, we'll see. Let's hope no sandstorms pop up.

The other thing is, as I recall this challenge included doing covers and prep docs and having all 10 novels up for pre-order within that 150 days.

At the moment, I don't yet have that done for Book 2 even as I'm closing in on Book 3. So we'll see how that goes too.

Rolled out late this morning and by 11 (mostly cycling, with breaks, to fix a glitch) and finishing a scene from yesterday I'd added only around 1500 words. Today might be a sluggish start to the week.

Around 11 too, I remembered I'd promised a couple of weeks ago to write a guest post for a writer whose work I really like.

That led me to a (probably) hair-brained idea. I won't tell you here what that idea was, but a few of you received an email from me about it.

I spent close to an hour composing that email, then (with my brain going in that direction today) I decided to write the guest post for my friend.

So that's how the day will end. With a lot more non-fiction than fiction written on the day. (grin) I don't usually count email words, but this one was too important not to count.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "When Real Life Collides with Fiction" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/when-real-life-collides-with-fiction.html>. There's a ton of good stuff in this post.

See "Haunted House: Crime Writer's Research Trip" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/haunted-house-crime-writers-research-trip/>.

See "Buried Alive: How To Escape Your Grave" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/buried-alive-how-to-escape-your-grave/>.

Some great (informative) comments on "Reading as an Editor" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/reading-as-an-editor/#comments>.

See The Passive Guy's take on "The Beginning of the End for Patreon" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-beginning-of-the-end-for-patreon/>. I recommend reading the comments, too, and I recommend (strongly) staying away from Patreon.

See "Business Workshops Around the Country" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/business-workshops-around-the-country/>.

Fiction Words: 1528

Nonfiction Words: 2543 (Journal, email, guest post)

So total words for the day: 4071

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Day 5..... 3415 words. Total words to date..... 17016

Day 6..... 1845 words. Total words to date..... 18861

Day 7..... 3093 words. Total words to date..... 21954

Day 8..... 1528 words. Total words to date..... 23482

Total fiction words for the month..... 26604

Total fiction words for the year..... 110007

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11503

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 36913

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 146920

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Professional Writer Series, Sue Coletta, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, February 12

February 12, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

The WIP

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Weird. As I close in on the end of the WIP (I don't know what the end will be and it's probably still some 20,000 words in the future) I seem to be writing it in spurts.

Again, every book writes differently, but this is a huge difference for me. It seems every time I sit down my fingers fly over the keyboard. Yet at the end of the day I have fewer words done than I expected.

It's true that I've absented myself from it somewhat lately for various reasons.

But the cold hard truth is that even when I have the hours, I'm either not spending them in the chair or I'm doing something other than writing while I'm in the chair.

Maybe this is my psyche trying to make the challenge more challenging. I don't know. But I need to snap out of it and write. (grin)

When I wrote that, a thought zinged through my mind: Easier said than done.

But it really isn't. It really is easy. *Just put your fingers on the keyboard, Harvey. Now read back over the last scene (or half-scene) and when you get to the white space again, Just Write the Next Sentence.*

Reckon I'll go do that now.

Rolled out late again this morning, wrote for a couple of hours, then had a doc appointment in Benson (it was put off from last week). Go that done, hit the store while I was in town, checked the mail and back to the Hovel.

I wrote a few lines, realized I hadn't bought something I'd meant to buy at the store earlier, so I went back to the store.

I'm stopping for the day. It's a good, exciting place to stop, and maybe tomorrow I won't display such aberrant behavior but will actually sit down and do my job.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Tip of the Week #57" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/tip-of-the-week-57/>.

See "First Page Critique: What Color Is Your Story?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/first-page-critiquewhat-color-is-your-story.html>.

See "Avoid the Bubble Scene" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/02/avoid-bubble-scene.html>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Name-calling" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/11/free-fiction-monday-name-calling-2/>.

See "You Must Keep it on the Market..." at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/02/11/you-must-keep-it-on-the-market-until-it-has-sold/>.

See "Release Day for the Mapleton Mystery Novellas" at <https://terryodell.com/release-day-for-the-mapleton-mystery-novellas/>.

Fiction Words: 2467

Nonfiction Words: 400 (Journal, email, guest post)

So total words for the day: 2867

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Day 5..... 3415 words. Total words to date..... 17016

Day 6..... 1845 words. Total words to date..... 18861

Day 7..... 3093 words. Total words to date..... 21954

Day 8..... 1528 words. Total words to date..... 23482

Day 9..... 2467 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 29071

Total fiction words for the year..... 112474

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11900

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 37310

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 149784

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Anthony DeCastro, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Kristine

Kathryn Rusch, M. Byerley, Professional Writer Series, Terry Odell, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, February 13

February 13, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Draft2Digital

Behind the scenes: an announcement

Crime Writer Sue Coletta

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Draft2Digital, the ebook distributor where you can also create print books, has a new refer-a-friend royalty program. At least it's new to me.

Basically, if someone opens a new account at Draft2Digital and uses my link —

<https://www.draft2digital.com/referHS> — I earn 10% of D2D's royalty share (not yours) for the next two years.

As you know, I've been recommending D2D as a distributor for the past couple of years. So if you haven't joined yet, now's the time. (grin)

Behind the scenes, I've been working to put together a group of at least seven independent writers and publishers who will collectively form a blog similar to the Kill Zone blog.

However, whereas TKZ authors are all traditionally published, our group will focus on independent writing and publishing. TKZ is also focused pretty tightly on the thriller and mystery genres. Ours will address topics of interest to all genres.

The goal is to have a new post every day. So if there are 7 of us, we'll each post once a week. If there are 14, we'll post once every two weeks, and so on. I have a good cadre, so now I'm opening it up to others.

Taboos: No politics, hot-button topics or language others might consider foul.

Fair Game: What's worked well for you in writing habits, personal challenges, "How to Write Like I Do" pieces, publishing, formatting, cover design (if you design your own or have sources to recommend) and so on. The sky's the limit.

I have the website URL and I plan to launch it as soon as everything's ready to go.

If this is something in which you're interested, and if you feel you have something original to contribute, contact me via email.

While back, Crime Writer Sue Coletta asked whether I'd like to write a guest post for her blog. Specifically, she wanted a "true crime" piece about an experience I had while I was a cop in a small town in the mid-1970s.

I wrote it, sent it off, and apparently she's going to post it this coming Saturday.

I'm grateful to Sue, but I'm also fair. I emailed this morning to tell her if she experienced a slew of unsubscribers on Sunday and Monday, I'd be expecting a bill. (grin)

Rolled out a little after 3 (summoned rudely by the lady cats), stumbled out to the Hovel and wrote the stuff above. I also wrote a few emails re the stuff above.

Wrote about 3000 words (I know because I wrote three sessions), then took a walk around noon. Came back and wrote some more.

For the first time in a long time, today I didn't check my word count as I was writing.

Ended up with a pretty good day and a few sizzling scenes.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "A Whole Lot of Travel" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/a-whole-lot-of-travel.html>.

See "Got Pushback On App Idea" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/got-pushback-on-app-idea/>.

See "Really Cool Award News" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/13/really-cool-award-news/>.

See "Nine Lessons from a Small Indie Publisher" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/nine-lessons-from-a-small-indie-publisher/>.

Fiction Words: 5757

Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal, email, guest post)

So total words for the day: 6287

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 1..... 1699 words. Total words to date..... 1699

Day 2..... 3766 words. Total words to date..... 5465

Day 3..... 4601 words. Total words to date..... 10066

Day 4..... 3535 words. Total words to date..... 13601

Day 5..... 3415 words. Total words to date..... 17016

Day 6..... 1845 words. Total words to date..... 18861

Day 7..... 3093 words. Total words to date..... 21954

Day 8..... 1528 words. Total words to date..... 23482

Day 9..... 2467 words. Total words to date..... 25949

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Total fiction words for the month..... 34828

Total fiction words for the year..... 118231

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12430

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 37840

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 156071

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	39
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Professional Writer Series, Sue Coletta, The Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic	

The Daily Journal, Thursday, February 14

February 14, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Topic: An Apology

A new blogger

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Topic: An Apology

Yesterday in "Of Interest" I posted a link to "Nine Lessons from a Small Indie Publisher." Had I read it first (I usually do), I wouldn't have posted it.

IMHO, this is not a "small indie publisher." This is a traditional publisher doing his best to make indie publishing look bad, and he's doing such a bad job at it that the attempt is transparent. How low will they stoop?

Yes, in true indie publishing the hours are long and the work occasionally piles up, but the reward is fantastic: 100% of net royalties for the life of the copyright (intellectual property), which the author also retains for the duration of his or her life plus 70 years.

As noted by TPG (and verified by me), this publisher priced his book in line with traditional publishing prices. Hence the article leaves me wondering whether the Mensch contract also mimics tradpub by assuming all rights or outright ownership of the copyright (again, valuable IP) like other traditional publishing contracts do.

In exchange for a pittance of an advance (maybe) and a ridiculously low royalty rate.

No, this is not "how it is" (per another comment on the OP), at least not at the majority of true small indie publishers, one of which I have been (successfully) since 2011.

Believe in yourself, believe in your work, and get it out there.

This morning I added a new blogger to the collective, a good looking young gent from New Zealand named Sean Monaghan. (grin) See his website at <https://seanmonaghan.com/>. By the way, it isn't live yet, but the new blog will be called Pro Writers Writing. When it's live, probably sometime in March, I'll announce it. (grin)

Rolled out way late at 4:30. Ugh. I guess I needed the sleep.

My friend Robert and I finalized (on the phone) details of the logo that will span the top of the new collective website. Thanks, Robert! He will also be one of the bloggers, so that's a double-win.

Searched for (and read) items for "Of Interest," worked out details for the logo, etc. and finally (still) got to the novel by 9 a.m.

Probably not a big day today. For one thing it's a half-day, but more importantly, my protagonist has wrapped up an assignment and is on the way home to see what her sister's up to. So I need to re-read the chapters on her and her sister again before I start the next chapter. (Feed the subconscious and it will feed you.)

As I'm searching for those chapters, I'll also update my reverse outline, which I stopped after Chapter 2. (I'm on Chapter 17 now.) If I'd kept up with it, I wouldn't have to search so hard. See?

I did some cycling too as I was looking over those older chapters. Found one minor glitch and fixed it in about six places.

When I finally got the cycling done and the reverse outline caught up, it was almost noon. Today was the shortest writing day in a long time, but I suspect I'll more than make up for it tomorrow. (grin) It feels great to know all I have to do to check an earlier point now is go back to the reverse outline. I'm tellin' you, folks, these things are priceless.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Writing a Novel Series: Tips for Developing Spin-Offs and Sequels" at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2013/11/21/writing-a-novel-series/>.

See "Happy Valentine's Day" at <https://terryodell.com/happy-valentines-day-2/>. Note: Free short story!

Via Reedsy, see "Four Key Elements of a Successful Romance Series" at <https://diymfa.com/writing/four-key-elements-successful-romance-series>.

Some great comments on "Got Pushback On App Idea" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/got-pushback-on-app-idea/#comments>.

See “The 10 Most Cynical Things [Prolific Writer] Georges Simenon Ever Wrote/Said/Pontificated” at <https://crimereads.com/the-10-most-cynical-things-georges-simenon-ever-wrote-said-pontificated/>.

See “Business Musings: Learning, The Future, and CES” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/13/business-musings-learning-the-future-and-ces-contracts-negotiations/>.

Fiction Words: 0775

Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal, email, guest post)

So total words for the day: 1405

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Day 11... 0775 words. Total words to date..... 32481

Total fiction words for the month..... 35603

Total fiction words for the year..... 119006

Total nonfiction words for the month... 13060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 38470

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 157476

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Creative Penn, CrimeReads, Dean Wesley Smith, Kristine Kathryn

Rusch, Professional Writer Series, Reedsy, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Friday, February 15

February 15, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on Pro Writers Writing

Topic: On Being “In the Zone”

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Update on Pro Writers Writing

Last night I got started setting up the website for Pro Writers Writing. There isn't much to see yet, beyond Robert Sadler's excellent design for the logo that stretches across the top. I anticipate launching the new site in mid-March or a little later.

As I mentioned a couple of days ago, Pro Writers Writing will be a blog similar to the Kill Zone blog.

However, whereas TKZ authors are all traditionally published, our group will focus on successful independent writing and publishing. TKZ is also focused pretty tightly on the thriller and mystery genres. Pro Writers Writing will address topics of interest to all literary and commercial genres, writing in general, and so on.

The site is coming together nicely (mostly behind the scenes at this point), and I'm almost as excited about it as I am about my current WIP.

If you're interested in following the creation of such things, you can find the website at <http://prowriterswriting.com>. I'll provide updates here in the Daily Journal as I go along. I'm not sure yet what the menu bar will hold beyond About Us. Probably categories of posts, so that if a writer wants to find posts about writing in a certain genre or a certain writing technique (process) or publishing, she can simply click that menu item. Of course, I'll add new menu items as those who post talk about the different topics.

In order to establish a regular schedule, Pro Writers Writing will have seven regular contributors (one for each day of the week) plus a few others who will pop in from time to time with a guest post to give the regular contributors a day off. (grin)

Guest contributors will appear regularly too, but much less frequently. I anticipate there will be one guest post from a different contributor every three or four weeks. As the primary admin for the site, I'll attempt to manage that.

Each contributor (regular and guest) will have his or her own bio page, but those will all be linked from the About Us page, on which there will be a smaller photo and an excerpt of that writer's bio.

Unless a few contributors drop out, I probably will be one of the occasional guest contributors. (If you would like to be a guest contributor as well, [please email me](#). Don't discount what you might have to share.)

Once I have the website fully operational and the schedule set, I anticipate that we'll all be able to sit back and glean a ton of useful information on independent writing, publishing, marketing and so on.

It should be a great reference for indie writers (and all writers) and indie publishers, and a great ride. (grin)

Topic: On Being "In the Zone"

This is what I've often heard writers and aspiring writers say when they're deep in the story and their fingers are all but flying across the keys, barely able to get their thoughts down before they slip away.

Or as I like to say, barely able to keep up with the characters as they race through the story. But I used to use that term too, that “in the zone” thing.

But being in the zone was something that happened only every now and then. It wasn't a regular occurrence. It happened infrequently enough that it deserved its own special appellation.

This morning (while I was “in the zone” on my WIP), I realized we can control when we're in the zone and when we aren't. How? By simply writing the next sentence. Then the next sentence. Then the next one.

That's what jumpstarts being in the zone.

Writing the next sentence when one doesn't seem willing to come is like tying a pull cord to your subconscious creative mind. Like an old lawnmower that has plenty of gas and the throttle tied back, when you tug on the pull cord a few times, it sputters a little, coughs, spits, and then runs at full speed.

It's as if tugging on the pull cord tells the lawn mower you're serious, that you really want it to let go of itself and just run.

Same thing with your subconscious, creative mind. You bait it, the push it a time or two or three by writing the next sentence that occurs to you, and the next thing you know you have to stop to dip your fingertips in icewater to cool them down. (grin)

So the next time your story “grinds to a halt” (another metaphor that sounds like that old, rusty lawn mower), wrap a pull cord around it. Sit down at the keyboard, write the next sentence, then the next and the next. Show your subconscious you're serious about writing that scene and watch what happens.

You will like the result.

Rolled out closer to my usual time of 3 a.m. this morning, wrote the stuff above, browsed the internet for awhile, and posted the above over on the Pro Writer blog on my main website. With all the prep work done yesterday (refreshing my memory of the sister part of the WIP and updating my reverse outline), I'm excited to return to the WIP full-force today. Which I did at a little after 6 a.m.

Wrote for a slightly long session (hour and a half), then up to the house for a break to see my wife off to work.

I've decided while I'm trying to build the Pro Writers Writing website, I'll write in the morning then turn my attention to the website in the afternoon.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Your Likes Have Nothing To Do With It” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/your-likes-have-nothing-to-do-with-it/>. For a brief personal story, read my comment.

See “Terms and Conditions, people” at <https://seanmonaghan.com/2018/11/13/terms-and-conditions-people/>. Not sure why I didn’t link to this the other day when I was first introduced to Sean’s site. Read it. Heed it.

Fiction Words: 3747

Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4777

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Day 11... 0775 words. Total words to date..... 32481

Day 12... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 36228

Total fiction words for the month..... 39350

Total fiction words for the year..... 122753

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14090

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 39500

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 162253

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, Pro Writers Writing, Professional Writer

Series, Sean Monaghan, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Saturday, February 16

February 16, 2019 by Harvey

In today’s Journal

My guest post

Update on Pro Writers Writing

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

My guest post on crime writer Sue Coletta’s blog posted this morning. If you get time, stop by and take a look. And if you’re moved to do so, please leave a comment. It’ll help with her blog.

The URL is in “Of Interest.”

The Pro Writers Writing site continues to come along. I’m still dithering with Robert’s original logo design, primarily trying to make the overall header short enough that the “meat” below it doesn’t appear too far down the page.

At this point, it’s just a matter of trimming dark matter from the top and bottom and finding a way to fit the subtitle on there. So stay tuned, but don’t be surprised if the header changes a bit now and then. This is normal stuff, all part of putting together a brand new site.

At present, the About Us page has a list of regular and guest contributors. Those lists are not set in cement.

I’m still waiting to hear from four more writers, including one you’ve heard of (if only through my “Of Interest” section) and one you should have heard of because the guy is an excellent writer.

If I hear back affirmatively from either of those, I will move my name to the Guest Contributors list. After all, you guys hear more than enough from me already. (grin)

If I hear back from both of them, I’ll have to ask someone else to move to the Guest Contributor list with me.

Oh, and our new site was almost called “7 Writers Writing.” To see just one reason it wasn’t (aside from the rhythm, which alludes to an annoying Christmas song), check “Of Interest” today. (grin)

Rolled out way early for a change. But it’s Saturday, so it’s better that way. I can get my writing done in the morning and have the rest of the day to spend with my bride and/or work on the new website.

My protagonist is off on another mission and just about to dive into a bunch of stuff. So I’m going to leave her for the day and go do a little more work to the new website. (grin)

To stay on track with the challenge, this one has to end on or before February 19, so three more days. (grin) We’ll see how it goes.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “MurderCon’s Official Website Is LIVE!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/murdercons-official-website-is-live/>. MAN I hope I can attend this!

See “WRECK — #TrueCrime by Harvey Stanbrough” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/wreck-truecrime-story-by-harvey-stanbrough/>. Got some great comments so far.

See “Dealing With Death” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/dealing-with-death.html>.

See “Should a Museum About The KGB Be This Much Fun?” at <https://crimereads.com/should-a-museum-about-the-kgb-be-this-much-fun/>.

See “Every Ounce of My Soul: An Interview with Gabino Iglesias” at <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/every-ounce-of-my-soul-an-interview-with-gabino-iglesias/>.

Note: Some rough language, on the part of the interviewer.

See “7 Writers Blog” at <https://woolf.biz/seven-writers-blog>. Browse on your own from there.

Fiction Words: 3085

Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3585

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Day 11... 0775 words. Total words to date..... 32481

Day 12... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 36228

Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 39313

Total fiction words for the month..... 42935

Total fiction words for the year..... 126338

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 40000

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 166338

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, Harvey Stanbrough, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland,

Professional Writer Series, Sue Coletta, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Sunday, February 17

February 17, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on Pro Writers Writing

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

The Pro Writers Writing website continues to evolve. I finally have the “banner” across the top of the site like I want it.

I've added many things behind the scenes that will make the site easier to navigate and various plugins that will make the site easier to read.

I'm very excited about our official launch, which is planned for March 15. Stay tuned!

My son got in from a trip to Yuma last night, so we stayed up chatting until around 9. Still, I rolled out at 3 with the intention of getting a few thousand more words done on Blackwell Ops 3.

Then I got busy (during my wake-up period) working on the PWW website and spent a couple of hours in that endeavor. (grin)

All of that plus writing the above and scouring the internet for items of interest, and I'm finally headed to the novel at 6 a.m.

I wrote about 500 words, then headed up to the house to change and maybe fix breakfast.

I got a little more writing done after our son left, but I'm feeling a little lazy today, so I'm taking the rest of the day off. At least from writing. I still have a cover to create for Blackwell Ops 2 (and 3, maybe, while I'm at it).

Then maybe a movie for the afternoon.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Last Fifty Pages Make or Break Your Novel" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/the-last-fifty-pages-make-or-break-your-novel.html>.

See "Understanding Audiobook Production: an Interview with Rich Miller" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/understanding-audiobook-production-an-interview-with-rich-miller/>.

See "The Moods of Ernest Hemingway" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-moods-of-ernest-hemingway/>.

Fiction Words: 1315

Nonfiction Words: 290 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1605

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Day 11... 0775 words. Total words to date..... 32481

Day 12... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 36228

Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 39313

Day 14... 1315 words. Total words to date..... 40628

Total fiction words for the month..... 44250

Total fiction words for the year..... 127653

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14880

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 40290

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 167943

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	2
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date.....	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	39
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags KillZone Blog, The Passive Voice, the writing life	

The Daily Journal, Monday, February 18

February 18, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on the challenge

Update on Pro Writers Writing

Topic: Ignore Name Calling

The daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Today would be the last day of writing for book 3 of the challenge if I didn't have a day in the bank. (grin) As it stands, I have today and tomorrow to finish the book on time. And it looks as if I'll make it.

I'd like to finish it today and carry over that bank day, but we'll see. Everything depends on the characters. As it is, I expect to end it today, though I might have to write the denouement tomorrow.

Than I'll have to find something else to write. (sigh) I love the protagonist in this book. But I want to write someone else's story before I return to this character again.

The Pro Writers Writing blog has added yet another blogger, although she wants to post only occasionally as a guest blogger. To read about her, see <https://stacitroilo.com/>.

Topic: Ignore Name Calling (Be Proud of What You Choose to Do)

When my young son came home from school quietly wiping tears from his eyes one day, I asked what was wrong.

Turns out some of the other kids at school in our gang-infested town had called him a "bastard" as he was walking home. Not for any particular reason, but just to be jerks. Kids do that sometimes.

That word carries an unfortunate and untrue stigma, that a person born out of wedlock is somehow a lesser person.

Of course, it's all foolishness, even idiocy. But as children are wont to do, my young son took it to heart.

My reaction? I just laughed.

I didn't get angry or upset or call the school or confront the little smart-aleck wannabe gangsters. The latter were their parents' and society's problem, not mine.

When he looked up at me, surprised at my reaction and the broad grin still on my face, I said, "Son, do you know what a 'bastard' is?"

He nodded, then quietly defined it for me.

I said, "So ARE you a bastard?"

He shook his head.

I said, "Then what does it matter to you what they think or what they call you?" Then, knowing me, I probably recited the "stick and stones" rhyme.

He looked up and smiled. Everything was fine.

Flash forward to the present day.

Some adults say things just to be jerks too, though I usually use another term for them that evokes another name for "donkey" coupled with a depression in the ground where dirt is missing.

When adults say stupid, harmful things it's usually out of a sense of inadequacy and inferiority. Pulling others down to their level is their way of making themselves feel superior.

Readers and even other writers do it all the time. Sometimes, self-published (Indie) writers even do it to the writer in the mirror.

Out of the entire history of humanity, traditional publishing as it exists today has been around only since the late 1940s or early 1950s with the advent of mass-market paperbacks. That's right. TradPub has been around for only 60 or 70 years. Before that, pretty much EVERYONE was self-published.

Yet traditional publishing has always harbored that sense of inadequacy and inferiority. That and a desire to maintain their sense of power as "gatekeepers" caused them to attack those writers

who choose to believe in themselves enough to write when and what they want and to publish their own works.

But the TradPubs went farther. They intentionally attached an illogical stigma to self-publishing. And for some inane reason, a lot of people — even writers themselves — bought into that stigma.

But again, it's illogical. Think about it.

If a chef believes in himself and his abilities and decides to open a restaurant (or a mechanic or carpenter a shop or a lawyer a practice), nobody snubs their nose and refuses to patronize the place because it's a self-started, self-funded business. And it's the same with any other business you can name.

And if you aren't ready yet to think of writing as a business, that's fine too.

Because it's also the same with the other arts. If a photographer takes and sells his own photographs (or a painter her paintings or a sculptor his sculptures or a songwriter or musician her songs) nobody so much as bats an eye.

Yet a writer is to his or her stories exactly what a sculptor is to sculptures, a songwriter or musician to songs and music, a painter to paintings and a photographer to photos.

Why should it be any different for novelists and short story writers who believe in themselves and choose to publish their own stories?

Of course, the answer is, it shouldn't. Because it ISN'T any different. At all.

So how do I combat that stigma?

I proudly proclaim that some of my long works have been traditionally published but that I would never go that route again.

When they look surprised and ask why, I say, "Because now I believe in myself and my work enough that I don't need some 20-something acquisitions editor making minimum wage in New York to validate what I do."

Some of them even ask a question they would never dream of asking another business person or artist: "But do you make any money at it?"

Frankly, how much money I make is none of their business, is it? But to feed the self-critical monster that's feeding them, I smile knowingly and say, "Enough that I'll keep writing."

Finally, if you've never had works traditionally published and choose to be an indie writer and publisher, so much the better. You haven't wasted as much time as I did on tiny royalties.

So good on you. Be proud of who you are and what you do.

(Thanks to a Canadian friend for this topic.)

The daily diary part of this is going away, mostly. If I have something to report that affects my writing or that I think you might find of interest (personal "writing life" tidbits), I'll report it. But I'll just stipulate that I generally take my 6 to 8 hours of sleep at a different time than most people do. I almost always sack out early, roll out early, and write as much as is possible with all the other stuff I have going on. (grin)

I'll also stipulate that I generally write in one-hour blocks, then take a break of 5 to 15 minutes and get back to it, unless the "break" consists of doing a household chore or going to/from the post office or grocery or something mundane like that.

I have a feeling most of you skip over the "daily diary" part anyway, and I don't blame you. I mostly skip over it myself. (grin)

My personal thanks to the few of you who chose to read and comment on my guest blog post over at <https://www.suecoletta.com/wreck-truecrime-story-by-harvey-stanbrough/>. Even Garry Roders, the influential former member of the RCMP and blogger on crime and police matter (at <http://dyingwords.net/blog-2/>) dropped in to leave a gracious comment. And then tweeted about it. (grin)

For this morning, I got my usual start, wrote the stuff above, skipped over to the big blog and posted it (scheduled for release in late April).

I also updated my plea for donations over there. It now looks like this:

Note: This Pro-Writers blog and my Daily Journal will always be free and are funded only by your gracious contributions. If you got something out of it, why not toss a little change in the kitty? (grin)

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!

Then I finally moved on to the WIP.

Well, the story took another twist. (grin) I guess I'll finish it tomorrow.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Some good comments on “Emotion Workshop” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/emotion-workshop/#comments>.

See “Using Real People in Historical Fiction” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/using-real-people-in-historical-fiction.html>.

See “Story Structure — Superstars Recap 1” at <https://terryodell.com/superstars-recap-1/>.

Check out Staci Troilo’s blog at <https://stacitroilo.wordpress.com/>. There’s a lot there to browse.

See “Joseph Wambaugh — Interviewing Crime Writing’s Master of Characters” at <http://dyingwords.net/blog-2/#sthash.QqgtpVjo.dpbs>.

Fiction Words: 3270

Nonfiction Words: 1420 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4690

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Day 11... 0775 words. Total words to date..... 32481

Day 12... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 36228

Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 39313

Day 14... 1315 words. Total words to date..... 40628

Day 15... 3270 words. Total words to date..... 43898

Total fiction words for the month..... 47020

Total fiction words for the year..... 130923

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16300

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 41710

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 172133

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 2

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 39

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily Journal Tags Dean Wesley Smith, Garry Rodgers, KillZone Blog, Professional

Writer Series, Staci Troilo, Terry Odell, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, February 19

February 19, 2019 by Harvey

In today’s Journal

Please read this, and update on PWW

Of Interest

The numbers

Please read this.

Looking back, I wish I'd set up this blog with only an excerpt via email from the beginning. Folks are just more likely to comment on the blog if they're reading it on the website itself.

Of course, I tried the experiment of going to a click-through model with the Journal, but most respondents didn't like it, so I switched back.

And don't get me wrong. I don't blame them.

The format of the Journal isn't conducive to excerpts. For example, I don't write a topic every day, and even when I do, the Journal is titled in a way that doesn't display the topic.

So to the recipient of the email, it looks like same ol', same ol'.

I won't go to an excerpt-only email for the big blog over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](https://harveystanbrough.com) either, primarily because email subscriptions go through MailChimp and it isn't friendly to excerpts.

But I'm changing that one (today) to display only excerpts on the home page. Then if readers want to read a particular full post, they have to click through to read it.

The benefit of this is obvious, and if you visit my big blog today (<https://harveystanbrough.com>), you'll see that benefit. Instead of seeing one long post, you will see excerpts from the current post plus the previous nine posts. It makes for a great browsing experience.

So lessons learned.

1. The PWW blog will be available for subscription via email and RSS, but both will be handled through a plugin called JetPack, which allows for a better experience with excerpts vs. MailChimp.
2. The PWW blog will show only an excerpt via email. If the excerpt interests the subscriber, s/he will click through to read the entire post (and I hope, leave a comment).
3. Like most professional blogs I follow, the PWW blog will also show only excerpts on the blog page at the main site. So those who wander by can read a few excerpts and cherry-pick what they want to read in full.

Finally, I'm still reaching out, striving to find a few more regular contributors who are enchanted-by and devoted-to indie writing and publishing. Those for whom writing is a main priority.

If you know of any such writers, please [email me](#) with that person's website URL. A cadre like that, I believe, is essential for a blog of this kind to succeed.

My goal is to get seven such writers lined up to post regularly on Monday through Sunday every week. At present, I have six, including me. But I want to have seven, not including me.

Then everyone else, including myself, will be relegated to “guest contributor” status. There, they (we) will occasionally share posts but we won’t have the pressure of having to post every week.

This will be better for those who are less experienced. Not having to blog every week will leave them more time for writing fiction. And it will be better for those who are more experienced but hyper busy writing the next book.

The reader will see the title and the accompanying excerpt, and if it interests them, they will click Read More (or something similar), which will take them to the full blog post.

Then, if the post moves them in some way, we hope they will leave a comment or question. Comments on posts drive the popularity of those posts and of the websites themselves.

Pro Writers Writing will always be free, like both of my blogs, at least as long as I’m running it. But it will also be an invaluable resource for indie writers, both those who post and those who read it.

The PWW blog won’t even ask for donations or contributions, so asking for readers to leave a comment doesn’t seem like such an unreasonable request.

Again, the appeal: if you know of any indie writers out there whom you believe would make a good regular (or guest) blogger, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com with that writer’s information.

There are two items in “Of Interest” today about the Superstars Writing Conference. I posted them in case you might be interested.

However, for \$1 (one dollar) more you can attend the annual Master Business Class in Las Vegas with Dean Wesley Smith and a lot of other instructors and it’s ALL geared toward indie writers and publishers.

Just sayin’.

Finished the novel today, so I’m on track with the challenge. Tomorrow I start a new one. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “More Challenges Faced by Indie Authors” at

<https://donmassenzio.wordpress.com/2019/02/19/more-challenges-faced-by-indie-authors/>.

See “Real Las Vegas Workshops Deadlines” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/real-las-vegas-workshops-deadlines/>. Even if you don’t read the rest, scroll down to the paragraph that begins with “So for 2020, what I am stunned about....”

See “MISSION CRITICAL: A Conversation with Mark Greaney” at <https://therealbookspy.com/2019/02/17/mission-critical-a-conversation-with-mark-greaney/>.

See “Sci-Fi Author Robert Heinlein Was Basically MacGyver” at <https://www.wired.com/2019/02/geeks-guide-gregory-benford/>. Thanks to Robert C. in California for the heads-up.

See “Critique” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/02/18/critique/>.

See “Story Structure – Superstars Recap 2” at <https://terryodell.com/story-structure-superstars-recap-2/>. I mention this, but I emphasize you shouldn’t be thinking about these things (consciously) while you’re writing. All stories have these structures naturally. All of this stuff comes from “deconstruction.”

Also see “Superstars Writing Conference” at

<https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/02/19/superstars-writing-conference/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Scars” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/18/free-fiction-monday-scars/>.

Fiction Words: 3190

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4090

Writing of Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux (novel)

Day 10... 5757 words. Total words to date..... 31706

Day 11... 0775 words. Total words to date..... 32481

Day 12... 3747 words. Total words to date..... 36228

Day 13... 3085 words. Total words to date..... 39313

Day 14... 1315 words. Total words to date..... 40628

Day 15... 3270 words. Total words to date..... 43898

Day 16... 3190 words. Total words to date..... 47088 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 50210

Total fiction words for the year..... 133613

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17200

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 42610

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 176223

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Anthony DeCastro, Dean Wesley Smith, Kristine Kathryn Rusch,

Linda Maye Adams, Professional Writer Series, Terry Odell, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, February 20

February 20, 2019 by Harvey

In today’s Journal

My apology for the very long Journal today. But it’s all good stuff.

Update on the challenge

Topic: Writers Need Adventure — Don't They?

Two folks chimed in

Daily diary (yeah, it's back)

Of Interest

The numbers

With novel 3 of the challenge in the bank, I'll probably begin novel 4 today. No idea at the moment what it will be. Maybe back to one of my series, maybe a standalone. I guess we'll see. It won't be another Blackwell Ops book, though, unless another truly unique character pops into my head and that happens to be his or her story.

And this time, no days in the bank. So starting from scratch, 15 days to write a novel. The last day of this part of the challenge (to stay on track) will be March 6.

But just a reminder: In a challenge like this, what matters is the overall average. I'm not writing one novel every 15 days; I'm writing 10 novels in 150 straight days. (grin)

Topic: Writers Need Adventure — Don't They?

The initial image many of us conjure of Ernest Hemingway is that of a writer writing. That's the first image I see too.

But the image I most often conjure is of a man's man. Living, by which I mean adventuring, continually seeking adversity and attacking it where it lives.

Of course, that's larger than life, but so was he. Wasn't he? To feel truly alive, we all need an antagonist. Don't we? I do.

My favorite quote from Hemingway is "[M]an is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated."

I can relate. And because I know myself better than I know anyone else, I'll use myself as an example.

Without going into the grisly details, my own childhood was marked with insecurity brought on by severe repression. As just one example, the night of my senior prom, I was at my job, washing dishes and bussing tables at a local truck stop.

Of course, my classmates came in with their dates after the prom. Of course they did. And all I earned or learned from that job was humility. My paychecks went into the family kitty.

To my lasting disadvantage, I learned during those early years to be overly empathetic. I learned nothing about being a man. When I left home, I didn't know so much as how to change a flat tire.

Instead, in order to survive, I learned through negative reinforcement to be what psychologists call a "people pleaser."

My early life also taught me to expect nothing, that there was and would be no gratuitous anything. I learned to earn every accolade and every reward I would ever receive. When I graduated high school at 17, I had three scholarships for college. I didn't accept them. In my view, I hadn't earned them.

(Hence my disdain for the current trend of awarding "participation" trophies and the notion that there are no losers or winners, only participants.)

But I did graduate, thereby earning the right to shake myself free from the repression. In that pursuit, I chose the most difficult, most self-testing route I could then imagine: Marine Corps basic training.

Graduating from the MC Recruit Depot was the first and biggest accomplishment of my life. It taught me I didn't need anything or anyone else to grow into who I was. And it imbued me with a heightened sense of urgency and a thirst for adventure.

During my 21 years in the USMC (which I jokingly refer to as a "21-year civilian-appreciation course") I never stood so much as an hour of mess duty (working in the mess hall, where food was prepared and served). Instead, I always volunteered for guard duty.

Standing or roving a guard post alone overnight might not be a greater challenge, but it definitely provided higher levels of adrenaline and ample opportunity for exercising the imagination, good and bad.

Subsequently, both in and out of the Marine Corps, I always sought and took on assignments that would provide me with some excitement, that feeling of heightened adrenaline. I was a cop for awhile. I labored in the oilfields of New Mexico. I was a landscaper, a truck driver, and on and on.

Over the years, I started and stopped smoking cigarettes several times, always in search of an antagonist, something to strive against.

While I was smoking, the self-destructive act of smoking itself was the antagonist. When I stopped smoking, the cravings were the antagonist. When the cravings dropped away, I started smoking again.

While on recruiter duty in Utah, I once faced down four young toughs who had “pretend raped” a 14 year old girl in our apartment complex. They actually called the police to report that I had threatened them.

It was true. I had. I told them blatantly I’d be watching them, no matter where they were, no matter what time of day or night it was. And if one of them stepped out of line, I would visit harm on him in numerous ways.

When the deputy sheriff showed up to talk with me about it, I told him the whole story, then admitted it. He laughed and said to be sure when I “visited harm” on them I didn’t do so with any sort of weapon that wasn’t part of my body. Then he shook my hand. For me, that was another reward.

One of my more memorable experiences happened during a camping trip. My friend and I spent a weekend perched on the edge of a 500-foot drop to the Gila River.

One afternoon and early evening of that trip, we survived a severe rain/hail/wind and lightning storm that jostled, rocked and lifted the truck my friend and I were sitting in — again, about 40 feet from that 500-foot drop. More than once, we thought we were going over. And each time we laughed. Because seriously, what a way to go!

Now, I didn’t convey all of that to fill you in on my life, but to explain my version of what makes up a guy like me and others like me. And writers like me.

During my (so far) 66 years on this planet, all of this — all of it and a great deal more — has been nothing more than a way to seek adventure. A way to seek just enough adversity to feel truly alive. (And the key word is “feel.”)

And then write about it.

Today, I can’t do much more than write, so I engage in personal challenges. But I almost feel as if I’m cheating. How much adrenaline is involved in sitting alone in a dark room making stuff up?

So occasionally I engage in a little self-sabotage. I wrote a bit about that [in a topic earlier](#). I desire adversity. I crave the adrenaline rush. Something — anything — beyond the simple, annoying act of existence. Simply breathing, in and out, in and out. And I think it makes me a better writer.

How about you?

Two folks chimed in yesterday to say they actually enjoy the day-to-day diary stuff, so I guess I'll put it back in. Frankly, the daily diary is the least time-consuming part of writing the Journal every day. (grin)

I'll try to omit the truly mundane stuff.

Rolled out at 3. Slow getting started this morning. I'm not worried about writing the next novel etc. but it was a curious start.

I read Dean's post (as I do every morning) and thought the guy is SO busy, a novel starring a fictional version of him as the POV character might be interesting.

Then my brain shifted to Ernest Hemingway for some reason, and from there to writers in general. The result is the topic above.

To the house at 6:30 for my second break, then back to scour my mind (and files) for the next novel.

Back at 7:15, saw something interesting and took a pic with my phone. (I am not familiar with that level of tech.) Spent the next half-hour trying to figure out how to email it to myself and my wife, then gave it up. Shrug.

I decided I enjoy the Blackwell Ops stories too much to leave them for now. I've written in several series in a few genres, but only the Wes Crowley 10-novel saga gripped me the way this one does.

Each book "stars" a different protagonist/POV character, man or woman, with different abilities and expertise, so suited for different kinds of assignments.

I keep a Blackwell Ops folder. In it, one file is a list of names of possible Blackwell Ops operatives. In my "search" for what to write next, I had to look no further than that list.

And when my gaze alit on Melanie James Sloan, I knew she would be the POV character in the next book.

At the moment, I have no idea where her expertise lies or what her abilities are. I do know (somehow) she's a brunette and is "statuesque," a kind way of saying she's considerably taller than other women. And I know she's a fitness nut. She runs half-marathons and so on.

Beyond that, I don't have a clue. I took another break to get my wife to show me how to send pics with my phone, and then to the novel. I can hardly wait to learn more about Miss Melanie and why in the world her middle name is James. (grin)

As it turned out, I returned to the Hovel at 8:30, then embarked on an in-depth, 2-hour search for a prolific female indie writer I know. I want to ask her to join the regular-contributor cadre at PWW. Anyway, I searched every friend I have on Facebook and the members of several groups. Nada.

So finally to write the opening for the new novel at 10:30. Here's hoping it takes off and drags me along for the ride.

A good-enough first day for the new novel. And it feels like it's going to pull me all the way through the book. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Kickstarter Update" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/kickstarter-update/>.

See "Ways to Beef Up Conflict & Mystery" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/first-page-critique-whatever-tomorrow-brings.html>.

See "The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide To Character Expression (2nd Edition)" at <https://writershelpingwriters.net/the-emotion-thesaurus-a-writers-guide-to-character-expression/>.

See "Hemingway On Hemingway & Hollywood" at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryclairekendall/2012/07/21/hemingway-on-hemingway-hollywood/>.

See "Remembering Papa" at <https://www.cigaraficionado.com/article/remembering-papa-6016>.
For a great deal more, type "Did Hemingway smoke?" into a search engine.

Fiction Words: 2363

Nonfiction Words: 1770 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4133

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Stone (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Total fiction words for the month..... 52573

Total fiction words for the year..... 135976

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18970

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 44380

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 180356

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, Ernest Hemingway, KillZone Blog, Professional Writer Series, the writing life, Topic, Writers Helping Writers

The Daily Journal, Thursday, February 21

February 21, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on the PWW site

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

The basics of the PWW site are set in concrete now. We'll have six regular contributors who will post once a week on Monday through Saturday. Sunday will be reserved for the guest contributors, who will post in rotation.

Later today I'll add a subscription form. I was going to use WordPress.com's "JetPack" plugin, but WP.com has gotten too big for their britches. The plugin basically took over the PWW site, so I deactivated and uninstalled it.

At the worst, I'll create a new "campaign" over at MailChimp, but in the meantime I'm searching for a friendlier (and free) email subscription service. Of course, I'll also create an RSS feed for PWW so readers will be able to subscribe in a reader as well.

I can't quite believe I used to design websites for part of my living. I'd forgotten how much work is involved. (grin)

Rolled out at 1:30 this morning. It's Thursday, so a short writing day. Then again, it's always slow going at the beginning of a Blackwell Ops novel anyway. I have to pop out and do a few minutes' research every now and then.

For example, in BO3, the protagonist was directed to fly to Mozambique to handle a situation there. Of course, I needed to know something about the area, Mozambiquean names, etc.

In BO4, there I was, writing along just fine, when the protag's VaporStream device went off and she was directed to "proceed to Istanbul." Sigh.

I spent the first three hours answering emails, updating the PWW site, and composing and sending a "final" (I hope) all-inclusive email to contributors.

At 4:30, I'm taking a break up to the house, then back here to the WIP.

Took another break at around 7:30. Worked on the PWW site for a little while up at the house. Back to the Hovel and the WIP at 9.

Didn't get a lot done on the WIP today. Back at it tomorrow.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "A Glimpse Back Almost Nine Years" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-glimpse-back-almost-nine-years/>.

See "Dick Francis: A Crime Reader's Guide to the Classics" at <https://crimereads.com/dick-francis-a-crime-readers-guide-to-the-classics/>. A lot of gems re openings to be gleaned here.

See "Violence and Madness in a Lost Chester Himes Noir" at <https://crimereads.com/violence-and-madness-in-a-lost-chester-himes-noir/>. See what he says about writing novels. He "knocked them out."

See "Business Musings: Ghostwriting, Plagiarism, and The Latest Scandal" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/20/business-musings-ghostwriting-plagiarism-and-the-latest-scandal/>.

For those who love real poetry, see "Meet Your New Favorite Poet" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/meet-your-new-favorite-poet/>.

Fiction Words: 2233

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2683

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Stone (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596

Total fiction words for the month..... 54806

Total fiction words for the year..... 138209

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19420

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 44830

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 183039

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, Dean Wesley Smith, Kristine Kathryn Rusch,

Professional Writer Series, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Friday, February 22

February 22, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

MurderCon registration opening soon

Daily diary and general rambling

Of Interest

The numbers

Registration for MurderCon, presented by Writers' Police Academy, opens this coming Sunday. For information, see <https://www.writerspoliceacademy.com/classes-available/>.

Up at a little after 3 to a rainy, drizzly morning. And the rain's supposed to turn to snow later. According to those who profess to know, we're supposed to get 6" before it's all done. Not something we're used to here, but it's only weather. It will be 70 degrees here by the middle of next week. Of course, today many of the desert denizens will be on their knees, praying to the sun god, asking what they've done wrong (grin).

I suspect the snowbirds who flooded in at the beginning of winter will be annoyed, but again, it's only weather.

When you're out and about here in southeast Arizona at this time of year, you can readily recognize snowbirds by their plumage.

Most of them are wearing t-shirts or untucked Hawai'ian shirts and shorts, white socks, black shoes. Meanwhile, if the temp drops much below 70, locals are wrapped in heavy winter coats. (grin)

I spent the first couple of hours browsing for items of interest, and for the first time in a long time, I found too much to read. You'll see what I mean below. I'll revisit some of those sites later.

To the novel at 5:45. To get back into the story after a very disruptive day yesterday, I read through the whole thing, cycling as I went.

I was a little surprised, but pleasantly so, that I added only about a hundred words. That isn't much (for me) when the whole thing, at that point, was almost 4600 words. I have a feeling it's going to be a good day.

After that long cycling session, I took an extended break at around 7:30.

By around 8 a.m. the rain was switching over to snow, and my wife's boss called to say not to come in today. So a three-day weekend for her. (grin)

On the other hand, my commute is only about 200 feet, so I headed back out to the Hovel a little before 9 a.m. I am a lucky, lucky guy. (grin)

I started on the novel again at around 9, though with a gentle snow falling, I feel like I should be writing a Robert Frost-ian poem. “White Mesquites on a Snowy Morning” — something like that.

I wrote for an hour, then took a few-minute break (walking back and forth in the Hovel), then wrote for another hour.

The novel was racing along. In that two hours, I wrote just under 3000 words, probably my best output ever. (Don’t get excited. That’s still only 25 words per hour. grin)

Now, of course, the book will slow down again a little as my protagonist is flying off to an exotic location on an assignment. So I have to get her to the airport, through security and to the location. Then she has to figure out what’s what and do her job. (grin)

And it isn’t like I can just skip getting her to the airport (for example) because there’s no telling what might happen along the way.

A break at 11:15 to take the small heater from here up to the house. My wife said the heater’s out up there. To which I replied, “Well of course it is.” (grin)

Back to the novel at 11:30.

I wrote another short session, but decided since my wife’s off today I ought to spend the afternoon with her. Well, that and setting up my new 24” monitor. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Reading With A Focus” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/reading-with-a-focus/>.

See “Writing Commercial Fiction – Superstars Recap 3” at <https://terryodell.com/writing-commercial-fiction-superstars-recap-3/>. Worth the time to read this one. Note: I disagree (vehemently) with Deaver’s advice to outline. Why? Because I don’t like to bore myself. I also disagree that it’s easier to write a story if you know where it’s going. It might be easier to write YOUR story, but it’s all but impossible to write the CHARACTERS’ story.

See “Disguises: Evasion and Impersonation” at <https://www.leelofland.com/disguises-evasion-and-impersonation/>.

Browse “Story Empire Blog” at <https://storyempire.com/>. Spend a little time. A lot to see there. A blog by six bestselling writers. This is very similar to what I hope to do with Pro Writers Writing.

See “Found: The Biggest Bee in the World” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/worlds-biggest-bee>. Okay, there’s a great prompt for SF, Horror, etc. (grin) Go for it.

See “Use All Five Senses To Enrich Your Writing” at <https://blog.bookbaby.com/2016/01/use-all-five-senses-to-enrich-your-writing/>. And take a look at the links below the article. It’s always learning time, folks.

As a reminder, if you enjoy writing stories from prompts, visit <https://reedsy.com> and sign up for their (free) weekly Writing Prompts Newsletter.

Fiction Words: 3353

Nonfiction Words: 820 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4173

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Stone (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596

Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949

Total fiction words for the month..... 58159

Total fiction words for the year..... 141562

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20240

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 45650

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 187212

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily Journal Tags Atlas Obscura, BookBaby, Dean Wesley Smith, Lee Lofland, Professional Writer Series, Reedsy, StoryEmpire blog, Terry Odell, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Saturday, February 23

February 23, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Topic: Paragraphing

A Special Offer (I'm feeling generous)

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Topic: Paragraphing

Despite what most of us heard in school, you don't have to keep everything about a particular topic in one massive paragraph.

Especially in fiction. And blog posts.

In fiction, you should begin a new paragraph every time a different character speaks. Most everybody knows that.

You should also begin a new paragraph when the scene or setting changes (even in the same setting, even a little).

The primary benefit of shorter paragraphs (say up to 5 or 6 lines on the page) is Pacing.

Shorter paragraphs pull your reader through the story. Period. Longer paragraphs slow the reader down, cause him or her to read more carefully.

I don't personally use longer paragraphs very often even in my magic realism or nonfiction works, where they are most often expected.

Skip to blog posts. The same general rule applies. Shorter paragraphs pull the reader through the post.

For a simple comparison (with all due respect to the excellent writer Joe Hartlaub) read my blog post, then read "A Little Something Extra" in "Of Interest" today.

I'm not being critical of Joe here. I'm just saying, for ease of reading, compare the two blog posts side by side.

It's difficult to slog through long and super-long paragraphs of text. A longer paragraph presents to the eye as a big square block of black type against a white page. It looks intimidating, so it is intimidating.

Back to fiction.

Especially in high-action scenes, you want short or hyper-short paragraphs. A staccato back-and-forth of one-line or one-sentence paragraphs in frenzied dialogue will cause the reader's heart rate to increase.

It will literally force the reader to eavesdrop on the discussion (and thereby pull him/her deeper into the story). You might even say it makes the reader a character in the story (The Eavesdropper). When a reader is involved, s/he's invested and engaged in the story.

Likewise, a series of short sentences or even sentence fragments in unspoken thought (inanely, some call this "internal dialogue") will do the same thing.

Think about this, study it, then apply it as you write.

And when you write a blog post, consider being kind to your reader.

Write short paragraphs. (grin)

A Special Offer

I'm feeling a little generous today.

In Terry Odell's post today (see "Of Interest") she continues the recap of Jeffrey Deaver's presentation. At one point, he said he "doesn't like commas because they slow the reading."

Folks, that is pure, unadulterated bull cookies. If he doesn't "like" commas it's because he doesn't understand how to use punctuation to direct the reading of his work.

If you would like to be able to wield punctuation naturally so the reader hardly notices it, email me (or comment) and I'll send you a free copy of the second edition of *Punctuation for Writers*. Then you can finally throw away your dog-eared copy of *Strunk & White* (a regurgitation of all the "rules" we learned in high school from non-writers).

Just sayin'. PFW regularly retails for \$10, but I'll send it to you free. Just email me or leave a comment. I'll even send a PDF copy so you can print it out if you want to.

I rolled out at 2 a.m. this morning, a good thing for a Saturday. Then I spent the first half-hour dealing with some PWW issues, then the next hour and a half (where does the time go?) checking the internet and writing the stuff above.

Then a break up at the house to release the pup from his kennel early so I can get to the novel for some uninterrupted writing.

Finally to the novel at 4:30. After cycling through what I wrote yesterday, I'd added only a little over 300 words. At 6, a break up to the house.

Back to the Hovel at 6:30, where I answered some email, etc. and basically blew a couple more hours.

Looking like today might be a light writing day. It happens.

This day just doesn't feel right.

I thought my protagonist was about to fly to Istanbul on an assignment, but as she was packing her bag, she decided she doesn't want to go to Istanbul.

I said, "Whaddya mean, you don't want to go? That's where the boss sent you."

"I don't want to go," she said, and crossed her arms.

“So how about Mondragone, Italy (north of Naples)?”

She shook her head. “Bor-ing.”

“So where DO you want to go?”

“You’re the writer,” she said. “You figure it out.”

“I don’t do that. I follow you guys around, then write down what you say and do.” I glared at the screen for a moment, then said, “Tell you what, I’ll give you some time to figure out where you wants to ply your trade.” I rolled my chair back.

“Where are you going?” she said, her eyes wide.

“Sorry, but I don’t have time for this. I’ll talk with you later.” Then I closed the laptop.

I’m glad she isn’t real. The woman is formidable, and I think she knows where I live.

At 9:30 I decided to swap the new monitor I just got with the one I’ve been using in the Hovel. So I did that.

I have some other odds and ends to do, so I’ll skip the rest of today and take care of those things. I’ll be back in the morning. And I hope Miss Snooty Pants will be willing to do her job by then.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See “Drop Caps” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/drop-caps/>.

See “The Art of the Twist Ending” at <https://crimereads.com/the-art-of-the-twist-ending/>.

See “A Little Something Extra” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/a-little-something-extra.html>.

See “Writing Commercial Fiction – Superstars Recap 4” at <https://terryodell.com/writing-commercial-fiction-superstars-recap-4/>. A continuation of the recap of Jeffrey Deaver’s class. Naturally, I take exception to some of this.

See “MurderCon: A Journey to Sensational Realism” at <https://www.leelofland.com/murdercon-a-journey-to-sensational-realism/>.

See “Got Reading To Do” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/got-reading-to-do/>. This is basically a list of his March workshops. I recommend them, so I posted this.

Fiction Words: 1330

Nonfiction Words: 1030 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2360

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363
 Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596
 Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949
 Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279
 Total fiction words for the month..... 59489
 Total fiction words for the year..... 142892
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 21270
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 46680
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 189572
 Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
 Short story collections..... 31
 Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland,
 Professional Writer Series, Terry Odell, The Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Sunday, February 24

February 24, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Yesterday

Smashwords' 10th Annual Read an Ebook Week

Topic: Presenting... The Hovel

A Special Offer (I'm feeling generous)

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Yesterday was interesting. I didn't make much headway in the story, but I did get covers created for Blackwell Ops 2 and 3, promo files done, and those books uploaded for pre-order at D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. So all in all, a good day.

On the home front, the heater in the house spontaneously started working again. Seems I have the only heater on earth that "vapor locks" and stops working when the weather gets too damp and cold. Go figure.

Of course, it always has to be something, so this morning the internet's out. If I have to, though, I'll use the mobile hotspot to post this.

My wife spent the day yesterday setting up a Pinterest account for StoneThread Publishing. When you get a minute, check it out at <https://www.pinterest.com/harveywriting/pins/>.

I'm participating in the 10th Annual Read an Ebook Week sale at Smashwords. From March 3 through March 9 you can purchase any of my books for 50% off: novels, novellas, short stories, nonfiction books and collections.

To take a look, visit <https://www.smashwords.com/shelves/promos/1/any/any> and key in HESanbrough (my username there). All of most of my books will pop up.

Topic: Presenting... The Hovel

Difficult for me to believe I'm actually doing this. But I've said for awhile I want to share my writing process, warts and all.

The Hovel works so well for me it's ridiculous. Still, it's a wart by any measure.

Yesterday, a subscriber and fellow writer asked whether I might post a photo of The Hovel. I wasn't sure I wanted pictures of it out there. (grin) Later, I thought why not? After all, I'm the only one who has to put up with it. Or it with me.

So here's a picture. (For a slightly larger picture, click the image.) In the meantime, I wrote this description:



The Hovel is a rammed-earth building, like adobe but the builders skipped the brick-making steps. It's situated about 200 feet from my house. As you can see, it's also an area we use for storage.

The walls are dirt and around 3 feet thick. The inside is painted with peeling, battleship-grey paint. The floor is rough concrete and the ceiling is (in places, sagging) fiberboard.

There are two windows, one to either side of the plain south wall I face when I'm writing. I don't have or want a view. I'm too easily distracted.

My eyes are overly sensitive to light, so I have both windows blocked to keep out glare, one with an old card table turned on its side and balanced on a sideboard, and the other with a couple of old bath towels hung over it.

On the other side of the card table, a fan blows out through that window to exhaust my cigar smoke. I have a goose-neck lamp on the near edge of the sideboard (on this side of the card table) with the lamp directed at the wall to provide soft, indirect light.

My “desk” is a former dressing table, and it’s cluttered. (I’m a “man cave” kind of a guy; I want everything within reach.) My drink (usually a 24-ounce container of ice water) sits on the right, and an ashtray, my cell phone and other things on the left.

In the center of the desk is an 11.5” HP ProBook laptop (my new writing ‘puter, Hal 2) and a 24” monitor. That’s pretty much it. I use the old green bath towel on the right to cover my computer at night. (grin)

I wrote probably 35 of my 40 novels in the Hovel, and put all but the 40th one and my WIP through my previous, 14” writing ‘puter, Hal 1. I kind of miss it. (grin)

So there you go. Everything you wanted to know and more about The Hovel. (grin)

Wow. Another short writing day. Actually, I had plenty of time (rolled out at 3) but had internet connectivity problems followed quickly by a lot of other things I felt compelled to take care of “right now.”

I wrote about 500 words before I noticed the world falling apart. Now it’s almost 12:30. I’m going to write for another hour or so, then give it up for the day and salvage what’s left of the weekend with my bride. (grin)

I hope all of you had a smoother weekend.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Bonding Character and Reader” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/bonding-character-and-reader.html>.

See “MurderCon: Advanced Fingerprinting” at

<https://www.leelofland.com/murdercon-advanced-fingerprinting/>. Not all about MurderCon.

See “Early Readers Wanted” at <https://terryodell.com/early-readers-wanted/>.

See “New Releases” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/02/24/new-releases/>.

Fiction Words: 2263

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3023

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363
 Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596
 Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949
 Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279
 Day 5..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 11542
 Total fiction words for the month..... 61752
 Total fiction words for the year..... 145155
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 22030
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 47440
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 192595
 Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
 Short story collections..... 31
 Categories Daily JournalTags KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland, Linda Maye Adams, Professional
 Writer Series, Terry Odell, The Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Monday, February 25

February 25, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on PWW

Thanks in spades

The Hovel, Part 2

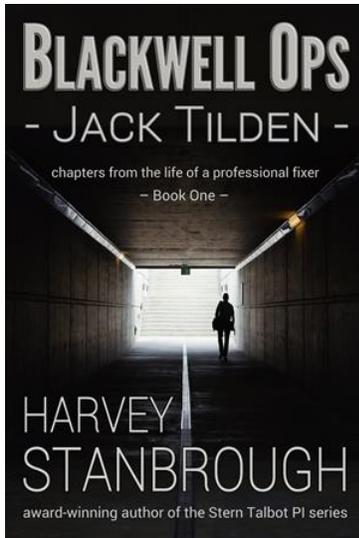
My special offer stands

Daily diary (and pictures!)

Of Interest

The numbers

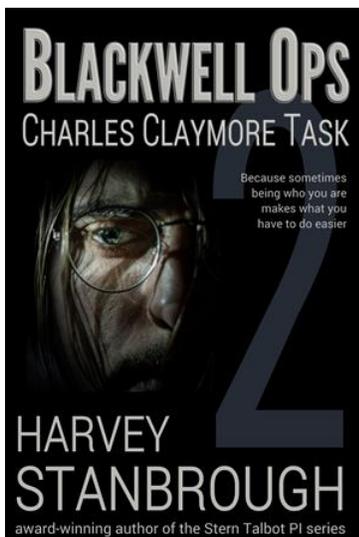
I received notice this morning that we have our first new subscriber who isn't also a contributor at Professional Writers Writing. Woohoo!



If you haven't subscribed yet, I hope you will. And I hope you'll tell all your writer friends. I think PWW is really going to be a big deal, a go-to source for writing information, advice and inspiration.

Thanks for all the comments recently on this Journal and on the big blog over at HarveyStanbrough.com. Warms my heart to know some of you are getting something out of all this blather. (grin)

Thanks too for the kind comments re my (StoneThread Publishing) Pinterest page. If you haven't seen it yet, you can find it at <https://www.pinterest.com/harveywriting/pins/>. And thanks to my bride for using her weekend to set it all up.



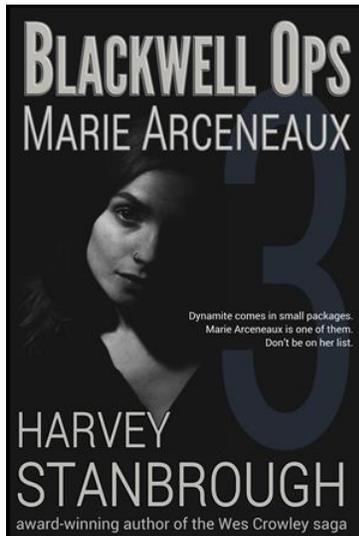
So I posted an interior shot of the Hovel yesterday (blush) and a few folks commented. In a day or two, by popular demand, I'll include a couple of external pics.

The special offer from yesterday stands no matter when you read this.

To get a free e-copy of Punctuation for Writers (normally \$10) email me or ask in a comment. You can learn to USE punctuation to direct the reading of your work. Specify Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF. Otherwise I'll email you a printable PDF copy.

Rolled out on time at 3, and used the first two hours to finish creating the covers for Blackwell Ops 2 and 3.

I've posted images down the left and right sides here. This is an advance look at Blackwell Ops 2 & 3 covers. They aren't even up on the big site yet. You should be able to see a slightly larger image if you click any cover (at least on the website). But don't hold me to that.



Did I say I'm very pleased with the branding? (grin) See the 2 and the 3 on the images?

Later today, I hope to create the cover for 4 (the WIP). Then I'll be caught up. Even ahead a little bit.

I don't even have all the first-reader input back yet for 3, but I'll upload a revised copy of the document after that happens. In the meantime, it's up and garnering advance orders.

I also emailed BO2, BO3 and Stern Talbot: The Case of the Mourning Widow to my donors. If you'd like to get in on that deal, take a look at <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>. It costs a lot less than you think.

And I'm confident enough in BO4 (the WIP) that as soon as I've created the cover I'll make that one available for pre-order too. It will be scheduled for release on April 15, so I think I'm safe. (grin)

Then I spent the next hour poking around the internet for "Of Interest" and writing the stuff above.

Finally to the novel at 6. Wrote a thousand words or so, then took an extended break up to the house.

Back to the novel at 9:30. Back and forth. I'm a yoyo.

Well, I honestly thought I'd get more done today, but I didn't. Back at it tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

Via Linda Maye Adams, see Ruby Dixon's Facebook post "Let's Talk About Writing Speed" at <https://www.facebook.com/RubyDixonBooks/posts/2349163511782349>. Despite the (necessary) language, this is a great post. Even DWS commented.

See "Blowback" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/blowback/>. I post this partly out of respect for my friend, ghostwriter Dan Baldwin. (TPG invited comments, Dan.) As a writer who "turns out multiple novels per month," I take exception to the OP listed at [Fall Into the Story](#). I commented on that one myself, though when I posted this my dissenting comment hadn't been approved.

Via Phillip McCollum, see "The Carnival of the Indies Issue #101" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/02/self-publishing-the-carnival-of-the-indies-issue-101/>.

Note: This mention of "The Carnival of Indies" does not indicate my endorsement of all the articles listed. But congratulations to Phillip.

See "Exercise and Writing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/exercise-and-writing/>.

See "Wounded Writer Syndrome" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/wounded-writer-syndrome.html>. I needed this. Check it out in case you do too. And while you're there, check out my comment. (grin)

See "Free Fiction Monday: An Incursion of Mice" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/25/free-fiction-monday-an-incursion-of-mice-2/>.

Fiction Words: 3345

Nonfiction Words: 650 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3995

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596

Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949

Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279

Day 5..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 11542

Day 6..... 3345 words. Total words to date..... 14887

Total fiction words for the month..... 65097

Total fiction words for the year..... 148500

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22680

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 48090

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 196590

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

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, Linda Maye Adams, Phillip McCollum, Professional Writer Series, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, February 26

February 26, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on PWW

Just got a note

Topic: "Pantsers" vs. "Plodders"

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

The contributors for PWW seem to be getting excited and looking forward to posting on PWW. Note that I may or may not always agree with what they post. But that isn't the point. The site isn't "my" website. I'm only the guy who set it up and started the ball rolling.

The site itself belongs to those who post on it.

I'll also contribute, but only every now and then as a guest contributor.

The point is that you get the best information and advice from several different professional independent writers and publishers all in one place.

Be sure to tell your friends! (grin)

I just got a note from D2D. Soon they will be distributing books to Google Play. This is a major new market. When they do, I'll "opt in" all of the books I have at D2D.

If you aren't yet distributing through D2D, this would be a great time to start whether you have one short story or novel or dozens of publications.

Just sayin'.

Topic: "Pantsers" vs. "Plodders"

In an age during which society has seen fit to give more weight to perception than intention, pretty much anybody can be "offended" by pretty much anything, whether or not that anything was intended to be offensive.

Despite all that nonsense, until now I have held fast. You who are of a certain age know the deal: “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.”

Well, I’m saddened to report that for the first time in my 66 years, I am offended in the modern sense of the word.

This is a very touchy subject for me. Why?

Because the term “pantsers,” hereinafter referred to as “the P word,” is offensive as hell. Just as “plodder” would be if we went to that from “plotter.”

Of course, purveyors of the P word will tell you it simply means “those who write without first plotting and are therefore flying by the seat of their pants.”

But when they utter it, what they actually mean is “an unprofessional clod who flings stuff against a literary wall and hopes some of it will stick.” They’re just too condescending to say it aloud.

Either way, the P word isn’t who I am. But let me break it down for you:

1. It’s true that I write without plodding along, outlining and plotting in advance.

That’s because I trust the characters to tell the story. After all, they’re the ones who are living it, and I don’t feel the obsessive need to be a control freak.

2. It’s also true that I don’t pursue agents and traditional publishers for my novels, as it’s implied that “plotters” do.

That’s because my mental state is such that I don’t feel the obsessive need for acceptance and approval — validation — from some unlicensed practitioner (the agent) or a 20-something English major (the acquisitions editor).

3. Finally, it’s true that I write “fast.” My production is prolific when compared with most (or maybe all) traditionally published writers. In some circles, that makes me not only the P word but also a “hack.”

That’s because I believe in myself and my skills. I don’t need the acceptance, approval and validation of complete strangers. Shrug. I just write, publish, and write some more.

As for the “hack” label, that doesn’t bother me enough to call it “the H word.” Duh. I’m smart enough to know that the 60 hours it takes to write a novel is the same number of hours whether it’s spread over a year or two weeks.

Yeah, I know they spend a lot more time rewriting and revising ad nauseam, but that's on them isn't it? It isn't my fault they don't understand a writer is paid to write, not to rewrite.

Of course, many of those who use the P word will tell you, adamantly, that they don't intend for the term to be dismissive and offensive. Maybe they don't.

Just like those who, in their naturally laid-back Southern speech, first pronounced "Negro" as "Nigra," which later morphed into a highly offensive word.

Some of them, too, didn't mean for the term to be offensive. But it is. So much so that most of us can't write it even in dialogue or in an instructive topic in blog posts. Like this one.

That's exactly how offensive the P word is to me.

Incredibly, most of those who use the P word are writers, and most often they're writers who are kowtowing to traditional publishers and their ravenous hunger for outlines and rewrites and their ridiculous rights-grabbing contracts.

Yet re their being "plotters," (notice, I didn't call them "plodders") I don't call those writers "control freaks" or "cowards."

And re their eager willingness to sign horrid publishing contracts, I don't call them "fools" either.

I don't even call them "persons who have a psychologically unhealthy need for approval and acceptance and should maybe consider exploring that problem with a psychologist."

Because I don't care. Those writers have attained their version of "making it."

Hey, I'm happy for them.

I assume they're doing what they're doing because it works for them. And nothing about their success directly affects my paycheck or my time off, so what do I care?

But I've attained my version of "making it" too.

I've done it by writing instead of outlining. By writing instead of rewriting. By writing every day instead of limiting myself to writing one or two novels per year. (Frankly, I think I'd kill myself.)

Even if I don't care to slander my traditionally published "plotter" (plodder?) friends, some might ask why I don't come up with another, non-derogatory term for what I do. You know, one to replace the P word.

The simple fact is, I don't feel the need. The term already exists. And that term is "writer."

Rolled out at 3:30 this morning. For various reasons (most of which were me making sure the topic above read exactly the way I wanted it to) I didn't get to the novel until 10 a.m. Still, I hope for a good day of fiction writing.

Woohoo! Fifteen hundred words in the first one-hour session. I'm taking a forced break. (grin)

Back to the novel at 11:30.

Around 2 I'm calling it a day.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Pacing and Spacing: The Power Of Artful Paragraphing" at

<https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/pacing-and-spacing-the-power-of-artful-paragraphing.html>.

See "Hot, Warm, and Cold Viewpoint" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/02/hot-warm-and-cold-viewpoint.html>. I don't care either way for the terms, but the examples are good and her final two sentences are gold.

See "Sirchie's KrimeSite Imager Detects Invisible Evidence" at

<https://www.leelofland.com/sirchies-krimesite-imager-detects-invisible-evidence/>.

See "Writing Commercial Fiction – Superstars Recap 5" at <https://terryodell.com/writing-commercial-fiction-superstars-recap-5/>.

See "World Building (Part I)" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/02/26/world-building-part-i/>.

Fiction Words: 3657

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4817

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596

Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949

Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279

Day 5..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 11542

Day 6..... 3345 words. Total words to date..... 14887

Day 7..... 3657 words. Total words to date..... 18544

Total fiction words for the month..... 68754

Total fiction words for the year..... 152157

Total nonfiction words for the month... 23840

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49350

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 201407

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31
Categories Daily JournalTags KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland, Linda Maye Adams, Terry Odell,
The Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, February 27

February 27, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Welcome and adios (almost)

On yesterday's topic

Topic: About Numbers

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Hello and welcome to Sherry and Kimberley, and a sad farewell (I thought) to another subscriber. When I emailed him to say I was sorry to see him leave, it was news to him. So he's re-subscribing. (grin)

Frankly, the topic I posted yesterday was half tongue-in-cheek. As I wrote somewhere in that article, if someone else outlines and plots everything to within an inch of its life, that's fine with me.

In the rest of the article, I was simply pointing out that I (personally) don't, and that to do so would bore me to tears.

But hey, whatever it takes to get to the "published" stage. The purpose of writing is to get to that point, and every writer is different.

The important thing to a fiction writer is writing fiction, putting out fiction, producing fiction, not how you prefer to get there.

Those who get wrapped around the wheel about outlining or not outlining are missing the point.

My point from yesterday is this: Those who get there, no matter which course they choose, are writers. Those who don't get there are not. And those who choose to marginalize others with denigrating terms just because those others choose to get there another way are jerks.

Topic: All About Numbers

I enjoy watching the numbers grow. For that reason, January is my least-favorite month of the year.

It's depressing on the first of January every year to see a blank in all five categories:

fiction words for the month and year,

nonfiction words for the month and year, and total words for the year). (grin)

And the depression kind of hangs on until February 1 hits. That's the first day every year when the fiction and nonfiction words for the year no longer match the words for the month.

Anyway, watching the numbers grow motivates me to sit down one more time, spend one more day at the writing computer. That's the main reason I watch the numbers for myself.

The numbers are another kind of streak, and streaks drive productivity.

But I can watch the number on my Annual Productivity spreadsheet. The main reason I post them below is so you can see them. So you can see that YOUR numbers will grow the same way.

For some of you, the numbers will grow more slowly than mine because you don't have the luxury of being able to write whenever you want.

For some, they will grow faster than mine (witness Dean when he's on his game) because you're better at "coming back" than I am.

Hey, it's all good. (grin) I tend not to compare my numbers with others' numbers. I tend to compare my numbers with my numbers from yesterday or last month or last year.

If you don't currently keep track of your own numbers, I urge you to do so. I promise, at the end of the year, you'll be amazed at how many words you've written.

Here's how I do it. This is not a suggestion or a recommendation. It's just food for thought.

With my fiction, I record the exact numbers. To get that, I subtract my WIP total of the day before from the word count in my current WIP Word document at the end of the current day.

For the nonfiction (most often just this Journal), I count everything from the top to the last "Of Interest" entry, then round up to the next ten.

Most of the time after I post the Journal from Notepad to the website, I add more to it here and there. I figure that takes care of my approximation. (grin)

I don't count emails and all that sort of stuff, though when I write another nonfiction book or if I write a separate blog post I'll include that in the nonfiction total too.

So that's just a quick rundown of how I do it.

But whatever way you choose, I hope you either are or will start recording your own numbers. Not for me or anyone else, but for you.

As I mentioned above, it's one heck of a motivator.

Rolled out early but promptly wasted two hours averting slings and arrows (grin) and writing the stuff above.

Anyway, I took a short break at 4:15 and on my return to the Hovel at 4:30 I was inspired and wrote the topic for tomorrow. (I'll count those nonfiction words tomorrow.)

Then I uploaded a couple of documents to distributors. Finally to the novel at 9. Man I screwed off a lot this morning! (grin)

But I had a rough night last night and the novel's flowing well. I still have 7 days to meet the deadline (March 6) and stay on track.

Three of those have the potential to be short days (tomorrow, Saturday and Sunday) but I think I'm gonna be all right.

Good-enough day today.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "The Page Proof Nightmare" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/the-page-proof-nightmare.html>.

See "Q&A with Tom Purdom" at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2019/02/27/qa-with-tom-purdom/>.

See "Fingerprints: 'Baby,' It's You!" at <https://www.leelofland.com/fingerprints-baby-its-you/>.

See some of the comments on "Pacing and Spacing:

The Power Of Artful Paragraphing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/pacing-and-spacing-the-power-of-artful-paragraphing.html#comments>.

See "Keep Readers Happy With White Space" at <https://terryodell.com/keep-readers-happy-with-white-space/>.

Fiction Words: 3581

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4481

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596

Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949

Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279

Day 5..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 11542

Day 6..... 3345 words. Total words to date..... 14887

Day 7..... 3657 words. Total words to date..... 18544
 Day 8..... 3581 words. Total words to date..... 22125
 Total fiction words for the month..... 72335
 Total fiction words for the year..... 155738
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 24740
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 50150
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 205888
 Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
 Short story collections..... 31
 Categories Daily JournalTags Asimov's, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland, Professional Writer Series,
 Terry Odell, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Thursday, February 28

February 28, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Quote of the Day

Topic: Words

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Via the Passive Guy, the quote of the day:

“Tomorrow may be hell, but today was a good writing day, and on the good writing days nothing else matters.” ~ Neil Gaiman

Topic: Words

Words are our friends, writers.

There have been many bits of advice handed down over the years, sometimes from “on high” by writers who have Made It.

Like Stephen King famously writing “The path to hell is paved with adverbs” or Samuel Clemens’ admonition to hunt down every adverb and kill it.

Note that this borders closely on English teachers’ advice to never use sentence fragments (like the second paragraph above).

But I ask you, did the second paragraph upset or interrupt your reading of this post? Of did it flow naturally while emphasizing the point of the paragraph?
And did this sentence fragment and the fragment that ended the fourth paragraph mess you up?

But I digress. (grin)

Words are our friends. All words. They all have a place and they all communicate something, whether it be the actual denotation (dictionary meaning) of the word itself or a certain connotation that adds a certain “feel” to the sentence.

Take for example “beneath,” “below” and “under.”

All are at least very similar in their denotation, yet the connotation of each is a little different from the others. As differences in connotation go not only to the context on the page and the writer’s own personal baggage and taste, I’ll leave the connotations for you to figure out.

Some writers (and rightly so — I’m not arguing here) refuse to use or allow their characters to use “bad” words (or “bad language”) in their stories. That’s fine. I avoid what I consider bad language in mine too.

Unless it’s necessary, meaning unless it fits the scene and the situation and the character.

But as I explained to one writer several years ago, if you flatly refuse to use what many consider “bad” or “rough” language, you probably shouldn’t write scenes in which gangstas are talking about what they did to their last victim.

Seriously. You can go ahead and write it — I’m nothing if not anti-censorship — but it will come across as unrealistic, which means it will dismantle the reader’s sense of disbelief.

Again, I’ll let you come up with your own examples. You’re all adults and you’ve all heard what you consider to be “bad” or rough language, so you can fill in the blanks.

But it’s up to each writer to determine his or her own limits.

For example, no matter the characters and no matter the scene or the setting or the situation, there are two words (in all of the English language) that I will never commit to a page.

Those two words, even in the privacy of my unspoken thoughts, I call “the N word” and “the C word.”

Those two words are ugly to me and, in my opinion, should be banished from every reference (even “slang” references) and the memory of everyone on Earth in every language.

(Though I draw my personal line at purging the former from previous works in which it was already written at a time when its use was “acceptable.” I can’t think of a time when the latter was ever considered acceptable. Nor should it have been.)

I won’t even write those words here for purposes of instruction. I will, however, describe them for you and allow you to draw your own conclusions.

The former, as if you didn’t know, is a highly derogatory term for some members of a particular race. It has no place in contemporary writing, nor should it ever again.

The latter is an extremely derogatory term (to me) for a particular part of human female anatomy. It, too, has no place in contemporary writing, fiction or nonfiction.

Sadly, I occasionally see it used in stories in which the setting is always one of two places:

The first setting is a women’s locker room. In that setting the word is usually used in dialogue between two women who are talking derogatorily about another woman, which flat stymies me.

The second setting is usually a run-down house or mobile home (premanufactured home) in which some ugly, nasty, mean man uses it in dialogue to angrily berate his wife or significant other.

In both settings or situations, there are other equally vicious words that would get the point of the character across just as well without leaping off the page and slapping the reader (at least this reader) between the eyes.

But those are the only two words — again, out of the entire English language — that I would never use or allow my characters to use.

How about you? Other than the two above, are there any words that you absolutely will not use or allow your characters to use?

Please comment if you have time.

Note: On this particular topic, if you email me privately with words you wouldn’t use, I reserve the right to add a comment to this post myself listing those words or your descriptions of them. However, I will not mention your name.

Rolled out just after 2, which is okay since today is Thursday (a half-day).

I also have a doc appointment this afternoon that I’ve actually been looking forward to for about five months. Yet another reason writing is a good thing: It keeps me from obsessing about the appointment. (grin)

To the novel at 4. By 6 I had around 1700 words. Time for another break.

Back to the novel at 6:40. About another 400 words, then back to the house.

Back to the novel at 10.

Stopping a little early so I can get ready for my appointment.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “How to Write a Book Blurb: A Guide for Novelists” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/write-blurb-novel/>.

See “Business Musings: Priorities” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/02/27/business-musings-priorities/>. Great post. Also see “Related” at the bottom. I would order her book today if it were available for pre-order.

See “Let’s Talk with Terry Odell” at <https://bookloversbench.com/lets-talk-with-terry-odell-29/>. A great post, and I disagreed with only one sentence. See if you can figure out which one. (grin)

See “Introducing TRUE CRIME THURSDAY” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/02/introducing-true-crime-thursday.html>.

See “A MurderCon Preview” at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-murdercon-preview-patti-phillips-a-tour-of-the-ultra-secure-sirchie-compound/>.

See “Looking for Recommendations” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/02/27/looking-for-recommendations/>.

See “Smashwords Introduces Global Coupons” at blog.smashwords.com/2019/02/smashwords-introduces-global-coupons.html. (Note: The link is correct without the http.)

Fiction Words: 3320

Nonfiction Words: 1070 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4390

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363

Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596

Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949

Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279

Day 5..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 11542

Day 6..... 3345 words. Total words to date..... 14887

Day 7..... 3657 words. Total words to date..... 18544

Day 8..... 3581 words. Total words to date..... 22125

Day 9..... 3320 words. Total words to date..... 25445

Total fiction words for the month..... 75665

Total fiction words for the year..... 159058

Total nonfiction words for the month... 25810

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 51220

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 210278

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	3
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date.....	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	40
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags Anthony DeCastro, KillZone Blog, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Lee Lofland, Reedsy, Smashwords, Terry Odell, the writing life, Topic	

The Daily Journal, Friday, March 1

March 1, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

A quiet rumination on days

A happy announcement

Topic: The Best Defense

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

When I close out each day and post the Journal, I go back and reset the Notepad document on which I type the original.

Yesterday, I almost left February in place and changed 28 to 29. I always feel a little cheated at the end of February, even when it has 29 days.

Seriously, couldn't they have taken the extra day from a couple of those with 31 days and made every February 30 days long? Would we really notice the extra day we get every four years? Or maybe they could make one of the 30-day months a 31-day month every four years. Wouldn't that work just as well?

It kind of reminds me of that alleged "old Indian" saying about daylight savings time: "Only a white man would think you could cut a foot off one end of a blanket and sew it to the other end to make a longer blanket."

Well, it looks as if you're going to be able to put up with my blathering for a longer foreseeable future than we in the Stanbrough camp were able to foresee yesterday.

The doc appointment yesterday was to determine whether my heart function has improved over the past 5 months from its all-time low of 10%.

According to the doc's reading of the cardio-echo I had yesterday, my heart function is now "35% at the worst," a great improvement. He went on to say, "But officially I'm calling it 40-45%."

So woohoo! Onward.

Topic: The Best Defense (Is a Good Offense)

Sometimes I wonder whether I'm being too opinionated. (Yeah, I know that's a major shock. Harvey? Opinionated?)

But it's true.

All my life I've striven to find common ground, or at least to leave said ground open to other possibilities and opinions. I'm just smart enough to know I don't know everything and that one size truly doesn't fit everyone.

In my blogs and in my teaching (back when I was still teaching), I use my own experiences as examples and I lay out my own opinions for the "right" way to do things.

I always try to add that every writer is different and that your results may vary. The bottom line (yeah, I'm a "bottom line" guy) is that you should find what works for you and then do that.

But somehow, my admonition that every writer is different — that what works very well for me might or might not work for you — doesn't always translate well for others. Somehow, occasionally, others translate my stance as "my way or the highway," meaning if you'd rather not do it "my way," it would be better if you hit the road.

Wow. A spin-meister could have a field day with that, couldn't he? I can just see it now: "In a recent blog post, Harvey Stanbrough said, and I quote, 'if you'd rather not do it "my way," it would be better if you hit the road.'"

I've never seen spin actually written out like that, but I suspect it occurs in writers' minds now and then. And when it does, they get mightily defensive.

Of course, in my own mind I have to wonder why. Are they unsatisfied with the way they do things? Are they so unsure of themselves and their abilities that they take "every writer is different" as a slight of some kind?

I don't know. And I don't really care, except as a matter of curiosity. After all, the demons that live in their mind is a battle they, not I, have to fight.

But I do know enough about psychology to know that a defensive response is often the result of a sense of inadequacy.

The most recent occurrence of this (to me) strange phenomenon happened on another writing blog on which I regularly comment.

After reading a post with which I mostly agreed, I commented and mentioned that I had written a similar post on the same topic. In my comment, I pointed to the URL of my post.

I didn't do so to "one-up" the other writer (a best-selling author) but only to provide her and other readers of her blog post with a little more information (and yes, to publicize my own post).

The author responded to my post defensively, as if I was saying in my comment that she was wrong and I was right, blah blah blah.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I was trying to say in my comment that I thought my post and hers augmented each other. That together, the two posts presented a more thorough view of the topic than either did by itself.

Apparently she didn't get that.

I can't and won't apologize for her perception, given that my intent was 180 out. But I really wish she'd understood what I was trying to do.

I really long for a world in which we all could figuratively hold hands and move forward together rather than sparring with each other, especially among the tradpubs and the indiepubs or among those who plot everything to within an inch of its life and those who Just Write the Story.

After all, don't we all have the same goal? Don't we all want to tell the best story we can tell at our current level of skill?

In every case, my intention in my blog posts and comments is to help others increase that level of skill. Not to get them to necessarily change the way they do things, but to tempt them to at least TRY another way they haven't tried before. To see for themselves whether it works better for them. If it does, good. If it doesn't, also good. Every writer is different.

What makes me crazy (and sad) is when a writer — we're supposed to be the most open-minded people on Earth — cross their arms and flatly refuse to try something new because they somehow "know" without having tried it that it will not work for them.

If I personally had not taken a chance and tried "something new" five years ago on April 15 2014, I wouldn't today be receiving income from almost 200 short stories and 30 short story collections.

And if I hadn't taken that same chance five years ago on October 19 2014, I wouldn't today have 40 (almost 41) published novels.

All of that happened and is ongoing because, although I was skeptical, I thought, “Well, this guy (Dean Wesley Smith) has been making a living from his fiction for 40 years. Maybe he knows what he’s talking about.” That was in early April of 2014 when I was 61 years old.

So let me say it here, as loudly and as plainly as I can: Try the “new” things I mention in my posts. If they feel right to you after you initially try them, stick with it for awhile (I’m talking at least a few years, not weeks or months).

And if they don’t work for you, if they don’t feel right to you after you’ve tried them, go back to your old way of doing things.

I promise, I won’t berate you for it. And I’ll stand alongside you and tell any detractors it’s none of their business. Even if you aren’t doing things “my way.”

Rolled out extra early this morning at just after 1 a.m. I checked the internet, didn’t find much, did a little work on my website, then wrote a lot of nonfiction.

I wrote everything above, then wrote the topic for tomorrow. (Something in the current topic keyed that, so stay tuned.)

Up to the house for a break at 4:30. Back to the hovel at 4:45, more screwing around, then to the novel at 5:30.

I was cruising along fine through 15 chapters in this novel with only a bare-bones reverse outline (names, place names). Then yesterday my characters threw me a serious curve. So this morning I’ll create a reverse outline as I cycle back through the whole thing.

Another break at 6:30. Back at 7:20 to continue cycling and filling in the reverse outline.

Up to the house at 8:30. Put on laundry, cleaned the catboxes, etc. and finally back to the novel an hour later.

By 10, I was through cycling and finally got to add new words to the novel. (grin) At 11:15 I took a break to check the laundry.

Then I made the mistake of reading Nora Roberts’ blog post. I didn’t list it in today’s “Of Interest,” nor will I ever again.

Suffice it to say I’m too incensed to write anymore today. I’ll go work on a website or something.

Besides, I believe in Myself enough to know I’ll be fine on my novel challenge. Someone like Nora Roberts can’t derail that, no matter how much she wishes she could.

And from this moment forward, I wouldn't buy one of her books to tear out the pages to use for toilet paper.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "There Ain't No Mickey Mouse Crap Like This on CSI!" at <https://www.leelofland.com/there-aint-no-mickey-mouse-crap-like-this-on-csi/>.

Fiction Words: 1235

Nonfiction Words: 1540 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2775

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 1..... 2363 words. Total words to date..... 2363
Day 2..... 2233 words. Total words to date..... 4596
Day 3..... 3353 words. Total words to date..... 7949
Day 4..... 1330 words. Total words to date..... 9279
Day 5..... 2263 words. Total words to date..... 11542
Day 6..... 3345 words. Total words to date..... 14887
Day 7..... 3657 words. Total words to date..... 18544
Day 8..... 3581 words. Total words to date..... 22125
Day 9..... 3320 words. Total words to date..... 25445
Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26680

Total fiction words for the month..... 1235

Total fiction words for the year..... 160293

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1540

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 52760

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 213053

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Lee Lofland, Professional Writer Series, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Saturday, March 2

March 2, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on my challenge

Topic: An Admission

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Man, a short day yesterday, and maybe a short day today and tomorrow. One of my sons and his wife and children are visiting. So I'll visit. (grin)

Meanwhile, time's running out on my current novel (for the challenge). I'm also feeling a need for breaks more and more often, not from the WIP, but from the overall challenge.

For the first time, I feel like I might not finish this one by the target date of March 6.

If I don't, the challenge will still be on. Remember, the challenge itself is to write 10 novels in 150 days, so the average is the big thing.

But I'd much prefer to finish each novel within its allotted 15 calendar days to keep the pressure at bay. I never want writing to turn into work. I want to keep it fun.

But I'll write when I can today. When I want a cigar or some alone time I'll come to the Hovel and fire-up the story. (grin)

Topic: An Admission

In yesterday's topic, I mentioned trying new things. When faced with a new technique, I suggest you don't get defensive, cross your arms and refuse. In this craft of writing, you really don't know what will work best for you until you try.

That being said, no one way works for everybody.

And even if it does, it will work differently. You can put your own personal spin on a new thing you pick up from whomever.

Like my unintentional mentor, Dean Wesley Smith, I write off into the dark, meaning I don't outline. I trust my creative subconscious. It works for me, and I'm so glad it does.

Also like DWS, I write one clean draft, start to finish. When I'm done, I'm done, and I move on to the next story. This is true to the point that I often can't remember specifics of a short story or novel even a day or two after I finished it.

When my first reader gets back to me with his or her notes, I have to refresh my memory on what the heck s/he's talking about.

And to write that one clean draft, again like DWS, I "cycle" as I write. Meaning I stay in the creative subconscious state of mind as I read back over what I wrote during the previous writing

session, and in that mode I add things here and there as I read (as my characters give me those things).

But that's where the similarity ends.

(When you edit, if you edit, you're in the conscious, critical mind. And as Bradbury, Block, Dean, King and countless others have said, nothing good in literature ever came from the conscious mind.

Even if you hire a copyeditor to clean up what you've written, that's fine. But don't allow them to bring their conscious-mind efforts into the content of your story. Their job is to sweep the floor, not to repaint the walls and hang new ceiling fans.

That being said, by all means, do it your way.)

So I learned writing into the dark, writing one clean draft, and cycling from DWS. But now those techniques are mine, and I do them differently.

I write into the dark pretty much the same way Dean does. (And the same way Bradbury, Child, and countless others do.) Basically, that means I sit down at the keyboard, put my fingers on the keys, and write whatever comes.

Likewise, when I get "stuck," I take a break, then come back and Just Write The Next Sentence (again, whatever comes).

But Dean cycles back only once. It's his rule. It's how he does things, and it works for him.

More often than not, I cycle back the initial time through what I wrote in the previous session (so 800 to 1200 words) each time I sit down to begin a new session. So that's still pretty much in line with what Dean does, except he stops and cycles back about every 500 words or so.

And later, especially if I have to go back to Chapter 3 and add some foreshadowing for something my characters spring on me in Chapter 16, I'll add that bit of foreshadowing.

But then, often as not, I'll read forward from there, again in the subconscious, creative mind and again allowing myself to add things my characters want to add. (Most often, in my case, that's a little more description here and there.)

It isn't uncommon for me to read through five or six thousand words and add maybe 100 words. But the story is tighter for it.

So in all, Dean cycles through his novel one time in 500-word chunks and is done with it. He prints it out and lays it on the desk of his first reader, who also happens to be Kristine Kathryn Rusch, of the most-awarded writers and editors of all time.

So that's my admission: I don't cycle like Dean does. I do it in a way that works for me.

I cycle through any given novel probably three to six times, and sometimes more. Depends on the novel, how intricate it is, etc.

Some would say I'm editing as I go or some such nonsense. But I'm not. I'm still not "editing" or "rewriting" or "revising." All of those are accomplished with the conscious, critical mind.

I'm just cycling, keeping myself in the creative subconscious. If I feel myself starting to slip into critical mode, I get up and walk away for awhile.

How do you tell the difference between your creative subconscious and your critical, conscious mind?

The creative subconscious is always positive. It's never negative. If you feel negativitiy creeping in, that's the critical, conscious mind.

The critical, conscious mind is always critical. It's always negative. It's the part of your mind that makes you question your sentence structure and length. It's the part that makes you wonder whether you've used "that" too many times. And it's to be avoided while writing.

The conscious and subconscious both have roles for a writer, though. The most succinct way I've heard it put is this:

Learn with the conscious mind, but write with the subconscious mind.

What you absorb while learning with the conscious mind — what is useful and "right" for you — will seep through to your subconscious, like crossing Ts and dotting I's and putting a period or a question mark at the end of a sentence. You learned all of those things with your conscious mind.

But create (write) with the subconscious. Write without thinking. Your characters, who live in your subconscious, will give you what you need when you need it.

That's my suggestion. But think it through for yourself:

Do you have to stop and consciously remember to cross a T or dot an I or put a period at the end of a sentence?

Of course not.

So when you're writing, trust yourself. It only gets better from here.

Rolled out late just after 3:30, shortening the day even more. Wrote all of the above, and checked the internet, which I found lacking.

What's worse, my computer restarted overnight. When I opened Blackwell Ops 4, my heart leapt into my throat.

The word count was 18,865. It stopped two paragraphs into Chapter 11.

So I closed the ugly thing and hastily riffled through my files. Sure enough, I found a "conflicted" copy that was the right one: at 26,680 words, it was well into Chapter 16. Whew!

Always Save Your Work.

To the novel at 6. Wrote about 500 words and up to the house.

Back to the write a bit at 8:40. About another 1100 words and back to the house.

Back to the Hovel at 11:30 and I ended the day with a long session.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Social Life of a Writer" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/the-social-life-of-a-writer.html>. You might find it interesting. Kind of bland.

See "Taking Inspiration from The Night Witches" at <https://crimereads.com/taking-inspiration-from-the-night-witches/>.

See "A Double Murder Mystery and Slovakia's Most Prominent Villain" at <https://www.ozy.com/provocateurs/a-double-murder-mystery-and-slovakias-most-prominent-villain/92430>.

Fiction Words: 3140

Nonfiction Words: 1380 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4520

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26680

Day 11... 3140 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 4375

Total fiction words for the year..... 163433

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2920

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 54140

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 217573

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	40
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Professional Writer Series, the writing life, Topic	

The Daily Journal, Sunday, March 3

March 3, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

More on pacing

A weird fact about me

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

A few days ago I mentioned pacing almost in passing. I got some good comments and a few emails about it, so I thought I'd expand on that in a topic.

Then I remembered I'd written a post about the topic over on the big blog.

To see that one (it holds up well) see "On Pacing and Paragraphing" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/on-pacing-and-paragraphing/>.

Here's a weird fact about me. I guess you could call it part of my process if you're interested. Sometimes, when I could (should?) be writing, especially at the beginning of the morning, I play spider solitaire instead. I enjoy it for some weird reason. Probably because it's a sheer waste of time. It's relaxing but it also exercises my brain.

More often than not, I play it until a sudden urge overcomes me to turn to the novel. At that point, no matter how good the cards look, I turn to the novel.

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning. Today, like yesterday, I intend to keep coming back and see what I can add to the novel.

To the Hovel by 3, flailed about the internet for awhile and wrote the little bit above. I had two different topics in mind, but I couldn't choose so I'll put them off for awhile.

A break just after 4.

Back to the Hovel at 4:30. Then I played spider solitaire for awhile (see above). This morning the urge to turn to the novel struck at 5:45.

Cycled through what I wrote yesterday, then added about 400 new words. A break for breakfast at 6:45.

Had a great visit, then a little house cleaning, and back to the Hovel and the novel at noon.

For some reason, despite my worries earlier, the challenge feels like it's going to be all right. I guess we'll see. (grin)

I decided to call it a day at a little after 1. Spend some time with my bride. I'll be back on the novel in the morning.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Sun Dance – Why Custer Really Lost the Battle of the Little Bighorn" at <http://dyingwords.net/blog-2/>. Seriously, you can get a free book out of this.

See "Burn Baby, Burn: Concealing Murder with Fire" <https://www.leelofland.com/burn-baby-burn-concealing-murder-with-fire/>.

See "How Long Should A Sentence Be?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/how-long-should-a-sentence-be.html>. Hmm. Great for critical thought.

Fiction Words: 1698

Nonfiction Words: 410 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2108

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26680

Day 11... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 29820

Day 12... 1698 words. Total words to date..... 31518

Total fiction words for the month..... 6073

Total fiction words for the year..... 165131

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3330

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 54550

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 219681

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags DyingWords.net, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland, Professional Writer

Series, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Monday, March 4

March 4, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on my Pro Writers Writing

An experiment

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

The contributors to Pro Writers Writing have begun scheduling their posts. We'll kick the site off "live" on Monday, March 18. I hope all of you will subscribe. More than likely, I'll reference some of those posts in my Journal in the "Of Interest" section. But I won't reference all of them.

If you subscribe, you will definitely find some things that work for you but that I might have skipped over.

UPDATE: Terry Odell (<http://terryodell.com>), whose posts I have featured in "Of Interest," has joined us as a guest contributor in Pro Writers Writing! This is excellent news, in part because now you won't have to listen to my stuff twice on Sundays. (grin)

I've come to realize I'm allowing this Journal to take priority over my fiction writing, and that's just crazy. (grin) I'm not sure how long that strange mix-up in priorities has been going on, but it's true.

So I'm going to run an experiment over the rest of this week to see whether I can make the early hours of the morning (say between 2 or 3 and 8) more productive re fiction writing.

Of course, I'll let you know how it goes just in case it helps in some way.

In theory, I should be able to knock out at least a couple of thousand words before 5 a.m. and another couple of thousand before my wife leaves for work. (Maybe I should make those goals.)

If I can do that, the main body of my daily writing would be done early, and that would leave the rest of the day for more writing or chores or whatever else I need to get done, including the Journal entry.

So we'll see.

If I'm unable to assume that new writing habit by next weekend, I'm thinking of shifting back to a more "normal" schedule, going to bed later and getting up later.

("Normal" for me means bed by 10 or 11 and getting up at 5.)

Rolled out just before 3 this morning, but spent the first SIX-PLUS HOURS of the day in various pursuits, none of which were writing fiction. Ridiculous. Finally to the novel at 9:30. Actually, to research on the novel. (grin)

A bit of a short day today. I'm calling it at a little after 2.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Dear Serial Killer..." at <https://www.suecoletta.com/dear-serial-killer/>.

See "Writing Commercial Fiction – Superstars Recap 6" at <https://terryodell.com/writing-commercial-fiction-superstars-recap-6/>. (Note that in point 6 Jeffrey Deaver says "Never let your characters control your story." Wow I'd like to ask him what he means by that.

See "Citizen's Police Academy" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/citizens-police-academy.html>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Blood Trail" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/04/free-fiction-monday-blood-trail-2/>.

See "Computer Stories: A.I. Is Beginning to Assist Novelists" at

<https://www.thepassivevoice.com/computer-stories-a-i-is-beginning-to-assist-novelists/>.

Actually, not really. Not yet. But an interesting article.

Fiction Words: 2514

Nonfiction Words: 500 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3014

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26680

Day 11... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 29820

Day 12... 1698 words. Total words to date..... 31518

Day 13... 2514 words. Total words to date..... 34032

Total fiction words for the month..... 8587

Total fiction words for the year..... 167645

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 55050

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 222695

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags KillZone Blog, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Professional Writer

Series, Sue Coletta, Terry Odell, The Passive Voice, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, March 5

March 5, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on Pro Writers Writing

An experiment

Topic: Reader Taste (Revisited)

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Well, the subscription form wasn't working out. Each time I updated it, it disappeared. So if you've subscribed, please do so again.

To subscribe, visit <http://prowriterswriting.com> and click Subscribe via Email in the menu.

We're growing! Yesterday we added Terry Odell, and this morning we added Dawn M. Turner.

It's kind of hard to gauge how the experiment is going. Of course, I'm only one day in. When I'm writing, the story's going very fast, but now and then I have to stop for a moment's research, and that slows things down a little.

Anyway, I'm determined to do it this way for a week. If it works out better, that's great. If not, it's still okay. I'm turning out an average of well over 2000 words per day as it is.

Topic: Reader Taste (Revisited)

In response to a dissenting opinion on today's post over on my big site, I wrote the following. I expanded it a bit here:

I agree up to a point. But IMHO, a best-selling writer should know how to add depth and should strive to balance the other details. If s/he can't pull me (the reader) into the story in the first place, that isn't a matter of my taste. It's a matter of that writer's skill (or lack thereof).

Which is why I've spent a ton of money and time learning how to craft a story that pulls the reader in.

But let's go the other way and say that every flaw in a book is owing to reader taste instead of the writer's lack of ability. In other words, nothing is my fault. (grin)

If every flaw in a book can be attributed to reader taste rather than a lack of writer knowledge, why bother learning the craft at all? Why bother spending hundred or thousands of dollars on workshops and seminars when we can mark up everything to reader taste?

What if my manuscript is chock full of wrong words (“waste” for “waist”) and typos and misspellings? When the reader finally decides wading through my writing isn’t worth it and closes the book, can I just mark up reader dissatisfaction to “reader taste”?

Some writers can, maybe, but I can’t and I won’t. That would just be silly.

Again, the ones with whom I have issues are not beginning writers, but bestsellers. In my opinion, they should have mastered the craft to which we all aspire.

Reader taste is a different animal. In my own novels, I’ve had some readers tell me they skim over some of my descriptions (because they feel there’s too much). At least the story’s good enough to hold their interest. (I do the same thing with some of the lengthy scientific descriptions in some of Heinlein’s novels, but I don’t toss away the book and quit reading.)

Yet other readers of my novels say they feel they’re down in the story with the characters (again, because of the depth of description). Now that is reader taste.

There comes a point where the writer should assume some responsibility for what s/he’s written. I personally try to add detail (depth, all five senses) when it’s necessary to the scene and the story and I try to omit it when it isn’t.

In other words, I’m studying and practicing and applying the craft. And that, I believe, should be the goal of all fiction writers.

Rolled out at 3 after going to bed early and catching up on my sleep: 9 hours of it. Responded to email for an hour, then turned to the novel.

In the first hour, I added only about 700 words, then took a break. Back to the novel at 5:30.

I lost track of time, but added another thousand words at sometime or other. At around 9:30 I went down to the house to put in a load of laundry and do a couple of chores.

Then I came back here and worked on the subscription problem with the site and answered yet some more emails. (grin) Still, somehow I’ve managed to lay down around 2500 words so far today. A break now, and then I’ll come back for at least one more session.

I’m calling it at 1:40.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “WPA Anthology Contest – Foreword by Lee Child” at

<https://www.writerspoliceacademy.com/after-midnight-tales-from-the-graveyard-shift/>.

See “Last Day of the Anthology Workshop” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/last-day-of-the-anthology-workshop/>. He talks also about his upcoming challenge.

See “Writing Commercial Fiction – Superstars Recap 7” at <https://terryodell.com/writing-commercial-fiction-superstars-recap-7/>.

See “Mystery Publishing News – Recent Shakeups” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/mystery-publishing-news-recent-shakeups.html>. I suggest taking this as a cautionary tale if you’re still seeking traditional publication.

See “World Building (Part II)” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/03/05/world-building-part-ii/>.

Via “Gai” in a comment, see the first film written entirely by AI at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsnPyKsmSml>.

Fiction Words: 3331

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 4131

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26680

Day 11... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 29820

Day 12... 1698 words. Total words to date..... 31518

Day 13... 2514 words. Total words to date..... 34032

Day 14... 3331 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 11918

Total fiction words for the year..... 170976

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4630

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 55850

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 226826

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 3

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 40

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland, Linda Maye

Adams, Terry Odell, the writing life, Topic

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, March 6

March 6, 2019 by Harvey

In today’s Journal

Update on the challenge

No topic today, but

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Well, I'll either wrap up the novel today or I'll be one (or more) days behind when I go into the next one.

Actually, it's looking pretty good. I wrote the last major climax yesterday, so we'll see.

UPDATE: One son (and I think, two) arrived after I was in bed last night. One from Indiana and one from New Mexico. There were two vehicles in the parking area this morning. So chances are very good I won't finish the novel today.

No biggie. Family comes first.

If I get some alone time later, I'll advance the novel. If not, I might not get any writing done today beyond this Journal.

UPDATE 2: Finished the novel. It came in at just under 40,000 words.

No topic today, but if you'd care to come along on a "beat a dead horse" party, read the [comments on yesterday's Journal](#).

To what I wrote there, I will just add this: I believe in my abilities as a writer and as a storyteller. I say without reservation that I will Never blame a reader for not being able to read and enjoy one of my books, much less "get through" it.

But that's just me. Seriously, folks, I like to discuss writing as much as the next guy. But feel how you feel, believe how you believe, etc.

I rolled out late at 4 a.m. then replied (at length) to a comment and wrote the stuff above. Then I started checking the internet for items of interest. Today will be what it will be.

Finally to the novel at 5:45. I wrote around 900 words, then up to the house for a break.

Back to the Hovel at 7:30. The boys aren't up yet (I heard they had a late night in Tombstone), so I played a little spider solitaire while I eat a breakfast sandwich. After that I wrote a little more, then noticed the boys were up so I headed up to the house to visit.

Finally back to the Hovel at 12:45. As I thought it might, the novel ran to the end today. My intention is to start a new one tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Quit Trying to Write" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/quit-trying-to-write.html>.

Wonderful post. Brought up a good memory for me.

See the comments on “Citizens Police Academy” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/citizens-police-academy.html#comments>.

Fiction Words: 2627

Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3007

Writing of Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan (novel)

Day 10... 1235 words. Total words to date..... 26680

Day 11... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 29820

Day 12... 1698 words. Total words to date..... 31518

Day 13... 2514 words. Total words to date..... 34032

Day 14... 3331 words. Total words to date..... 37363

Day 15... 2627 words. Total words to date..... 39990 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 14545

Total fiction words for the year..... 173603

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5010

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 56230

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 229833

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags KillZone Blog, Professional Writer Series, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Thursday, March 7

March 7, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Daily diary and challenge stuff

Of Interest

The numbers

Rolled out at 3 this morning, per my internal clock. So far it's a great but slow morning. One of my first readers read Blackwell Ops last night and responded already. Very fast.

I applied his corrections and one suggestion. Then I completed a quick first-page critique for another writer and got that sent off.

(I do still offer a free critique of up to about the first 500 words of your WIP, if anyone's interested. Just email me.)

After that I read a lot of stuff online, took a long break (15 minutes) up at the house and came back here to write.

I was telling someone yesterday, I'd like to just jump right back into another Blackwell Ops novel, but I need one I can complete quickly (I want to take a few days away). The BO books write quickly through the action scenes, but they also require a lot of "stop and look this up" research, which slows the writing on some days.

I also suspect (strongly) two of my BO POV characters are going to continue with Blackwell Ops but also go off into another series on their own. (grin) They'll make a great team.

When a writer tells me s/he can't seem to come up with story ideas, I am mystified. If you write, how can you not come up with ideas? (grin)

Anyway, to a new story this morning. In my challenge, the deadline for this one is March 21. If I can finish it or be in the end game by March 16, I'm going camping with a friend for a few days.

So I need to write this one in ten days, give or take. (grin) During many of which two sons (and later, one son) will be visiting. So we'll see.

Around 5:30 a title popped into my head: The Wayward Bullet. So that put it pretty firmly in the Stern Talbot, PI series. I don't think I've ever written a novel based only on a title before, so this will be a new endeavor for me.

By around 6:15 I had around 800 words on the page and took a long break.

The opening of this one hinted at some things that happened in the previous Stern Talbot novel, so I went to look at the reverse outline for the previous one. And learned another important lesson. I hadn't completed the reverse outline, so I had to look up a few things in the manuscript.

So from now on, I'll take a few minutes to complete the reverse outline for the current novel. (grin)

At 8:30, back to the novel. Some researching through previous novels and some writing. I added about a thousand words. At 10:30 a break up to the house.

Wrote a little more, but Mona will be home soon, so I'll call it a day. A good start on the new novel.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Personal Assignment Available for Pre-Order" at <https://terryodell.com/personal-assignment-available-for-pre-order/>. If you enjoy "Romance with a Twist of Mystery" consider supporting this author, who is also a contributor to the Pro Writers Writing website.

See “Business Musings: Productivity (Writing With Chronic Illness)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/06/business-musings-productivity-writing-with-chronic-illness/>.
See “Know Your Genre and Do the Research – First Page Critique: The Nature of Things” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/know-your-genre-and-do-the-research-first-page-critique-the-nature-of-things.html>. A GREAT post on including detail, among many other things. (See? It isn’t only me and Dean.) (grin)
See “The Accidental Crime Novelist” at <https://www.topic.com/the-accidental-crime-novelist>.
See “I’m Back But Behind” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/im-back-but-behind/>.
See “Q&A with Kofi Nyameye” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2019/03/06/qa-with-kofi-nyameye/>.
See “Resources for Writing Psychic Characters” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/03/resources-for-writing-psychic-characters.html>.

Fiction Words: 2412

Nonfiction Words: 620 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 3032

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Wayward Bullet (novel)

Day 1..... 2412 words. Total words to date..... 2412

Total fiction words for the month..... 16957
Total fiction words for the year..... 176015
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5630
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 56850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 232865
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31
Categories Daily JournalTags Asimov's, Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, M. Byerly, Professional Writer Series, Terry Odell, the writing life, Topic.com

The Daily Journal, Friday, March 8

March 8, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Hmm. Not sure why the email version of the Journal didn't go out yesterday. Thanks to Karen for letting me know.

I went to MailChimp and double checked. It's supposedly "sending," but it verified the last one sent was on Wednesday.

Anyway, you can see Thursday's Journal at <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-thursday-march-7/>. I hope you'll check it out. There are a lot of

Rolled out a little before 2 and was in the Hovel by 2. Followed my usual ritual and found little to nothing for "Of Interest."

And I got a pleasant surprise. One of my sons knocked on the door of the Hovel at around 3:15.

When I opened the door, all three of my sons were here. Two had been partying in Tombstone a little, and the third drove down from Flagstaff to join them, then they all came here. It's the best early morning I've had in a long time.

They came in and we all visited and laughed for about an hour before they all left and went out to our "guest trailer" to get some sleep.

I took a break soon after that, then came back and wrote around 1200 words. Now at a little after 6 I'm going up to the house for a slightly longer break.

Not sure how much I'll get done today, especially with all three sons here. Have to visit while I can. (grin)

Well, a broken-down vehicle and some other things, so no more writing today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Nada

Fiction Words: 1563

Nonfiction Words: 270 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 1833

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Wayward Bullet (novel)

Day 1..... 2412 words. Total words to date..... 2412

Day 2..... 1563 words. Total words to date..... 3975

Total fiction words for the month..... 18520

Total fiction words for the year..... 177578

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5900

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 57120

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 234698

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31
Categories Daily JournalTags Professional Writer Series, the writing life	

The Daily Journal, Saturday, March 9

March 9, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Update on my challenge

On Daylight Saving Time

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

In today's "Of Interest," Dean Wesley Smith talks about firing up his challenge again. And again, I picked up a gem that helped me.

At the moment and for the past few days, all three of my sons are visiting. I'm blessed. All are adults and successful in their own right, and each has a (very) unique personality. I love that about them, so I'm trying not to miss even a single moment of observing those personalities while they're here. (grin)

As you know, writing is important to me too. Not what I write, but *that* I write. Every day. That's why my current challenge (to write 10 novels of 35,000 to 60,000 words) is important to me, but it's also why it was pretty much an easy-peasy snap even back when I started it. It's easy to do something you love to do.

I thought I could just write through the visit. I have to have a few hours a day alone (I suspect everyone is like that) so I figured it would be fairly easy to write during those few alone-hours and that no quality visiting time would suffer.

I was wrong. This visit is just another life roll, albeit (I hastily add) a very good life roll.

But it's something that often necessarily disrupts the routine. I don't regret that it breaks the routine, but of course I wish I could do both: visit and write.

I can do that to some degree, of course, but the visit is my priority right now, so often the time I am able devote to writing has to suffer.

The overall visit will continue for another ten days or so, and as usual the only finite measure boils down to math.

For me, the remaining visit represents a potential loss of 40 hours of actual writing time, so a potential loss of 40,000 words: a short novel. Again, I don't regret that potential loss, At All. It's just what's happening at the moment.

So I wrote all of that to write this: I might end up putting my challenge on hold.

I won't cancel it or end it. But I might take an intermission.

I'll still write a little (fiction) every day during the remaining visit time, but probably not nearly as much as I would otherwise.

In fact, I've been jonesing to take a break from life in general and go camping for a few days. I'll probably do that a few days after the visit ends. (Give my bride a few days to wind down a bit without going from a full house to herself alone.)

And that's all right. When I come out the other side of the camping trip, I hope to have at least five novels finished, although I probably won't finish the fifth one (my WIP) in the time allotted by the challenge.

So at that point, I'll restart the challenge, appropriately adjusted: maybe I'll begin a new challenge with new target dates to write ten (more) novels from that point in fewer days (maybe 140 or 130 or something).

Or maybe I'll just re-start the original challenge (again, with new target dates) to write five novels in 75 days.

I don't know, but I'll come up with something. (grin) Stay tuned and we'll see how it all comes out.

In one blog I visit occasionally but very seldom include in "Of Interest," a writer complained about having to adjust her clock one way or the other for Daylight Saving Time.

I live in Arizona where common sense regarding such things prevails, so I am not privy to the concept of "losing" or "gaining" an hour.

Anyway, she said she just doesn't need to lose 60 minutes of writing time. (grin)

Yeah, you're ahead of me, aren't you?

When the only considerations are 1) The Writer, alone in 2) A Room, the clock really has no bearing. Does it?

You can still write at the same time every day (if that's your thing) regardless of where the hands are pointing on the clock.

Despite the dreams of governments everywhere, it simply isn't possible to create a longer blanket by cutting a foot off one end and sewing it to the other end.

Very odd hours today. I rolled out a little before midnight, was in the Hovel by the witching hour, and spent a little more time “waking up” than usual, then wrote everything above this. As I turn to the novel (with my second mug of coffee at my right hand) it's almost 2:30.

A good-enough day with a hair over 1400 words

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Challenge Is On (Again)” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/challenge-is-on-again/>.

See “New Method of Using Blood, and Lucky Charms, to Solve Crimes” at <https://www.leelofland.com/new-method-of-using-blood-and-lucky-charms-to-solve-crimes/>.

Fiction Words: 1407

Nonfiction Words: 830 (Journal)

So total words for the day: 2237

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Wayward Bullet (novel)

Day 1..... 2412 words. Total words to date..... 2412

Day 2..... 1563 words. Total words to date..... 3975

Day 3..... 1407 words. Total words to date..... 5382

Total fiction words for the month..... 19927

Total fiction words for the year..... 178985

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6730

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 57950

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 236935

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, Lee Lofland, Professional Writer Series, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Sunday, March 10

March 10, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Back on schedule, at least for now. Rolled out at 2 a.m. after sacking out last night at 6. But in addition to doing what's necessary to put out this Journal every day, I also fooled around for awhile and didn't get to the novel until 4:30.

Frankly, I'm having a little trouble writing this one too. (ATTN: WHINE ALERT!) Between the positive life roll and the Blackwell Ops books being in the back of my mind as I write, it's slow going. (grin)

I also think my conscious mind is screwing with me a little bit. In the whole first session today, I think I wrote only around 300 words. Silly.

Of course, I'm still writing off into the dark. I just put my fingers on the keyboard and write whatever comes next.

But sometimes that little voice inside (the same one that gives me the next sentence to write) says, "Nah, that ain't right. Remember the old bum on the corner in the last scene? You were gonna check on him, remember?" or "C'mon, dude, the detective arrived on the scene and let the POV character leave without getting his statement?" Stuff like that. So it's kind of instant cycling.

Oh well. It'll be what it'll be.

Today is the last day my last son is visiting when both I and his mother will be home, so I'm taking off the rest of the day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "One of the Joys of Indie Publishing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/one-of-the-joys-of-indie-publishing.html>.

See "If You REALLY Want to Do This..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/if-you-really-want-to-do-this.html>.

See "The Cold Case Factory" at <https://www.topic.com/the-cold-case-factory>. The article is a little long, but stick with it. Incredible.

See "Homemade Bread and Heroin: Search Warrants and Snacks" at

<https://www.leelofland.com/homemade-bread-and-heroin-search-warrants-and-snacks/>.

See "Don Winslow on His New Novel..." at <https://www.gq.com/story/don-winslow-the-border-interview>. Some bashing of President Trump (of course) but some gems on process.

See “By the Book: Donna Leon” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/07/books/review/by-the-book-donna-leon.html>.

See “Who Is The Zodiac Killer?” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/who-is-the-zodiac/>.

Fiction Words: 1373

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1723

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Wayward Bullet (novel)

Day 1..... 2412 words. Total words to date..... 2412

Day 2..... 1563 words. Total words to date..... 3975

Day 3..... 1407 words. Total words to date..... 5382

Day 4..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 21300

Total fiction words for the year..... 180358

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7080

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 58300

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 238658

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags CrimeReads, KillZone Blog, Lee Lofland, Professional Writer

Series, Sue Coletta, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Monday, March 11

March 11, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Rolled out at 2 and found some amazing stuff for “Of Interest.” If you write fiction and have the means, consider signing up for Dean’s Anthology Workshop for next year.

I’m a little stuck on the WIP. Somewhere along the way I lost interest in it. I’ve done this enough to know that means somewhere along the way the story veered in a wrong direction.

So at 4 when I opened the file, I scrolled up to the top and started reading. I’m not even cycling. Just reading. I think I’ll find the glitch this way.

Found it, fixed it, and added about a thousand new words. To the house for a break at 7:20.

I had plenty of time to write today, but instead I did various other things. So I had an okay writing day, but still not up to my normal numbers.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “2019 Goals Recap – Week #10” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/2019-goals-recap-week-10/>. MUCH more than a personal goals recap, Phillip offers insight into Dean’s Anthology workshop.

See “Lean Mean Opening Scenes – Superstars Writing Recap 8” at <https://terryodell.com/lean-mean-opening-scenes-superstars-writing-recap-8/>. This is not only a great post, but a whole host of possible post topics. I wonder how our Pro Writers Writing bloggers might handle the opening setting in their own work, for example, or characters, etc. (Hint hint.)

See “Nifty Blogs” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/nifty-blogs/>. He lists two blog posts, one of which is below.

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/>. A longer recap of the same workshop a year ago.

See “What Did You Say? Writing Realistic Dialogue” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/what-did-you-say-writing-realistic-dialogue.html>. I was pleased to see Elaine Viets’ post was not only titled Writing Realistic Dialogue (the title of one of my nonfiction books) but advises some of the same things I’ve been teaching for years. Be sure to check out the comments, especially the one from John Gilstrap. He nailed it.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Track 61” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/11/free-fiction-monday-track-61-2/>.

Fiction Words: 1780

Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2130

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Wayward Bullet (novel)

Day 1..... 2412 words. Total words to date..... 2412

Day 2..... 1563 words. Total words to date..... 3975

Day 3..... 1407 words. Total words to date..... 5382

Day 4..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... 6755

Day 5..... 1780 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 23080

Total fiction words for the year..... 182138

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7430

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 58650

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 240788

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Dean Wesley Smith, KillZone Blog, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, Phillip McCollum, Professional Writer Series, Terry Odell, the writing life

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, March 12

March 12, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

Topic: Reader Taste Revisited

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Topic: Reader Taste Revisited

Well, I started a minor firestorm with my offhand comment in my post “On Readers’ ‘Taste’ and Writers’ Ability” over at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/on-readers-taste...-writers-ability/>. (grin)

The point of the article was based on a simple but solid premise: that all fiction writers who are (or profess to be or want to be) professionals are responsible for their own work and should strive to learn how to keep readers in their stories.

After all, if every unfinished reading experience can be marked up to reader taste, why should any writer continue trying to improve? Of course, I’m using sarcasm here.

To me, writers have two clear choices: They can either take responsibility for the quality of their writing and strive to improve, or they can simply mark up every unsatisfactory reading experience (and low sales) to “reader taste” and simply keep writing whatever they want to write without a thought for craft.

If it isn’t clear, I’m a member of the former group. Hence, my radical opinion. Though it wasn’t too many years ago when taking responsibility for one’s own life and work was the mainstream opinion.

I think I made the point well, not that I didn’t expect some backlash, and I got it, albeit from some unexpected sources.

The opposing argument seems to be that any time any reader can’t get into even a bestselling author’s work, it’s purely a matter of reader taste. Even if the reader read and enjoyed a lot of that bestselling author’s work before.

First, it’s a given that if the bestselling author writes in a particular genre and you (the reader) don’t like or read that genre, certainly that’s a matter of reader taste.

For example, I don't read heaving-bosom romance because it simply isn't something I would enjoy. So it goes against my personal taste as a reader. The author might be a great writer or s/he might be a hack, but I'll never know because I don't care for that kind of romance.

For another more specific example, I absolutely love Dean Wesley Smith's time-travel and SF works, but I can't stand his Poker Boy stories. Again, reader taste.

But say you DO like a particular genre. Say you even like that particular genre from that particular author and have read a ton of them.

Now say you suddenly encounter one you just can't get into because you're never pulled into the story. Or you're pulled in but something about the writing keeps bouncing you out.

In that case, I still assert that's the fault of the writer, not the reader.

For example, I've read almost everything Stephen King ever wrote. Yet I couldn't get through one novel specifically because every now and then but repeatedly I was bounced out of the story by the author's (or typesetter's) repeated use of ALL CAPS or **Bold**. (As in, "Peter put on the brakes as they approached the **STOP** sign." Sigh.)

It was off-putting. It was distracting. Instead of enjoying the story, I was annoyed, wondering why he did that. A couple of years ago, when I turned in an assignment in a workshop to DWS, he wrote back that he had trouble staying in the story because of my use of italics to indicate unspoken thought. I did that because I wanted to differentiate between spoken thought (dialogue, set off with quotation marks), the narration (in regular type) and unspoken thought (with italics).

Dean made me realize with his criticism that if every word on the page is filtered through the POV character's physical senses and the character's opinions of the setting, the reader would never be confused as to what was narrative and what was unspoken thought (some call this "internal dialogue," a misnomer since it's a monologue and not spoken).

As a result, I no longer use italics to indicate unspoken thought. And guess what? I've never had a reader say s/he couldn't differentiate between the three kinds of text. Nor has anyone reported feeling confused by unspoken thought being in normal font face (like the narrative).

But the glitches (I'm being kind) in King's work drew attention to themselves for no good reason and pulled me from the story. And really, ever since junior high school, writers have been told to avoid ALL CAPS and **Bold** because 1) there's simply no reason for it and 2) it's distracting. Now, will EVERY reader notice the glitches? No, s/he won't. But for those who do, that writer might have lost future sales.

It wasn't my fault as a reader that I was knocked out of the story repeatedly. To posit that I went into the book looking for a reason to leave early is ridiculous. I'm like any other reader. I go into a book with my sense of disbelief already suspended. All the writer has to do is not buy it back.

The problem in the King book was that the glitches were so numerous and occurred so often that I was unable to continue even in what I thought was an excellent story. And the story was excellent, at least the part I read. But even that was not enough to help me trudge (or pull me) through the glitches. I still wonder what happened in the story.

I still hope someday I'll find a different edition in a used bookstore somewhere, one in which those glitches do not appear. If I do, I'll buy the book again and happily read it.

Anyway, that isn't the firestorm I was referring to at the beginning of this topic. In the post, I wrote, "As an aside, I don't know of anyone who doesn't like works by Ray Bradbury or Raymond Chandler." In hindsight, I should have hedged my bet or further fueled the firestorm by mentioning James M. Cain and Louis L'Amour. (grin)

My insinuation was that back in the day, writers took responsibility for their own work as a matter of course. I failed, however, to add that insinuation in actual words.

So two respondents felt the need to say they don't like Bradbury. That's fine by me, but they kind of missed the overall point of the article.

And now the whole thing comes full circle. Those readers who latched onto my "aside" comment missed the point because I distracted them from it.

And that is my fault. After all, I'm the writer. (grin)

As a writing instructor, I've been telling writers for years not to put anything on the page that will distract the reader's attention from the story. I stand by that.

Of course, all of this is only my opinion. At the end of the day, you should continue along whatever road you've chosen.

As an aside (ahem), nobody has yet come forth to say they don't like Raymond Chandler's stories. (grin)

Rolled out late this morning at around quarter to 4. Today is the last day of the last son's visit, so probably not a big writing day.

However, I plan to take my new baby 'puter (Hal2) and the WIP with me on the upcoming camping trip.

The target date for the last day of this part of the challenge is March 21, so I see no reason why I can't get at least a few thousand words done while I'm gone.

This morning while I'm still visiting but not directly engaged I'll add notes from my first readers for Blackwell Ops 4. (grin)

Well, for the first time since February 3, I'm putting up a goose egg for fiction writing today. Working with my son (I'm mostly watching) to get his rig ready to hit the road and it's been a bit of a trial. So no fiction today.

I've decided not to postpone the challenge though. It is what it is. I'm gonna work through it and see what I have when the smoke clears on the last day (June 4).

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Searching for... Discouragement" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/03/11/searching-for-discouragement/>.

See "World Building (Part III)" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/03/12/world-building-part-iii/>.

See "A Lifetime in a Tin Cup" at <https://www.leelofland.com/a-lifetime-in-a-tin-cup/>.

See "Feminism and Copyright Revisited" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/feminism-and-copyright-revisited/>.

See "Lifetime Subscription Information" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lifetime-subscription-information/>. Some great bargains for those of us who take responsibility for our own work.

See "Writing Off Into the Dark, Take 2" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/writing-into-the-dark-take-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1380 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1380

Writing of Stern Talbot, PI: The Case of the Wayward Bullet (novel)

Day 1..... 2412 words. Total words to date..... 2412

Day 2..... 1563 words. Total words to date..... 3975

Day 3..... 1407 words. Total words to date..... 5382

Day 4..... 1373 words. Total words to date..... 6755

Day 5..... 1780 words. Total words to date..... 8535

Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 23080

Total fiction words for the year..... 182138

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8810

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 60030

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 242168

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories Daily JournalTags Anthony DeCastro, Dean Wesley Smith, Harvey Stanbrough, Lee Lofland, Linda Maye Adams, Professional Writer Series, Ray Bradbury, The Passive Voice, the writing life, Topic

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, March 13](#)

[March 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Welcome and today in "Of Interest"

Topic: What Is a Scene?

Update on my challenge

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Welcome to our newest subscriber, Judy M. Thanks for coming along for the ride, Judy. Tell Ron W. I miss his tired old self. (grin) (By the way, most of my Journal entries aren't quite as long as this one. You picked a good day to start.)

Today in "Of Interest" John Gilstrap (at TKZ) talks about what constitutes a scene. He has an interesting take, and he asked readers what we thought.

I responded, and that led to today's topic.

There's also a great first page critique with good advice re using a child as the POV character, a thought-provoking story (or series) idea, and then something just for fun.

Topic: What Is a Scene?

For me, defining "scene" is easy. For some, not so much.

I think it was Ray Bradbury who said (for him) a new scene occurs each time there's a new camera angle. I'm fortunate in that I "see" every new setting and scene in that way too. For that reason, for me, every new setting holds a scene.

But how we see a scene isn't important. What matters is that we can see (hear, smell, taste, feel) a scene through the POV character's senses and opinions and transfer that to the page. Nothing

on the page should come from the writer. Every word, every bit of punctuation, everything should be filtered through the current POV character.

Bestselling thriller author John Gilstrap in a recent blog post (see “Of Interest”) made the point that screenwriters don’t have available to them all the tools novelists have.

It’s interesting, too, that we DO have available techniques that film directors often use: that ability to visualize the scene.

My minor scenes are usually transitory as the POV character moves between major settings and scenes, and for me, a major setting and scene (combined usually with one or two minor scenes) comprise a chapter.

So what is a minor scene? Most of mine are transitory. They exist only to move the POV character from one major scene to another without him magically appearing there.

A transitory minor scene might be the POV character moving from a taxi cab into a building. He won’t notice much, so there won’t be a lot of description. (Remember, all setting description is filtered through the POV character.) After all, what’s to notice about a sidewalk and the façade of a building, for example (unless it holds something important to the story)?

Likewise, some minor scenes are only implied, meaning they aren’t written on the page at all. For example, the POV character getting from the lobby of the building into an elevator, out of the elevator on the relevant floor and into the office where the major scene will take place).

For example, maybe while he’s in the lobby he finds (or heads toward) the elevator. The next paragraph would open the next major scene as he arrives at his destination.

But when we talk about scenes, most often we’re talking about what I call “major” scenes.

My major scenes are all around 800 – 1200 words, with that number sometimes sliding upward depending on the characters and what action is occurring.

My major scenes usually begin with a quick but in-depth description the new setting, to ground (or include) the reader, interspersed with dialogue (if necessary), whatever action occurs, etc.

But Gilstrap was right. Major scenes are so diverse, they’re difficult to explain. Let me try with two quick examples:

1. If the office belongs to the POV character, the lights are off and there’s an assailant waiting, there won’t be a lot of dialogue (or any) at the beginning, and any in-depth description of that setting probably took place in an earlier scene.

In that case, during the action or after the action is resolved, only minor description would be required to reground the reader.

2. If the POV character is arriving in his office for the first time in that novel, a more in-depth description of the office is necessary (to pull the reader into the office too).

In that case, if the office is dark and an assailant is waiting, the in-depth description will take place intermittently, some during the action and most (probably) after the action is over.

This is only two of literally hundreds or thousands (or millions) of possibilities for that one scene.

And that's why I'm glad I write off into the dark. (grin)

Imagine how much more dull the scene would be if I planned everything in advance and forced it on my character rather than just allowing the story to unfold in its own time.

When the POV character steps out of the taxi cab, I don't know what he'll see or smell or otherwise sense on his way into the building until he senses it and it comes out through my fingers into the keyboard.

As he steps out of the elevator and reaches for the doorknob to his office, I don't know what's about to ensue either. And if I don't know in advance what's going to happen, my readers can't possibly know.

Which leads me back to another Bradbury quote: If you don't surprise yourself, how can you hope to surprise the reader?

So there's one thing we can probably all agree on: Scenes, and by extension, whole stories, are mind-boggling to explain, but a ton of fun to write. (grin)

At this point, I was going to point you to other, older blog posts on writing setting and scenes. Then I realized those posts are now marked "private," meaning only I can view them.

For a short while, I've marked those two posts public so you can read them if you want. If you read them, you will be reading Chapter 6 of my book, *Writing the Character-Driven Story*.

Consider it a free "look inside" at that book. And if you decide you want the book, you can find it at <https://www.books2read.com/u/bQLXP4>.

As you know, my current challenge was to write 10 novels in 150 days.

It faltered when I had the happy life roll of all three of my adult sons visiting at once. That too is a rare occurrence and one I wasn't willing to miss. The challenge faltered.

So I'm calling the original challenge ended, and also a limited success. I did stay on track, writing 4 novels in 60 days. During that time I had only two non-fiction-writing days. So either way, that's a win.

Tomorrow morning, I'll begin a new challenge. Again it will be to write 10 novels, and again in 150 days. The target dates will be 15 days apart. Again, if I finish early, I'll have days in the bank. If I finish late, I'll pull days from the bank.

In a challenge like this, what matters is the average.

When I come out the other side, if I'm successful, I will have written 10 new novels, and 51 novels over all.

Wish me luck. (grin)

Oh, and yes, I'm still going camping for two or three days beginning on the 16th. But I'll take Hal2 with me and try to get one or two thousand words done per day while I'm camping too. We'll see. (grin) As I won't have internet access, I'll pre-post a few Journal entries for the days that I'm gone.

I rolled out this morning at my usual time of 3 a.m. I didn't waste any time during the first few hours, but I did do a lot of admin stuff, including writing all the stuff above, adding some links to my Books2Read account, etc.

For just one example of "admin stuff," when I looked initially, the link to Writing the Character-Driven Story went to only two vendors. Now it goes to several, as it should.

I still need to finalize the cover for Blackwell Ops 4 and publish it, and I still need to add my last three Blackwell Ops books and my last mystery to my website too. And I need to update my publisher website.

Amazing how easy it is to fall behind. I'll get started on all of that this afternoon.

Up to the house for a break at 5:40. My eldest son ended up staying one more night, so part of the morning will be devoted to saying goodbye to him as he begins his trek back to Indiana. I don't envy him going back there at this time of year.

I finally opened the WIP at just before 9 a.m. To get back into it, I read it through again, but it just doesn't excite me anymore. So I'm setting it aside. Thankfully, this is a rare occurrence for me. I'm glad it happened only 8,000 words in.

It feels strange to do this right in the middle of a challenge, but it is what it is. So I used my usual writing time today to upgrade my Hovel. This afternoon I'll update my websites. So no fiction writing again today. But tomorrow morning I'll start a new novel.

In related news, I've been thinking a lot lately about writing a spinoff series from Blackwell Ops while also continuing the Blackwell Ops series.

But the new series will involve at least two current BO characters, so I have to write another BO novel first that will also serve as the basis for the spinoff. I think I'll do that.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Scene Construction" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/scene-construction.html>.

See "First Page Critique: From the Mouths of Babes" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/first-page-critiquefrom-the-mouths-of-babes.html>.

See "Doctors Are Using Hospital 'Robots'..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/doctors-are-using-hospital-robots-to-tell-patients-theyre-dying-sparking-an-outcry/>.

For fun, see "Offline" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/offline/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1630 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1630

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 23080
Total fiction words for the year..... 182138
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10440
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 61660
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 243798

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date..... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [John Gilstrap](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writing Scenes](#), [Writing Setting](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, March 14](#)

[March 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quote of the day

Update on admin stuff

Topic: Four Harsh Truths

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

"You only fail if you stop writing." Ray Bradbury

Well, I got my main author website up to date yesterday. And I got Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan uploaded for advance orders. It will release officially on April 15.

The universal link is <https://books2read.com/u/4NZxYZ>, but it's currently available only in a few stores. (It takes a few days to get into all the stores.)

The publisher website is going to take a lot more doing. I'll probably have to devote a full day to that, so i'll either wait for one of my "bank" days or until after the challenge is over.

For anyone keeping track, that will mean one more novel by March 28, then two in each of April, May, June and July, and the final one out by August 10.

Topic: Four Harsh Truths About Being a Professional Fiction Writer

This is a direct take-off on Sue Coletta's post in today's Killzone blog (see "Of Interest"). This is also one of the comments I left on Sue's post.

1. There will come days off, or Life Happens.

At times, no matter how much you long (jones) to write, there will be life rolls that keep you from writing. These might be good (visiting family or friends) or they might be bad (turmoil, illness, etc.).

I'm often seen staring at visitors with a stupid grin on my face as I pretend to listen. In actuality, I'm with my characters romping through a field of clover or scraping grit off my lips as I burrow deeper into a mud pit while avoiding incoming gunfire.

2. There is a necessary but evil business side.

- a. You have to take out time to publish your work or submit it for publication.
- b. You have to take out time to create covers, a promo document (title, description, internet search words, categories, etc.) and blurbs or have those things created for you or discuss those things with your publisher.
- c. You have to take out time to market your work in whatever way you choose to do that (social media, physical appearances, etc.) and
- d. Just as you learn what works for one book or series, you also learn the same thing doesn't work for another book or series. (grin)

As an aside, I often wish Heinlein's Rules stopped with Rule 3. (grin) The first three rules are easy for me and a sheer joy. Rule 4 ("You must put it on the market"), not so much. Get your free annotated version of Heinlein's Rules [HERE](#).

3. Things break.

Redundancy is your friend. Save (and auto-save) your work often. Back it up to the cloud, your other computer or external hard drive, and a thumb drive at least at the end of every day if not every time you hit Save.

4. There will be naysayers.

Years ago, when I mentioned to a writer friend that I'd written a novel in 20 days and was about to begin writing my second, he said (and I quote), "Don't do it. If you keep up that pace, you'll burn out."

Yeah. I'll burn out if I keep working at my "job" on average three hours a day. I admit I also "work" on weekends. Still, devoting 21 hours per week to a day job that brings me sheer joy isn't such a bad gig. (grin)

I'm pleased to report I'm still here, still writing, and (thus far) still barely able to keep up with my characters as they bring me ideas and invite me along as their recorder.

I think that's about it. (grin) And wow, am I glad.

Rolled out at 2, anxious to see which character will pop into my head as the POV for Blackwell Ops 5. FIVE already! Gawd I love this new world of publishing! And challenges! If it weren't for my challenge driving me to the computer every day, I might not have written BO 2-4 yet.

Anyway, I checked out the internet and wrote the stuff above, then took a brief break up at the house at a little before 4.

At 4:05 back to the Hovel and the first WIP of the new challenge.

The beginning of a novel (for me) is always slow. This one will feature Georgette Tilden (nee, O'Shaughnessy), who was a secondary character in BO1. So I pulled up BO1's "notes" to research and refresh my memory on Georgette, her husband Jack, and a few other characters who might reappear.

While there, I noticed I'd given her dad two different first names. And I published it that way. (It even escaped my first reader's attention.)

So I pulled up BO1, made the changes, and uploaded a new document to D2D, Amazon, Smashwords and BundleRabbit. (grin) Despite our best efforts, there will be glitches in books, but thanks to this new world of publishing, they don't have to remain.

While I was doing that, I decided to update the cover too, to bring it more in line with the ones that came later in the series. (grin)

Still, the whole operation took only a half-hour. See what I mean about this wonderful new world?

Now to the house for another break.

Back to the Hovel and finally to the novel at 7:30.

A pretty good first day despite the early interruptions. I've also agreed to meet my wife for lunch a little after 1 so I'm posting this early.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "7 Hard Truths of Working as a Professional Writer" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/7-hard-truths-of-working-as-a-professional-writer.html>. Be sure to check the comments too. (grin)

See "Firefox Send Is an Easy Way to Share Large Files Securely" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/firefox-send-is-an-easy-way-to-share-large-files-securely/>.

See "When Drug Abuse Pays Off..." at <https://www.leelofland.com/when-drug-abuse-pays-off-big-time-federal-residential-drug-abuse-program/>.

See "Business Musings: Comparisons" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/13/business-musings-comparisons-writing-with-chronic-illness/>.

If you like writing gear (cups, etc.) see <https://www.zazzle.com/> and enter "writer" in the search block.

Fiction Words: 2494

Nonfiction Words: 1010 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3504

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494

Total fiction words for the month..... 25574

Total fiction words for the year..... 184632

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11450

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 62670

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 247302

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

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](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, March 15](#)

[March 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

New release and this morning

Just a reminder... ProWritersWriting blog

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Blackwell Ops 2: Charles Claymore Task released this morning, so I uploaded it to BundleRabbit.

This morning I'll put together a few blog posts for Sunday through Tuesday (just in case). Then while I'm gone it will be just like I'm here except the fiction numbers below won't change over those 2 or 3 days. But they should take a nice leap when I get back.

Just a reminder... the PWW blog goes live on March 18. I believe this will be a valuable new resource.

If you subscribed to <http://prowriterswriting.com> through a "form" on the website in the early days, you need to subscribe again.

I got rid of the form and that subscription service. Now you only have to click a link in the menu at the website.

If you want to subscribe via RSS, you can do that too. The feed URL is <http://feeds.feedburner.com/ProWritersWriting>. If that doesn't work, use <http://prowriterswriting/feed/>.

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning and went straight to work creating posts for Sunday and Monday for this Journal. I'll leave tomorrow afternoon and expect to be back on Monday afternoon. We'll see.

No topic today and probably no topic tomorrow. My intention is to get as much done on the novel today and tomorrow as I can so I can go into the camping trip not feeling guilty about writing less while I'm out there. (grin)

But I've already pre-posted a couple of good topics for Sunday and Monday. I'd forgotten how much work is involved in writing and pre-posting Journal editions.

Searching the internet for items of interest, writing those pre-posts and writing the stuff above took up the better part of three hours.

Finally up to the house for a break at 6.

To the novel at 7:45.

Well, I didn't get as much done today as I thought I might.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The 10 Greatest Openings from a Master of Wild Florida Noir" at <https://crimereads.com/carl-hiaasen-sure-knows-how-to-open-a-crime-novel/>. The man has a formula going. Can you spot it?

See “A Bunch of Stuff Again...” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-bunch-of-stuff-again/>.

Fiction Words: 3107

Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3487

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494

Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601

Total fiction words for the month..... 28681

Total fiction words for the year..... 187739

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63050

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 250789

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Saturday, March 16

[March 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Repeating a reminder... ProWritersWriting blog

Topic: On Character and Setting

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I thought I'd repeat this reminder... the PWW blog goes live on March 18. I believe this will be a valuable new resource.

If you subscribed to <http://prowriterswriting.com> through a “form” on the website in the early days, you need to subscribe again.

I got rid of the form and that subscription service. Now you only have to click a link in the menu at the website.

If you want to subscribe via RSS, you can do that too. The feed URL is <http://feeds.feedburner.com/ProWritersWriting>. If that doesn't work, use <http://prowriterswriting/feed/>.

Topic: On Character and Setting

A few days ago I was talking with a writer about my nonfiction book, [Writing the Character-Driven Story](#).

He asked why I put such emphasis on character and setting. Aren't the events of the story what matters?

Well, yes, they matter, but only as a catalyst to drive the characters' reactions and dialogue.

Overall, maybe 20% of a fiction is comprised of events and those take place in a setting. The other 80% is the characters' reactions to that event, which also take place in a setting.

Nothing in real life — either events or character interaction — takes place in a white space. There is always a background.

Characters wear clothing. The reader should be able to see (smell, feel?) that clothing.

A general description is fine if you're dealing with a secondary character or a gaggle of them (the guy wore jeans, a t-shirt, scuffed work boots and a ball cap).

Or the airport was filled to overflowing with men in suits and women in skirts and blouses or pantsuits. The whole place smelled of travel, and a boring automated announcement about unattended bags repeated every few minutes.

Or everyone at the worksite was dressed in dusty jeans, stained t-shirts, scuffed workboots and ball caps in varying colors. Or they all wore a blue ball cap with the sweat-stained Smith & Sons logo in white across the front.

Why? Because that's all your POV character would notice in passing as he's focused on a particular goal. He wouldn't notice specifically what they're wearing, but he would notice that they weren't naked.

For more prominent characters or for secondary characters who figure prominently in the story, a more detailed description is necessary.

In other words, in every case describe what your POV character notices. This is not difficult once you learn to trust your character and to filter everything through his or her physical senses.

A house or other building has a façade with particular attributes.

If your character is going to walk into that building, the reader should be able to see the door and any windows, feel the doorknob or pushbar in his hand, smell the scent or aroma or stench when the door opens, hear the sounds washing out over him.

Likewise a room has a particular look and smell and sounds (even if the sound is an eerie silence) and feel. Let your readers experience it right along with your POV character.

All of that is setting. Again, nothing — no event, no conversation, no character wondering internally what's going on — takes place in a blank space.

Rolled out way early at 1 a.m. To the Hovel shortly afterward to swap the topic for tomorrow with the topic for today. I wanted to give everyone a chance to read Tony DeCastro's post (in "Of Interest" today) before seeing my take-off on it in tomorrow's Journal.

Then I wrote the rest of this stuff, finished poking about the internet, and took a break up to the house at 2:40.

Dan won't be here until around 3, so I should have a good writing day today. We'll see.

Knocked out the first thousand words and took another break to release the hound. (My chihuahua spends the night in a kennel. He feels safe there.)

Back to the novel shortly after 6. Added another thousand words, then back to the house for a long break: breakfast, get dressed, finish packing, etc.

Back to the novel at 9.

Finished up for the day with another thousand words.

The Daily Journal will talk with you again tomorrow. I'll talk with you again on Monday or Tuesday. (grin)

Of Interest

See "Eight Days In" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/eight-days-in/>.

See "Critical Reading" at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/03/16/critical-reading/>. Good post. I'll comment on this in tomorrow's topic.

See “Harlan Coben Wants The Reader To Decide” at <https://crimereads.com/harlan-coben-wants-the-reader-to-decide/>.

See “Who Really Killed JonBenet Ramsey?” at <http://dyingwords.net/who-really-killed-jonbenet-ramsey/>.

For more on critical reading, see “三体 (Three-Body)” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/%e4%b8%89%e4%bd%93-three-body.html>.

See “The Long Strange History of Novelists Who Became Spies” at <https://crimereads.com/the-long-strange-history-of-novelists-who-became-spies/>.

Fiction Words: 3076

Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3856

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494

Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601

Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677

Total fiction words for the month..... 31757

Total fiction words for the year..... 190815

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12610

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 63830

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 254645

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, March 19](#)

[March 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Dean Wesley Smith

Mea culpa

Catching up

Daily diary

Of Interest (a boatload of links)

The numbers

If you missed it, do yourself a valuable favor and watch the half-hour video at <https://selfpublishingadviceconference.com/how-to-write-a-novel/>.

Dean basically presents a masters class on writing fiction. I recommend you take notes. I did, and I also watched and listened to the video twice. It is incredible. I added this in several categories to my [Writers Resources page](#).

And for one of the most excellent and shortest posts I've ever seen, see "A Reminder" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/a-reminder/>.

Oops. Even with all the hubub of me reminding all the contributors to be sure to pre-schedule their posts so there would be no glitches with Pro Writers Writing... there was a glitch.

My fault. My problem. My apologies.

In the midst of everything else, I forgot somehow to design an actual campaign for PWW. A "campaign" (I don't like that word) is something I have to do behind the scenes so MailChimp can send posts on our behalf.

Thanks to Karen R. for letting me know she hadn't received an email from PWW.

I rectified the problem this morning, as evidenced when I received a post from PWW at 7 a.m. (Yay!)

If you haven't subscribed yet and you'd like to receive advice from a variety of successful indie writers and publishers, you can subscribe by clicking <http://eepurl.com/gjwnWT>.

To catch up over the past couple of days, as it turns out, this time of year the Lower Gila Box has little to recommend it unless you're a penguin. (grin) The view, certainly, is spectacular. But it's there all the time.

I fell asleep late because it was so cold, though I still awoke at 4 a.m. And I awoke to a thick layer of ice (dew frozen from the night before) on my sleeping bag. Not good.

I was cold all night despite being fully clothed and with my heavy coat on inside my sleeping bag. A miserable night. Dan reported similar results.

But it was our own fault. There is no such thing as bad weather. There is only weather as perceived by humans who are inadequately prepared. (grin)

Anyway, to top off everything else, when I pulled out Hal2 and opened my WIP, I found it hadn't saved all of Saturday's writing, something over 3,000 words. GASP!

It's saved in my Dropbox, but apparently I'd already packed Hal2 for the trip, so it didn't update on Hal2.

Fortunately, my brain was functioning just well enough that I was able to remember the sentence of the last scene I'd written. (grin)

So on Sunday after my fingers thawed out (I'm not kidding) I quickly wrote that line in all caps across the bottom of the version of the WIP that I had with me. Then I started on the continuation of that scene. I rounded out that chapter and the next one. (grin)

Sunday, as it turned out, and Sunday night and Monday were wonderful. Very temperate, no wind to speak of, etc.

I didn't write at all on Monday. Not long after we got up, we packed, went into town for coffee and breakfast, and then headed west.

So my total fiction writing for the trip consisted of just over 1500 words. I thought about writing more after I got back on Monday, but it was noon and I was tired and I had follow-up chores to do. So back to writing today. You'll see the results below.

I'll get back into my routine as the days ensue.

Slow start this morning, but that was to be expected. Like anyone getting back into a routine, I had a lot of things to do. In my case, a lot of reading for myself and for "Of Interest." (grin)

I rolled out a little after 3 a.m., read the email from Karen and went to MailChimp to create an actual campaign for PWW (duh). Then as I waited to find out whether I'd fixed the problem, I looked around the internet for items of interest and added them below.

Then at 5 as I was about to open the WIP, I remembered I had two versions: the original and the one I used in the field. Naturally, I forgot to change the filename of the field version. Remembering that this morning created yet another tense moment.

Fortunately, good luck prevailed. Word had saved one as a “conflicted copy.” (They have no idea how appropriate that word “conflicted” was.) So I was able to mesh the two without having lost anything. (Whew!)

I need more coffee.

After that I waited around until 7 a.m. to see whether MailChimp would send out today’s PWW post. If it did (fingers crossed) I’d go to the WIP. If it didn’t, I’d go back to MailChimp, do more there, then go to the WIP.

AND IT POSTED! A few minutes after 7 a.m., an email from PWW appeared in my inbox! I can’t tell you how relieved I was. (grin)

Then I took a break up to the house to catch my breath and spend a little time with my bride before she heads off to work.

I was about to go to the WIP (again) at 9 a.m. when a topic occurred to me. So I wrote that. It will be in tomorrow’s Journal. This one’s more than long enough. (grin)

Finally to the WIP at 10 a.m. I’ll begin by cycling through the last 5,000 words or so, then take off from there.

Not a good fiction writing day at all. Finally through cycling (with breaks) and I think I’m through for the day. I’m tired. I added just over 700 words and greatly enhanced the main action scene.

Back at it tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Emotion Workshop...A Sample” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/emotion-workshop-a-sample/>.

See “Get Grammatical or Get Lost” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/get-grammatical-or-get-lost.html>. I’ve been teaching the same thing for twenty or thirty years. (grin) And I recommend reading the comments. There are a ton of them.

See “Terminology for the Savvy Crime Writer: Abrasion Collars to the Rare Cadaveric Spasm” at <https://www.leelofland.com/terminology-for-the-savvy-crime-writer-abrasion-collars-to-the-rare-cadaveric-spasm/>.

See “Words. They’re Important to Your Readers. Use Them Wisely” at <https://www.leelofland.com/words-theyre-important-to-your-readers-use-them-wisely/>.

See “The Ordinary Detective” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/the-ordinary-detective.html>.

See “How to Get Your First Speaking Gigs” at <https://www.novemarketing.com/178/>. To “get new episodes of Novel Marketing delivered to an app on your phone,” you can subscribe at <https://www.novemarketing.com/add-this-podcast/>.

See “Power of a Streak...2,417” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/power-of-a-streak-2417/>.

See “Golden Donut Short Story Contest” at <https://www.writerspoliceacademy.com/golden-donut-writing-contest/>. (Be sure to read the very restrictive and weird rules. Seriously, “don’t” is two words?)

See “Behind the Scenes of Silent Mayhem + Giveaway!” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/behind-the-scenes-of-silent-mayhem-giveaway/>.

Fiction Words: 731

Nonfiction Words: 1116 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1847

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923

Total fiction words for the month..... 34003
Total fiction words for the year..... 193061
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15380
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 66600
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 259661

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
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](#), [Phillip McCollum](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, March 20

[March 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

I'm still offering

I'm also considering

I've listed the first few

The famous novelist suffering

Topic: On the Need for Authenticity...

Daily diary

Of Interest (a boatload of links)

The numbers

I'm still offering a free first-page critique, say up to 500 words or so. Send what you have as a .doc, .docx or .rtf attachment via email to harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

I'm also considering serving as a personal writing tutor for up to three writers/students. We'll work our way through Your manuscript, focusing on Your writing problems or weaknesses and Your questions.

I will be available via telephone and email for these discussions. (I recommend email so you can go back to review what was said, but we can do either or both.)

The focus will be up to the student. We can focus on one area of writing (punctuation, dialogue, narrative, POV, pacing, how to be more prolific, etc.) or on a whole manuscript.

There is no set fee. The fee will depend on your requirements. If the requirements are light, I might take on more than three. And yes, this is in the middle of my challenge. (grin)

This can greatly shorten your learning curve in improving your craft. If you're interested, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

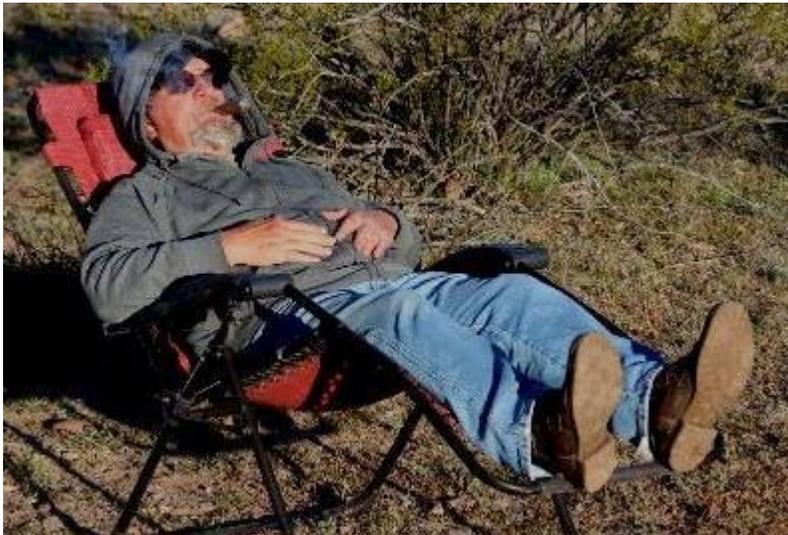
I listed the first few posts from Pro Writers Writing in "Of Interest" this morning. But seriously, if you haven't subscribed, I strongly urge you to do so.

There are now eleven professional indie writers posting to this new blog. I realize receiving a post every day is a lot to take in, but each day will be something new.

It takes only a second to glance at the topic. If you find it interesting, read it. If you don't, delete it and wait for the next day's post. A few seconds isn't much to pay for so much great information.

Seriously, this will be an excellent source of information, ideas, etc. Don't miss the boat on this one.

Here's a pic of the famous novelist suffering for his art about 500 feet above the Gila River in southwest New Mexico.



Topic: On the Need for Authenticity in Fiction

Awhile back I discussed this topic with another writer. If I remember right, I mentioned to him that one of my pet peeves is some writers' use of "clip" when they mean the thing that holds the rounds in the butt of a semiautomatic pistol or in the bottom of the action of a semiautomatic rifle.

That part is actually called a "magazine." A "clip" is a completely different animal. It works in a different way and serves a different purpose, usually to ease the loading of an internal magazine that's an integral part of a semiautomatic weapon.

He said — and he was right — that most readers wouldn't notice the use of "clip" vs. "magazine."

As I said, he was right, but to me, that's no excuse for sloppy or inaccurate writing. And to me (and many other readers) calling a magazine a "clip" is sloppy.

(No, it isn't enough to toss me out of an otherwise good story, but it's annoying and calls into question the writer's knowledge.)

At best, such a misuse indicates that the writer isn't well versed in the tools of his or her trade (words) and/or that s/he didn't bother to take the time to do a modicum of research.

Likewise, I've seen writers use "pistol" and "revolver" interchangeably. Both are sidearms or guns, but one uses a magazine and the other uses a cylinder.

I guess my question is, why would anyone bother writing that far outside their comfort zone (or their zone of knowledge)?

It also bugs me when a writer (or politician, for that matter) refers to any semiautomatic rifle as an "AK-47." The AK is a weapon that was widely used by Soviet troops and some of their allies during most of the Cold War. Much more prevalent today is the Chinese version, the SKS. It isn't the same weapon.

I've even heard the Colt AR-15 referred to as an AK-47. Puh-leeze. The two don't even fire a similar round (or cartridge).

(Yeah, I've also seen writers loading "bullets" into a gun. Uh, no. The bullet is the actual projectile. It's only one part of a "round" or "cartridge.")

My point here is that authenticity matters. It's true that many readers won't know the difference between a clip and a magazine. So those readers will skip right over "clip" and keep reading. But they'll also skip right over "magazine" and keep reading. Right? Right?

But if you use the correct term, the story will sound more authentic to those who DO know the difference.

On the other hand, although the less-knowledgeable reader will skip over the misuse, that same misuse will make the knowledgeable reader doubt the writer's abilities. And that can cost the writer sales.

We can't all know everything, and we can't always be right about everything in our stories. But we can try.

That's what a lot of my quick research entails.

I mentioned recently that writing some parts of my Blackwell Ops novels is slower than writing other parts. I write more slowly in places where I have to pop online for a few minutes' research.

But if a "hit" takes place in Rio de Janeiro and my people have to fly in from London Heathrow, if you look up flight times from Heathrow to Rio, you'll find that the length of their flight and any layovers are realistic.

If they stay in a particular hotel in Rio, and if you key the name of that hotel into a search engine, you'll find that the hotel actually exists and that it looks much as described in my novel.

If they remember that a particular Brazilian drug lord was killed in a shootout with police, he actually was. And if they recall that another Brazilian drug lord was executed by firing squad in Indonesia for drug trafficking, yep, that happened too.

When I was younger, I read a lot of Louis L'Amour stories. He was known for the authenticity of his settings. He even made a statement in the back of each book: "When I write about a spring, that spring is there, and the water is good to drink."

Of course, L'Amour has his detractors. There are some who say no, his settings aren't as authentic as he says they are.

They miss the point. As I wrote earlier, nobody knows or is right about everything. But the point is to strive for authenticity in your work. Write what you know, or what you would know if you were your character.

Do your homework and/or your research and give your readers an authentic experience.

It doesn't get any better than that.

Rolled out way too early at 1:30 this morning. I'm not sure why. Probably still coming down from the camping trip.

Had an email from a friend for whom I'm supposed to rebuild a website and opened a ticket with his host to find out why we still can't access his website. Starting the day with a problem is always such fun. Not.

Caught up with some Facebook stuff and posted some new release things, then messed around with Spider solitaire for awhile. Bleh.

Found myself stuck in the novel this morning. Fortunately I've encountered this problem before. The problem? It just didn't "feel" right.

So I backtracked, identified the wrong turn (as always, it was something I was trying to force on the characters) and started writing again.

Slow going though. As is part of the process with the Blackwell Ops novel, today is a combination of research and writing.

Well, I wrote a rip-roaring 1002 words today. Two days in a row with low output. See? It happens to all of us.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “First Page Critique: ALEXA” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/first-page-critique-alexa.html>.

See “Breaking Rules – The series trap” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/breaking-rules-the-series-trap/>.

See “How To Write Like I Do-Part One” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/how-to-write-like-i-do-part-one/>.

See “Glad you could make it!” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/glad-you-could-make-it/>.

See “Crime Writers’ Words of the Day: Make Your Stories Bleed Realism” at <https://www.leelofland.com/crime-writers-words-of-the-day-make-your-stories-bleed-realism/>.

Fiction Words: 1002

Nonfiction Words: 1360 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2362

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923
Day 6..... 1002 words. Total words to date..... 11925

Total fiction words for the month..... 35005
Total fiction words for the year..... 194063
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16740
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 67960
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 262023

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, March 21](#)

[March 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

More on tutoring

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Yesterday I announced that I'm willing to tutor a few writers. I wanted to give you guys the first shot before I announce it over on the big blog since I can only take on a few writers.

But it was a confusing announcement at best. So I'll clarify.

This is to benefit you, so your writing will be the focus. I'll provide instructions, examples and nouseam, and exercises as necessary.

We can work on one or more areas of your actual writing: punctuation, pacing, characters, dialogue, narrative, POV, pulling the reader into the scene, hooks, cliffhangers, etc.

Or we can work on your technique: coming up with ideas, productivity, making time to write, discipline, writing into the dark, cycling, etc.

Or both. Or everything.

You and your writing are the focus. Whatever you want to work on, that's what we'll do. There will be a fee, but it will fluctuate, depending on what you need.

You'll always know the fee before we begin. I might charge only \$25 to solve your lifetime problem with when and where to use commas (with examples) or \$40 to show you how to improve your productivity (there will be exercises).

The benefit will always far outweigh the cost. And in each case, I'll tailor the tutoring to suit your focus and help you fix your problem.

Okay, enough about that. First come, first served. If you're interested, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

I sacked out last night early at 6:30. To make up for it, I rolled out late this morning at 4. (grin)
I am a well-rested child. Now to see what the day holds.

Probably another slow writing day today. It's a half-day. Anyway, the novel will pick up when it picks up. I just hope it picks up soon enough that I don't get behind in the challenge. (grin)

A pretty good day today. I'd write at least one more session, but there's something else I have to do when my wife gets here.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Punctuation, Voice, and Control" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/20/business-musings-punctuation-voice-and-control/>.

See "Using Words to Help Readers See What You See" at <https://www.leelofland.com/using-words-to-help-readers-see-what-you-see/>. This is a great little post.

See "How Do I Write What I Write?" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/how-do-i-write-what-i-write/>.

Via CrimeReads, see "The Truck Stop Killer" at <https://www.gq.com/story/truck-stop-killer-gq-november-2012>.

See "Writers of the Future Volume #35" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writers-of-the-future-volume-35/>. Not really about writing but interesting.

See "8 Key Questions for Every Writer" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/how-writing-is-like-a-good-brisket-recipe-8-key-questions-for-every-writer.html>. I'll just leave this right here. I didn't bother responding. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2492

Nonfiction Words: 450 (Journal)

FTotal words for the day: 2942

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923
Day 6..... 1002 words. Total words to date..... 11925
Day 7..... 2492 words. Total words to date..... 14417

Total fiction words for the month..... 37497

Total fiction words for the year..... 196555

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17190

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 68410
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 264965

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
 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](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, March 22](#)

[March 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

I got a new coffee mug

Topic: Turning a "Story Prompt" ...

Daily diary

Of Interest (a boatload of links)

The numbers

I got a new coffee mug from Zazzle (<https://zazzle.com>).

My new mug reads

I'M A FICTION WRITER.
 Yes, I'm poor.
 No, I don't wish I wrote "_____."
 Yes, I'm aware that no one reads anymore.
 No, I'm not drunk.

Just thought I'd share. (grin)

Topic: Turning a "Story Prompt" into a Story Idea

From Reedsy's Writing Prompts newsletter, "You're a professional cleaner and the beginning of spring is always your busiest time."

This is for their current short story contest, but it could also easily be a premise for a novel. Here's what sprang to mind for me:

First, define "cleaner." It might be a person who cleans houses and businesses for a living (as intended).

It might also be the lower-level mobster or associate who "cleans" a crime scene after someone else does the deed.

It might be something else. Up to you. And which type of cleaner you choose will help define your genre.

Likewise, "What does the cleaner find?" popped into my head. This will also help define your story and your genre. Answering that question sets up the initial conflict (an ordinary citizen suddenly finds him/herself in an extraordinary situation).

Say the cleaner is a person who cleans houses and businesses, but is also a retired cop or retired CIA or a wannabe PI or an amateur sleuth (or... or... or...).

What does the cleaner find while s/he's cleaning? Again, that will lead you into the story and help define your genre.

Old blood stains?

A fine golden necklace buried in the corner of the carpet? What does the amulet signify for the cleaner?

A black fleck the cleaner recognizes as microfilm from the days of the Cold War?

A tiny antique ladies' watch (maybe with no band) that turns out to have magical time-transport properties?

Or a tiny antique ladies' watch the back of which is loose and inside is that bit of microfilm?

A small knife with a decorative handle inlaid with bands of mother-of-pearl, turquoise and coral? And old bloodstains on the blade? (Sorry. That's where my mind goes.)

A small, balled-up scrap of paper that draws the cleaner's attention and on it is

A different item altogether?

The possibilities are practically endless, and each leads to a different story and genre.

To subscribe to Reedsy's weekly Writing Prompts newsletter, see <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-contests>.

Happy writing! (grin)

Rolled out at 3, got coffee in my new mug, and headed for the Hovel.

I added a "Facilitators" group to the sidebar of PWW and changed "Guest Contributors" to the more apt "Alternate Contributors."

Took a break at 5. To the novel at 5:30.

I had a really good writing day today, off and on.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "A Brief History of "Unlikeable" Protagonists" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-brief-history-of-unlikeable-protagonists/>.

See "Next Step in Disinformation..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/next-step-in-disinformation-how-a-dating-app-becomes-a-weapon/>.

See "Book Challenge Update" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/book-challenge-update/>.

See "...Share Your Feelings..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/reader-friday-share-your-feelings-when-your-first-book-was-published.html>.

Fiction Words: 4479

Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 5009

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923
Day 6..... 1002 words. Total words to date..... 11925
Day 7..... 2492 words. Total words to date..... 14417
Day 8..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 18896

Total fiction words for the month.....	41976
Total fiction words for the year.....	201034
Total nonfiction words for the month...	17720
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	68940
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	269974
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	41
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 Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Zazzle.com](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, March 23](#)

[March 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

With respect to the OP...

Topic: On Being a “Hybrid” Writer

Daily diary

Of Interest (a boatload of links)

The numbers

With respect to the OP mentioned about Microsoft Word in “Of Interest,” you can still view (free) my blog series “Microsoft Word for Writers” at <http://harveystanbrough.com/microsoft-word-for-writers/>. Just sayin’.

Topic: On Being a “Hybrid” Writer

Part 1: Statement, History and Rationale

At 66 years old, with 40-some novels and almost 200 short stories under my belt, I’ve decided to go hybrid.

My work has been traditionally published before. I've had articles, essays and a few short stories published by the establishment.

I've also had two book-length poetry collections published by traditional publishers.

One, *Lessons for a Barren Population*, which was also significant for being the first-ever full-length collection of poetry published as an ebook, placed third at the Frankfurt Book Fair in the mid-1990s. That one also came in second to Maya Angelou for a major award sponsored by Foreword Magazine (see "Of Interest").

The other, *Beyond the Masks*, was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1996 or 1997.

And I've had two non-fiction books published traditionally.

Those were the first edition of *Punctuation for Writers*, which had no singular accomplishments other than brisk sales, and *Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction*, which came in 4th (out of over ten thousand entries) for the 1998 BEA New York Book of the Year Award in the Education Category.

Those were all feathers in my cap.

But later, when I realized I was making only a pittance (10% on the nonfiction titles and 8% on the poetry titles), I got my rights back and re-released them myself.

Of course, poetry doesn't sell, though the nonfiction titles have done well for the past almost 25 years.

Then in 2014 I turned my hand seriously to writing fiction. I'd written short stories for much of my life, off and on, but never with the determination and vigor with which I attacked the process in April, 2014.

Short stories abounded (one per week for 72 weeks to begin with) and in October 2014 I started my first novel. I finished it 20-some days later and started the second.

And I've never looked back. I kept learning and kept practicing, applying what I learned in the next story and the next novel.

A fairly famous horror-novelist friend, Deborah LeBlanc, once told me when she started as a novelist she gave herself five years to "make it." After that, she'd fold her tent and find something new to do.

She made it big in her second year, though her medium-sized traditional publisher folded a few years later and took her books with them. For me, that was a cautionary tale.

I've preached indie publishing ever since I reconnected with Dean Wesley Smith in early 2014. We first met at a conference where we were both presenting in the late 1990s.

Part 2: The Plan

But now I've reached a tipping point. I've reached a point where I'm coming up on that five-year mark. And I'm 66 years old.

My recent personal good news last month — my heart function increasing significantly from 10% to 35% or higher — was a major wake-up call for me.

I've decided to become a hybrid writer, meaning I'll continue as an indie publisher, but I'll also pursue a traditional contract with the first book of each series I've written.

Now please don't get me wrong. For several reasons, I'm not recommending this path for everyone else, or even anyone else. This is a choice each writer has to make for him- or herself.

The main reason I don't recommend what I'm about to do is that most (if not all) traditional publishing contracts suck canal water from all 50 states. That hasn't changed, and it's unlikely to change in my lifetime.

Most of them "buy" all rights (including film rights, ebook and subsidiary licensing rights, etc.) in exchange for an advance. And I will continue to rail publicly against that lopsided policy.

(Note: Those rights can be reverted to the author [by the author] 35 years down the line, but I can confidently say that doesn't really matter to me at this point.)

But bearing in mind how rarely lightning strikes, at this stage in my life, for me, if the advance is large enough, I'll take the deal. Of course, with apologies to my friends Ranger Wes Crowley, Adventurer Nick Porter, PI Stern Talbot and the legitimate, government-approved criminal TJ Blackwell and his operatives. Oh, and maybe to Jonathan Kirski and Maldito (Gervasio).

Of course, as this new scenario unfolds, I'll occasionally share lessons learned here in the Journal.

How about you? Is this something you're considering or already doing? Please share your thoughts with the rest of us in the comments.

Rolled out at 3 this morning despite my plan to get up earlier. We have a trip planned to Sierra Vista later to shop for groceries, so a short writing day today.

In the Hovel, I wrote the stuff above and checked around the internet, took a break, then turned to the novel at 5:30 or so to cycle over what I wrote yesterday.

I'll strive to get at least 1,000 words today, then give the rest of the day to my bride. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

To see an authentic tale of lightning striking in publishing, see John Gilstrap's comment on "Share Your Feelings When Your First Book Was Published" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/reader-friday-share-your-feelings-when-your-first-book-was-published.html#comment-67610>.

See "Start with a Line..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/start-with-a-line.html>.

See "Interview with Ray Bradbury" at <https://strandmag.com/the-magazine/interviews/ray-bradbury/>.

See "ASK KRIS ANYTHING Webinar" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/ask-kris-anything-webinar/>.

See "9 Lesser-Known Word Features" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/9-lesser-known-word-features/>. *Caution: Some of the items listed in this article are not good for fiction writers.*

See "How To Become a Las Vegas Hotel Magnate" at <https://crimereads.com/how-to-become-a-las-vegas-hotel-magnate/>.

See "Group Registration for Unpublished Works" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/group-registration-for-unpublished-works/>. Hmm. Back in the day, I used to register "The Complete Works of Harvey Stanbrough, 1998" for one \$25 fee. It included poems, stories, and essays. Who was to say it wasn't an omnibus?

See "Against Catharsis: Writing Is Not Therapy" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/against-catharsis-writing-is-not-therapy/>. I offer this almost against my better judgement and only because it is strongly written, not for the author's view of writing as "work."

See "Foreword Magazine" at <https://www.forewordreviews.com/>. Browse awhile. They've opened up things for indie writers.

Fiction Words: 1252

Nonfiction Words: 1090 (Journal)

FTotal words for the day: 2342

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923

Day 6..... 1002 words. Total words to date..... 11925
Day 7..... 2492 words. Total words to date..... 14417
Day 8..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 18896
Day 9..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 20148

Total fiction words for the month..... 43228
Total fiction words for the year..... 202286
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 70030
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 272316

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Announcement](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Foreword Magazine](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ray Bradbury](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [The Strand Magazine](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, March 24](#)

[March 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

I was really surprised...

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I was surprised not to find a slew of comments on my Journal post from yesterday. Nobody saying “No! Don’t do that!” or “Yeah, I’ve been shopping a manuscript around tradpubs for awhile” or “It’ll be interesting to see what happens.”

Instead, crickets. (grin) *UPDATE: I did get one comment after I wrote this.*

I suspect that's because the results will affect only me, at least directly, and that's fine. I don't want to think it's because the topic was simply not interesting, or worse, nobody read it. (grin)

Anyway, just in case anyone's following along, here's a maybe-surprising addendum: I'll be shopping the first novel (or two) from each series to traditional publishers, But Not To Agents.

With the recent spate of even well-respected long-time literary agents going under or even being found to have cheated authors, I won't be shopping those novels to agents.

I'm not the most well-versed guy when it comes to negotiations, but I know enough about copyright and what I require of a deal to do the negotiations myself. And yes, I'm fully able and willing to walk away if the offer isn't at least in the high five figures.

Yesterday on our way to Sierra Vista, out of the blue my wife said, "Wait, if a traditional publisher picks up one or more of your series, you'll sell all rights to that series?"

I said, "Yes."

In defense of me, she said, "I don't want you to sell your work outright."

That was sweet. But I quickly conveyed the story I linked to in yesterday's "Of Interest" about lightning striking John Gilstrap.

As a reminder, he (his agent) had shopped his manuscript around tradpubs for no more than a week when lightning struck and he got a deal that changed his life forever.

Hence my characterization of it as lightning striking. Or you can look at it as winning the lottery. Same thing. And probably about the same odds.

Which brought me then and brings me now to Why I'm willing to try this at this stage in my career:

1. I'm a good storyteller because I've practiced my way through 40-some novels and almost 200 short stories.
2. My stories retain my original author voice (all publishers look for a "unique voice") because I write off into the dark vs. outlining, rewriting, and forcing the story on my characters.
3. Lightning will never strike me if I'm not standing on my roof in the rain and reaching as high as I can.

When I was teaching GED courses years ago, one student asked why he should even bother getting his GED.

I said because every extra bit of education opens new doors, new opportunities, while closing none behind him. Then I asked whether he would like to win the lottery one day.

He said of course he would.

And I said, “Well, you can’t win the lottery if you don’t buy a ticket. Getting your GED is you buying a ticket.”

Me offering my novels around is me standing on the roof in a thunderstorm. It’s me buying a ticket.

If lightning doesn’t strike (or if I don’t win the lottery) I won’t be any worse off. But if it does, I, my wife, and our descendants will be set.

Rolled out late at almost 4, was almost immediately distracted with a bunch of stuff, and wrote the above.

I also added a little to the novel, but it’s Sunday and I’m feeling lazy. The novel’s moving along fine. I might write on it more today, and I might not.

Nope. I wrote a little more, but I’m calling it for the day. Between the distractions in my email inbox and my several trips up to the house, I decided I’ll not count what little I got done today. I’ll be back at it tomorrow. (grin)

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See “Do I Do This? Or That?” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/do-i-do-this-or-that/>. I can relate. (grin)

See “You Can’t Please Everyone” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/you-cant-please-everyone.html>.

See “Words That Take Your Breath Away” at <https://www.leelofland.com/words-that-take-your-breath-away/>.

See “Creating Custom Templates in MS Word” at <https://jwmanus.wordpress.com/2019/03/23/creating-custom-templates-in-ms-word/>. Don’t miss this. At least read it over. It’s a lot more than it seems on the surface.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 710 (Journal)

FTotal words for the day: 710

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923
Day 6..... 1002 words. Total words to date..... 11925
Day 7..... 2492 words. Total words to date..... 14417
Day 8..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 18896
Day 9..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 20148
Day 10... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 43228
Total fiction words for the year..... 202286
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19520
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 70740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 273026

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [JW Manus](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, March 25](#)

[March 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

If you don't read anything else

Topic: On Being a Hybrid Writer, Part 2

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

If you don't read anything else all day, read “In Y.A., Where Is the Line...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/in-y-a-where-is-the-line-between-criticism-and-cancel-culture/>. This sort of censorship crap makes me wonder what the hell is wrong with people.

If you would ever succumb to this kind of censorship, I suggest you drop your pen, close your laptop, and go find something fun to do other than writing. And if you choose to keep writing, gird your loins: jerks abound.

Topic: On Being a Hybrid Writer, Part 2

If you missed Part 1, you can see it [HERE](#).

To continue briefly with the discussion I started re traditional publishers, I have two motivating factors:

One is the possibility that lightning will strike in the form of a large paycheck. Yeah, that would be nice.

Two, at the moment I'm not wanting to expend the effort to publish my own paperback version of my books. Nor do I get around well enough to sell them at personal appearances, etc. Those days are in the past for me.

If I can land a contract that will add the print aspect (and maybe audio), it will be a new revenue stream (or two) at the minimum.

And it's all about negotiation, giving a little to get a little. I always have the option to just say “No” and walk away.

Ideally I'll find a tradpub who will buy only paper (and/or audio) rights even with a low or non-existent advance). If so, I'll be miles ahead of where I am now in both discoverability and revenue streams.

But if the publisher requires ebook rights as well, will I “trade” some percentage of my ebook royalties to get mass-market paperbacks out there? Yes. Of course.

But again, that would depend on the percentage of ebook royalties I would have to give up. And again, I always have the option of saying “No” and continuing my search elsewhere.

And finally, if lightning does strike and I have to trade one (of five) series for a large, life-changing advance, I will do that too.

The paperback run with a tradpub with that one series will enhance name recognition (discoverability) and the sales of my books that are not included in the contract.

Of course, I would never sign a contract that includes a “no-compete” clause or anything else that would impede my ability to continue writing in other series or writing other stand-alone titles.

Ideally too, I’ll find a publisher who can keep up with me, with or without pen names, given that I’m turning out a novel per month at the longest. (grin)

Of course, very rarely do we find ideal situations, and that’s fine too. But I’ve never been timid. In fact, I’ve always been one who, even in the face of overwhelming evidence that taking a particular path might turn out to be a bad idea, I weigh the cost vs. the possible benefit, then venture forth to find out for myself.

At the worst, I’ll screw up the negotiations and “lose” one book or even one series. But when you’re a prolific professional writer, there are plenty more where that one came from. (grin)

Either way, this whole thing should be a learning experience. And all learning experiences, positive or otherwise, turn to the good. For one thing, if you follow this Daily Journal, you will benefit from what I learn, mistakes or otherwise. And that alone makes it worthwhile to me.

Rolled out right on time at 3 a.m. and made my way to the Hovel. Had a comment on my “Hybrid Writer” topic and wrote the followup above, then scheduled both of them over on the big site for early June.

You lucky folks still get to bear witness to my insanity first. (grin)

To the novel slightly after 7. Just over 3000 words by 11 (with breaks) then a longer break to do a chore.

Back to the novel at 1.

Calling it at 2:30. A good day today.

My characters actually surprise me more today than they usually do. When I finished day before yesterday, I was in Chapter 13. This morning, my POV character tugged on my sleeve and had me write a new Chapter 1, 2, and 3. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “How To Create Free & Easy Book Marketing Images” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/how-to-create-free-easy-book-marketing-images.html>. This is invaluable.

Especially for any fantasy writers out there, see “St. Edward’s Church” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/st-edwards-church>.

See “Are Real-Life Detectives Inspired...” at <https://www.leelofland.com/are-real-life-detectives-inspired-by-agatha-christies-fiction/>. I am reminded by this post of immersing yourself in your characters, of BEING your characters.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Hero Dust” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/25/free-fiction-monday-hero-dust/>. In case some of the new subscribers haven’t heard me say it yet, you can’t do much better than to study the writing of Kris Rusch.

See “Everyone’s a Copywriter. Right?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/everyones-a-copywriter-right/>. I’m lookin’ at you, Dan. (grin)

Fiction Words: 4416

Nonfiction Words: 810 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 5226

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 1..... 2494 words. Total words to date..... 2494
Day 2..... 3107 words. Total words to date..... 5601
Day 3..... 3076 words. Total words to date..... 8677
Day 4..... 1515 words. Total words to date..... 10192
Day 5..... 0731 words. Total words to date..... 10923
Day 6..... 1002 words. Total words to date..... 11925
Day 7..... 2492 words. Total words to date..... 14417
Day 8..... 4479 words. Total words to date..... 18896
Day 9..... 1252 words. Total words to date..... 20148
Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Total fiction words for the month..... 47644
Total fiction words for the year..... 206702
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 71550
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 278252

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, March 26](#)

[March 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Yesterday I read

Update on my challenge

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Yesterday, I had the pleasure of reading the first few pages of a story from a relatively new writer. Hey, we all start somewhere.

The writing was good, though the writer is currently too wrapped around the wheel of the myths he was taught in school. Again, we've all been there.

But this writer is different than many. He wants to improve his craft. He was honest enough to post specific questions (which pointed to his being wrapped around the wheels of those myths) and take my responses on board.

He's thinking of taking me on as his tutor, which is wonderful. But whether or not we end up in the tutor/writer relationship, in the meantime, he took the initiative to request a free critique of his first 1000 words.

I applaud him for that. I would have killed for this opportunity when I was starting out. (Figuratively speaking, of course. Probably.)

If you would like to also take advantage of this free first-1000 words critique offer, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Especially if you have fewer than say a million new words of fiction under your writing belt.

Which reminds me, sometime I need to sit down and figure out how many words of fiction I've written. (grin)

For those who don't know, my challenge is to write 10 novels in 150 calendar days. Not actual writing days. That would be too easy. (grin)

Calendar days are the sequential dates that appear on the calendar. Writing days are days that I actually put new words on the page.

Although the numbers below show that today is my 11th writing day on this novel, today is also the 13th calendar day. In other words, I've frittered away a couple.

But again, this is an "average" challenge, so as I go along, the average is what matters. To keep track of my progress, I've set each 15th calendar date as a kind of mini-goal.

If I finish a novel in fewer than 15 days, the extra days go into the bank. If I go over, I have to "borrow" days from the next novel.

Currently, to stay on track, I have to finish my first novel of this new challenge (Blackwell Ops 5) on or before March 28.

At the moment, it looks as if I'm going to go over, an event that will leave me fewer days to write the next book. What I need is a string of days like the day I had yesterday.

I know my characters want to go on at least two more major operations in this book (in order to set up my next series), which means I'm currently somewhere just past the middle.

I guess we'll see what happens. (grin) I'm so glad you're along for the ride.

Rolled out late this morning at 4. If I could manage it (and remain coherent) I would never sleep. For me, sleep is hours out of my life that I'll never get back. Ugh.

Using yesterday's writing as a reference point, I'm going to try something sort of new starting today: I'll get to the novel when I get to it, then I'll keep coming back. The trick, I think, is to not succumb to distractions when I'm ready to get to the novel.

Over the first couple of hours, I relaxed my way into the day, mostly with the stuff above. To the house at 6:30 for a break.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 7:40. By 10:30 (with breaks) I managed to cycle through the three new chapters I wrote yesterday and added around 1300 words.

Another break, then back to the novel at 11.

Well, back to looking for where they're going on their next assignment. Sometimes that takes some time. This time it took a couple of hours. (sigh)

The good news is that once I know where they're going, other than some quick research, they go, do their thing and return. And that part's ridiculously easy to write.

Well, I didn't get the day I would like to have gotten, but it just is what it is.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "World Building (Part IV)" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/03/26/world-building-part-iv/>. Linda also occasionally puts things in her newsletter that would make good (shareable) posts. I recommend it. You can sign up at her website.

As coincidence would have it, see "Our World vs. Your World" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/03/our-world-vs-your-world.html>.

See "A Short Ride In A Fast Machine" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/a-short-ride-in-a-fast-machine.html>.

See "Cueva de los Tayos" at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/cueva-de-los-tayos>. Possibly an excellent story starter.

See "9 best video analytics tools" at <https://www.talkwalker.com/blog/best-video-analytics-tools>.

See "Jacqueline Winspear Wants Us To Respect The Dead" at <https://crimereads.com/jacqueline-winspear-wants-us-to-respect-the-dead/>. Chock full of gems.

For those of you still bent in that direction, see "How to Write a Novel in only 15 steps" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-write-a-novel/>. For my money, there are only three steps. 1. Write a sentence. 2. Write another one. 3. Repeat step 2.

Fiction Words: 2948

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3808

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Total fiction words for the month..... 50592

Total fiction words for the year..... 209650

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21190

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 72410

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 282060

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [CrimeReads](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Marilyn Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [TalkWalker](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, March 27](#)

[March 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quote of the day

Update on Pro Writers Writing

Topic: Once More Into the Breach

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Social media quote of the day: "I don't see a need to strong-arm people I've never met into giving me happy thoughts and supportive words." ~ Anonymous

The subscriber list for PWW is growing. If you haven't subscribed yet, we're in the second round of posts and they're getting even more interesting. To subscribe, visit <http://prowriterswriting.com> and click Subscribe via Email in the menu.

At the request of one contributor, I recently added a comment subscription line to the comment section via a WordPress plugin. I hope it will work as intended.

I'm still looking into the possibility of subscribers being able to receive a weekly digest instead of an email every day. We'll see whether that works out.

Topic: Once More Into the Breach

A couple of my writer friends and I were chatting off and on via email. One is going to try what I'm trying with the tradpubs. The other was (stringently) warning me away.

I encouraged the one, tried to calm the other. I did both with an email that helped (I hope) in both cases. I thought I'd share those thoughts with you.

One writer mentioned in a comment a couple days ago that I'm "exploring options from a position of strength." She's right.

Here's the nutshell.

It's a simple fact (one that few writers consider) that a publisher needs your IP (intellectual property) more than you need a publisher.

Consider, even if the publisher *never* publishes your book, the IP is still in their portfolio and on their books as an asset, so the company's value goes up. That's why they're doing the "all-rights" thing right now.

It isn't the "actual" value of the IP that matters. The *possible* value is what the IP represents: it's the *possible* film, audio, paper, ebooks, merchandise, etc. etc. ad nauseam.

And You Own That — *you have what they want* — from the moment your work is completed in fixed form for the rest of your life plus 70 years.

If you go into any contract negotiation with that in mind, you'll be negotiating from a position of strength.

You only have to know what you want, and be willing to say No until you get it.

Would I sell "all rights" to one of my books for the life of the copyright?

I've seen writers do that for as little as a \$1500 advance. Just so you know, I wouldn't do it for \$15,000. Or for that matter, \$50,000 or \$60,000.

But I would, in a heartbeat, for a life-changing, mid-six-figure paycheck (after taxes). For one book.

For that matter, if the contract read that I could *never* publish another book, but they gave me a HIGH-six-figure paycheck (after taxes), I'd be camping and fishing too much to write anyway. (grin)

So all I'm really saying here is this:

Understand the possible value of your IP — how much money it COULD make for you and your descendents over your life plus 70 years — and then deal from that position.

The rest is up to you.

Rolled out at 2:30 and, as has become my habit, spent a couple hours hanging with my friends (you guys), checking the internet and writing the stuff above. I even visited FB for a few minutes.

Took a break at 5. To the novel at 5:30.

Cycled through yesterday's writing (added a couple hundred words) then wrote around a thousand new words. Another longer break around 7:40.

Also took care of a pop-up chore, getting out the ladder and the shears and cutting a few blobs of something like mistletoe out of a tree in the front yard. Finally back to the novel at 9:30.

By 10:45 I'd added another thousand words or so and went up to the house to see my little girl cat. It's good to be missed. (grin)

Had a nice visit with the girl, then back to the Hovel at 11:30. I found a site, Rope and Wire, that seeks short stories in the western genre.

They aren't a publisher per se, but if you write western novels, Rope and Wire will help you publicize them. Check them out at <https://www.ropeandwire.com/writers-wanted.html>. I sent them a short story titled "Coralín," one excerpted from my 10-volume Wes Crowley saga.

After that brief diversion, back to the novel at 12:30. (grin) I wrote a little over the next hour, then was diverted yet again.

The Coyote Situation

The neighbors' horses were making a ruckus in the corral near the Hovel. (You ever hear a horse growl?)

I stepped out to see what was going on and a coyote was running through the corral. So I followed him for a ways down the little road that connects us to the highway, then checked on my babies (everyone's okay), then came back out here.

Back to the novel at 1:50. Good thing I'm in an action scene. (grin)

And my chihuahua started going nuts at 2. The coyote was back, this time under my 4Runner. Seriously?

I ran him off again, then went into the house and strapped on my Beretta 9mm pistol. (sigh) I really don't like killing stuff, but I'm a very good shot, and if it comes around the house all bets are off.

A few minutes later, I realized my moron chihuahua was a little bloody. I finally caught him, inspected him, and FINALLY (when I was able to get his mouth open) realized he was barking so hard he bit his tongue.

Did I mention he's a moron? (grin) Anyway, all's well.

Back to the novel (I hope) for a little more writing at 2:30.

Nope. I decided to put together the topic above, then call it a day and post this thing. Then I and my pistola are gonna head for the house. I can't imagine a better starting point for tomorrow than the action scene I'm in the middle of today.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Loose Lips Sink Careers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/loose-lips-sink-careers.html>.
Word.

See "Dangers of Methamphetamine" at <https://www.leelofland.com/dangers-of-methamphetamine-long-and-short-term-effects/>.

See "How to Differentiate Your Startup in a Red Ocean Industry" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-differentiate-your-startup-in-a-red-ocean-industry/>.

Fiction Words: 2721

Nonfiction Words: 990 (Journal)

FTotal words for the day: 3711

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Total fiction words for the month..... 53313

Total fiction words for the year..... 212371

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22250

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 73470

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 285841

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	41
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, March 28](#)

[March 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

I can tell you right now

I've also decided

Update on Casey and the Coyote

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Well, I can tell you right now I'm probably not going to finish Book 5 in the Blackwell Ops series today. It'll take at least one more good writing day and possibly two. Or three.

No biggie. I can't write the next one (in the series or otherwise) until I finish this one. (shrug)

I've also decided I'm dropping the challenge. It just doesn't mean as much to me in the moment as it did when I first attacked it a couple of months ago.

I've talked here before about life rolls, and we've all experienced them. We normally think of a life roll being a bad thing — the death or illness of a loved one, for example — but it can also be a good thing.

When my ticker was faltering (heart function 10% at the best), that fact drove me to the computer, as odd as that might sound to some of you. It drove me to write a lot more than I might have otherwise.

Now, I haven't lost the desire to write At All. But since I learned a couple of weeks ago that I was in much better health than I thought (heart rate 35% at the worst, and the doc is calling it 45%) I'm just not as frantic about it.

Does that make sense? So anyway, I'm dropping the challenge.

Chances are I'll continue writing 2000 to 3000 or more words per day pretty much every day. And chances are I'll continue to turn out a novel every 15 to 20 days or so. But I won't feel pressured at all to do so. I'm just not worried about it (or that ticker thing) like I was. (grin)

And the current book? I don't know. It keeps running and frankly I'm enjoying the heck out of it. I have at least one or two more major scenes to write for it, so it might even take TWENTY (gasp!) calendar days to write it. (grin) Who cares? The important thing is to tell a good story and have fun doing it.

Apparently my chihuahua (Casey, who is old enough to warrant the designation Silverback Chihuahua) did not bite his tongue as I previously thought. He lost a canine tooth (no pun intended). He must have bit the field-wire fence we have around the yard when he was arguing his point with the song dog.

So today he's resting, with my apologies for the unintentional slander.

I did see the coyote later in the day yesterday (around sunset) and fired a couple of rounds in his direction. He was running away from me and I missed low, but the dirt hit him and I think (I hope) he's moved on to more hospitable pastures.

Rolled out at 3, did all my usual stuff, and between 4:30 and 5 this morning, my wife and I cleaned out Casey's kennel. (He's undergone a trauma and is reacting accordingly, which you'll understand if you've ever had a long-root tooth ripped out without anesthesia.)

Finally back to the Hovel around 5:10.

Not a good diary today. I wrote a lot but didn't keep track through the day like I usually do.

I kept going up to the house to check on the pup, and I wore my 9mm all day just in case our sick coyote came back.

I also realized (late, when my wife drove up at a little after 1) today is a half-day. (grin) So I'm shutting things down.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Mentor Program Update” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/mentor-program-update/>. A great opportunity for someone. Got me thinking about my own mentor program again.

See “Federal Prisoner ‘John’ Discusses Helicopter Wire, the Mafia, and Al Sharpton” at <https://www.leelofland.com/federal-prisoner-john-discusses-helicopter-wire-the-mafia-and-al-sharpton/>.

See “Business Musings: Rebranding, Rethinking, Refreshing” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/03/27/business-musings-rebranding-rethinking-refreshing/>.

From the Weird Stuff file, see “A Visit to the Synthetic Cadaver Factory” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/syndaver-labs-synthetic-cadavers-tour>. For a video that complements the story, see <https://youtu.be/se8sB7pzCic>.

Not about writing per se, but see “My Great Galapagos Adventure – Part 1” at <https://terryodell.com/my-great-galapagos-adventure-part-1/>.

Fiction Words: 2510

Nonfiction Words: 680 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3190

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743

Total fiction words for the month..... 55823

Total fiction words for the year..... 214881

Total nonfiction words for the month... 22930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 74150

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 289031

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

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](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, March 29](#)

[March 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Nothing really

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Nothing really to talk about today. The pup's improved over the past couple of days, so that's good. He's eating again, albeit soft food.

A lazy day for me today, back and forth watering the yard, doing chores, checking on the pup and writing.

I didn't get much done in that last department. As old Wes Crowley said one time, "Sometimes things just don't line up right. That's why they make tomorrows."

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "We Learn From All Story" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/we-learn-from-all-story/>.

See "The First Time I Responded to a Suicide Attempt" at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-first-time-i-responded-to-a-suicide-attempt/>.

Fiction Words: 1620

Nonfiction Words: 120 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1740

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743
Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363

Total fiction words for the month..... 57443
Total fiction words for the year..... 216501
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23050
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 74270
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 2907711

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
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](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, March 30](#)

[March 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Yesterday

On the novel

Topic: On Writing Series...

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Yesterday I was thinking about going out into the desert behind my house for some target practice with my “new” 9mm. I realized the few rounds I fired at that old coyote the other day were the first ones I’d ever put through that piece.

But instead, nagged by the constant PHP warning on all the websites I managed, I decided to look into upgrading the PHP version. (Don’t ask me. All I really know about it is it’s called “PHP.”)

Anyway, I finally figured out how to do it, then opened my test site and did it. Easy peasy. So I did it on my other sites that affect no one but me. It worked on (meaning “did no harm”) on those too.

So I applied it on PWW and some client sites. Now every site is up to date, and the stupid warnings are gone.

Thank goodness.

On the novel, I'm in that space where I'm getting closer to the end and I don't want it to be over. Man that's annoying. But it happens pretty much every time.

I've talked about this before. I'm really excited to tell the stories, but I hate it when they end, so the subconscious and fingers that comprise my writing system tends to bog down. Sigh.

Anyway, I'm coming into the final big conflict of Blackwell Ops 5, so a few more chapters and it will be done. So probably a couple more good writing days (“good” being defined at 3000+ words).

Then I'll get excited all over again about the next one. Sometimes I don't know how much more of this I can take. (grin)

Topic: On Writing Series, and Series/Novel Structure

For awhile now, I've been casting about looking for a Jack Reacher type character, by which I mean one who would carry a series that was both interesting for readers and fun to write.

To that end, I've gone through several series:

Joseph “Joey Bones” Salerno, a Brooklyn mob-guy anti-hero, stood up and carried several short stories and a novella. But I had neither the chops nor the permission to write a Joey Bones series.

Then along came Nick Spalding in the exploratory Hemingway-esque novella *Jobs Like That*. Spalding was fun, and the novella led to the four-novel Nick Spalding action-adventure series.

But with that one I inadvertently limited Nick and his stories (and therefore myself as a writer) to the period between the Spanish Civil War and World War I.

Nick also found himself a woman, one who turned out to be a lot like my ex-wife. But she disappeared and later he found another one — a good one, Marie Delacroix — and soon after that he lost interest in being a mercenary.

Marie was a pretty capable mercenary herself, but she also was in love, wanted children, blah blah blah. Sigh. So Nick collected his pay and went off hand-in-hand to a new kind of adventure. One I will not put on the page.

After that, Stern Talbot came along. Stern is a classic detective turned PI. As I wrote, I even saw Bogie in the lead role. But there are only so many stories you (well, I) can write in that genre, and it's mostly for a very niche audience. I'll probably write more Stern Talbot books, but I'm not in a rush to do so.

Then I turned to the Blackwell Ops series. I thought for certain (in the early stages) that would be my Jack Reacher series. But the series characters (yeah, plural) themselves had other ideas.

Several POV characters popped up, each wanting to tell of his or her own experiences as an operative for TJ Blackwell. And who could blame them? All I could really do as the writer was sit down at the keyboard and hold on for the ride. (grin) I mean, you don't want to cross these people.

I hasten to add that writing this series been a good ride so far and it will continue. But it isn't the Reacher character I was looking for when I came through the door.

In the Blackwell Ops series, because of the necessary series-of-stories structure in each novel, the actual writing is like encountering an accordion effect in traffic on a major highway at rush hour.

You know. Like anywhere in southern California or Houston. You race along for awhile, then come to a crawl, then race along again. Eventually you get to your destination (the end of the book).

In Blackwell Ops, the POV character goes on an assignment and the story races along. But the assignment eventually ends. Then I'm obliged to write a short, quieter transition as the operative is between assignments. Then another assignment comes in. The story grinds to a standstill as I take an hour to a few hours to a day to research the new location so the setting is authentic. Then the story speeds up again, etc. Hence the accordion effect.

So in the back of my mind, even as I write Blackwell Ops, I still want to find that one character who carries a series on his or her own strong, capable shoulders.

But this morning I realized I'd already gotten that lucky once.

The Wes Crowley Saga, although it featured dozens of characters, remained focused on (was "about") one character, Wes Crowley, from the beginning to the end around 600,000 words later.

And with one exception — as I neared the end of the third prequel in the saga, when I had to tie-in the prequels to my first novel (which would become Book 4 in the series) — the story raced along throughout. I love it when that happens. (grin)

I think that's one of the reasons I keep looking for a new series to write. I want the endorphine rush (or "writer's high" or whatever it is) to keep going, unabated by anything but my own happy fatigue at the end of the day. And certainly unabated by anything in the story itself.

My next series will be a spin-off of Blackwell Ops (even as I continue the BO series). I'm thinking the structure will be a little different though, in an attempt to avoid that accordion effect.

My three main characters in that series will strike out on their own during their downtime from Blackwell Ops. I suspect (I won't know until I write it) each novel will be about 1, 2, or all 3 of those characters and focused on one assignment. A lot the way Reacher focuses on one problem in each novel.

What about you? What does your ongoing learning look like? What do you want to write that you've never written before (or what do you want to write again)? Any input/help for me in finding that one character who will last through several hundred thousand words? Anything else?

We can all learn from each other. I appreciate you sharing your comments in the comment section below.

By the way, if anyone out there likes westerns, you can still download (free) the first prequel to the Wes Crowley saga at <https://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/>. Scroll down to The Rise of a Warrior.

For anyone who might be interested in turning their story into a movie, see TaleFlick at <https://taleflick.com/>.

Jordan Dane of TKZ said she thinks this might be a good thing, meaning legitimate, "for indie authors."

I'm sure what she meant was that the TaleFlick site itself offers its service to *all* writers, although those published through the tradpubs are more limited on what they can do, depending on the contract they signed.

Anyway, I signed up for the newsletter, and I probably will submit a book. What's to lose?

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning, but I might not get any fiction writing done today. What's the old saying about March? In like a lion, out like a lamb? Seems that way with my fiction this month too.

Anyway, that's only for my fiction. I hit on the topic above and wanted to get it out.

Also, my son and his family came in late last night. Visiting will ensue. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Five Tips For Legal Thrillers” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/five-tips-for-legal-thrillers.html>. Great advice, very informative, but he completely blows marketing his new book to at least half the population in his final paragraph.

See “How to Be a Writer and Still...” at <https://www.thecut.com/2019/03/jessica-knoll-writer-rich-the-luckiest-girl.html>. Some excellent tips on Doing the Work to get “discovered.” I particularly like the last question.

See “The amateur sleuth...” at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47627701>.

See “How Do You Explain Consciousness?” at <http://dyingwords.net/how-do-you-explain-consciousness/>.

See “Just Finished... The Lonely Silver Rain” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/just-finished-the-lonely-silver-rain/>.

For your leisurely perusal, see “50 Blogs for Mastering the Art, Craft, and Business of Writing” at <https://getfreewrite.com/blogs/writing-success/top-50-writing-blogs>. I haven’t checked all of the sites they mention and am not recommending this for anyone, but you might find something you like here. I did notice they didn’t mention Harvey Stanbrough, Dean Wesley Smith or Kristine Kathryn Rusch, so....(grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1500 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1500

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743

Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363

Day 15... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 57443

Total fiction words for the year..... 216501

Total nonfiction words for the month... 24550

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 75770

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 292271

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	41
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](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, March 31](#)

[March 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

One potential taker...

Topic: On (Not) Developing Characters

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I've had one potential taker on my offer to work with other writers as a tutor. I really look forward to working with this writer and hope s/he decides to go ahead.

I'm thrilled to be able to share now the awakening that happened for me some 5 years ago. Finding Heinlein's Rules and then the writing into the dark (or as Michael L. calls it, "writing into the unknown") technique was literally life-changing for me.

I only wish I'd learned it when I was in my 20s or 30s or 40s or 50s. (grin) But I haven't looked back since I did finally get a clue.

Looking back changes nothing and does no good. The only thing that changes a writer's life and skill level is looking (and moving) forward. And flattening the learning curve when and where you can.

That's what I'm offering with my tutoring: a chance to flatten the learning curve and move your skill as a writer forward, never back.

If you have a particular block or hump that you're having difficulty getting over, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I like sharing the unbridled joy I've found. If I can help, I will.

A last note — everyone has only 24 hours in each day, and my time's as limited as anyone else's. So at the moment, I have one or maybe two spots left (depending on what the student needs) for tutoring.

So if you're thinking of taking me up on this offer, email me. It has to go "first-come, first-served."

Topic: On (Not) Developing Characters

I had a question posed by a brave writer who asked about characters. So I don't belabor the point (or put words in his mouth), you can [read his question and comment here](#) and my response [HERE](#).

I thought I'd add to that response in today's topic.

Back when I first started writing short stories, I bought into all the myths, including that the writer has to "develop" characters. It was even a good idea to write character sketches, various teachers said, even including things that might or might not make it into the story later.

To be as blunt as I can in an effort to save you all a lot of time, that's all hogwash. Or bovine (or ovine or bat) excrement.

Meeting and writing a character always happens in a setting, and learning about the character best happens over time as the character reveals him or herself to you during the course of the story.

Think about it. Your characters are real people to you (and to your reader).

When you first meet another human, you meet a stereotype. (This is true no matter how "woke" you are or proclaim to the world that you are.)

When you first meet another human, you probably immediately learn his or her name. You probably immediately recognize his or her gender. Depending on where and how you meet, you might also know what s/he does for a living.

And you make certain presumptions based on what the person says and does, how s/he talks, how s/he presents him or herself, and your own past baggage. That's the stereotype.

If you are intrigued (in either a "good" or "bad" way) you're also interested. You actively want to learn more about who the person (or character) is. (If you aren't intrigued either way, you and s/he go your separate ways and probably never meet again.)

Only later, as your interest-in and meetings-with the person grows, do you learn more about the person.

As you continue to speak-with and observe that person, your presumptions shift to assumptions, some of which you believe are facts.

After that your imagination begins to take over and you think the two of you might become Friends (or Enemies) or that this is a person you might want to hang out with (or avoid).

But at this point, the person will become someone you don't or can't easily forget. You're hooked, at least for awhile.

If you're having fun with your writing, your relationship with your character(s) develops in exactly the same way.

If you make the HUGE mistake of creating a character sketch or otherwise "developing" your character(s) with your conscious, critical mind, you automatically limit the character(s) to a pre-defined, uninteresting shape.

And no, you can't have it both ways.

If you write a character sketch and stick to it, your character can't just be who s/he is. Just as if you outline your novel (a conscious, critical mind function) and then stick to that outline, your characters and situations can't simply "happen." In other words, your new acquaintance can't simply live his or her interesting life because s/he's forced to do what you tell him or her to do and to act in ways (and say things) that you prescribe.

In other words, your characters (and situations) can't surprise you. And as Ray Bradbury once said, if your characters don't surprise you, how can you hope they will surprise the reader?

Surprise is perhaps the most universal element in good fiction. Without the element of surprise, your characters and situations will be bland. Why? Because if you can "think-up" what the character will do or say next in any given situation, so can your readers. And they will.

The shortest route I can think of to a brief, unsuccessful stint as a writer is to write things (characters and situations) that are predictable.

So how do you avoid predictability?

By letting your characters speak, act and react the way they want to in whatever situations arise during the natural flow of the story.

You are the first person who will be entertained by your characters and the situations in which they find themselves.

This doesn't mean every character or every story you ever write will entertain you equally.

But if you're surprised and entertained at all, your readers will be too. And you'll make money at this crazy business.

Think about that for a moment: You'll make money for sitting alone in a room, allowing your characters free-rein to be who and what they are. You'll make money by allowing your characters to entertain you.

If you'd rather not make money, that's fine too. Just continue forcing your characters into a predetermined mold. Force them to be an extension of your critical, conscious mind instead of allowing them to simply be who they are.

Being a control freak over your characters will bear its own punishment, just as it will if you levy control over your friends or your spouse. In every case, they will become bland, uninteresting people. In the end, you would rather not be around them.

And neither will your readers.

Rolled out at 2, got coffee and headed for the Hovel.

I wrote all the stuff above, but again today there will be no fiction writing. Visiting, and later in the day will be filled with a trip to the grocery, etc.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "New Line! New Line!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-line-new-line/>.

See "From Beer to Bookshelf" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/from-beer-to-bookshelf.html>. James Scott Bell begins with "In keeping with last week's post on risk-taking and writing what pleases you..." and it just gets better from there. As you read, think of what you saw in Dean's "New Line! New Line!" above.

See "My Great Galapagos Adventure – Part 2" at <https://terryodell.com/my-great-galapagos-adventure-part-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1300 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1300

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743
Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363
Day 15... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 58743
Total fiction words for the year..... 217801
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25850
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 77070
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 294871

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
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](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#),
[Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, April 1](#)

[April 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

It's April 1

An opportunity to reset goals

Some valuable lessons on structure

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

It's April 1. Let me just say up front, nothing in this edition of the Journal is an April Fool's joke. (grin)

I'll be getting back to my WIP today.

Also today, Blackwell Ops 3: Marie Arceneaux releases to the public. It's available at <https://books2read.com/u/3LGY00>.

I'm also in a new bundle, ECLECTICA, from BundleRabbit. Nineteen short stories and short story collections, featuring my own collection S, F, & H. For details, visit <https://harveystanbrough.com/bundles/>. It's at the top of the page. I think my work is currently in 9 bundles now. (grin)

The first calendar quarter ended yesterday. That means we have our first opportunity to determine what pace we're on for this calendar year and reset our goals.

During the first calendar quarter (90 days), I wrote (on average) 2420 words of new fiction per day (total is 217801). I also wrote 856 words on nonfiction per day (total is 77070). Overall, I wrote (on average) 3276 words per day for 294871 total words.

If I can stay on track with my numbers for the next three quarters, on December 31 I will have written 871204 words of new fiction, 308280 words of nonfiction, and a grand total of 1,179,484 words overall this year.

I think that's what Dean calls Pulp Speed (one million words per year).

But for a general year-end goal, I'd like to achieve pulp speed with just my fiction.

To do that, I would have to write 782199 words of new fiction between tomorrow and December 31, inclusive. There are 275 days remaining in the calendar year. So to hit my year-end goal for 1,000,000 words of fiction, I would have to write (again, on average) 2845 words of fiction per day.

Think about that. Compare the numbers.

Without really trying, I've averaged 2420 words per day. I would have to increase that number by only 425 words per day. I'd have to increase my actual writing time by only a half-hour per day.

Some of you will remember awhile back I made a lot of noise about a new daily goal of writing 4,000 words per day of new fiction.

If I had done that beginning on January 1, I would have reached my 1,000,000 word goal only 250 days into the year, on September 7. (grin)

For that matter, if I'd averaged even 3,000 words per day since January 1, I'd still reach a million 334 days into the year on November 30. In other words, I could take the entire month of December off.

What other job exists where you can work only three hours per day and still take 31 days paid vacation? (grin)

But I didn't, so here I sit. But I'm still dreaming big and reaching. (grin)

From Linda Maye Adams' newsletter, see "How Star Wars Was Saved in the Edit" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFMyMxMYDNk>.

This is an excellent film. Not because I have (or advocate) a separate editing pass when writing fiction — I Don't — but because you can learn a ton about Story by watching this video.

It's less than 19 minutes long, but it's a masters class on story structure. I recommend you watch it, both to learn new things and for validation of what you're already doing right.

Remember, too, that you have to write in a novel what's shown on the screen in a film.

In a film, you have both visuals and words. In a novel, you also have visuals, but those are in the reader's mind and are created with the words you put on the page.

Wow, slow start this morning.

I rolled out at 3, wrote much of the stuff above, trolled the internet, etc. and took a phone call from my friend Robert in Dallas. We chatted (writing stuff) for a little over an hour.

Whenever I talk with Robert, I feel almost like we're mentoring each other. I know I always learn something new from our conversations.

I did a bunch of other stuff (still have more to do) and started a load of laundry. Finally to the novel at 10.

I didn't get as much done today as I'd hoped, at least in writing. In non-writing, I got about as much done as I thought I would. Which also wasn't a lot.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Great Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-great-challenge/>. Wow! What an outstanding opportunity for some writers! I once wrote a story a week for 72 weeks, so this is do-able.

See "18 Themed Calls for Submissions" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/18-themed-calls-for-submissions-2/>.

See “Ride Along” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/ride-along.html>.

See the comments on “From Beer to Bookshelf” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/from-beer-to-bookshelf.html#comments>.

See “Murder One: You Can’t Make This Up: Oddities in Police Procedure” at <https://www.leelofland.com/murder-one-you-cant-make-this-up-oddities-in-police-procedure/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Amazing Quizmo” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/01/free-fiction-monday-the-amazing-quizmo-2/>.

See “How Not to Plot a Series” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/04/how-not-to-plot-series.html>. (With a grain of salt.)

See “Gmail’s New ‘Smart Compose for Lawyers’ Uses Ai to Add Legalese to Emails” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/gmails-new-smart-compose-for-lawyers-uses-ai-to-add-legalese-to-emails/>. Happy April 1.

Fiction Words: 2638

Nonfiction Words: 850 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3488

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743

Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363

Day 15... 2638 words. Total words to date..... 37001

Total fiction words for the month..... 2638

Total fiction words for the year..... 220439

Total nonfiction words for the month... 850

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 77920

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 298359

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Marilyn Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, April 2](#)

[April 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Inexpensive classes available

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

There are some inexpensive online classes available in police procedure and other topics (offered by RWA but not all about Romance).

If you decide to take any of these classes, offered in Lee Loffland's post from yesterday, please let the rest of us know what you think of them.

For info see <https://rwakissofdeath.org/coffin>.

For a list of upcoming RWA Kiss of Death classes see <https://rwakissofdeath.org/coffin-classes>.

Wow. Rolled out late this morning. I couldn't see the clock and thought it was around 2 or so, but when I got to the kitchen to fix my coffee, I learned it was almost 4.

To the novel at 5:40. I might finish it today. Either way, this should be an exciting day of fiction writing for me.

At 11:50 I'd written only a little over 1000 new words of fiction. It took a couple of hours to convince my protagonists to tell me where they're going. (grin) A break at noon, then back to the novel at 12:30.

I was expecting a big day of writing today, but it just didn't work out that way. My attention was split among several small things I had to get done, so...

But the action in the novel is starting to pick up again. More than likely I'll finish this one tomorrow. But for today I have limited time, so rather than pushing it, I'm calling it with less than I would like to have done.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Some Questions About the Great Challenge” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-questions-about-the-great-challenge/>. Again, this is a fantastic opportunity. I urge you to take the plunge if you want to write short stories. I’d love to see someone break my personal record of a short story per week for 72 weeks.

See “Max Allan Collins: Write Outside Your Comfort Zone” at <https://crimereads.com/max-allan-collins-write-outside-your-comfort-zone/>.

See “Another Day In Their World” at <https://www.leelofland.com/another-day-in-their-world/>.

See “How To Build Conflict Using Myers-Briggs Personality Types” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/how-to-build-conflict-using-myers-briggs-personality-types.html>. “If you understand why certain MB personality types clash with other types, you can use that knowledge to increase tension among your characters.”

See “Why I Write the Way I Write” at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/04/02/why-i-write-the-way-i-write/>.

See “A Cold Case, An Unsolved Murder, and All the Unanswered Questions” at <https://crimereads.com/a-cold-case-an-unsolved-murder-and-all-the-unanswered-questions/>. Story ideas, maybe. But don’t wait for the “unanswered questions”; they aren’t there.

See “Today’s The Day – Personal Assignment is Live” at <https://terryodell.com/todays-the-day-personal-assignment-is-live/>. Terry also offers the first book in the series free.

Fiction Words: 1968

Nonfiction Words: 430 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2398

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743

Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363

Day 15... 2638 words. Total words to date..... 37001

Day 16... 1968 words. Total words to date..... 38969

Total fiction words for the month..... 4606

Total fiction words for the year..... 222407

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1280

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 78350
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 300757

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41
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](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, April 3](#)

[April 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Dean's "Great Challenge"

My tutoring is still open

Topic: Priorities

Daily diary

Of Interest (a lot of good links)

The numbers

Dean's "Great Challenge" is still open for sign-ups. Frankly, I'm surprised.

On the surface, the cost appears a little steep, but it's basically free tutoring from Dean Wesley Smith. You can use your \$600 for credit toward anything you want, and if you make at least 52 short stories in a row (one per week for a year) you get a lifetime subscription of your choice.

If I was still writing short stories, I'd consider hocking a child to take him up on this offer.

Of course, I'm kidding. Maybe. And you'll notice I didn't say "my" child. (evil grin)

I added a second writer for tutoring this morning (yay!). I always get a little giddy when I encounter a writer who's so fired up to learn the craft of writing. (grin)

I have one spot left, maybe two depending on what you need. If anyone's interested, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Topic: Priorities

If you're going to be a professional anything, you have to make that anything a priority.

If you're still in the workforce, that priority is set for you if you want to continue to draw a paycheck.

If you're a cop, you have to put on the uniform once a day and go clean up human dregs. If you're a mechanic or a construction guy, you have to show up at a particular time and fix things or build things. Nature of the beast. If you want to draw your pay, you have to do the work.

Same with the arts. You can call yourself anything you want, but you can't actually "be" a fine artist if you don't draw or paint pictures. You can't "be" a musician if you don't actively play an instrument. I know. Duh, right?

It's also the same with writing. Words don't just appear on the page. If you're an actual writer, you have to put them there.

The best way I've seen to do that is to set a goal, then work toward it. And by "work toward it," I mean bring your fanny and the seat of your chair (recliner, couch, booth at Starbucks, whatever) into close contact on a regular basis. That should be the only "work" involved.

As most of you know, I have a dedicated writing space (the Hovel) and a dedicated writing laptop (my 'puter, Hal). I show up every morning about twenty minutes after I wake up, and I put words on the page.

I advocate having a dedicated writing 'puter because doing so will key your subconscious. It will tell the subconscious that when you sit down at that 'puter and put your fingers on the keys, it's time to play with your characters and have fun. It's time to find out what they'll get into next and how they handle it.

To me, there's nothing better in the world than that. Nothing.

(And obtaining a dedicated writing 'puter isn't that difficult. I recently bought an excellent second writing 'puter with a solid state hard drive (SSD) for just over a hundred bucks on eBay.)

In my life, other things sometimes take priority (visits from family or friends on the good side, chores or emergencies or other "bad" things on the bad side). But really, writing is my number one priority.

How do I know? Because even when I'm doing those other things (good or bad) writing is in the back of my mind. Not WHAT I'm writing — not the WIP or any particular story — but the act of writing itself.

Of course, you don't have to give the act of writing — the act of creation — the same priority I do. In fact, I don't recommend it.

For me, writing is all-consuming. It's what keeps me coming here every morning to chat with you, and it's what causes me to return to my WIP even when I feel as if the words have left me and I might never write another word of fiction.

But if you have other interests — that is, if there are other people or situations that make you completely forget your writing for awhile — that's fine. Again, I even recommend it. If I could bring myself to that mental place, I'd go camping or fishing or practice my photography a lot more often.

***But no matter where Writing sits on your list of priorities,
it has to be included somewhere.***

And if writing is on your list of priorities at all, it has to be on your list regularly.

It has to be on your list at a certain time and place over and over again. Even the frequency with which it appears on your list isn't as important as the fact that it appears *regularly*.

If you can make time to write (read "escape life") only on Sunday from 1-2 p.m., so be it. But make sure your butt is in the chair during that time, your fingers poised over the keyboard.

If you can write only five days per week from 5-6 a.m. (or 5-6 p.m.) because you reserve your weekends for family time, that's fine too. Wonderful, in fact. Just make sure you're there during that hour, and that you're writing.

If you're a "weekend novelist" (there are books on the topic), that works too. Whatever you want to do, however you want to do it, is fine.

But nothing will work without the regular bonding of the seat of your body with the seat of your chair.

Without that regular, scheduled bonding, instead of watching your word count or title count or book sales (or however you mark success as a writer) grow, you'll look back and mark the passing of time with a wistful "What if...?"

And that is a particular kind of hell nobody needs.

Another late start. Rolled out at 4 again. I was exhausted last night for some reason and slept for 9 hours. Ugh. To me, every period of sleep is just time that is subtracted from life that I'll never get back.

I used to love road trips. Now, not so much. Now I want to *be* there, not *drive* there. Just as each evening, I'd rather skip the sleep part and just wake up refreshed and ready to get back to the writing.

Anyway, I did all the usual morning stuff and then wrote the topic above. A break at 7, then finally to the novel when I get back.

Well, the best-laid plans. Had some emails to deal with when I got back, which is okay. In a few minutes, I'll go up to the house to see my wife off to work, then come back and get to the WIP.

I still feel like this might be the last day of writing for this WIP, but that all depends on whether my characters toss me a new weird quirk (easy to do in the novels of this series). So we'll see.

To the novel at 9. The early going in the writing day is slow as I cycle first, then ease my way back into the story. It's as if my fingers are a little rusty.

Took a phone call from my second tutoring client and chatted for awhile, and did some other stuff. But I did get a little writing done today.

I actually laughed when I saw how little I've written today. (grin) On the other hand, I think I've just written the best fight scene I've ever written.

It's the penultimate fight scene in Blackwell Ops 5. When it was over, I literally pushed my chair back from my desk and said, "Dayum!" (grin)

Then I glanced at the clock on my computer and saw that I have to get around and make supper pretty soon. Besides, I need time to cool down from that scene. (grin)

THIS, folks. THIS is why we write.

I'll wrap up this novel tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

I love quotations. See "150+ Writing Quotes to Help You During Every Stage of Writing" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-quotes/>.

See "Amazon's Kindle Create for Ebooks" at <https://jwmanus.wordpress.com/2019/04/03/amazons-kindle-create-for-ebooks/>.

See “In Which We Talk Swag” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/in-which-we-talk-swag.html>.

See “April Workshops Now All Live” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/april-workshops-now-all-live/>. Great opportunities (more than just the April workshops).

See “James Lee Burke” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/04/02/james-lee-burke/>.

See “Q&A with Rammel Chan” at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2019/04/03/qa-with-rammel-chan/>.

If you’re into personality types and all that, see the comments on “How To Build Conflict Using Myers-Briggs Personality Types” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/how-to-build-conflict-using-myers-briggs-personality-types.html#comments>.

Fiction Words: 1627

Nonfiction Words: 1430 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3057

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564

Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512

Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233

Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743

Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363

Day 15... 2638 words. Total words to date..... 37001

Day 16... 1968 words. Total words to date..... 38969

Day 17... 1627 words. Total words to date..... 40596

Total fiction words for the month..... 6233

Total fiction words for the year..... 224034

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2710

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 79780

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 303814

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 4

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 41

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [Asimov's](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, April 4](#)

[April 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

A little trivia

Topic: Writing Action Scenes

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

According to a promo email I received yesterday, Motorolo made the first cellular phone call 46 years ago yesterday. Feelin' old yet? (grin)

Topic: Writing Action Scenes

I've wanted to write a post on this for awhile now, and it's finally time.

This post results directly from a high-action scene, a fight scene, I wrote yesterday. It was probably the best high-action scene I've ever written. It isn't so much a "how-to" as a "how-I-do-it" essay.

All of this will go to my individual "style" as a writer, which I define as the way a particular writer composes sentences and paragraphs, the writer's use of simile and metaphor, pacing, etc.

I personally like to focus-in on high-action scenes. I want the reader to not only see the action but to feel it. I want him to experience it, albeit vicariously.

I want the reader to see what the POV character sees, hear what she hears, smell what she smells, and all of that while immersed in the heat of battle.

I want the reader to feel, both physically and emotionally, what the POV character feels as she's going through the fast-action scene.

This is much easier done in "normal" scenes when lives are not at stake. Those can be as long as you like, take whatever time they take, and work themselves out. They're also a little more bland. Bland is good sometimes, like when you're giving the reader a break.

But in a high-action scene, you can't have bland. You can't have even one word of bland. You can't write anything that will either gloss-over or take-away from the action.

In high-action scenes, the stakes are higher (usually life or death) and the scene is "shorter" and much more tense regardless of the number of words on the page.

In the scene I wrote yesterday (and incidentally, I love writing scenes like this) there were 994 words, yet it encapsulated maybe 5-10 seconds of time in the story. And it took me a couple of hours to write. (No, there was no conscious-mind rewriting involved. More on that later.)

I want the reader to experience the tension the POV character is experiencing. If the POV character's heart is pounding in her chest, I want the reader's heart rate to increase too.

As the POV character calms down in the aftermath, I want the reader to calm down too. If the POV character feels remorse of sadness or elation or relief or fatigue, I want the reader to feel it too.

There's a way to do that.

If you've ever been in a high-tension situation (scene) in your own life, you know that your senses are heightened far beyond the norm and in odd directions. You notice things you wouldn't notice in a normal situation, and you notice them much more intensely and with all your senses.

If your car is spinning out of control on an icy road, you might be trying to determine, through your windshield, where you're going to end up. You're very glad you aren't on a road with a sheer cliff on one side and a sheer 500-foot drop-off on the other.

You might notice other vehicles, which also might or might not be out of control, and try to calculate in your mind whether you're likely to collide with one of them.

You might notice how unbelievably white your knuckles are as you grip the steering wheel. You might notice the smell of your passenger's fear. You might not even hear her scream, though you might wonder why her mouth's so wide open and when she got that new cap on her incisor.

Got it?

Good.

So when I write a scene like that, I filter the setting through the POV character's physical and emotional senses so the reader can experience it too. I also allow the POV character her opinions of the setting.

She might not only wonder when her passenger got that cap on her tooth. She might wonder when her passenger got that "stupid" or "gaudy" or "really cool" cap on her tooth.

Or she might wonder “is that real gold?” Or she might think “It looks horrible!” or “It looks good!” or “I wish I could afford to pamper myself like that” (envy). That’s the POV character’s opinion, one she would never say outright to her friend, but one that she feels.

And it all belongs right in the middle of the high-action scene.

Why? Because it’s real. It’s what she’s experiencing in the moment, and I want the reader to experience what the POV character is experiencing in the moment.

So to that end...

At first, I just wrote the scene into the dark (as I always do). I always write high-action or fast-action scenes very quickly. I wrote those 994 words in probably a little over a half-hour.

Then (as I always do) I cycled back over it. When I cycle back over a “normal” scene, I might add or remove a little description. I might even reparagraph a little to speed-up or slow-down the pacing.

If I make a lot of changes (I usually don’t) to a “normal” scene, it might take me up to an hour to cycle through 3000 or 4000 words.

Yet cycling through this little 994-word scene (two or three times, in segments) took me two hours or longer.

The seed of the scene was there. All the necessary good guys and bad guys were where they were supposed to be and doing what they were supposed to do. All of it written into the dark.

So when I cycled through it the first, second and however many other times...

I changed a word here and there from a less-tense, less-descriptive term to one that was more tense and more descriptive.

I moved a few clauses and phrases that were originally at the end of a sentence to the beginning of the same sentence (or from the beginning to the end) to give the sentence greater impact.

(Sentences have areas of greater and lesser impact and carry greater and lesser impactful information. Matching the information with the area makes all the difference.

For just one example, I’d originally written one sentence like this:

He frantically tugged at his tunic, still struggling to reach for something on his left side even as he fell away from me.

It now reads like this:

Even as he fell away from me, he frantically tugged at his tunic, still struggling to reach for something on his left side.

Exactly the same words, but do you feel the difference in tension? If not, try reading it aloud.)

I shifted one paragraph to a slightly different, earlier place.

I shifted three or four sentences to different places in the sequence in a paragraph.

I hit the return key (the enter key) a few times to create new one-sentence paragraphs. (One-sentence paragraphs, if they're the right sentences, enhance emotional impact.

And finally I did a lot of mixing and matching, shifting the reader's attention from one assailant to another and to an unseen assailant who was behind the POV character for almost the whole scene (and whom the POV character hoped was being handled by her partner) just as the POV character's attention shifted.

Attention shifts are important in high-action scenes, just as they occur in high-action situations in real life.

Now for the "editing or rewriting vs. cycling" discussion.

The difference between editing or rewriting and cycling is not one of substance. It's one of source.

Editing and rewriting is done from the conscious, critical mind. Any changes are most often based on a negative thought, such as "Ugh, that (word, sentence, paragraph) doesn't work" or "That doesn't belong there."

Cycling, like writing, is done from the creative subconscious. Any changes occur naturally, come directly from the POV character, and always are based on a positive: "Harvey, I can see the third guy leaping over the first guy I put down to get to me even as the second one is reeling away after catching the buttstock of my rifle to his face. And I'm still worried about the guy behind me even while I'm fighting the one in front of me. See?" (Why does this remind me of something my friend Alison would say?)

My characters teach me a great deal both while writing and cycling.

As I mentioned, I cycled through this scene three or four times — maybe more — even though I usually cycle through "normal" scenes only once. That means I read it, beginning to end, and allowed my fingers to lie on the keyboard.

When something wasn't "right" (as evidenced by a character tugging on my sleeve), I "fixed it" by adding, deleting, shifting, replacing, etc. And after the third or fourth time through, I knew it was golden. There was simply nothing more to do.

Every word, sentence and paragraph moved the scene forward. Every word, sentence and paragraph transmitted the tension to the reader (in the moment, me) and heightened or lessened that tension as necessary for that part of the scene: the winding-up, the fight itself (which was actually five individual fights all mixed up), and the winding-down.

I was so giddy when the scene was finished, I actually shared it with a few people. I very, very seldom do that.

But since I wrote all of this stuff, if any of you would like to see the finished scene to compare it with this topic, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I'd be happy to send it to you, along with a sentence to set the scene for you.

If you're a regular reader of my work, I promise, it won't "spoil" anything. (grin)

Rolled out at 2:20 this morning, got coffee, came to the Hovel. I did the usual stuff on the internet, then decided to write the topic above.

For some reason, the post over at PWW didn't hit my email inbox this morning, so I added a new "missed post" plugin. I hope that will fix the problem

Finally to the novel at 9:15.

Finished the novel today. I have friends coming tomorrow or the next day. Haven't seen the guy (a Marine Corps buddy) since 1974, so visiting will ensue. I won't start a new fiction project until after that.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Outrage Fatigue" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/03/business-musings-outrage-fatigue/>. Kris rants. Pretty intense. And she doesn't wander off into politics. (Yay!)

See "Short Post Tonight" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/short-post-tonight/>.

See "3 Factors for Choosing an On-Brand Pen Name" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/3-factors-for-choosing-an-on-brand-pen-name/>.

See "Not Just Self-Published" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/not-just-self-published/>.

See ““But I’m Not a Lawyer. I’m an Agent.”” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/but-im-not-a-lawyer-im-an-agent/>.

See “A Harvard Linguist’s (and Bill Gates’ Favorite Author) 13 Simple Tips for Becoming a Great Writer” at <https://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/a-harvard-linguists-13-simple-tips-for-becoming-a-great-writer.html>. Grain of salt. Take what works for you, ignore what doesn’t.

See “12-Archetypes: A Framework for Creating a Cast of Memorable Characters” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/archetypes-a-framework-for-creating-a-cast-of-memorable-characters.html>.

See “My Great Galapagos Adventure – Part 3” at <https://terryodell.com/my-great-galapagos-adventure-part-3/>.

Fiction Words: 3805

Nonfiction Words: 1840 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 5645

Writing of Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden (novel)

Day 10... 4416 words. Total words to date..... 24564
Day 11... 2948 words. Total words to date..... 27512
Day 12... 2721 words. Total words to date..... 30233
Day 13... 2510 words. Total words to date..... 32743
Day 14... 1620 words. Total words to date..... 34363
Day 15... 2638 words. Total words to date..... 37001
Day 16... 1968 words. Total words to date..... 38969
Day 17... 1627 words. Total words to date..... 40596
Day 18... 3805 words. Total words to date..... 44401 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 10038
Total fiction words for the year..... 227839
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 81620
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 309459

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, April 5](#)

[April 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Day One of my days off

Topic: Writing Action Scenes

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Well, today will be Day One of my days off. I'll still visit with you each morning, but I plan not to begin a new fiction project until the visit with my friend is over.

My first four years in the USMC were akin to many other people's college time. It was a time during which I mostly grew up, had parties, learned a ton of new stuff, and made lifelong friends.

The guy who's coming (probably today, all the way from Missouri) to visit is one of those I consider a lifelong friend. I'm not sure how long the visit will last.

When my friend Corky and I met, I was a Hawker. Not a guy who sells stuff on the street out of a suitcase, and not a guy in Oceanside, California who tries to persuade passersby to go into one shady business or another.

A Hawker in our situation was a guy who understood and operated various pulse- or continuous-wave acquisition radars and fed the lieutenant information so he would know when to lean slightly forward and push the big red button. (grin)

At which point a HAWK missile would launch so quickly it couldn't be seen by the naked eye (the speed is still classified, I think), fly downrange and destroy any incoming medium- to low-altitude target.

But my buddy "Corky" was not a Hawker. He was in our communications platoon. A comm guy. And a really good one. He and I were also whiskey aficionados, pretty good pool players, and young enough to get ourselves into (and out of) situations I wouldn't attempt today.

Like Seinfeld's old Jewish uncle, I could wag one hand in your direction: "I could tell you such stories, you wouldn't believe!" (Don't worry. I won't. Probably.)

But I hope to relive that time period over the next few days as Corky and I remind each other of a lot of them.

We had only a few years together. I got out, spent some time as a truck driver and a cop, came back in and ended up retiring from the USMC. Corky went on to retire from the Missouri Prison System — as a guard, not an inmate (Thank you, Jesus) — though there were times I thought it might've gone either way. (grin)

The point is, the bond we forged during our short time together has endured for over 45 years, many of which we were completely out of touch with each other. Pretty amazing.

Good friends, and lifelong friends — that's what's good about getting older.

Topic: Cycling vs. Editing or Revising, Revisited

I wasn't planning to write a topic today, but I was handed this one on a silver platter. (Thanks, Linda.) Huh. I almost wrote "on the *proverbial* silver platter," but to my knowledge there is no silver platter mentioned in Proverbs.

Anyway, Linda wrote

"Cycling requires a tremendous amount of trust from the creative side. That you're not going to meddle with the story unnecessarily...."

I omitted much of her comment, but she ends with "But the trust gets rewarded."

I wrote a brief response but decided to elaborate here. It's been my experience that what one person asks, twenty others want to ask.

Yes, cycling requires tremendous trust in the subconscious. In fact, it requires EXACTLY the same tremendous amount of self-confidence and trust in the subconscious that is required of writing into the dark in the first place. Same "source" (the subconscious), same process except that you're reading (as a Reader, not an editor) and allowing your characters to touch the story.

I would never allow myself to meddle with the story, in the writing or in the cycling. In fact, once you "get it" — meaning once you trust yourself enough to write off into the dark and learn how truly freeing it is — meddling with the story becomes an alien concept.

For me, the path to that trust was this: It isn't my place to meddle with the story because it simply isn't my story. It's the POV character's story. I have no more right to influence it than I have to meddle with the lives of my neighbors or my adult children or anyone else.

And as I pointed out in the previous post, ANY negative that pops into your mind as you read comes from the conscious, critical (negative) mind.

If, while I was writing or cycling, I heard “this is horrible” (or “awful”) or anything else negative, I’d get up and take a walk or go do something else, all the while telling my critical mind to shut up and get back in its corner.

If you get a little sick feeling in your gut when you make a change while you’re cycling, that’s another sure sign that somewhere along the way you’ve slipped into the critical, conscious mind.

When that happens (and it still occasionally happens to me), I recommend immediately hitting Undo on your screen. Then go take that walk, etc. until you are able to relegate the conscious mind back to its cage. It has no place in writing, and it has no place in cycling.

Or put another way, editing and revising (coming as it does from the critical mind) requires concentration and work. Cycling, like all things from the subconscious creative mind, is always a joy. If it isn’t, or if it’s negative, you aren’t cycling. You’re editing. And you will make the story worse.

The fact is, until you learn to trust yourself, your creative subconscious (and your characters to tell their own story), you won’t be able to cycle, but neither will you be able to write off into the dark in the first place.

To take a roadtrip with no map and no idea where you’re going or when you’ll get back home requires a great deal of trust in your abilities. And that’s exactly what you’re doing when you write “off into the dark” or as my friend Michael Lockhart calls it, “off into the unknown.”

Imagine for a moment you’ve decided to chronicle the life of your adult son and his wife and children. Without them being aware you’re doing so, of course.

You want what’s best for your children, so it takes a lot of trust in them to let them make their own decisions and live their own lives, especially while you’re watching.

Yet you know in your control-freak heart of hearts that their life will be better ***And More Authentic*** than it would if you tried to levy control over it. So instead, you support them in their decisions and let them live their own life, their own story.

(And if you don’t know that yet, think about it: How much did you want to live your own life instead of letting your parents control your every action, interaction and comment?)

Exactly the same thing is true of your characters and their life, their story. Exactly the same thing.

So to return to Linda’s comment, ANY “meddling” with the story is done “unnecessarily.” And it will harm the story. Period.

Perhaps worse than that, allowing your critical mind to meddle with the story will tell your subconscious you DON’T trust it. And that, my friends, will kill any chance you have of being a

writer and telling interesting, authentic stories.

Rolled out shortly after 2 this morning, wrote the stuff above and scanned the internet.

Later today, before my friend and his lovely wife arrive, I'll prep and send off Blackwell Ops 5 to my first readers, mow the yard, then work on a website for another friend. I think I have to do a load of laundry too.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "How I Write – Or: D.I.Y." at <http://prowriterswriting.com/how-i-write-or-d-i-y>.

While you're there [SUBSCRIBE](#) or browse some of the other topics. There's a lot of great stuff from some very good writers.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1230 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1230

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 10038
Total fiction words for the year..... 227839
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5780
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 82850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 310869

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, April 6](#)

[April 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Day 2 of my days off

Topic: What Writing Into the Dark Really Is

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

It's Day 2 of my days off. Had a great 3-hour visit last night and will do touristy things today. In the meantime, don't skip today's topic:

Topic: What Writing Into the Dark Really Is

Especially if you think you already know what WITD is, please don't skip this topic. If you do know, you will have lost only a few minutes. If you don't, this might open up a whole new world to you.

Karen, an excellent storyteller, wrote a comment on yesterday's post.

I responded, albeit briefly, because if someone takes the time to comment and the comment seems to beg a response, then a response is owed.

But I decided to turn my response into a topic in the hopes that it will help a few more little lights come on.

Karen is one of my tutored writers at the moment. I've been tutoring her for a long time, but officially (meaning as an official "student") for only a week or so.

In part, Karen's comment read

"I do love writing into the dark but I don't know how to sustain it (I leave holes in the story as I write). And I really don't know how to cycle. That's where my critical mind creeps back in usually. I need a bigger stick."

Nope. What she needs is to understand what writing into the dark really is.

As I've said all along, WITD is trusting the characters to tell their own story through your subconscious mind to tell the story.

But I've said that so often that it's become a cliché, like "Show, don't tell." Everyone purports to know what "show don't tell" means, but few (even so-called writing instructors) actually understand and can explain it.

But that's a topic for another post. Like [THIS ONE](#).

WITD is more than writing without an outline or trusting your subconscious mind and the characters.

Or maybe a better way to say it is this: Not everyone truly understands what "trust the characters to tell their own story through your subconscious mind" really means.

And that's perfectly all right. It took me awhile to understand and develop that level of trust in myself and my characters to Just Tell A Story.

Then one day (AS A READER, not an editor) I read a short story I'd written awhile back as Nick Porter ("Consuela"). And the little light bulb over my head came on.

All at once, I understood the freedom of writing into the dark. And I realized "Consuela" is a really GREAT story.

In preparation for this blog post, I read "Consuela" again.

In light of new and simple mechanics or techniques I've learned or slap-my-forehead-realized SINCE then (like pacing and using all five senses filtered through of the POV character's opinions),

the pacing wasn't as good as it could have been (read "it sucked");

the characters themselves would have been more fully developed had I delivered their opinions of the setting as filtered through their physical senses; and

there was (still is) a TON of setting description missing that would have enhanced and advanced the story.

Yet "Consuela" is still a GREAT story. And yes, other regular readers have said so as well. It was the best I could do at my mechanical or technical skill level at the time, yet it's a great story.

And because I trusted in my own abilities, wrote it and let it go (published it), it's been earning me money since early 2014.

As part of her comment, Karen wrote, "I leave holes in the story as I write."

That she believes her story has plot holes is a function of her conscious mind.

I edited (conscious mind) her debut novel *The Widow's Circle* and didn't see any plot holes that I can remember. And it was part of my job to consciously look for them.

The Widow's Circle was a really great story. Want to know how great it was?

I STILL remember parts of that story, and that was three years ago. That's how great that story was. Yet chances are, if you say the name even of one of my recent novels, I won't be able to tell you the plot without looking it up to refresh my memory. (grin)

The point is this: If Karen read *The Widow's Circle* (after the edit) and decided there were "holes" in it, that's her conscious, critical mind trying to stop her, trying to "protect" her from being embarrassed by publishing a story that wasn't "good enough" (or that had "plot holes" in it).

And why is she allowing her conscious, critical mind that level of control? Because she was (and is) assigning too much importance to an individual story.

It's only a story. It isn't earth-shaking or life-changing except to a particular reader who's reading it at the time.

But get this: If *The Widow's Circle* didn't exist, that same reader would read another story that would be equally earth-shaking or life-changing for her.

Eventually, the truth of writing into the dark will sink in for Karen and, I hope, for you: As I keep saying, what's important is THAT you write, not WHAT you write.

No matter how much you agonize and strive to make any individual story "right" or Perfect, it won't be right or perfect to someone.

You have zero control over the outcome. None.

It's a fact that if you hover over a story, rewriting and revising and polishing your original voice off of it even for years, some readers will LOVE your story, and many more will like it. A few will hate it, and a few, possibly, will think they found a plot hole.

And that brings us back to writing into the dark.

Guess what? If you write your story to the best of your ability and skill level at the time and then let it go (publish it) and move on to the next story, some readers will love it, and many more will like it. A few will hate it, and a few, possibly, will think they found a plot hole. (Sound familiar?) (grin)

So it's your choice.

You certainly have the right to write a novel in a few weeks or months or years, then spend time rewriting, revising and polishing. Or you can write it, give a first-reader and/or a copyeditor a crack at it, and then let it go (publish it) and move on to the next novel.

And the outcome will be exactly the same.

If I were in the former camp, at this point in my career I would have published a handful of short stories and (maybe) a handful of novels.

Instead, I've published almost 200 short stories (and their 30 attendant collections) and over 40 novels. And in a day or two I'll start another novel. And I'll continue to rack up 4- and 5-star reviews. (I don't watch those, but my wife does.)

So here's the bottom line: The closest you can ever come to perfection as a writer is, "I Don't Care What Anyone Thinks."

Seriously.

Now, I DO take into account what my first readers (one man and one woman) say, and their opinion is valuable to me, but I don't always take their advice. I make some minor changes (spelling, inconsistencies, etc.) that they spot. Then I publish the thing, forget it and move on to the next story.

At the moment, that probably sounds arrogant to some of you, but it really isn't. It only means this: I trust my voice, and I won't allow any critic (even myself) to derail it.

When you reach that place — I PROMISE — you will become vastly more prolific AND as long as you keep learning, your work will improve.

When you reach that seemingly arrogant vantage point (and you will), you will have released the notion that "This story is important," and you will have opened the doorway to freedom in your writing.

That freedom is invaluable, folks. It's the freedom to tell a story, publish it, and let it go as you move on to the next story.

I wish that for all of you.

Rolled out at 3:30 despite the late night. But writing the long topic above took some time. It's almost 7 a.m. and I'm meeting my friends for breakfast, so I'll close this and get it into the mail. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “A Different Path” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/a-different-path.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1460 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1460

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 10038
Total fiction words for the year..... 227839
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7240
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 84310
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 312149

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, April 7](#)

[April 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

I regret to report

Day 3 of my days off

Topic: Who a Story Is About

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I regret to report a massive sadness.

This morning, my wife told me she saw on Facebook that my dear friend and mentor Jim Glaser passed away last night. Jim and I occasionally talked about both music and writing. I will miss his insights, and him, a great deal.

For those of you who knew his music or the harmonies of Tompall and the Glaser Brothers (Tompall, Chuck and Jim), this is a sad occasion.

Jim and his brothers had a long career that started with them being “discovered” on their Nebraska farm by Marty Robbins. They accompanied him for many years, mostly singing background harmonies in live concerts and on many of his albums.

Later, the brothers went off on their own, for which the elder brother, Tompall, was the catalyst.

Later still, Jim forged a staggeringly successful independent career highlighted by such successful singles as “The Man in the Mirror” and “Lights of Albuquerque. He also wrote the smash single “Woman, Woman” as recorded by Gary Puckett & The Union Gap.

If you were never treated to Jim’s beautiful voice, you missed something incredible. You can see and hear him singing “Woman, Woman” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxvO9HJF3y0>.

Today is Day 3 of my days off. In a little while, we’ll have breakfast at my house (I’m cooking) and then spend the day visiting and touring whatever my friends want to see. Tomorrow I’ll be back in full form.

Topic: Who (Never “What”) A Story Is About

To subscribe to Reedsy’s weekly writing prompts newsletter, visit <https://reedsy.com> and poke around a little. You’ll find it. (grin)

In yesterday’s writing prompts newsletter, Ariel listed five writing prompts:

1. Write a story about an abandoned home.
2. Write a story about an abandoned amusement park.
3. Write a story about an abandoned school.
4. Write a story about an abandoned corner store.
5. Write a story about an abandoned town.

I believe these are interesting prompts, in part because they're intriguing. There's an inherent mystery (or conflict) in each of them: What caused the home, park, school, store or town to be abandoned in the first place?

From there, you can branch off into your (or your characters') chosen genre:

Did alien invaders cause it to be abandoned? (SF)

Do you not know what caused whatever was abandoned to be abandoned? (Mystery)

Were the effects or aftermath of war so bad that everyone left? (War/Action-Adventure)

Did illness or a similar fear-inducing occurrence cause the abandonment and/or are there ghosts about? (Horror/Suspense/Psychological Suspense)

In the midst of the rubble (if there's rubble) does the protagonist find something that bears international intrigue (biological or chemical attack, a rare wristwatch, a bit of recorded data)? (Thriller)

Do two people meet there as they search for answers? (Romance)

And so on. What other genres could a story about an abandoned town (for example) lead to? Pick your poison.

But once you pick it, regardless of genre, realize the story isn't "about" the abandoned whatever.

The story is about the characters' REACTION to the abandonment (the situation) and the setting (what's left, what is found, etc.)

Have fun!

No real diary today. Just the stuff above.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Pro Writers on Writing" at <https://terryodell.com/pro-writers-on-writing/>.

See “Challenge Still Open” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/challenge-still-open/>. I still say this is a great offer.

See “Can You Write Better Than a Robot?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/can-you-write-better-than-a-robot.html>.

Story ideas, anyone? See “The Machines That Will Read Your Mind” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-machines-that-will-read-your-mind/>.

Get your free copy of “The Paid Publishing Guidebook — 2nd Edition (2019 Edition)” by clicking <https://www.freedomwithwriting.com/freedom/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-2019-Paid-Publishing-Guidebook-2nd-Edition.pdf>. Couldn’t hurt, right? But yes, bring along a shaker of salt.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 640 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 640

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 10038
Total fiction words for the year..... 227839
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7880
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 84950
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 312789

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Freedom with Writing](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, April 8](#)

[April 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Today I'll start

Tutoring slot open

Topic: Who a Story Is About

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Today, sometime or other, I'll start a new novel. Maybe. The visit with my old friend went really well, interrupted somewhat by the sobering news about Jim Glaser's passing.

This morning, I watched/listened to a few of Jim's performances as a way to spend some time with him. It was enjoyable.

I heard from another possible tutoring student that s/he decided to pass at the moment (until s/he decides what specifically s/he needs to work on.)

So that means I still have room (time) in my current schedule to take on one more writer for tutoring. If you're interested, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

This stuff isn't one-size-fits-all, and it isn't hit-or-miss. We'll talk via email or phone, and I'll tailor a program specifically to suit your needs, to address any aspect of your writing and/or cycling, editing, cover design or publishing issues.

It costs nothing to find out what I can do for you specifically. Once we come to an agreement re what you need, we'll move forward a month at a time. The monthly cost and the number of months we continue the tutor/writer relationship will depend on your needs.

Topic: Writing Is Writing

The passing of Jim Glaser started me thinking about this topic. Jim not only had one of the best tenor voices anywhere, but over the years he was also a poet, a songwriter and finally a novelist.

Songs he wrote were recorded by a host of country music greats, but also by groups as diverse as Gary Puckett and the Union Gap and a rapper (I didn't quite catch the name in the interview in "Of Interest").

In his spare time, Jim was also an accomplished guitarist, and he mastered (vs. simply having his hand in) every aspect of music production, recording and showmanship.

I've long admired any consummate professional.

And all of that brought me to think about what being a consummate professional entails.

First, it entails a work ethic: the only way to be a professional is to work at your profession.

Second, and maybe more importantly, it involves ignoring false borders. In all-things music, for example, that means ignoring the fan-constructed borders between rap, rock, blues and country music.

Musicians love Music, period. It isn't uncommon to see rock, country, blues, rap and other musicians comparing notes. Performers will put their personal stamp on any song from any musical genre that intrigues them.

Witness Johnny Cash recording Nine Inch Nails hit, "Hurt." Witness "Don't Wanna Miss a Thing" by both Arrowsmith and Mark Chesnutt (and others). Hundreds of other great, timeless songs have been recorded by artists in seemingly opposed musical genres. I'm still waiting for someone else to record Lonestar's massive hit, "Amazed" because it's another of those timeless songs.

In our chosen profession of writing, being a professional means crossing (or ignoring) the borders between writing poetry, essays, articles, songs, short stories, novellas, novels and novel series.

In the purest possible sense, writing is writing and writers are writers. Yet incredibly, many writers wouldn't think of writing outside their chosen genre. For example, a novelist might never dream of writing a short story or a poem or a song.

Jim asked me one day during a phone conversation whether I thought he could write a novel. I was stymied by the question at first. I thought he was joking. Not because he *couldn't* write a novel but because he was so accomplished that I was amazed he'd even asked.

When I finally realized the question was serious, I said, "Of course you can write a novel. Think of how many songs you've written."

"Well, yes," he said, "but that's a different skill set."

I said, "That's true. It is a different skill set, but you use the same alphabet, the same sentences and parts of sentences, the same sense of timing and punctuation and..." so on.

We talked for another few minutes, and at the end of that conversation, he said, "Well, I'll let you go. I need to get started on that novel."

And he did.

His novel is called *Drowning on the Third Coast*, and it's available only in paperback and only through his website at <http://www.jimglaser.com/merchandise.php> (\$17). I wish it were available more widely, but we never got around to talking about marketing.

Drowning on the Third Coast is a great novel and a great story. It's the story of going "on the road" in the '60s, '70s and '80s, back before everything changed.

Chances are, you've all heard Jim's songs (even if you weren't aware of it at the time). His talent, drive and professionalism translated well from one genre (songwriting) to another (writing the novel).

The point is, never limit yourself. If you're interested in writing in a different literary genre (poetry, short fiction, essays, novels, screenplays, etc.) do it.

Yes, you will have to learn a new set of skills, but many of the skills you already have will transfer without you even realizing it.

And once you learn the new skills required to write in your chosen new genre, those same skills will transfer back to other genres and improve your writing there.

You all know that I write short stories, novels and nonfiction. I've also had several articles published in The Writer, Writers' Digest, and other writerly mags.

I have five or six collections of poetry and hundreds of other poems. Believe it or not, for awhile (if not still) my poetry was part of the canon and was taught at the University of North Texas in Denton.

I've written a few dozen songs too. Some were silly things, meant only to be humorous. Some were serious. Back in the day ('70s and '80s), I submitted some of my songs to recording professionals. None were ever published or recorded to my knowledge.

But especially now that my general skills as a writer are vastly improved, Jim's passing has me thinking maybe I'll write some more. And I'll almost certainly write more poems. Not that I'll bore you with either of those. (grin)

But again, the point is, if it interests you, try your hand at it. Writing is writing.

Rolled out at 3 this morning, working my way back into my "normal" schedule, and used the first few hours checking the internet and otherwise as described above.

Took a long break at about 6, then wrote the topic above and did some other things.

Finally began to think about the next novel at 10 (right after I put on a load of laundry).

Nope. I remembered I need to find a good pic for a cover for Blackwell Ops 5, so I turned to that. I'm not quite back into my routine yet. I'll click back in over the next day or two.

I never rest on my laurels, but it's nice to take a look back and realize that taking another day or two to get back into my routine won't kill my career. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Never Give Up” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/never-give-up/>.

See “First Page Critique: Watch All Night” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-watch-all-night.html>.

See “Here’s How To Write A Damn Good Fight Scene” at <https://www.standoutbooks.com/heres-how-to-write-a-damn-good-fight-scene/>. I disagree with #5, but then, so do they. (grin) Read their #5 and then compare it with their explanation and example.

See “25 Poetry Markets Seeking Submissions During Poetry Month” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/25-poetry-markets-seeking-submissions-during-poetry-month/>.

For an almost hour-long glimpse into the life of Jim Glaser, [CLICK HERE](#).

See “Free Fiction Monday: Cowboy Grace” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/08/free-fiction-monday-cowboy-grace/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1220 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1220

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 10038
Total fiction words for the year..... 227839
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9100
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 86170
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 314009

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Authors Publish](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jim Glaser](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, April 9](#)

[April 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Today I'll start

Topic: The New World of Publishing

Daily diary

Of Interest (a LOT of links)

The numbers

Today I'll start that new novel. I've had four days away from fiction writing, and frankly, I'm jonesing for it. Or as my wife put it, "Honey, you're getting grouchy." (grin)

I thought I'd start writing again yesterday, but I wasn't ready. Instead I spent a lot of quiet time with Jim Glaser and thought about the recent visit with my old friend and did some other things to slowly move myself back into my normal routine.

This morning, I thought I'd take a brief look at grief and the grieving process.

It's an old truism that different people grieve differently. "Friend," to me, is the biggest word in the English language. I can think no more highly of anyone than to bestow upon him or her the title Friend. In fact, whether or not that friend is also a relative has no bearing.

When someone to whom I am a friend (my choice) passes, I spend the next day or two unable to shake the knowledge that even as I am doing something (writing, taking a shower, cooking, etc.) that person has performed that same action for the final time and will never do it again on this plane of existence. That's just my process.

Fortunately for me, a day or two later the immediacy of that loss, that knowledge, and that situation passes. I still remember them fondly and think of them now and then, but those thoughts don't intrude All Day and into every action like they do during that first couple of days.

And so the world keeps turning and I slip quietly back into my place in it. We simply do what we do. If I were a mechanic, I'd go fix a car engine. If I were a carpenter, I'd build something. If I were a lawyer, I'd devote my attention to my client.

I'm a writer, so I write.

Topic: The New World of Publishing

Awhile back, I mentioned almost in passing that I love the new world of publishing. Here's why:

I've written for most of my life and have had two nonfiction works and two books of poetry traditionally published (back in the early '90s). However, I've considered myself a professional writer for only about 5 years.

Five years ago on April 15 I wrote my first short story into the dark. Five years ago in mid-October (the 19th, I think) I started writing my first novel.

Under the old way of doing things (traditional publishing) today I would have written and published no fewer than 4 novels but no more than 8 (that's if the publisher allowed two novels per year).

I probably would have published only a handful of short stories, and I probably would not have published any short story collections.

But get this: It's a harsh truth that no matter who you are, it's difficult to be "discovered" by readers if you have only a handful of publications out there.

It's also difficult to improve your craft if you're writing only a novel or two per year. You simply don't have the ability to practice new techniques, like grounding the reader or adding depth or writing from all five (of the POV character's) physical senses and his/her opinions of the setting.

Common wisdom says you can't really get good at storytelling until you've written a million words of fiction.

But in the meantime, some readers will like what you've written no matter your skill level.

So you publish even that first story or novel so they can buy it. Then you forget it and move on to the next story or novel, and the next and the next.

In between stories, you're learning new bits of the craft through reading, workshops, etc. And in the next work and the next, you're applying what you learned and you're practicing.

Go you! (Dan, for you that would be "Ya'll geaux!")

I am a perfect example of all of the above.

In the past five years — specifically because of the freedom this new world of publishing affords us all — I've written and published almost 200 short stories plus the attendant 30 or so collections plus 42 novels.

Today, I'll start my 43rd novel. And all in less than five years.

In fact, at my current rate of production, this year alone I might write in the neighborhood of 24 novels. Which means I will have been entertained by my characters' stories 24 times.

As a side benefit, I'll have 24 more chances to be discovered by readers and 24 more streams of revenue from sales of those novels.

Can your production be as big as mine? The short answer is Sure.

Much depends on your situation. If you hold down a full-time job that isn't writing, your time is more limited than mine is. If you have children still living at home, your time is more limited than mine is.

But Dean Wesley Smith devotes well over 40 hours per week to non-writing job related activities, and he's much more prolific than I am.

The point is to develop a habit. Carve out the time to write from whatever else you have to do during the day (or weekend) and then allow nothing to interfere with that time (barring life rolls, of course).

And the bigger point is to keep the writing fun. If writing seems like drudgery or work to you, either change your attitude or find something fun to do to fill those hours. Life is far too short to unnecessarily spend any of it being miserable.

And the BIGGEST point is that it doesn't matter whether your production is greater or less than mine. What matters is that your production tomorrow is greater than your production today. At least until you hit a comfortable plateau. Then all you have to do is run with it.

And it's all made possible by this wonderful new world of publishing.

I've been torturing a mentoring client with detailing her day (for herself) in half-hour increments to see whether and how much wasted time she has. I do the same exercise a couple of times per year, and I'm due. I also recommend it, so I'll kill two birds with one stone and do that in today's diary as an example for you.

Any "big blocks" of time can be detailed in a batch, such as: I rolled out at 2:30 this morning, came to the Hovel to enjoy a cigar and coffee while I wrote all the stuff above, searched the internet for items of interest, etc. I also added the topic above to my main blog. (grin) At this point, I'm good over there on the other blog up through mid-July. So that's a little heat off me.

To the house for a brief break for the first time at 4:30, then back to the Hovel to do some of the above, and back to the house at 6:15 to change clothes, grab breakfast and get ready to write. As you'll note, I don't take a break every hour while writing nonfiction and doing other necessary things. I only break every hour (or thereabouts) while writing fiction.

So to the house at 6:15, then back to the Hovel at 7. Now I'm beyond the routine, so from here it gets more detailed.

Beginning at 7, I played 15 minutes of Spider solitaire (yeah, it gets a lot of us) and spent 15 more minutes on the internet, answering email, etc.

Ten more minutes of browsing cigars from a special email (nothing I was interested in, as it turned out) and I turned to Blackwell Ops 6 at 7:40. I'd finish the title, but I don't know who the POV character will be yet. (grin)

At 8, after I'd written 158 words on my new novel (Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task), up to the house again to spend a little time with my girl before she heads off to work.

At 8:25 back to the Hovel. Email for a few minutes, and back to the WIP at 8:30.

At 10:10 I answered a couple of emails, then took another break at 10:20. (I [and my first chapter] went a little long, but the WIP is now a little over 1700 words.) By the way, I'm no whiz kid. The book probably will slow down a bit now that I reached the end of the first chapter. Spot-research and all that.

At 10:30 I'm back in the Hovel. A couple of emails, a few more items added to "Of Interest," and back to the WIP at 10:50.

Nope. Put my fingers on the keyboard and the phone rang. It was my buddy, who's planning to visit in a couple of weeks. (He's one of the few who can't interrupt me because as a Friend he's more important to me than anything he might interrupt.) So we talked, solved roughly half the world's problems, and I went back to the WIP at 11:15.

Another 800 words and another break at 12:20. A few forkfuls of cole slaw up at the house for lunch and back to the Hovel and the novel at 12:35. Wrote about 200 more words and had to go into research mode at 12:50.

Well, my POV character's going to Aden, Yemen, I guess. So I'm researching Yemeni names, places, landscape, etc. The UPS guy showed up at 1:20. To the house to receive a package and store the contents. Back to the Hovel at 1:45 and back to research.

Probably no more writing today. In fact, I'll go ahead and call it. I'll do more research with the last hour or so of my day before I have to go do things at the house.

But I think this gives you a good overview of how to keep tabs on your day in 15- to 30-minute increments. (grin)

Note: If you try this exercise, it's best to do it for at least two days: one interior weekday (Tues, Wed, Thur) and one weekend day. If you don't already have a regularly scheduled writing time each day, this can help you find time for that.

As for the novel, I'm not worried in the slightest. It's running, and actually faster than I expected at the beginning.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "On Publishing Luck and Royalties" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/on-publishing-luck-and-royalties/>. (I'm trying to get MailChimp to do their job, but no luck so far.)

See "A University Masters Degree in Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-university-masters-degree-in-publishing/>.

See "First Page Critique: Shadows And Suggestion" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critiqueshadows-and-suggestion.html>.

See "Promotion Items at the Freebie Table" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/04/promotion-items-at-freebie-table.html>.

See "Dog Number Twelve: The Brothers Most Grim" at <https://www.leelofland.com/dog-number-twelve-the-brothers-most-grim/>.

See "My Great Galapagos Adventure – Part 5" at <https://terryodell.com/my-great-galapagos-adventure-part-5/>.

See "MIPTV: 'Jack Reacher' Author Lee Child to Develop True-Crime Series" at <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/jack-reacher-author-lee-child-working-true-crime-series-miptv-1200066>.

See "WWII's Most Decorated Spy Was An American Heiress with A Wooden Leg" at <https://crimereads.com/wwiis-most-decorated-spy-was-an-american-heiress-with-a-wooden-leg/>.

See "For Sale: The Entire Town of Story, Indiana" at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/story-indiana-for-sale>. Seriously, how cool would it be for a writer to own a town named Story? In one building, Dan and I could open a "story (or novel) while you wait" shop for tourists. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2774

Nonfiction Words: 1860 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4634

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774

Total fiction words for the month.....	10960
Total fiction words for the year.....	230613
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10960
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	88030
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	318643
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, April 10](#)

[April 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

It's so good

I've been thinking (oh-oh)

Writing flash fiction

Pro Writers Writing

Topic: How I Learn to Write

Daily diary

Of Interest (a LOT of links)

The numbers

Was my break really only four days long? When the floodgates opened again, it seemed as if it had been four weeks. It feels very good to be writing again.

I've been thinking a lot lately about my 10-novel western series, The Wes Crowley Saga. I wrote it out of order. I wrote what ended up being books 4, 5, and 6 first. Then I wrote books 1-3, then 7-10.

As you know, I don't usually go back and mess with anything I've already written. But because that saga makes up such a large part of my oeuvre (and because I flat love the story), I think I'm going to make an exception.

After I finish my current WIP (the 6th novel for this year), I think I'm going to go over at least Books 4-6 and let myself touch them. Mostly I'll improve the pacing.

This isn't something I would normally do or something I would recommend. But again, it's TEN books. In fact, if you read them in the sequence in which I wrote them (Books 4-6 first, then 1-3) you'll actually see my storytelling improve, especially with regard to ease of reading and pacing.

So maybe I'll go back and fix that. I do it for other people, so why not do it for myself?

If anyone's interested in learning to write (or writing) true flash fiction (99 words or fewer), you can now download *The Art of Writing Flash Fiction* on my website at <https://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/>. Scroll down. You'll find it. It's very short, very concise, and loaded with information.

While you're there, look around. There's a lot of stuff, and it's all free.

Pro Writers Writing is still there, though the past couple of days it hasn't posted to email automatically like it's supposed to. (*UPDATE: It posted to my email this morning like it's supposed to every day. It also posted one of the two it "missed" before.*)

I'm still exploring MailChimp to try to figure out why it doesn't send every day at 7 a.m. (Arizona time), as it's supposed to. Rest assured I'm doing everything I can.

In the meantime I recommend adding PWW to your Bookmarks (or whatever it's called in your browser) and checking it once a day.

You might also check your spam folder every day. This morning I found three "Xxxx left a comment on PWW" emails in my spam folder. (I have gmail.)

Topic: How I Learn to Write

Awhile back, I wrote a topic (here) and a post over at [HarveyStanbrough.com](https://harveystanbrough.com) on how I write. It was titled [How to Write Like I Do](#). I recommend it.

This morning, I received feedback from one of my two first readers for my recently completed *Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden*.

First, a bit of explanation.

Dean Wesley Smith pretty vehemently recommends having only one first reader. I understand his reasoning. Basically, it's "too many cooks spoil the stew."

But I like having two. Most importantly, one is female and one is male. As such, each brings his or her truly diverse and invaluable perspective to the reading.

For another, each brings his or her life experience to the reading. Both are accomplished poets. That's important to me because they both know timing, pacing, word choice, etc.

Both also enjoy the Blackwell Ops stories and other stories similar to those. So I know they actually want to read them and be entertained by them.

Finally, both also bring knowledge of various aspects of the lives of the Blackwell Ops characters to the reading. For just one example, both are at least familiar with Many Things French (and/or Cajun). For another, one is well-versed on period/regional clothing, and the other is familiar with weapons and police procedures. And so on.

So they give me great input and occasional great insights into things I might not have considered as I recorded my characters' story (and things the characters themselves might not have divulged to me).

You might ask, "But don't your characters reveal everything about themselves to you?"

The short answer is *No, they don't.*

When you meet someone new, even a person who will eventually become a friend, do you divulge everything about yourself?

Of course not. And I'm not talking about privacy here or the skeletons in your closet. I'm talking about things that are not necessarily secrets. It isn't that you withhold those things intentionally. It's just that some aspects of your life are so routine to you that you don't think to divulge them.

So it is with characters.

So to How I Learn to Write.

I don't mean how I *learned* to write. I mean how I learn to write even as I'm in the midst of writing.

First, I learn from my characters and how they get into and out of situations. I learn from how they deal with stressors (events or other characters). Surprisingly, my characters very seldom approach or deal with situations and other characters in the same way I would.

But that's all internal. It's all between me and the characters and their story.

Then I finish the story and send it off to my first readers. They read it and send it back, and a whole new level of learning begins.

Often, I'll take-off an hour or a few hours or a day from writing my WIP to read their comments on the previous novel. I do that so I can learn, then integrate (but subconsciously, always subconsciously) what I learned into the new WIP.

Sometimes I'll go all the way back to the beginning of my WIP and read through the whole thing (cycling) as I allow my fingers to rest on the keyboard.

Inevitably, I'll add to the WIP some of the things I learned from reading my first readers' comments on the previous novel, especially in the same series.

I'm writing Book 6 of the current series now, and I'm still learning about the series overall and about the characters and situations and locations specifically.

And it's a ton of fun.

Of course, I also take an hour or two here and there to learn "formally" from a new workshop I've bought into. But I often learn just as much from the invaluable input of my first readers.

So at some point, when I get feedback from my other first reader, I'll set everything else aside for a short while and read over their recommendations.

I'll apply what works for me and discard the rest. And I'll learn a little more about writing.

Rolled out at 3:30, but I woke up in a bad mood for some reason. I woke up groggy and confused and stumbled through my morning ritual. I hope escaping back into my WIP will help with that.

Did all the usual stuff and finally headed to the house for a break at 7. Shower, change of clothes, long, leisurely breakfast (a new concoction I dreamed up) and finally back to the Hovel at 8:30.

I spent the next TWO HOURS doing something stupid. I looked at reviews on Amazon. Most of them were good. Natch, there were a few bad, at least one for entirely the wrong book (similar title, why the hell doesn't Amazon remove *those* reviews?) and one that obviously panned my book (a nonfiction) without ever having read it. Sigh.

Like I said, even looking at them in the first place was just a stupid thing to do. Especially with my mood today.

I'm not going to return to the novel today. Too much of me might seep into the story. I'm going to mow the yard, spend some quality time with my little girl, and maybe do some publishing stuff.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Costs of Creation” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/costs-of-creation/>.

See “How to Sell eBooks at Cons and Book Festivals” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2019/04/07/how-to-sell-ebooks-at-cons-and-book-festivals/>.

See “Dear Hollywood Producer” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/dear-hollywood-producer.html>. This one could have been titled “If the check is big enough, I won’t even care.” (grin)

Not about writing, but please see “Stay Secure Online with Virtual Credit Card Numbers” at <https://www.creditcardinsider.com/blog/virtual-credit-cards/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1370 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1370

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10960
Total fiction words for the year..... 230613
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 89400
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 320013

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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 Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, April 11](#)

[April 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Sometimes I wonder

Topic: If You're a Writer, Write

Daily diary

Of Interest (a LOT of links)

The numbers

Sometimes I wonder whether anyone's still reading these silly entries. I mean, I know a few people are, those with whom I'm working closely. But sometimes I wonder otherwise whether all this is worth it.

Kris Rusch's post makes even this nonfiction writing (and wondering) better. Her post in today's "Of Interest" reminded me that I chat with my friends and acquaintances here each day because I enjoy doing so.

She reminded me I do it because it's fun. The same reason I keep churning out novels and the occasional short story. Not because anyone will read it or get something from it, though certainly I hope they do.

But because it's what I want to do and it's fun. You know. The same reason I write anything.

Topic: If You're a Writer, Write

While so many are attending monthly writers' group or critique group meetings, rehashing the same tired advice writers have been swapping and kicking around for years, I write.

While so many spend hours, days, months or even years outlining and researching and rewriting and polishing and doing any number of other kind'a sort'a writing-related things that aren't actual writing... I write.

And while so many actively search for (and find) any of myriad other reasons not to write, all the while proclaiming they are writers, I sit quietly in a room and write.

When I'm invited to speak to writers' gatherings, I tell them things they've never heard before or things they've heard and dismissed because what I say doesn't jive with all the myths they keep repeating to each other — and which continue to not work.

What I want to say to them more than anything is what Robert Frost and Howard Nemerov told writers in similar gatherings at different times: "If you want to write, why are you here? Go write."

I'm occasionally told that for me, writing is easy (meaning that for the speaker, it isn't). "After all," they say, "you have dozens of novels and hundreds of short stories under your belt. You've been at it a long time."

And I say, "No, actually I've been a professional writer for only five years."

They said, "So how are you so prolific? It must be because you're a fast writer."

And I say, "No, I'm prolific because I actually write."

Five years ago, I had roughly the same conversation with New York Times and USA Today bestselling writer Dean Wesley Smith.

And he said the same thing back to me: "No, I'm prolific because I actually write."

And for me, finally, the little light came on.

There is one stark difference between a would-be writer and a writer. A writer actually writes.

Thanks to DWS, I finally understood that the 6 hours required to write a 6,000-word short story is still only 6 hours whether it's spread over a day or a week or a month.

And the 50 or 60 or 100 hours it takes to write a 50,000- or 60,000- or 100,000-word novel is still only 50 or 60 or 100 hours whether those hours are spread over a year or two or three years. Or a month. Or two weeks.

Seriously, the only problem to solve if you want to be a writer is the problem of application. You must apply the seat of your pants to the seat of your chair.

After that, you have only to let your fingers move over the keyboard to record what your characters are saying and doing as they (and you) race through their story together.

It simply is what it is. Writers write.

Rolled out at 3:30, answered several emails (two about editing projects, one with a flash of inspiration re mentoring a writer, a few others), read Kris Rusch's post and a few other things. To the house for a break at 4:50.

Back to the Hovel at 5:05. I updated the current post over at HarveyStanbrough.com with a note appended to the second paragraph, then wrote the topic above.

Another break at 6:30. To the Hovel again at 6:40, more email, very briefly to the novel, then at 8:15 another break to see my wife off and put on a load of laundry.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 8:30. Spent a few minutes on the novel, then received input on Blackwell Ops 5 from my other first reader. Woohoo!

However, today is a half-day, so I'll read and consider my first readers' input either this afternoon or tomorrow sometime. I need to add at least a few chapters to the WIP this morning.

I read over the topic above, then added it to the big site as a post for late July. To the novel at 9. The going will be slow today as I'm still alternating between writing and spot-researching, coming up on an action scene.

At 12:30, I have to get ready to go into town to join my wife in shopping. I'll file today's Journal after I get back. If I have time to write a little more, I will. If not, it's been a decent-enough day at a little over 1700 words.

Nope. I'll write more tomorrow. I'm approaching the front edge of an action scene. Woohoo!

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Great Novel Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-great-novel-challenge/>. Now THIS is something I'm going to give some thought. I'm writing the novels anyway. (grin)

See "Business Musings: Fun (How to Put the Fun Back Into Your Writing)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/10/business-musings-fun/>.

See "First Page Critique: The Secret of Thieves" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-the-secret-of-thieves.html>.

If you haven't visited for awhile, see "Free Downloads" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/>.

If you're interested in free books and writing reviews, see "Call for Reviewers" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/reviewers/>.

Fiction Words: 1776

Nonfiction Words: 990 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2766

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774

Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550

Total fiction words for the month.....	14588
Total fiction words for the year.....	232389
Total nonfiction words for the month...	13320
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	90390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	322779
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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

[The Daily Journal, Friday, April 12](#)

[April 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Thanks

Trad pubs?

Topic: Consistency Is Key

A new icon for PWW

Daily diary

Of Interest (a LOT of links)

The numbers

I read over yesterday's post again last night, and wow did it sound needy. (grin)

Anyway, thanks to all of you who commented on the post or in private emails to let me know the Journal matters to you. I appreciate it.

I kind of figured it mattered to some of you, but I admit it's nice to hear. If a particular edition of the Journal strikes you or is helpful, please consider visiting the website and leaving a comment.

Is anyone out there still pursuing a traditional publishing contract? If so, from time to time (like today), I'll put an item in "Of Interest" for you.

Please let me know either in a comment or via email at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I don't want to encourage you to do something I wouldn't normally recommend, but neither do I want to snub anyone who does things differently than I do.

Topic: Consistency Is Key

First, credit where credit is due. The catalyst for this topic was Terry Odell's excellent post on "Tips for Using Apostrophes" (see "Of Interest").

Say you have a character whose name ends in S, for example Thomas. At issue is whether to add another S after using the apostrophe at the end of the character's name.

I never do. In the same manuscript, I'll write "I went to Thomas' house before I went to John's house and then on to Bill and Susan's house."

I would never write "Thomas's house" because to me the added S sounds awkward. But that's just me. Writing it either way is correct.

The key is to be consistent within the story (of any length). If you write "Thomas' house" once, omit the extra S from after the apostrophe on any other character names that end with S.

(Yes, I note the LACK of consistency in not adding the S after "Thomas'" but adding it after names that do not end in S ("John's") but I don't care. The focus of my consistent pattern is narrower in this case.

There's also a "rule" to never use an apostrophe to indicate a plural. Yet one exception is to write "Billy got two A's, three B's and two C's on his report card." Or to write "Always cross your T's and dot your I's."

Using the apostrophe after the A and the I avoids reader confusion (with the words As and Is, respectively). But because you use an apostrophe after the A and I, for consistency you have to also use one after B, C, and T.

There's an ongoing argument among people who care and think they can change other people's minds regarding the "Oxford" comma, the third comma in a series, generally coming before the "and."

Some use it, some don't. I most often don't. But again, be consistent. If you use it, use it throughout a single work (or series). If you don't, don't. Just be consistent.

And hyphen use...

A couple of days ago in a review of one of my nonfiction books, a reader took exception to my personal rule of writing “A three year old boy was standing in the yard” vs. the Chicago Manual of Style’s rule to write it like this: “A three-year-old boy was standing in the yard” or “A three year-old boy was standing in the yard.”

I don’t omit the hyphens to be contrary. I omit them because I use the area directly above my neck for something other than a place to rest my hat. I am frequently a practitioner of an Original Thought Process. Which basically means I take responsibility for my writing. I, the writer—not some other person who contributed to a “style” manual—determine whether a piece of punctuation is necessary for clarity in my work. If it isn’t, I omit it.

Reading “a three year old boy” is clean, and I’ve never heard of anyone becoming confused as a result of the missing (and to me, unnecessary) hyphens.

The hyphen has only one effect: it forces the reader to read two or three words as if they are one word. Hence, I sometimes sit in the back seat of a car, where occasionally I am a back-seat driver. I occasionally go into the back yard of my home, where we used to have a back-yard swingset for the children.

Today, of course, the hyphen has been dropped, so those single words are now “backseat” and “backyard,” which has had the effect of confusing some writers. “Backseat” and “backyard” are adjectives, not nouns. They describe something that is located in them. They are not a place to go. To this day, I cringe whenever I read that a character got into the “backseat” of a car or went into the “backyard.”

Punctuation is a tool you use to direct the reading of your work. As such, it is something that should be used as necessary, but *only* when necessary and always with a thought in mind as to how it will directly affect the reader.

In my nonfiction book *Punctuation for Writers*, I didn’t regurgitate the rules of punctuation. I suppose if I had, the reviewer I mentioned above wouldn’t have had a problem with it.

Instead, I based my advice on scientific principles of how those tiny black marks directly affect the reader. And they do affect all readers in exactly the same way.

Some punctuation forces the reader to take a long pause. Those marks are the period, the colon, the exclamation point and the question mark. Some force the reader to take a medium pause. Those are the semicolon and the em dash.

Remember in school the teacher said to use a colon after a complete thought to introduce a list that follows the thought? That’s why, because the colon forces a long pause to ready the reader to receive the list.

But if the list comes before the complete thought, you use an em dash. The medium pause gives the reader a break, but rushes him sooner to the “important” information that explains the significance of the list.

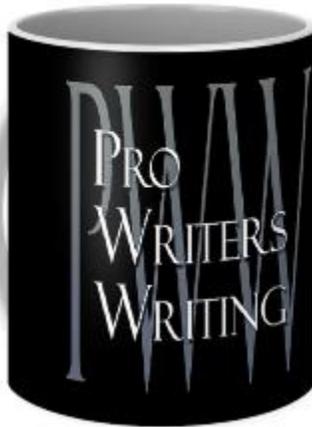
And one bit of punctuation, the comma, forces a short pause.

None of the other punctuation marks (parens, en dash, apostrophe, quotation marks) create a pause at all. For lack of a better term, I call those “spelling” punctuation.

If you have trouble with punctuation, or if you think of it as a necessary evil rather than a tool to use to direct the reading of your work, I encourage you to give my Punctuation for Writers a try. You can find it wherever ebooks are sold. If you ask nicely, I might even send you one free.

The point is, whether you choose to use or not use the possessive apostrophe after a name that ends in S or to use or not use the Oxford comma or to use the hyphen as intended (or blindly follow someone else’s “style” guide), do so consistently.

Consistency is the key to less-confusing writing.



While back my friend Robert sent me a mockup of a coffee cup with the PWW logo on it.

This morning I changed the icon (the little pic that appears alongside the URL) to that mockup. (grin)

Here’s the photo in case you want to see it:

Had a rough night and rolled out at 4 this morning. To the Hovel where I followed my usual routine, then to the house at 6 for a break.

Back to the Hovel at a little after 7 where I was pleased to find PWW posted on schedule. I did a lot of other work (the topic above, posting to the big blog, etc.) then returned to the house to see my wife off.

Back to the Hovel and the novel (finally) at 9:30. Today should be a good writing day.

And it was. And I’m still on the verge of the action scene. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Challenge Questions” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/challenge-questions/>.

See “Tips for Using Apostrophes” at <https://terryodell.com/tips-for-using-apostrophes/>.

Via AuthorsPublish.com see “Text Publishing” (a small tradpub house) at <https://www.textpublishing.com.au/manuscript-submissions>.

Fiction Words: 4190

Nonfiction Words: 1350 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 5540

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774

Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550

Day 4..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740

Total fiction words for the month..... 18778

Total fiction words for the year..... 236579

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14670

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 91740

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 328319

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Apostrophe](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Hyphen](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [punctuation](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, April 13](#)

[April 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Not a lot

Topic: Take Your Time

Daily diary

Of Interest (a LOT of links)

The numbers

Not a lot around the internet this morning, so probably a relatively short post today.

I did take a few minutes to improve the copyright notice. It appears at the bottom of every page. Stop by <http://prowriterswriting.com> and take a look.

Topic: Take Your Time (Revisited)

As I was discussing with one of my mentoring writers a day or two ago, sometimes it's necessary to take your time while writing.

Yes, I write around 900 to 1200 words per hour.

But if you do the math, that's only 15 to 20 words per minute. And a minute is a long time. For comparison, how many WPM did you type in high school? (Mine was around 80 WPM.)

So I'm just saying, even writing 900 to 1200 words per hour leaves a lot of time for staring off into space.

This doesn't mean you invoke the conscious, critical mind or try to figure out where the story's going next. That isn't your job. Your job is only to convey what the characters say and do.

But sometimes you have to slow them down.

Like me, my POV character wants to rush from one action scene to the next or from one dialogue-filled scene to the next. It's tempting at times even to leave a placeholder, such as <insert maid description here> and move on.

My advice is don't do it. Slow down a little.

Take the time necessary to describe what the POV characters notices about the maid. It will take only a sentence or two, and then you can move forward, still in the creative subconscious.

Take the time necessary to convey what the POV character sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels (physically and emotionally) in the setting, and his/her opinions of that setting. I do that at least once in every major scene, usually at the beginning. It's called "grounding the reader."

Again, it takes only a few minutes, a few sentences, and it will enable the reader to feel as if s/he is in the setting and the scene with the character. And a reader can't be more engaged in your story than that.

And again, then you can move forward, still in the creative subconscious.

But what about the alternative? What if you WANT to just leave a placeholder and forge ahead?

You will evoke your conscious, critical mind when you "look for" that placeholder (or those placeholders) later.

And when you find the placeholder, you'll still be in the conscious, critical mind. You'll want to get the description of the maid "right" instead of just recording what the POV character notices. And chances are, you'll bore the snot out of your reader.

So don't do it. Rein-in your POV character's (and your) desire to rush forward to the next heart-pounding, high-action scene.

Write what's necessary in the moment to pull your reader into the setting. Write what's necessary in the moment to enable your reader to see the maid, to scent her perfume, to visit for a moment the scents from the POV character's grandmother's kitchen evoked by the maid's perfume, etc.

Your writing (and your bank book) will be richer for it.

For more on this topic, see my previous post "Take Your Time" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/take-your-time/>.

Rolled out a little after 2 a.m. this morning, as I planned last night. Today should be a big day of writing, but it's also Saturday, so I need to knock it out early. (grin)

I hit all my usual haunts, answered several emails, and wrote the topic above. I took a break at 4:10.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 4:30.

Cycling through what I wrote yesterday and writing, occasionally interrupted by emails, most often notifications from posts on which I previously commented. I tend to jump out of my story, read and/or respond to those, then jump back into the story. It's going to be a short (but good) day anyway. (grin)

I decided to call it at 10:30, but a pretty good day. Gonna spend the balance of the day on an edit (for another writer) and with my girl. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Black Hole Dreams” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/black-hole-dreams.html>.

See “Do Books Become Outdated?” at <https://terryodell.com/do-books-become-outdated/>.

See “Tom Nolan on the Enduring Legacy of Ross Macdonald” at <https://crimereads.com/tom-nolan-on-the-enduring-legacy-of-ross-macdonald/>.

See “Who Really Cares About Research?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/who-really-cares-about-research/>.

Fiction Words: 2662

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3412

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402

Total fiction words for the month..... 21440
Total fiction words for the year..... 239241
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15420
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 92490
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 331731

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, April 14](#)

[April 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quote of the day and thanks

Another BundleRabbit bundle

Yesterday I ordered

Topic: “Take Your Time: Part 3”

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

*Via **The Passive Voice***, “If you have a story that seems worth telling, and you think you can tell it worthily, then the thing for you to do is to tell it, regardless of whether it has to do with sex, sailors or mounted policemen.”

— Dashiell Hammett

I think I forgot to mention awhile back I’m in another BundleRabbit bundle called Eclectica. My short story collection S, F, & H is in that one. Today there’s an interview with yer uncle Harv over at <https://creativebarbwire.wordpress.com/2019/04/14/sunday-surprise-228/>. Probably nothing you don’t already know.

Yesterday I ordered the updated, revised version of The Copyright Handbook (NOLO) yesterday. Afterward, my wife reminded me I’d bought the 2011 version earlier. If you’d like that one, email me at harvestanbrough@gmail.com with your snail-mail address. I’ll charge you \$10 and ship it to you.

If you’d like to get your own 2019 copy (ebook or both ebook and print), visit <https://store.nolo.com/products/the-copyright-handbook-coha.html>.

Topic: Take Your Time: Part 3

Thanks to everyone who commented on “Take Your Time (Revisited)” either on the post or via email. I appreciate it and I’m glad it helped. Here’s some more.

“Take your time” has almost become a mantra for me.

I’ve pretty well mastered [Heinlein’s Rules](#), especially the all-important Rules 1, 2 and 3. I’ve also pretty well mastered writing off into the dark, which means keeping my conscious, critical mind (the hell) out of my writing.

Yet even as I'm writing, I have to remind myself occasionally to slow down, calm my mind and my characters, and record parts of the story that the POV character is seeing, hearing, smelling, etc. that are important to the forward momentum of the story.

It usually takes only a sentence or two to describe a secondary or flat (cardboard) character that the POV character encounters. But the description needs to be there. It fills-in for the reader what would otherwise be a non-entity, a blank space where you assured the reader a person was standing just a moment before the flat character is gone as the POV character moves past him or her.

Likewise, it takes only a sentence or two or three to fill in important details (and the POV character's opinions) about the setting that the POV character notices.

For example, as the POV character enters an office where an altercation is about to take place, s/he would probably notice the "messy" (or "immaculately clean") desk, the desk chair, and the "thin, sickly looking" or "healthy" jade or rubber tree in a pot in one corner, and so on.

The POV character would also most likely notice if the office were "chilly" or "warm." S/he probably would also notice an "antiseptic" smell or "a hint of perfume" or "the stench" (or "sweet aroma") of pipe smoke.

Include those things (and the file cabinet and the "comfortable, overstuffed, brown" or "uncomfortable, stern, wooden" guest chair or the "presumptuous" certificates or "incriminating" photo on the wall, etc.) in the description.

Why? Because you can't know in advance (you're WITD, remember?) how the altercation will go.

When you record what the POV character sees, hears, smells, feels, etc. as s/he enters the office, you give the story the space it requires to let the altercation proceed however it will. Maybe the bad guy will end up on the floor, his head near the pot that holds that jade plant. But maybe before he ends up there, the POV character will clear the desk or upset the desk chair (or both) with his body.

Maybe the POV character will slam him against a wall, an action that will cause those certificates or photo(s) to fall or hang at an awkward angle. And so on.

But those items can't come into play in the scene if they aren't there. Few things are more annoying to a reader than part of a scene suddenly appearing when it wasn't there before.

How can a photo frame shatter on the floor if there was no photo hanging on the wall or sitting on the desk before the altercation began?

"Maybe," you say, "the POV character didn't notice a particular framed item on the wall until it shattered on the floor."

Of course, that's entirely possible. In that case, probably the POV character noticed only "a 'pretentious smattering' of photos and/or diplomas on the wall when he came in.

Later, during the altercation when one of those items falls to the floor and shatters, the POV character zooms-in or focuses on it (notices it) and realizes it's a particular diploma or photo that provides a clue s/he needed.

The possibilities are endless, but not if the items that produce them aren't there in the first place.

The point is, those things are all in your mind and in the POV character's perception. But if they don't make it onto the page, the reader can't see, hear, smell, etc. them and won't be in the scene with the POV character in the first place.

The POV Character's Opinion

One of the more difficult concepts for me to "get" for the longest time was to insert the POV character's opinions of the setting into the scene.

Yet the POV character's opinions of the setting are all-important because they provide a little more insight into the character him- or herself and enhance the scene for the reader.

All of the items above in quotation marks are the character's opinions. A "thin, sickly-looking" jade plant in a chipped red-clay pot evokes a different, more evocative image than a jade plant in a pot.

Maybe when the bad guy's head hits the pot in which the jade plant resides, half of it breaks off and lays across his face (justice). But it probably wouldn't do that if it weren't sickly and weak in the first place.

Maybe where the pot was chipped it breaks and a bit of dirt spills onto the bad guy's eyes. Who knows?

Now let's talk for a moment about cycling.

Chances are, you won't put everything necessary into the scene the first time through. I usually don't. My POV character (and/or the action in the scene) surprises me most of the time.

So at the end of the writing session I take a break. When I come back and read (cycle) through what I just wrote, I add things that the POV character deem necessary, whether those things are items in the setting or the POV character's opinions of those items. Then I move on into the new writing.

(DWS does this about every 400-500 words. I do it about once every scene, so about once every 1000 to 1500 words.)

And during cycling too, after the scene has ended and the smoke has cleared, I might remove things (descriptions, opinions) that didn't matter to the scene in the aftermath.

By the way, you can call this "editing" or "revising" or "orange marmelade" if you want. What you call it doesn't matter as long as you stay in the creative, subconscious mind while you do it. Don't allow yourself to be critical. You aren't in the story. The POV character is.

When I cycle through what I've written, I'm usually what Stephen King calls a "putter-inner," but occasionally I'm a "taker-outer." (grin) In some stories I'm both.

It's all about balance for the reader. You want to draw the reader deeper into the scene, but you don't want to include things that are not necessary to the scene.

But be careful. Do most offices have an I-love-me wall? Yes. So it should be there, even if it's only a quick "smattering of pretentious certificates." Because otherwise your reader will see a bland, blank wall.

Of course, if the POV character notices the walls are "oddly bare," that's fine too. But put it on the page. Because that too is part of the setting.

To further enhance this topic, see James Scott Bell's "Smell the Story" in "Of Interest" today.

Finally, by way of personal example, here's the beginning of a scene I wrote yesterday from my current Blackwell Ops novel:

I approached Mr. Robbins' doorway as if I'd lived there all my life. Without breaking stride, I grasped the dark, cast-iron handle, worked the thumb latch and pushed the door open.

The first thing I saw was through an open, arched doorway to my left front: the blue-white square of a ribbed a-frame undershirt stretched over a broad back.

A television set I couldn't see cast that odd blue light as what sounded like a male news commentator rattled on in Arabic.

The man in the undershirt was broad but appeared to be a little less than six feet tall, so a few inches shorter than I am. He was standing in front of a small wooden table situated next to a dingy brown, cloth-covered recliner in the otherwise dim room. Against the wall to his right was a couch covered in the same fabric. He was hunched slightly forward, his elbows, hairy upper arms, sloped neck, dark-clad legs and sock-feet in view in the eerie light.

Only his forearms and hands were missing from that initial image. They were in front of him as he held and manipulated something.

I hoped it wasn't a pistol. But if it was I'd feed it to him.

Apparently the sound of the television blanked out the noise of me working the latch on the door. The house was warm, too, and apparently the rush of cooler air I admitted hadn't reached him yet. He hadn't reacted to either one.

The initial instant over, I shoved the door with my right heel and strode through the arched entrance. As the door slammed, I said, "Hello there."

He ducked instinctively and pivoted to his left.
In his right hand was a pistol. In his left, a magazine.

As he brought his left hand toward his right, the magazine clacked against the butt of the pistol and I hit him in the center of the face.

As I hope you can tell, this entire excerpt happened in the space of a second or two of real time. This is how you slow time down to provide the description the reader needs to pull him or her into the setting and scene while establishing a basis for what's about to happen. Maybe most importantly, it puts the reader into the place of the POV character. (grin)

Despite my best efforts to get an early start, I rolled out just before 3 this morning. Then some of you guys encouraged me with your comments and I wrote the topic above. (See the effect your comments have?) (grin)

In fact, for the first time in a long time I'm considering teaching an in-person seminar (workshop) on the topic of Writing Scenes (to include setting, taking your time, etc.).

Around 5 I took a break. Back in the Hovel and to the novel (finally) at 5:30. Might be a short day today.

A LOT of cycling today and enough added new words to call it a good day. Especially for a Sunday.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Recharging" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/recharging/>. (This post didn't go out automatically. I'm still working on this problem.)

See "Do We Really Own Our Digital Possessions?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/do-we-really-own-our-digital-possessions/>. A bit long, but definitely worth the read for TPG's take on it.

See "Smell Your Story" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/smell-your-story.html>.

See “Crows Continue to Astound Us” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/the-crow-continues-to-astound-us/>. Fascinating.

See “Crows Never Forget a Face” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/crows-never-forget-a-face/>.

Fiction Words: 2087

Nonfiction Words: 1970 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4057

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489

Total fiction words for the month..... 23527
Total fiction words for the year..... 241328
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17390
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 94460
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 335788

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, April 15](#)

[April 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Notre Dame Cathedral

Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan

I couldn't get through the OP

Topic: Mentoring (or Not), A Cautionary Tale

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

First and foremost, our hearts go out to the people of Paris and France as Notre Dame, which has stood since the 14th century, is on fire today.

I don't watch network news, so I first learned of this at around 1:15 p.m. from my dear friend Michael, for whom the Cathedral was once her parish church for a short while.

Of course, human beings are all about placing blame. The latest news I've heard (online, CNBC) says at the moment firefighters are treating the situation as if the fire was caused by an accident probably from some of the renovations ongoing in the Cathedral.

Let's hope that's the case, and that there are no human beings on Earth ugly, hateful and mean-spirited enough to demolish such a lovely icon of peace and spirituality.

I won't be writing more today.

Blackwell Ops 4: Melanie Sloan released today. I just have a gut feeling that this series is going to "hit" in the minds of readers. I hope so. Anyway, it's released so I uploaded it to BundleRabbit this morning.

I argued with myself about whether to even post the following link. I couldn't get through the original post, but you might find The Passive Guy's comments enlightening at the end of "The Golden Age of Youtube Is Over" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-golden-age-of-youtube-is-over/>.

Via Kevin Tumlinson's newsletter, "Click this link to find a whole bunch of exciting, FREE new thrillers from a collection of amazing authors: <https://geni.us/ngnTumlinson>." I checked. True story. (grin)

Topic: Mentoring (or Not), A Cautionary Tale

I spent an hour and a half this morning (not kidding) very carefully crafting a 360-word email to a young woman who wants my help with her writing.

We're all at various stages of writing ability. We all have our human glitches, our learning abilities and disabilities, our disconnects.

For just one example, I know people who can write several thousand words per day by dictation. What they speak into the recorder comes out clear and concise and in sequence, a complete story or novel, beginning to end. They can do that, cycle through one time, and be done.

I wish I had that capability, but I don't. My head just doesn't work that way. If it did, I could probably write upwards of 10,000 words of new fiction per day. (Talk about being prolific!)

But when I do things my way (or in the way I am able to do them) I'm a pretty good writer. And I like to share what works for me.

So as I wrote above, we all have our glitches and our own ways of learning.

Enter the mentoring relationship.

I see mentoring as a way of drastically cutting or flattening a learning curve. I see it as a good thing for both me and my students.

Everybody who's reading this can eventually learn exactly the same things I'm teaching my mentoring students. (With the proviso that you can "get it" from the way I "put it.")

But with my students I can focus on specifics. I can provide more deeply detailed information that goes to their specific needs.

As a result, my students will learn in a month or a few months what might take them years to glean from my blog posts. But that's only because both they and I are satisfied that they can learn from me.

Of my two current mentoring students, I've known one and her writing for several years. She's also attended a lot of my writing seminars. She and I both know she can learn from me because we've both seen her do it.

I've only just met my other student (and so far, only via email), but she's clear on what she needs to learn, and judging from her emails, she has a capacity to learn it from the way I teach. So again, we're both satisfied it's the way to go.

That sense of being satisfied is all-important.

We live in an age of scams. There are hundreds of organizations (ahem, cough, subsidy publishers) and individuals out there who are more than willing to take your money and not feel bad in the slightest that you don't get what you pay for.

I'm not one of them.

The thing is, I won't mentor a writer formally and take his or her money unless I'm relatively sure s/he can learn what I'm trying to teach and in the way I have to teach it.

So I wrote the young woman a carefully crafted email trying to draw her out. Before I'll agree to mentor her, I need to know who she is as a writer.

So in my email to the prospective student, I advised her to take her time and tell me all about herself as a writer. And to be bluntly honest because there really are no wrong answers.

I also asked more specific things like the following:

How long have you been writing? How often do you write? And when do you write? Every day, once a week, when?

How did you do in school? What learning abilities and disabilities do you have? Do you read a lot of fiction? What genres?

In what country or what region of the US do you live? (She uses Brit spellings.)

Do you tell people (friends, relatives, colleagues, clients) stories orally? If so, do the stories come out more clearly than when you're writing them down? (If so, maybe you're one who can dictate your stories.)

Do you outline or mind-map your stories before you write? (Be honest. Every writer is different, and again, there are no wrong answers.)

Tell me what frustrates you about writing (if anything). Be specific.

I hope she'll answer all of those things and more under the general "tell me about yourself" question.

Not to protect me, but so I can understand her perspective. So I can be relatively sure a formal mentoring relationship won't be a waste of my time and her money.

If writing stories is important to her (and it is), then it's equally important that she learns to do it well and from someone who can teach in the way she needs to learn.

Rolled out very early this morning at 1 a.m. But I was wide awake, so I made coffee, came to the Hovel, etc.

By the time I wrote the email I mentioned above and the things I wrote above, it was 5 a.m. A break, then to the novel to begin cycling at 6:30.

A break around 8 to see my wife off, then another at 10:30 with cycling finished and a little over 2200 new words written.

My high-action scene is over, so things will slow down a little bit now for a day or two. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Challenges Both Started” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/challenges-both-started/>.

See the comments on “Smell Your Story” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/smell-your-story.html#comments>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Mr. Alibi” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/15/free-fiction-monday-mr-alibi-3/>.

See “First Page Critique: Unearthed” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-unearthed.html>.

Fiction Words: 2220

Nonfiction Words: 1220 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3440

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489
Day 6..... 2220 words. Total words to date..... 15709

Total fiction words for the month..... 25747
Total fiction words for the year..... 243548
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18610
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 95680
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 339228

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, April 16

[April 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

We're a strange lot

Topic: Mentoring (or Not), A Cautionary Tale

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

We're a strange lot, we humans. I left work and turned on the television yesterday, then flipped through news channels (all of the "biggies" as well as a few lesser-knowns) for coverage of the Notre Dame tragedy.

There was good coverage for about an hour, complete with all the drama of disbelieving news anchors, trembling in their chairs as they guided on-scene witnesses through first-hand accounts of what was happening at the moment.

Then news came down that the fire was most likely caused by an accident. That it resulted from something one of the workers did while working to renovate the cathedral.

It wasn't terrorism.

And coverage stopped.

Know what? The fire was still what the anchors themselves called a "tragedy of global proportions." We still lost much of an almost 1000 year old landmark.

But terrorists didn't do it (apparently). There was no explosion. No lives were lost. Old news. Let's move on.

And I realized (again) why I stopped watching television news shows some 10 years ago.

The burning and loss of Notre Dame Cathedral is a massive tragedy. One reporter said Paris is more than a beautiful city. It's an idea. And Notre Dame Cathedral is the heart of that idea.

I agree. But like all great tragedies, it wasn't meant to be sensationalized in the first place. Better that those whose hearts were actually harmed by its loss commiserate over the horrific event among themselves.

As the throngs of people of all faiths, nationalities and walks of life did on the streets of Paris. And as countless others around the world did and are doing long after the television networks simply lost interest.

Shame on them.

Topic: Sources of Research

I recently saw a post on why writers shouldn't use films (and ostensibly, probably, television shows) for research. (This was not [Michaele's recent excellent post at PWW.](#))

I almost shared the suspect post in today's "Of Interest" but it had several typos (*Goes to credibility, Your Honor*) and at least one glaring (to me) inaccuracy, so I couldn't bring myself to share it. (I won't divulge the name of the writer or of the post, so please don't ask.)

Then another thought occurred: Frankly, I didn't think this was a problem anyway.

Research is necessarily a conscious-mind activity. Which begs the question: Does anyone actively, consciously use films or television shows for research?

I don't even use "real-time" TV shows like "Cops" or "Live P.D." for research because most of what I see there is too boring to go into a novel.

Of course things we see and hear in our everyday lives seep into our subconscious mind. Many of those things come out eventually in our fiction.

But most of us understand that films and television shows, even those that are based on real-life or historical events, are fictions.

Films and television shows aren't intended to be factual representations of real life. They aren't intended to be used for research. They're intended to entertain, period.

I don't do what I would call extensive research when I write fiction. There, I said it. I do what I call "spot" research, probably 99% of it online.

If I'm not personally certain of a fact, I pop out of the story, spend maybe ten minutes (if that) learning what I need to know, then pop back into the story and continue writing.

For example, yesterday I learned that a direct flight from Aden, Yemen to London, England takes a little less than 9 hours. (For some reason, I thought it would be much longer.)

I also learned that there are "very few" direct flights from Aden to Heathrow. But my sources (I checked three) didn't say there were "none." And I'm writing a novel, so I fudged a bit and gave the POV character a direct flight. Because...

1. doing so wasn't completely inaccurate.
2. my story is FICTION.

If a conscientious, disbelieving, reader bothered to look up flights from Aden to London, all he would find, as I did, is that there are “very few” direct flights.

Had even one of my sources said there were “never” direct flights, I'd have added a few sentences, had the character spend a brief layover in another airport, then fly on to London.

I hasten to add that research is important. It's important to get details — even (or maybe especially) minuscule, obscure details — right in your story.

That's why, for example, I would never call a magazine for a small-arms weapon a “clip.” Because even if most readers would skip right over that misnomer, why risk running off the few readers who know the difference?

Granted, I know a lot about small-arms. But I don't know everything.

So before I hand my POV character a Beretta or Glock or Heckler & Koch or Sig-Sauer or (gasp!) Kimber semi-automatic pistol, I visit the manufacturer's site and spend a few minutes browsing handguns.

I read the specs of each weapon so I know how many rounds a magazine will hold. I look at the photos so I can identify and accurately name a smaller-frame weapon if the POV character is a female.

I've never owned or fired a Glock semi-automatic pistol. But I know the Glock 19 is intended for smaller hands and the Glock 17 is meant for larger hands. (Key “difference between the glock 19 and the glock 17” into a search engine.)

I also know that a cop in foot-pursuit of a dangerous, armed criminal on a busy city sidewalk wouldn't “aim for his leg” because it's an all-but-impossible shot.

But there's more to it than that.

In the space of those few seconds, the cop would weigh the welfare of the public if he *didn't* fire against the welfare of the public if he *did*.

Then, if he chose to fire, he would stop, bring himself under control, and aim carefully for center mass. Chances are, he would also be using hollow-point ammunition (another factor he would have weighed) because it probably wouldn't pass through the perp and endanger innocent lives.

I know that because I used to carry a .357 magnum S&W Model 19 Combat Magnum as a police officer. And it was loaded with hollow-point rounds. I even took the time to carve a shallow + in the top of the bullet because I thought it might improve the mushroom effect.

(As an aside, a “citizens group” in the community once lodged a complaint against the PD for allowing its officers to carry hollow-point ammo instead of copper-jacketed ammo. Their reasoning was that a copper-jacketed round would do less damage to the perp on its way through his body. They hadn’t considered the damage it might do to others after it passed through. Nor, apparently, had they considered the damage any .357 magnum bullet would do on impact with the perp.)

But I digress. The point is, yes, do what research you need to do. But no (if you have to be told), don’t believe everything you see or read as you’re being entertained.

And for goodness’ sake, don’t view films or television shows as a primary source of factual information.

Except maybe “Forensic Files.” That one’s pretty good. (grin)

Rolled out around 3:30 and made my way to the Hovel where (as you can tell above) I engaged in a one-man grouch fest. Sorry about that. Maybe.

I’m still exhausted from yesterday. No telling how that will play out today. I guess we’ll see. to the house at 6:30 for a break.

I feel much better, but I’m going to take a vacation day today. There are some things I need to shop for, and I’ll probably have to drive to Sierra Vista (more and larger stores). And then an acquaintance might stop by this afternoon for a visit.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Wow. See “Nancy Drew – Immortal Female Detective” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/nancy-drew-immortal-female-detective.html>.

See “The Book Bible” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/04/the-book-bible.html>.

See Duke Southard’s “Sustaining an Accidental Series” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/sustaining-an-accidental-series/>.

See “Up for a RONE Award. Need Your Help” at <https://terryodell.com/up-for-a-rone-award-need-your-help/>. Good luck, Terry!

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1400 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1400

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489
Day 6..... 2220 words. Total words to date..... 15709
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 25747
Total fiction words for the year..... 243548
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20010
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 97080
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 340628

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Duke Southard](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Michaele Lockhard](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, April 17](#)

[April 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

A great day

There's a great writing-book bundle

Thoughts on Realizations and Legacies

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I had a great day yesterday in Sierra Vista. I bought some new jeans that are actually blue, don't have frayed cuffs and aren't falling off me. (grin)

I also bought a few items to outfit my 4Runner for upcoming camping trips, got a haircut, and bought some other stuff. Topped it off with a visit to my favorite burger joint.

It was a necessary trip, but if I'd tried to write plus do all that, the whole thing would have been pressured and neither the writing nor the shopping trip would have been fun and relaxing. Like I said, it was a great day.

I hope yours was too.

There's a great writing book bundle out. I bought it just to get Kris' new book and Kevin J. Anderson's boxed set (mostly for the book on collaboration).

For only \$15, you can get 12 books on writing plus a lecture from DWS on how to carve out time to write. You can find the bundle at <https://storybundle.com/writing>.

Thoughts on Realizations and Legacies

Yesterday I took a day off, and it taught me something, or helped me realize something I hadn't thought of before.

Sometime or other I've settled comfortably into being a novelist. Others probably realized that before I did. In a way, it's odd that the realization didn't strike me until I'd written and published over 40 novels.

But in another way, I understand it.

Through the first probably 30 or so novels and novellas, I was more or less frantic.

I could only barely wait to get back to the story of Wes Crowley when I was away from it. At the same time, between Crowley novels, I was also frantic to branch out.

I tried my hand at writing science fiction and science fantasy, both "they come here" and "we go there." I wrote detective novels and war novels and crime novels and PI novels, both contemporary and dated noir. Romance worked its way into my repertoire, and even a bit of erotica for awhile.

The feeling through all of that was that it all might come to a screeching halt at any moment. Not that I might suddenly go off-planet or anything like that, but that the words or the ability to come up with ideas might desert me.

That's about the time I also realized a truism for professional writers: that it isn't important what I write, meaning no one story was any more "special" or any more important than any other story.

The only thing that mattered was that I keep writing. If I wanted to leave a legacy as a writer, I had to consciously make writing my number one priority.

And then somewhere along the line that settled into the realization that writing WAS my number one priority. It must be, because even when I'm not writing, the current or next story is uppermost in my mind.

Not that I'm taking the words or ideas for granted now, but I DO know now that I can take off for a day, enjoy myself in other pursuits, and that the stories will be waiting for me when I come back.

It's a relaxing, comforting feeling, and I consider myself fortunate to be in this position.

Now, even when I'm occasionally faced with the possibility of going off-planet, I know my stories and novels and poems and knowledge won't. All of those things will be around long after I've stopped "being" at all.

And that's a relaxing, comforting feeling too.

Rolled out early as usual this morning and did all my normal stuff. I cycled through what I wrote yesterday and added bits here and there.

Also answering emails back and forth with a possible mentoring client, so the going is a bit slow, but no worries there. The novel is moving along fine.

Today mostly I cycled through old scenes to correct a glitch.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Alison Holt's "Listen with a writer's ear" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/listen-with-a-writers-ear/>.

See Neil Gaiman's "It's been a while..." at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2019/04/its-been-while.html>. Not specifically about writing but very interesting. And he's thinking about posting to his blog more regularly again now.

See "First Page Critique: Coyotes" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-coyotes.html>. I almost didn't list this one. See what you think.

Fiction Words: 1202

Nonfiction Words: 750 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1952

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489
Day 6..... 2220 words. Total words to date..... 15709
Day 7..... 1202 words. Total words to date..... 16911

Total fiction words for the month..... 26949
Total fiction words for the year..... 2444750
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20760
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 97830
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 342580

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Neil Gaiman](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, April 18](#)

[April 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Dean Wesley Smith's free offer

Topic: Always Learning

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Dean Wesley Smith is incredibly generous. He is giving away his Pop-Up Workshop #9: “How Authors Hurt Their Own Writing and Sales and How to Stop.” No catches. No gimmicks.

The Pop-Up consists of twelve videos plus a short story prompt. See the link to his post (and the first video) in “Of Interest.”

ESPECIALLY if you think you don’t need this (critical voice) SIGN UP. Seriously.

Topic: Always Learning

Every morning I search the Internet for items for the “Of Interest” section. Every morning I read those items in full. Often, I also leave a comment. In addition to maybe helping someone else, commenting helps me clarify my thoughts on the topic in my own mind.

I tell myself I read those posts because I don’t want to list something here that I haven’t vetted myself. But the truth is, I’m hungry. Even if I think I know the subject matter of the post, I read it. And more often than not, I come away knowing more than I did going in.

In that way, I’m always learning. And really, I think that’s key to being a fiction writer.

In her post on Pro Writers Writing yesterday, Alison Holt advised us to always keep our eyes and ears open for character details when dealing with other humans. In other words, keep learning.

Another writer told me a long while back that when she saw pretty much anything, even in passing, she would think of how she would describe it in fiction. Again, in that way she was always learning and practicing.

Kris Rusch posted in her blog last night (in today’s “Of Interest”) on the conscious, critical mind. That’s a topic I talk about often here, but I posted a link to Kris’ post because she has a different take on it.

Frankly, her take didn’t work well for me. BUT it might work better for some of you than my own takes do. So I added the link. Different people learn in different ways.

You can hear the same information twenty times and it won’t sink in until one person says the same thing a little differently that twenty-first time. Then, bam! It all makes sense.

That’s why I often return to the same topics but address those topics a little differently or with different examples. What doesn’t quite touch one writer will descend on another as a major epiphany.

Which is why I constantly read all these blog posts and which is why I constantly read novels and short stories written by writers whose voice I enjoy.

It isn’t that I don’t already know what they offer. It’s that I don’t know their take on the subject matter, and their take might adjust my own take to my benefit. It almost always does.

I've been offering my services as a mentor for awhile now. But I realize not everyone who wants to can take advantage of that.

I understand, believe me. But the truth is, what I offer as a mentor is only a flattening of the learning curve.

Most of what I offer as a mentor is also available in my blogs and in the nonfiction books I've written. Examples of what I offer are available in my short stories, novellas and novels.

Granted, reading and understanding the information in all of those posts and nonfiction books will take longer than direct mentoring. But you still get the information, just a little more slowly.

And reading some of my fiction to see me putting that information to use takes time too (though I hope you'll also get some entertainment out of the deal).

On the other hand, you can also email me, free, to ask questions that arise as you read my nonfiction books (or even my fiction).

But the point is, the information is there for the taking.

*

Now then, I didn't mean for this to turn into some sort of advertisement. But here it comes. (grin)

While I'm on the topic of learning, I thought I'd list what I believe are the best nonfiction books I've written along with their retail price.

Although you can buy these books at any of several ebook vendors, they're also available directly from me. Just visit <https://harveystanbrough.com/nonfiction/>, browse the titles, and let me know which ones you'd like. If you order directly from me, I'll give you a 15% discount.

Punctuation for Writers \$9.99

Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction \$12.99

Notes from Writing the World \$9.99 (This contains the full text of Writing Narrative, The Seven Writerly Sins, Creating Realistic Characters, Writing Dialect, Writing Great Beginnings, Writing Flash Fiction and Self-Editing for Writers)

Poetry Techniques for the Fictionist \$9.99

Writing the Character-Driven Story \$9.99

The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life \$9.99 (a 13-month long compilation of my Journal blog posts)

I also have recorded several audio lectures. You can find those at <https://harveystanbrough.com/lecture-series/>.

Finally, if you're looking for info on digital publishing or on setting up a publishing business, visit <https://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/> and download **The Essentials of Digital Publishing, A Fact Sheet Toward Efficiency in Epublishing**, and/or **Quick Guide to Self-Publishing & FAQs**. All of those are free, along with a lot of other free stuff on the page, including a free novel.

Okay, end of advertisement and end of topic. (grin)

However you choose to keep learning, keep learning. If you do, your writing can't help but improve.

Rolled out a little early this morning, took a ridiculous amount of time looking up the books I listed above on Smashwords and adding the links, then removing them. Sigh.

I was about to go to the novel at 4:30, but then I remembered my buddy Dan decided to take the day off from writing for PWW. (grin)

So I wrote a short guest post titled "On Personal Challenges."

I hope and expect today will be a good writing day, but to the house for a break first at 6.

Then a lot more little stuff happened. (grin) Just normal pop-up stuff. Finally to the novel at 9:15.

When I glanced back at the notes from the earlier Charlie Task novel (Blackwell Ops 2) I realized I hadn't made a reverse outline for that one. (Oops.) So I had to search through BO2 for some character descriptions and references I'm using in this one (BO6).

That slowed things considerably, but overall not a bad half-day at over 2500 words.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "#9 Pop-Up Free" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/9-pop-up-free/>.

See "How Not to Write Courtroom Scenes" at <https://crimereads.com/how-not-to-write-courtroom-scenes/>. A great post, mostly to say "spontaneity rules."

See “Lecture In a Bundle” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lecture-in-a-bundle/>. This post refers to the writer bundle I mentioned yesterday. If you didn’t get it yet, read this.

See “Business Musings: Critical Voice” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/17/business-musings-critical-voice/>. A slightly different take on something we’ve been talking about here for awhile.

See “Tips on Writing Believable Conspiracies for Thriller Fiction” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/tips-on-writing-believable-conspiracies-for-thriller-fiction.html>.

See Terry Odell’s “Character Interview: Meet Ryan Harper” at <https://bookloversbench.com/let-talk-with-terry-odell/>.

See my “On Personal Challenges (a guest post)” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/on-personal-challenges-a-guest-post/>.

Fiction Words: 2546

Nonfiction Words: 1780 (1240, Journal) (540, PWW)

Total words for the day: 4326

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489
Day 6..... 2220 words. Total words to date..... 15709
Day 7..... 1202 words. Total words to date..... 16911
Day 8..... 2546 words. Total words to date..... 19457

Total fiction words for the month..... 29495
Total fiction words for the year..... 247296
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22540
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 99610
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 346906

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Challenge](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, April 19](#)

[April 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Grand Master Jack Williamson

There's a great writing-book bundle

Topic: Always Learning

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

In a comment on his post from yesterday, DWS reminded me of Jack Williamson, whom I was fortunate to study under and get to know during my final year in college at Eastern NM University in Portales NM back in the early '90s.

Jack had compiled a collection of short stories titled *People Machines*, and he gave me a copy. But it wasn't only a collection of stories.

Accompanying each short story was an essay concerning a particular writing technique illustrated by the story.

Jack also gave me permission to pass along those essays in the now long-defunct *Roswell Literary Review*.

I looked up *People Machines* on Amazon this morning, just out of curiosity. I was stunned to find that you can still buy a copy for only a few dollars. I strongly, strongly recommend you do so. Those essays are invaluable.

If you'd like to take a look, visit <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000RXZBTU/>. You can actually get a "collectible" edition from only \$6 or a "new" paperback from only \$9.

Seriously, if you like to learn, don't pass this up.

I haven't talked much about Joanna Penn for quite awhile. I recommend you visit her website at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/>.

Joanna has a blog as well as a podcast, which also features transcripts for those of us who would rather read than listen. At the top of her website, she features links to specific topics, like “Write a Novel” and “Publishing” and “Marketing” etc. Check it out.

To get you started, I've included a few posts from her blog in today's “Of Interest.”

Some Random Thoughts on Writing and Terms

Recently when I was talking with my friend Michaela about writing into the dark, she mentioned that she preferred to call it “writing into the unknown.”

Her preference is excellent, and a good illustration that the connotations of words are often more important than the denotations.

Her comment led me to notice that had the D in WITD stood for “darkness” instead of “dark,” WITD would be a more apt description. In fact, WIT Unknown and WIT Darkness are synonymous.

Maybe that's because “unknown” and “darkness” are both nouns and both conjure up an emptiness. A nothingness in which something awaits. What awaits, of course, is the rest of the story.

The word “dark,” on the other hand, is an adjective, a descriptor of something else that, in WITD, is curiously missing.

So from here on out, I probably will refer to WITU (though the acronym is a bit awkward, at least in my mind. There it evokes the sight and sound of a Brooklyn wiseguy staring at another, a look of incredulity on his face, as he says, “What is it (whaddizit) wit(ch)u?” (grin)

*

In [today's post over on PWW](#), Robert brought up some interesting thoughts on “becoming” and “being.” So I hereby blame the following on him. (grin)

As I commented on his post, the notion of “being” and “becoming” intrigues me. What we believe of ourselves in terms (or titles) matters. Robert nailed the concept hard with “I Am” in his short poem in the post.

I Am is the most powerful force in the universe (IMHO). For example, I Am is much stronger than “I can” or “I might” or anything similar. It's massively more powerful even than “I did” because there is no end to I Am.

In fact, I Am actually illustrates the lack of a beginning or an end. It is a mobius strip of being. Think about it. Even God used it. (“I am that I am.”)

It’s also peculiar how different terms mean different things to different people. For me, I Am isn’t limited only to meaning “I exist” or anything else that I “do.”

I Am denotes more.

It denotes a constant learning, an *active* existence. It denotes a continual observation and absorption of everything around us, from how people behave in public vs. private to the particular manner in which a bee approaches a dandelion flower or the way a deer pricks his ears when a stick snaps in the forest.

It denotes an appreciation and respect for all other creatures, whether carbon- or silicon-based.

I Am enables me to judge for myself without remorse the creatures around me.

For example, I Am stymied by people who say writing is drudgery. I can’t fathom why they would continue doing something they feel is “drudgery.” Or in the alternative, why they would *pretend* (see pretense, pretension) to trudge to work day after day and labor over something they actually enjoy.

For me, “writer” is an off-shoot of I am. It also is a way of being, an apt descriptor of one who is fortunate enough (in my opinion) to have been born with a profound, abiding affinity-for and ability-with the language.

There is a difference between who we are and what we do. The chief difference is that we can’t stop being who We Are (I Am, plural), but we can always stop doing what we do.

The writer who truly sees writing as drudgery is not a writer. He is a laborer with a pen, and writing is only one more thing he does.

Because I Am a writer: a poet, an essayist, and (my collective term) a fictionist. (Merriam-Webster defines “fictionist” as “a writer of fiction” but they’re hardly proud of it. They hedge their bet with “especially : novelist” and point out that fictionist is in “the bottom 20%” of words. Talk about pretentious.)

But I digress.

I love everything about the language and (almost) every word in it. (Out of our entire language, one word springs to mind that has no good use, one that is so worthless, filthy and harmful that I will never utter, write or share it.)

I enjoy diagramming sentences almost as much as I enjoy turning a phrase well or writing poems or essays or fictions of whatever length.

Likewise, I've seemingly always understood that I can learn as much from great writers in any genre as I can from those who are great writers in my own genre(s).

After all, we all use the same words, only in different sequences to form different thoughts or different expressions of those thoughts.

I suppose that's why I never considered, even for an instant, that Heinlein's Rules might apply only to writers of speculative fiction. To me, the very idea is eyebrow-arching, "huh?"-inducing, head-scratchingly ridiculous.

Nor do I ascribe to any silly negative notions like "kill all adverbs." Though I suppose if you spread a blanket over them and "kill" them all you will save yourself the necessity to engage in original thought and determine whether or not to use one in a particular, appropriate place.

Embrace I Am and the power it will give you. Fill yourself with it, then move forward and do what you love, what you have an abiding affinity and driving desire to do.

And don't look back.

Rolled out early in the middle of a cat fight on my bed. Oh well. I probably needed to get up anyway.

To the novel at 4 a.m. Yeah, for about 500 words. Then to the house for an extended break, then to town to return some merchandise and buy more, then to the grocery, then home and finally back to the Hovel to write all of the above.

So finally back to the novel at 11:50. I wrote for about five minutes, then remembered I had a load of laundry to put in the dryer.

So back to the novel at 12:15. (Don't I live a terribly drudgery-filled life?)

Well, I finally diverted all my attention to the novel and had a relatively good day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Ask Kris Anything Starts Sunday" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/ask-kris-anything-starts-sunday/>.

See "Writing A Novel: How To Hook Your Reader" at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2019/04/10/writing-a-novel-how-to-hook-your-reader/>.

See “Writing Tips: 8 Ways To Take Your Book From Good To Great” at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2019/04/12/writing-tips-8-ways-to-take-your-book-from-good-to-great/>.

See “Why Writing Yourself Into a Corner Can Improve Your Writing” at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/2019/04/19/why-writing-yourself-into-a-corner-can-improve-your-writing/>.

For a little fun, see “Email Settings” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/email-settings/>.

Fiction Words: 3233

Nonfiction Words: 1360 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4593

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489
Day 6..... 2220 words. Total words to date..... 15709
Day 7..... 1202 words. Total words to date..... 16911
Day 8..... 2546 words. Total words to date..... 19457
Day 9..... 3233 words. Total words to date..... 22690

Total fiction words for the month..... 32728
Total fiction words for the year..... 250529
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23900
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 100970
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 351499

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Robert Sadler](#), [The Creative Penn](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, April 20](#)

[April 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quote of the day

Topic: On the Value of Pre-Orders

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Quote of the Day: "We shall soon be in a world in which a man may be howled down for saying that two and two make four, in which people will persecute the heresy of calling a triangle a three-sided figure, and hang a man for maddening a mob with the news that grass is green." G. K. Chesterton

Topic: On the Value of Pre-Orders

Well, apparently I'm still having trouble with Heinlein's Rule 4 (Put it on the market). (grin) The problem is, I tend to have a blast writing stories. Too much of a blast. So much that when I'm finished, I ship the story off to my first reader(s) and forget it.

Even when I get input back from my first reader(s), it's easy to leave the finished story off to one side in its folder while I'm wrapped up in the excitement of writing a new story.

That's what happened with Blackwell Ops 5: Georgette Tilden.

I finished it way back on April 4. I sent it off to two first readers. I had planned to take their input on board, then put the novel up for pre-orders for official release on May 1.

I've been wrapped up in the pre-order thing for awhile now, ever since my first Nick Spalding novel, which I finished on August 31 and released on October 25, 2018.

Since then I've written, put up for pre-order, and released about a month later 9 novels and a novella. In fact, since January 15, I've released a new novel every two weeks (7 in all) after first having it up for pre-order.

But I haven't noticed any significant sales increases from having novels available for pre-order, so I find myself wondering about the effectiveness of pre-orders. Is it all much ado about nothing?

Anyway, whether I decide to continue using pre-orders, the streak of releasing one every two weeks (after being on pre-order) is over now.

I realized this morning I still haven't created a cover for BO5 or even gone through my first readers' notes yet. Sigh.

I'll have to do that sometime this weekend. I don't think the distributors will allow me to set a pre-pub release date as soon as May 1, so I might just go ahead and publish BO5 "live" on May 1.

That will keep the every-two-week release streak alive, though that one would release without having been available for pre-order.

Then maybe I'll put BO6 up for pre-order as soon as I finish it (should be finished next week) and then release it on May 15.

So are pre-orders all that important? Have any of you used them? If so, did you notice an increase in sales or sales-rankings on the date of release?

I've always had a nagging doubt about the value of pre-order availability. Maybe it's better to just release each book as soon as I can and "get it out there" so readers can read it.

Any thoughts?

Because it's Saturday, I made a point to hit the sack early last night and roll out early this morning. In the Hovel by 2, whereupon I wasted as much time as is humanly possible and got to the novel at 4:50.

By 6 I'd put a thousand words on the page and took a break up to the house.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 8. I added another thousand words or so, then an impromptu trip to Sierra Vista. Back in a while.

Back to the Hovel at 1:30. So we'll see what happens.

Okay, so as it turned out, today was a "keep coming back" kind of day. My favorite kind of day, really. I'm always pleasantly surprised at how much I write when the story's flowing, and even more so on a keep-coming-back kind of day. (grin)

I'm shutting it down at 2:20. Spend some time with that woman who keeps hanging around my house. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Finally Back At The Writing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/finally-back-at-the-writing/>.

See “Top Places Accepting Short Story and Poetry Submissions in 2019” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/short-story-poetry-submissions/>.

See “Open Access” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/open-access/>. I too wonder whether these creations can be used to create book covers. Probably not. But if I find out, I’ll let you know. (But don’t wait for me. You can ask them yourself, then share what you learn.)

See “Why We’ve Decided That The Machines Want to Kill Us” at <https://crimereads.com/why-weve-decided-that-the-machines-want-to-kill-us/>. Maybe some good story prompts here.

See “First Books on the Moon” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-books-on-the-moon.html>.

See “Book Design: EVERYTHING You Need to Know” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/book-design/>. Not really. More of an overview and filled with maybe useful links.

Fiction Words: 3212

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4012

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 1..... 2774 words. Total words to date..... 2774
Day 2..... 1776 words. Total words to date..... 4550
Day 3..... 4190 words. Total words to date..... 8740
Day 4..... 2662 words. Total words to date..... 11402
Day 5..... 2087 words. Total words to date..... 13489
Day 6..... 2220 words. Total words to date..... 15709
Day 7..... 1202 words. Total words to date..... 16911
Day 8..... 2546 words. Total words to date..... 19457
Day 9..... 3233 words. Total words to date..... 22690
Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902

Total fiction words for the month..... 35940
Total fiction words for the year..... 253741
Total nonfiction words for the month... 24700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 101770
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 355511

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, April 21](#)

[April 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

A guy once said to me

Today is Sunday, and Easter

Topic: Sometimes I Hate the Truth of Numbers

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

A guy once said to me, “You shouldn’t work on Sunday. Even God took Sunday off.”

To which I replied, “Ah, but I am not a god.”

From the Department of Stuff You Already Know, today is Sunday, and Easter, and a short day for me.

Sometime today, I’ll help my wife set up a small office for a surprise party kind of thing for a co-worker of hers who is retiring soon.

Today is a slow “news” day today too, as you’ll see in the “Of Interest” section.

Anyway, I wish you a Happy Easter in the joyful, Easter-Bunny, enjoying-children’s-excitement kind of way if you’re still fortunate enough to have those odd little people running about.

And I wish a thoughtful Easter to those of you for whom today is a major religious or spiritual holiday. I should have done yesterday since most of you who read this won’t see it until much of the day is gone.

Topic: Sometimes I Hate the Truth of Numbers (*A Brief, Maybe Humorous, and Possibly Sobering Essay*)

When you talk about any god, you're talking about eternity. Gods don't sweat "time" much because it holds no consequences for them, except in terms of what they hand down to their creations.

One of my favorite passages from the Christian bible is Psalm 90, in which the author writes in Verse 10, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten."

My favorite verse from that song is Verse 12: "[T]each us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Hey, truedat. Only by "numbering our days" can we see them clearly enough to make use of them. So I thought I'd do a little numbering here.

"Three-score and ten years" is 70 years.

(See, sometime a long time ago, some guy decided to call 20 of anything a "score," though I'm not sure why. For example, I don't believe it had anything to do with making a goal in soccer or any other sport where the term "score" actually makes sense.

Or maybe it did. Maybe the shooter was required to take 20 steps before attempting to kick the ball into the goal. I really don't know.

But I digress.)

Anyway three score and ten years is 70 years, and it occurs to me that 70 years of 365 days each adds up to only 25,550 days.

(Another aside — in an effort not to be nitpicky, I will stipulate to slight inaccuracies in my calculations as I'm writing-off the 17.5 extra "leap" days that occur during those years, depending on which year we were born.

Those leap days are *sort of* included anyway when we count hours, because leap days exist only to make up for the few extra minutes we add to each day to round up to 24 hours. Frankly, the whole thing seems more than a little suspicious to me.)

So our starting point is 25,550 days. Now for the math and why I sometimes hate it.

First, let me subtract the 8 hours per day we're advised to sleep.

After all, nobody can argue that sleeping is actually living. Breathing, yes. Existing, maybe, sort of. But living? Uh, no.

There are 24 hours in a day. The 8 hours we're told to sleep adds up to one-third of that time, and one-third on one scale is one-third on another. So we're advised to sleep 23.33 years of our allotted 70.

Which leaves us with 46.67 years of actual living (17,035 days).

But we should also subtract the Sundays (46.67×52) from those remaining days. After all, we aren't supposed to accomplish anything on Sundays. Shrug. We might as well sleep.

So of the 17,035 days we are given to actually live, we are advised to spend 2,427 of those days not doing anything that might be construed as "work." And trust me, there are people out there watching.

So that drops our effective lifespan to 14,608 days. Or 40 years.

But my head's beginning to ache, so I'm gonna go back to the macro scale of three-score and ten.

Of my very own personal allotted 70 years, on my 67th birthday later this year I will have used up 95.7% of my time. (Or, if you wish, 38.28 of my 40 years.)

Either of which explains, at least to me, three things:

1. why I hate the accuracy of math;
2. why I "work" on most days, usually without noticing at all which particular label the day carries; and
3. why I spend as little time in suspended animation (sleep) as possible.

Oh, and as a bonus, it also explains why, when I want a cigar, I have a cigar.

Rolled out at 2 this morning, then spent a few hours playing silly games with myself. At least I wasn't asleep.

I was going to write today, but my wife and I decided to set up the office early. And then while we were out, I remembered I had admin things to do (some stuff on PWW, prep and distribute BO5, etc.) so I'm using today for that.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Via Karen Riggs, see "Rare Manuscript Found..." at <https://www.thevintagenews.com/2019/04/19/libro-de-los-epitomes/>. (Thanks, Karen.)

See "150+ Famous Writing Quotes..." at <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-quotes/>. I list this as entertainment, not necessarily as valid information. As you can see from yesterday's post, I'm a

little addicted to quotations. Which is like saying if you stand in the path of an Oklahoma tornado, you might experience a little wind.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 930 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 930

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 35940
Total fiction words for the year..... 253741
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25630
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 102700
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 356441

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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

[The Daily Journal, Monday, April 22](#)

[April 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Still downloading

Too Important for "Of Interest"

Topic: Life Wants to Live

A note about "Of Interest"

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I visited [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) yesterday and downloaded more possible cover pics for Blackwell Ops 5, and this morning I continued and downloaded even more.

And yes, as I scanned “women in shadow” pics (thousands of them) I also downloaded a lot of pics that appealed to me for future stories and/or covers too. Easy to get happily lost while doing that. (grin)

But everything’s moving forward. I’ll get the cover done for BO5 and get it distributed today, and then I’ll get back to writing BO6.

From the Too Important for “Of Interest” Department, see “Tracking Phones, Google Is a Dragnet for the Police” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/tracking-phones-google-is-a-drag-net-for-the-police/>.

Topic: Life Wants to Live

If you write stories in which characters die, it’s important to have a sense of what that must be like.

Obviously, you don’t want to actually experience it, but you can think (conscious, critical mind, learning) yourself close.

It’s important to get it as right as you can. Not that the character in question will have any idea of what happened to him, unless, maybe, you’re writing a paranormal story. But as all of you probably already know, death also affects those who continue to live.

I’ve thought about death a lot, off and on. Not only the experience itself and not only its ramifications and repercussions and what leads one to experience it. One of the big questions I’ve always had (and explored) is whether the deceased really believed it could happen just before it did.

I don’t think so. I don’t think we have the capacity to really believe deep-down that we’re going to simply stop being.

I’ve been close to death more than several times. The first few times I wasn’t aware of it, at all.

I won’t bore you with details. What’s important here is what caused me to focus-in.

I had three heart attacks — the first in 1990 and the last in 2000 — and one near cardiac arrest (they aren't the same thing).

The first heart attack passed on its own (it's a long story) and the other two were attended to by physicians, the third with a 7-hour operation called the Ross Procedure.

Flash forward to April, 2008, the near cardiac arrest caused by a complete heart block (a disconnect of the electrical signal that tells the heart when to beat).

In short, my ticker kept trying to stop, so I'd pass out. Then my brain would send me the worst nightmare I've ever had. The extreme fear released a surge of adrenaline, forcing my heart to beat and causing me to seize myself awake.

I went through several cycles of this, and each pass-out/seize/wake-up cycle occurred in the space of several seconds to a few minutes each.

That was finally corrected with an early morning trip to the local 6-bed hospital (a 10-minute trip during which I passed-out/seized/woke-up several times), a medevac flight that I don't remember to Tucson Medical Center, and the implantation of a pacemaker.

But even with all of that, it was only during one of the ensuing six-month pacemaker checkups that I started seriously thinking about death.

Making conversation, I casually asked a pacer tech what would happen if my pacemaker stopped working.

He shrugged, looked up from his paperwork, and said, "Life wants to live."

Wow. What a profound statement.

Life wants to live. Even if my pacemaker stopped cold, my body and brain would do everything it could to continue. Just as it had before. Of course, if it couldn't...

Which caused me to begin wondering whether we ever really believe we're about to die.

I've come to the conclusion that maybe we realize it just before it happens. I mean in the second or instant before it happens.

I suspect there's an instant when the brain thinks something like, "Oh. So this is it then." And then there's nothing.

Of course I've read accounts of people "moving into the light" and all that. I make no value judgements. Whether those reports are credible probably depends on the individual, his or her belief system, and/or what s/he wants to believe in the moment.

For a writer, whether those or other reports or thoughts are credible depends on the story and the belief system of the writer and the character(s).

There are no clear answers to the question.

But as I used to say often, the most important grouping of words in the English language is the one that comprises a question.

Not because a question leads to an answer, but because it leads to more questions.

In other words, Questions lead to Thought. And in that way, questions verify and validate life. As René Descartes put it, “Cogito, ergo sum.” (“I think, therefore I am.”)

So think. Consider for a moment my pacer tech’s profound statement, especially delivered as it was past a so-what shrug: “Life wants to live.”

What do you think? In that final instant or second when s/he understands s/he will be no more, What would your character’s last sensation or utterance or thought be?

In “Of Interest” today there’s a post on ways to come up with chapter titles.

NOTE: if you still distribute to Smashwords, and if you use chapter titles, you’ll have to manually create an interactive table of contents (TOC). You can learn how to do that by downloading my free book, [The Essentials of Digital Publishing](#). It’s PDF, so you can print it out if you want to.

I learned the hard way that Smashwords will create an automatic TOC only if you label each chapter with “Chapter 1,” “Chapter 2,” etc. It has to be the word “Chapter” followed by the actual numeral or numerals (not the spelled-out “One,” “Two,” etc.).

Rolled out around 1:30 and was in the Hovel by 2. I continued looking at and downloading photos from Unsplash.com, then wrote the above stuff.

After working on the cover for Blackwell Ops 5, I distributed the novel for release on May 1 at D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. I took a break up to the house, did a few chores and finally turned to the WIP at 10 to begin cycling.

I’m a little annoyed with myself. I’m rapidly running out of time today (other pressing things to do) and haven’t added much new to the WIP, so I’m counting today as another non-writing day. Sigh.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Wrong Direction” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/wrong-direction/>.

See Sean Monaghan’s “Finding Your Voice” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/finding-your-voice/>.

See “Your Writing Process. Accept That It Is What It Is” at <https://terryodell.com/your-writing-process-accept-that-it-is-what-it-is/>.

Via Linda Adams’ newsletter, see “Six Ways To Come Up With Good Chapter Titles” at <https://pekoablaze.wordpress.com/2013/07/18/six-ways-to-come-up-with-good-chapter-titles/>.

See “17 Literary Journals that Read Submissions ‘Blind’” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/17-literary-journal-that-read-submissions-blind/>.

See “Elvis Presley — What Really Killed The King Of Rock ‘N Roll” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/elvis-presley-what-really-killed-the-king-of-rock-n-roll.html>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Star” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/22/free-fiction-monday-star-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1160

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 35940
Total fiction words for the year..... 253741
Total nonfiction words for the month... 26790
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 103860
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 357601

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sean Monaghan](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, April 23](#)

[April 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Pro Writers Writing blog

Topic: You Have a Choice

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Well, for the second day in a row the post at PWW didn't go out via MailChimp as it was supposed to.

As a result, I deactivated the "missed-post trigger" plug-in that obviously isn't working and activated another one.

I also went into MailChimp and re-set the posting time to 9 a.m. So we'll see. UPDATE: The PWW post went out! Woohoo! I'll leave the posting time at 9. Wouldn't want to upset anything.

In the meantime, be sure to see Duke Southard's "Distractions and Annoyances" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/distractions-and-annoyances/>.

Topic: You Have a Choice

Every fiction writer is different. That's a given. But at the same time, like it or not, all fiction writers fall into one of two camps. You have a choice as to which camp you're in.

In one camp are those who see themselves as the god of the story. They move about the camp in flowing robes. If they encounter a fellow writer, they nod grimly and mutter a short "Good day" so as not to derial their train of thought. Which of course is focused on the story they're thinking about writing once they've figured it out.

They see themselves as responsible-for and in-control-of the story and the characters who populate it. After all, it's only logical that the story the writer is writing or thinking about writing is the writer's story.

Chances are, they see the word Writer (always capitalized) as some sort of elevated "calling" and they hear an angelic chorus (ahhAHHHH!) every time the word is uttered.

They attend or conduct or dream-of book launches where they dine on brie and crackers with French names and expensive wines as they soak up the adoration of the attendees.

Many of these folks outline their novels before writing a word of the story. Others don't.

Many create character sketches complete with the character's physical description, backstory, emotional baggage, etc. Others don't. But either way, they all control the story.

They listen closely to every criticism because, after all, it's their story and it must be perfect. So they have to write it the way others say it should be written. (???)

As they write, they labor over every word and fret over sentence and paragraph construction and repetition. They watch closely to be sure they appropriately alter simple, complex, compound and compound-complex sentences regularly. They work to be sure each individual "topic" has its own paragraph and that the paragraph doesn't end until the topic is exhausted, like they were taught in high school and college by their non-fiction-writing (or nonfiction-writing) teachers and professors, and like this paragraph is written. And chances are, because it contains a lot of words (49), they believe the previous sentence is "run-on." (It isn't. It's actually a simple sentence.) These writers probably gasped at my use of "And" to begin the third sentence above this one. Finally (the readers sighed with relief), they are very careful to count the number of times they repeated the word "there" and they are careful to alternate "that" and "which" just as if they believe those words are interchangeable. (They aren't.)

Most often, you can recognize these writers even when they're away from their camp. They're the ones with bruises on their forehead from their wrist resting there so often.

All of this (and a great deal more) is perfectly fine. These writers are doing what they were taught to do. Their obedience is a symptom of their skill level at the moment.

In the other camp, there are no immaculately clean, godly robes. Like craftsmen everywhere, the writers there dress in whatever makes them comfortable as they ply their trade.

Most of the writers in this camp don't know what wine and cheese and crackers taste like together. If they do, the cheese is probably sharp cheddar or colby and the wine is probably coffee. They wonder why their colleagues in the other camp are "launching" instead of writing.

These writers do occasionally practice word selection, usually to replace "green stuff on a rock" with "moss" because "moss" didn't come to mind in the moment.

They generally don't sweat sentence construction or paragraphing or much of anything else:

The sentences are whatever the characters use in a given situation.

A new paragraph begins without conscious thought whenever a different character says or does something.

A new scene or chapter begins when the characters move from one setting into another one. Easy-peasy.

And it's easy-peasy because the characters decide all of those things.

These writers have abdicated control and responsibility for the characters' story. They don't fret over much and they don't labor over anything.

And they don't have to make that long, arduous climb up the stairs into the Authorial Tower each morning.

They get up, throw a sandwich into a bag, walk across the dusty camp, and roll off the parapet into the trenches of the story.

The characters look up. "Ah, there you are. Ready?"

The writer grins and puts his or her fingers on the keyboard. "Gawd, I hope so."

The characters laugh and take off, racing at full speed from setting to setting, scene to scene, exchanging bits of dialogue and pointing out what they see, hear, smell, taste, touch and feel (emotionally) as they go.

The writer hangs on for the ride. And with just a little luck, s/he records all of that.

Now and then, the characters stop for a breather. When they do, the writer grabs a few of them, drags them back to where the last scene started, shows them what s/he's written and asks them whether s/he missed anything.

The characters fill in any blank spots. Then a whistle blows to end the break, the characters race off laughing again, and the poor writer — this luckiest, most fortunate of all creatures — tries again to keep up.

So which camp do you live in?

For you personally, is writing an elevated calling, a tiresome, forehead-bruising labor of love?

Or is writing simply the most fun you can have with your clothes on?

Please don't respond except to yourself. After all, there are no right answers and every writer is different. Really, whatever works for you at your current skill level is fine.

Just know you're always welcome in my camp. Bring your own clothes, but I'll keep the coffee on for you.

Rolled out at 2 this morning. I had planned not to write a topic at all, give you folks a rest. But something I read somewhere (maybe a comment on Dean's post from yesterday) got me keyed up. The result is the topic above.

It's 5 a.m. now and I'm headed to the house for a break. Back to the Hovel and the novel around 7.

I wrote for awhile, then went up to the house to do some mowing while the temperature was still reasonable (low 70s). Got that done and the sidewalk swept, then ate some breakfast-lunch and headed back to the Hovel at 10.

Writing slowly today for some reason. I write a few paragraphs, then get up and wander around for awhile. Write a few more paragraphs, wander again. Weird.

The novel's moving along fine when I sit here and write. (grin) Maybe I'm already moving into the "fear of finishing" phase, where I know the end is coming and I don't want to let go and see the story end.

Then again, my dear, longtime friend Robert will be here at around noon tomorrow. With my weird hours, I should still get some writing done every day, but I'm sure the impending visit is messing with my mind at least a little bit. I haven't seen Robert for roughly a thousand years. (grin)

I'm pooped. Calling it a day a little early.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "First Page Critiques: A Look At The Edgar Nominees" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critiques-a-look-at-the-edgar-nominees.html>.

See "The Emo Dump of Horror" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/04/the-emo-dump-of-horror.html>. With posts like this one, frankly I wish Marilyn Byerley would post more often.

Via The Passive Voice, see "Fiction Notes" (Darcy Pattison's website) at <https://www.darcypattison.com/>. Browse the menu. A lot of good stuff there.

See "John Sandford: Inside the Mind of a Manhunter" at <https://crimereads.com/john-sandford-inside-the-mind-of-a-manhunter/>.

See “Great Challenge Revisited” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/great-challenge-revisited/>.

For fun, or if you love fonts, see “Helvetica, the World’s Most Popular Font, Gets a Face-Lift” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/helvetica-the-worlds-most-popular-font-gets-a-face-lift/>.

Fiction Words: 2123

Nonfiction Words: 1410 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3533

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902

Day 11... 2123 words. Total words to date..... 28026

Total fiction words for the month..... 38063

Total fiction words for the year..... 255864

Total nonfiction words for the month... 28200

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 105270

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 361134

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Darcy Pattison](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, April 24](#)

[April 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

My friend Robert

Sometime yesterday

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

My friend Robert will be coming in early today, so we're going to meet for breakfast. Then he'll follow me to the house where we'll spend the day visiting. It should be a great time.

Late this afternoon, we'll head out to the desert to take some sunset photos of saguaro cacti. Then he'll leave in the morning for the rest of his trip.

Sometime yesterday I did something (apparently) to my left shoulder. I don't recall doing anything to it, but I get a lot of pain when I lift it. Interesting but weird.

Between Robert's visit and my shoulder "injury" I probably won't get a lot of writing done today, but that's all right.

Rolled out at 3:30 and hurried to the Hovel. I wrote the stuff above, found a few items for "Of Interest," then started on the novel.

It's important not to break routine, so I cycled through what I wrote yesterday first, then started adding new words.

A good-enough day overall. Around 7 I'll need to get ready to go meet Robert. Have I said how much I'm looking forward to our visit? (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Never Give Up" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/never-give-up-2/>.

See "Resorting to Manual Methods" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/resorting-to-manual-methods.html>.

If you have a blog or if you're thinking of creating a blog, see "Author Newsletters" at <https://www.darcypattison.com/authors/author-newsletters-2/>. You can subscribe at the bottom of her page.

Fiction Words: 1964

Nonfiction Words: 260 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2224

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902
Day 11... 2123 words. Total words to date..... 28026
Day 12... 1964 words. Total words to date..... 29990

Total fiction words for the month..... 40047
Total fiction words for the year..... 257848
Total nonfiction words for the month... 28460
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 105530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 363378

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, April 25](#)

[April 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Adios Robert

Topic: Voice (and some stuff on dialect)

Daily diary

Of Interest

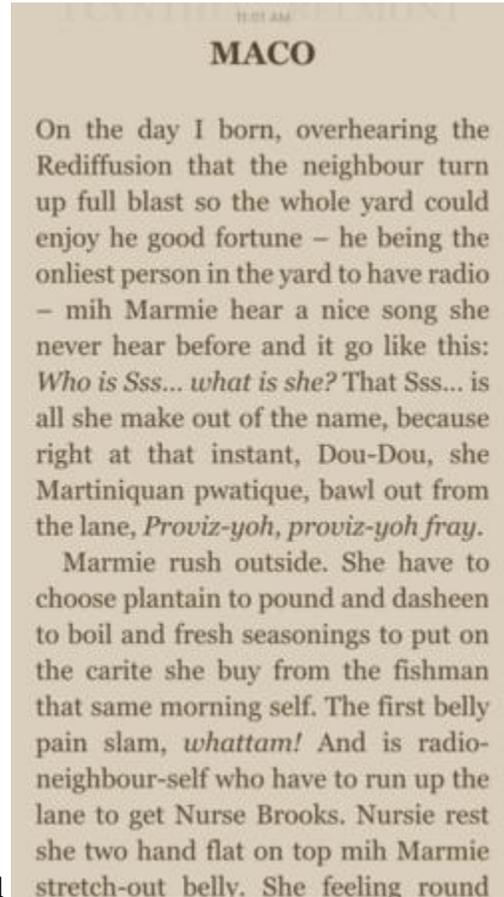
The numbers

Yesterday, my friend and I spent a full day and evening visiting, reminiscing, philosophizing, swapping lies and generally just shooting the bull. It was a great time.

This morning, though, I got up a little late and Robert had already left. Robert, if you decide to go home via I-10, I hope you'll give me a call so we can at least meet in Benson for lunch or a cup of coffee. Either way, thanks for the visit and for stopping by.

Topic: Voice (and some stuff on dialect)

Recently I received via email a short excerpt from a book that was published by a UK company.



The excerpt is very rough, with missing or omitted words, foreign words (to an English language reader), or in the alternative, English words to a native-language reader.

That's the excerpt on the right. Take a moment to look it over:

Now here are a few questions:

Did you read the excerpt smoothly, straight-through the first time?

Based only on this excerpt, would you buy this book?

Based only on this excerpt, would you flip through to find other excerpts to read to see whether the author's voice changes?

My own answers to these questions were No, Absolutely not, and Maybe, since apparently the cover was enticing enough to make me pick up the book in the first place.

In fact, I probably would select three or four excerpts and read through them just to see whether the voice changed.

But if the voice didn't change, no way would I buy this book.

Why?

Because I'm reading to be entertained, not to go back and try to decipher the writer's voice or figure out what the narrator is trying to say or what's going on.

My job as a reader isn't to "figure out" anything in the writing (as opposed to "in the story").

For example, in a mystery story, I might be tasked with figuring out who done it. But if I find myself struggling to understand what the writer's trying to communicate in her writing, I won't bother. Not my job.

In an action-adventure or thriller, I'll have certain subconscious expectations, many of which (if the writer did her job) will be twists and I'll be wrong. Again, that's fine.

But if I have to go over a sentence more than once to try to figure out what the writer is saying, again, I won't bother. In fact, I shouldn't even *notice* the sentences or the paragraphs.

I should mention, the above excerpt (obviously, I hope) is dialect. And that's fine.

But even when writing dialect, less is more.

The writer's job is to evoke the reader's interest, pull the reader into the story, and give the reader pleasure. Like the song says, "That's entertainment."

The writer's job is NOT to make the reader work to understand what the writer is trying to say. The moment the reader's focus shifts from being entertained to working, he'll close the book and find something else to do.

While I'm on the topic of dialect, here are a few traits of good dialect:

1. Using words in odd juxtapositions because of the character's misunderstanding of the finer points of the language.

For example, a native Spanish speaker says in English he wants to "fill up" a job application (instead of "fill in" or "complete"). It's difficult to do this too much, and it's an excellent way to indicate dialect.

2. Omitting or making-up or changing words, such as (from the excerpt) "On the day I born" (omitted "was") or "Rediffusion" (made up) or "enjoy he (his) good fortune."

This can be a good technique, but ONLY if it isn't overdone. Use this technique sparingly.

3. Phonetic spellings, such as (from the excerpt) “mih” for “me” or “my.” Again, this can easily be overdone and is labor-intensive, so use this technique sparingly.

4. Truncated words, those like “feelin” or “gov’ment,” in which you insert an apostrophe for the missing letters in the shortened word.

This can be a good technique, but it’s definitely labor intensive. If you aren’t a perfectionist, you might want to skip this one, or again, use it only sparingly.

When using truncated words and phonetic spellings, the writer has to decide not only which words a particular character will ALWAYS truncate or spell phonetically (there will be some), but also which form (phonetic or truncated or “correct”) a particular character will use in each situation.

For example, 11 year old Billy might say “gonna” most of the time when talking with his peers. At other times (like when he’s being nagged to complete his homework or a chore, or to other people, like his mother), he might say a calm, “I’m goin’ to, Mom” or a more emphatic, “I’m going to, Mom.” And in those last two examples, you might choose to italicize “goin” or “going” or add an exclamation point for further emphasis.

Now back to the excerpt...

I mentioned some of the dialect in the excerpt threw me. On the other hand, later, having gotten more or less used to the dialect, the writer’s use of “this” threw me too. Why didn’t the writer replace “this” with “dis” (or should I have written “this’ wit’ dis”) and stay with the dialect? Was this a conscious decision on her part, or did she just slip?

And why in the last line of the excerpt was “She feeling [‘]round” instead of either “feelin’ ’round” or “feeling around”?

These last two are instances in which the “proper” or English usage threw me out of the dialect. In the earlier examples the dialect threw me out of the English that my mind wanted to read, as established in “On the day I (was) born, overhearing....”

Writing dialect is a tightrope.

In many ways, writing well also is a tightrope.

Your job as a writer is to communicate a story with the intention of entertaining the reader. At the point where you make the reader “work” to get through what you’ve written, the you have failed – and I don’t mean “failed to success.”

And you’ve probably lost a reader.

Rolled out late at almost 4 after a later night than I’m used to.

I didn't look at email at all yesterday, so this morning I played catch-up. I wrote a long email to a tutored writer on a topic she asked about, then plowed through emails, responding, checking PWW and another blog, and eventually finding things for "Of Interest."

Took a break up to the house at 6 for a shower, breakfast and to arrange my meds. Finally back to the Hovel a little after 7 to write the topic above and do a few other things.

Back to the house to help with laundry, wash and put away a few pans, etc. then back to the Hovel to correct a few things.

Finally to the novel at 10:30.

Lazy day today. I did finish a very strong scene, so I'm happy with that. Back to full form tomorrow.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Taming The Critical Voice" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/24/business-musings-taming-the-critical-voice/>.

See "The State of the Mystery: Part 1 of a Roundtable Discussion" at <https://crimereads.com/the-state-of-the-mystery-a-roundtable/>. Chock full of gems to be mined by all writers.

See "The State of the Mystery: Part 2 of a Roundtable Discussion" at <https://crimereads.com/the-state-of-the-mystery-part-2-of-a-roundtable-discussion/>. Ditto.

See "You'll Never Get it 'Right.' Accept It." at <https://terryodell.com/youll-never-get-it-right-accept-it/>.

See "Reading Stories" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/reading-stories/>. A couple of valuable hints here about process. Or defending your process. Or not letting anyone else into your process.

Fiction Words: 1026

Nonfiction Words: 1230 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2256

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902

Day 11... 2123 words. Total words to date..... 28026

Day 12... 1964 words. Total words to date..... 29990

Day 13... 1026 words. Total words to date..... 31016

Total fiction words for the month.....	41073
Total fiction words for the year.....	258874
Total nonfiction words for the month...	29690
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	106760
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	365634
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	42
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](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, April 26](#)

[April 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quotes of the day

PWW

Most of the novels

Topic: Voice (and some stuff on dialect)

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Quotes of the Day:

“The critical voice is about fear, and the creative voice is about joy.” Kristine Kathryn Rusch

“[F]igure out how to keep your critical voice busy with important tasks that are not writing-related.” Kristine Kathryn Rusch

For a moment, just before 9 a.m., I thought PWW didn't go out via MailChimp as it should have this morning.

Then at 9:02 it appeared in my in-box. I forgot I'd reset it to go out at 9 a.m. (grin) So all's well for the moment with PWW.

Be sure to check out Robert Sadler's "My Five Requirements for a Series..." at <http://prowriterswriting.com/my-five-requirements-for-a-series-series-character/>.

Most of the novels in the Blackwell Ops series are short, coming in at around 35,000 words. That alone tells me there's a good chance my WIP is nearing completion.

Today will also be the 14th writing day for this novel. In calendar days, though, this one's gone on for 17 days, counting today. WAY outside my original challenge of writing another novel every 15 days.

Topic: Balance

In her Business Musings article on "Taming the Critical Voice" Kris Rusch nailed a few important points, including those in the Quotes of the Day above.

Another big point she made (with me) was that it's a good idea to give the critical voice a job, something to do that isn't writing related. To draw a kind of balance between critical and creative voice.

I've never delved that deeply into the creative vs. the critical voice. I use the subconscious, creative voice whenever I can because I want my unique, original voice to shine through in my writing. I do the same thing when chatting with friends or relatives, making up stories about "tug snails" and other such odd things.

On the other hand, I use the critical voice only when I have to because it makes sense to me that we learn things with the critical voice. It goes to not believing or taking on board everything we hear or read.

When we read for pleasure, we want to believe and take on board everything. It's called "suspension of disbelief." But we don't want to employ that suspension when we're learning new techniques.

For example, you should read my (and others') posts and topics with your critical mind. Not everything I or others say will work for you (gasp!), so you should be prepared to toss out what you're certain won't work for you.

If an idea appeals to you at all, certainly you should try it. But if you find it doesn't work for you, don't hesitate to toss it out. That's exactly what I do.

The other HUGE point I took away from Kris' article is that the creative voice just wants to have fun. And writing, that best of all functions of the creative voice for writers, should always be fun.

So soon, to bring a little more balance, I'll be testing Kris' theorem in two ways.

First, I have some Pop-Up workshops, a couple of unviewed regular online workshops, and some previously viewed workshops — all from WMG Publishing — that I've been meaning to attend.

So soon I'll set up a schedule to do that. That will effectively give my conscious, critical mind something to do. First setting up a learning schedule, and then attending those workshops.

I won't take a month off of my writing and do that all at once. That would just be silly. And I think it might kill me.

But I can set aside one day a week or one day every couple of weeks or one day between writing projects to attend those workshops, some to learn new things and some to review things I've already taken on board.

I'll also set aside one day between writing projects (or one day a week or every couple of weeks) to do nothing but pre-pub stuff: covers, promo documents, etc.

And in between those critical-mind learning or pre-pub days, I'll write.

As you know, I'm currently writing a run of stories in a single series, albeit with a different POV character (or characters) in each novel.

And I have another, spin-off series lingering in the back of my mind. And (as he has for the past 5 years) Wes Crowley is lingering in my mind. And I have a few SF story-starters or series-continuers lingering in my mind.

So no shortage of stories to write.

But I mention that because writing should also be fun.

The instant I feel bored with the current series, I'll (take a day or two of pre-pub and learning and then) write something in a different world.

It might be something brand new, or it might be something based in a world I haven't written in for awhile.

That's how I'll keep the writing — and more importantly, my experience and practice with the writing — fresh and new. And balanced.

How about you? What did you take away from Kris' article or from your own thoughts about the creative voice vs. the critical voice?

How do you deal with the two? How do you keep the critical voice out of the playground that is your subconscious?

Rolled out shortly after 4 this morning after getting about 4 hours more sleep than I usually get. Wow, what a difference! But apparently I needed it. I feel blessed and am pleased that I don't need it all that often.

To the Hovel around 4:30, back to the house around 5 to sort out an issue with some meds, then back to the Hovel to write everything above. (I also wrote another article but it sounded snarky so I set it aside.)

Another break up to the house at 6:30 and back to the Hovel an hour later.

Finally to the novel at 7:45 for a short time, then to see my wife off, then back to the novel.

More back and forth to the house, and a fairly meager writing day today, but I'm approaching the end of the thing so this is normal for me.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

(I realize the first two are repeats, but they're that important.)

If you missed it last week, see "Business Musings: Critical Voice" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/17/business-musings-critical-voice/>.

Then see "Business Musings: Taming The Critical Voice" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/24/business-musings-taming-the-critical-voice/>.

See "Some Real Basics" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-real-basics/>. How can any writer not be aware of standard manuscript format? That stunned me. I wonder whether that knowledge started going away with the advent of indie publishing? Being an indie writer/publisher doesn't mean it's all right to let professionalism slide.

See "Reader Friday: Obstacles to Writing" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/reader-friday-obstacles-to-writing.html>. This is the post that elicited what turned out to be a snarky topic. (grin)

See "How to End a Story" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-end-a-story/>.

For fun, see "Fox in Socks" at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2019/04/fox-in-socks.html>. (You can also see the vid at <https://youtu.be/gM2e5dBz9L4>.)

Fiction Words: 2252

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3412

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902

Day 11... 2123 words. Total words to date..... 28026

Day 12... 1964 words. Total words to date..... 29990

Day 13... 1026 words. Total words to date..... 31016

Day 14... 2252 words. Total words to date..... 33268

Total fiction words for the month..... 43325

Total fiction words for the year..... 261126

Total nonfiction words for the month... 30850

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 107920

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 369046

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42

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](#), [Neil Gaiman](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Robert Sadler](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, April 27](#)

[April 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Sometimes I just have to

Topic: No, I Think I Won't

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Sometimes I just have to go out of my way to prove myself a citizen of Moronville,

which as you might know is a small town in the center of Moronshire Township,

at the center of MoronsArUs County

in the state of Moronopoly

in the United Sort of Square Areas of Imbecilia

in the Middle Hemisphere

of Planet Urth,

the Denizens of which believe themselves terribly influential despite the fact that if their silly little planet were suddenly to explode and blink out of existence, not only would their nearest galactic neighbor not care, they wouldn't even notice. Seriously.

And no, the first sentence above is not a run-on sentence despite its length and despite the fact that I almost counted the words to prove my point, which plainly illustrates why I reside in Moronville and am a citizen of Imbecilia in the first place.

But I digress.

As I wrote above, sometimes it seems I just have to go out of my way to prove all that.

Such was the case yesterday when I mismatched the topic in the "In today's Journal" preview with the actual topic in the actual body of my actual Journal post.

Then again, if you skipped reading the topic in the post because you were misled by the topic in the preview, you might want to apply for citizenship in my town. The house next door is empty, and frankly I could use the company.

Disclaimer: This writing is in no way associated with my dissertation on Tug Snails, which exists nowhere other than in a few shells and trails in the warped plane of my memory because I was too stoopid to write it down. However, a few of my grandsons enjoyed it a great deal, as evidenced by the furtive glances they cast out of the corner of their eyes and the fact that their off-foot was constantly inching toward the door even as I spoke.

Disclaimer 2: If you are "offended" at any of the above, please check your sense of humor. If it isn't off-kilter by at least 15°, Don't Apply For Citizenship. You're far too good for our little community of slant-brains.

Topic: No, I Think I Won't

write a topic today. You can see the mood I'm in, and I'm sure at this point you've had more than enough.

Rolled out at 10:45 p.m.

Yeah, you read that right. As I began writing all this, it was still officially yesterday. It actually became today about 8 minutes ago.

I'm a little under the weather, so I sacked out after a baseball game at around 7:15. But sinuses, etc. wouldn't let me sleep, so I got up around 10:45. So I figured I might as well come to "work." (grin) And you can see above what terrible drudgery my "work" is.

As my subconscious two year old obviously wants to strip off all his clothes and run splashing through mud puddles, I'll turn to the WIP now.

Over the next hour or so, I cycled and started a new scene for a total of just over 340 words. Then I headed to the house for a break and (as it turned out) a nap.

Back to the Hovel at 5:30.

Wow. I sat down in the Hovel, read over the tiny bit I wrote earlier, and got the distinct feeling the novel is finished. I am amazed. I knew I was close to the end, but not that close. (grin)

I wrote a little more, but soon it felt like I was writing past the ending, trying to force another scene onto the story.

Because of the night I've had, I'll wait and look at it again tomorrow morning just to be sure, but for the moment, it's done.

If I still feel it's done after I look at it tomorrow, I might give my first readers a break and read this one aloud. I haven't done that in awhile. If so, I'll send the finished version to my donors and first readers when I put it up for pre-order.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Some good comments on "Some Real Basics" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/some-real-basics/#comments>.

See "Thinking of a New Pop-Up" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/thinking-of-a-new-pop-up/>. Please read this. There's a great bonus toward the bottom.

See "Five Reasons To Write Short" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/five-reasons-to-write-short.html>.

See Michaele Lockhart's "The Joy of 'Letting'" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-joy-of-letting/>. Good stuff.

Fiction Words: 344

Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1104

Writing of Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task (novel)

Day 10... 3212 words. Total words to date..... 25902
Day 11... 2123 words. Total words to date..... 28026
Day 12... 1964 words. Total words to date..... 29990
Day 13... 1026 words. Total words to date..... 31016
Day 14... 2252 words. Total words to date..... 33268
Day 15... 0344 words. Total words to date..... 33612 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 43669
Total fiction words for the year..... 261470
Total nonfiction words for the month... 31610
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 108680
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 370150

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 5
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 42
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](#), [Michaele Lockhart](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, April 28](#)

[April 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Topic: Back Cover Blurbs

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Topic: Back Cover Blurbs

Over at PWW today, Karen posed an excellent question that keeps a lot of writers up at night:

How to create a back-cover blurb that will draw the reader's interest yet will not "give away" too much (or any) of the book.

DWS has written extensively on this topic, though only a bit here and there. I don't believe he's ever done even a lecture on the topic, though if he did I would immediately recommend it.

Still, I've gleaned enough from his posts that eventually I learned how to write good back-cover blurbs.

There are only three real "tricks":

1. Write the blurb in present tense.
2. Open with a great hook in as few words as possible.
3. Say just enough about the POV character (and the organization if there's an organization involved) to entice the reader to buy the book.

All good fiction is character driven, so you have to make the reader care about the POV character.

Many beginning writers (and some not-beginning writers) tend to let themselves be drawn into listing a series of "this happened, then this happened" plot points. That is the major mistake that "gives away" too much of the book.

Here are a few examples of back-cover blurbs from my own books. Note the hooks, and note how I used paragraphing for emphasis:

From the magic-realism fantasy novel *Keeper of the Promise*

The prophets promised a king who would restore justice on Earth. But it's a tall order, and prophecy can be interpreted in many ways.

When the 13th daughter of a 13th daughter meets the 13th son of a 13th son, she is ecstatic. Their union will break the curse that has plagued both their families for generations.

But over time the line blurs.

Is the child a cursed remnant of a prophecy gone awry? Or is he the fulfillment of that prophecy?

From the SF novel In The Siberian Fields

Could you mine the bones of your own ancestors? And if so, at what cost?

In the early 22nd century, the Earth is governed by the World Equality Organization (WEO). Like all corrupt governments, they plant imagined problems for the citizenry, then parlay the citizens' fear into power.

The Jewish people, who for centuries have been considered "God's Chosen," are seen by the WEO as a barrier to that power. A purge ensues.

Jonathan Kirski, embittered by his parents' decision to give him to a German family so he would escape the purge, has chosen to mine the bones of his people in the Siberian fields.

The bodies don't decay.

The faces are always there.

But Jonathan believes he is prepared.

Are you?

From the SF sequel, The Claim

Adolph Hitler, terrible as he was, was nothing but a pawn, one in a series of strings tugged by a puppeteer. Hitler was vanquished, but the entity that gave him rise never went away.

Two centuries and two decades after the rise of Hitler, the same entity is still pulling strings.

And he's almost accomplished the goal of his father and grandfathers before him.

From another SF novel, The Advent of Simon Stark

The Solgren, intra-galactic colonists from another planet, have their eye, and their man, on Earth. It would make a perfect new home.

Simon Stark dons a brand new human suit, and it fits him better than he might ever have expected.

As the one great hope of the Selgrom Council of Elders, will Stark accomplish what they put him on Earth to do, or will his humanity overtake him?

And if it does, what then? Destroy the planet and move on, or opt for Plan B?

From the crime/psychological suspense novel *The Clearing*

On one side, Randall B Cregg's father has always hoped his son would feel a calling to take over the church someday.

The boy does feel a calling, but it is not the one his father hoped for. And Randall's mother is a veritable fount of Christian charity, even in her traditionally submissive role in the family.

On the other side is Detective Sean McManus. He is a matter-of-fact gumshoe who just wants to work his cases and make ends meet. But moonlighting isn't always what it's cracked up to be. Especially when you cross wires with a man like Big Frankie Giuliatti.

Smack in the middle is the clearing. Beautiful. Remote. A perfect setting for magic and romance and the plucking of young, ripe, forbidden fruit.

And a perfect setting for a graveyard.

From book 1 of the *Blackwell Ops* series (so the organization is as important as the first POV character)

Blackwell Ops is a special, secretive organization. Its operatives conduct swift surgical strikes on persons and organizations around the world.

Former Marine Jack Tilden is one of those operatives. This is part of his story, as told to the author.

Only the more sensitive parts of Mr. Tilden's story are fictionalized. Everything else is true.

And finally, the opening statement from each of the other *Blackwell Ops* books. The POV characters are

2, *Charlie Task* — Sometimes being who you are makes it easier to do what you have to do.

3, *Marie Arceneaux* — Dynamite comes in small packages. Marie Arceneaux is on of them. Don't be on her list.

4, *Melanie Sloan* — Melanie Sloan is young, but accomplished. She is also a force to be reckoned with. Or one that will reckon with you.

5, *Georgette Tilden* — Georgette Tilden, wife of Blackwell Ops operative Jack Tilden and an operative in her own right, is a deadly combination of charm, looks, and skill. She will disarm, disable and drop you — and you won't have a chance to blink.

In full disclosure, writing blurbs, like updating covers, can be an ongoing process. One wonderful aspect of this new world is that you can easily update the description (back-cover blurb) of your books.

As I read through many of the blurbs I'd written for my own novels, I found several I will recast to make them more attractive to readers.

Hope this helps.

I rolled out (at my kitten's insistence) at 5 this morning.

I did attend one short online workshop yesterday before my allergies and a budding head cold drove me to the house to do nothing productive for the rest of the day.

Off and on, I watched TV (mostly ball games) and slept. Today I'm feeling better. I hope to create a cover, promo doc etc. for Blackwell Ops 6, though I probably won't begin the read-through until tomorrow.

I won't write any fiction today unless something just grabs me, and I might not write any for the next two or three days. Just have to see how it all pans out.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Karen Riggs' "Pondering the Assassination of Genre" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/pondering-the-assassination-of-genre/>.

See "The Magic of Ed McBain's 87th Precinct" at <https://crimereads.com/the-magic-of-ed-mcbains-87th-precinct/>. A lot of good tips here if you look for them.

See "Write Tight" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/write-tight.html>.

And if you're interested in more about writing back-cover blurbs (or descriptions), I recommend keying "how to write back cover blurbs in fiction" into your search engine and see what pops up. If for no other reason, than to get a variety of opinions.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1220 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1220

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 43669

Total fiction words for the year..... 261470

Total nonfiction words for the month... 32830

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 109900
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 371370

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Karen Riggs](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, April 29](#)

[April 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quote of the Day

My two year old says being sick sucks

Note on Joe Lansdale's essay

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Quote of the Day: “[N]ever fight what’s working.” Joe Lansdale

Wow, April 29 already. Where does the time go?

I’m one of those unfortunate souls for whom the ticking of the clock is a powerful catalyst. It’s been that way since I was about ten years old.

When an hour passed, even when I’d accomplished something during that hour, it was still an hour I’d never get back.

Being sick sucks. In my fugue state, I’m just aware enough to know there are things I need to get done and that the clock is ticking relentlessly, but I’m literally powerless to do anything about it.

Hence yesterday and the day before passed with me filling the role of Casual Uninterested Observer. I was neither invited nor encouraged to participate. And today probably will pass in much the same way.

Don't get me wrong. I'm able to hurry up and wait — Lord knows I had ample practice in the USMC and as a cop for a year — but I don't like it. At all.

And as an entity who possesses free will, I want to exercise that will. I want to do what I want, accomplish what I want, be farther along the road an hour from now than I was an hour ago.

Yet I sit. I alternate boring myself with TV shows and sleeping. Then I wake up, gripe for awhile (if you hadn't guessed, I am not a good patient), bore myself a little longer, and lapse back into sleep.

My poor little healthy-as-a-horse (knock on wood) wife is probably relieved that she gets to go back to work for awhile today. If she is, I don't blame her.

I'd like very much to get away from this guy that I am at the moment and go back to work as well.

But I haven't so much as looked at photos for the cover of Blackwell Ops 6. I can only imagine the horrible result I'd come up with in my current state.

I haven't written the promo doc, the description (back cover blurb) or re-considered what I believe is the "ending" yet.

I haven't done anything worthwhile other than chatting with you since this crud descended on me.

And You. You poor unfortunates provide me with an audience before which I can air my grievances. And even though I'm certain you have grievances of your own, this Stuff, whatever it is, renders me selfish enough that I continue to blather-on about nothing.

Well, at least I'm writing Something. (grin) I suspect it's my way of keeping my fingertips in the writing pie.

But be careful not to lean-in too closley as you read this drivel. I wouldn't want you to catch this stuff.

I only wrote all of this to add something other than the items in "Of Interest" to today's edition of the Journal.

Thanks for reading. I'll do better when I eventually drag myself out of this nonsense.

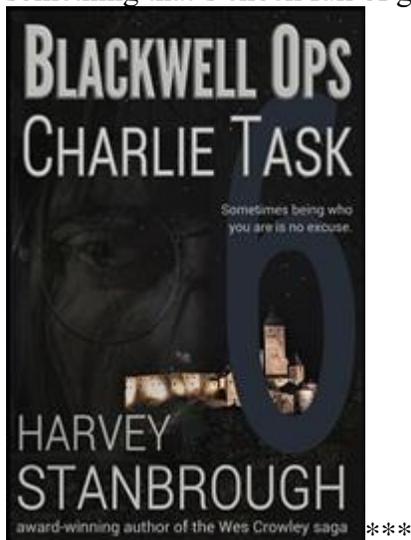
Tick. Tick. Tick.

Note: Reading Joe Lansdale's post a couple days ago on Facebook and again in Dean's post today helped me. Not only with overall knowledge but in my current situation with my current WIP.

Every book writes differently. In my current WIP (the one I just "finished") I've decided when I'm no longer under the weather, I'll cycle through the whole thing, allowing myself to touch it.

Then, when I get to the current end, I'll know whether it's truly the end or whether the characters have more to say. If they don't, I'll ship it off to my first readers (maybe) or read it aloud (probably) and give them a break.

If you DIDN'T read Joe's post on Facebook the other day, please read it today. Talk about something that's chock full of gems... wow.



Rolled out at 2:30 after sleeping off and on All Damn Day yesterday. I do feel a little better, I think. I feel better enough at least that I can be fairly sure I'll come back to the Hovel later to finish up today's Journal with more than only two links in "Of Interest."

So at 5, up to the house to waste what I need to waste of yet one more day.

I actually rebounded a bit and created a cover for Blackwell Ops 6. That's it on the right.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Great Advice from Joe Lansdale" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-advice-from-joe-lansdale/>. Seriously, copy/paste this into a Word or Notepad or Something document and read/re-read it occasionally.

See “First Page Critique: Ghost Wind” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-ghost-wind.html>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Thorns” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/04/29/free-fiction-monday-thorns/>.

To understand why I’ve never created or caused to be created or used book trailers, see “Book Trailers?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/book-trailers/>.

See “How to Fight the Commoditization of Books” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-fight-the-commoditization-of-books/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 840 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 840

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 43669
Total fiction words for the year..... 261470
Total nonfiction words for the month... 33670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 110740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 372210

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, April 30](#)

[April 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Thanks for all the well-wishes

Topic: I'm All Done with Patreon

Note: An advertisement

If you enjoy great thrillers

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

As I begin the day, thank you for all the well-wishes. I appreciate it.

I'm feeling a little better each day, though I'm still sleeping more than I care to. (grin)

As I morph from ill to well, I'm also determined to catch up on some admin stuff. That includes "needing" to read through my last WIP, the final chapter or two I wrote as I was descending into a sneezing, watery-eyes, coughing pit of darkness. (Wow, Harvey, dude, dramatic much?)

I've known for a long time that every story writes differently, yet I'm always amazed at how differently some of them write.

For example, I've never "had" to do a full cycling session through an entire novel because I wasn't certain the characters had ended the story.

I fear that maybe my descent into not feeling well caused me to call the story finished when it wasn't. On the other hand, that "little voice" that is my subconscious keeps saying, "Yeah, it's finished. Move on, already." So if I find it isn't finished, I'll feel very much surprised.

So this will be an experiment for me, and I'm just enough of a scientist (read "curious") that I'm always up for an experiment.

So as the last dregs of muddy-mind leave me and I engage in my first post-illness creative push, I'll do that cycling read-through. (Part of the experiment will be to ensure that I remain a Reader, in the creative subconscious, as I do the read-through.)

Topic: I'm All Done with Patreon

I opened a Patreon account two or three years ago for two reasons:

1. Partly because I wanted to support Dean Wesley Smith in a small, recurring way for the vast array of knowledge I've gleaned from him over the years; and

2. Partly because I was toying with the idea of starting my own Creator account at Patreon.

Part One

I've learned more from DWS over the years than I've learned from all other professional writers in nonfiction books, workshops and blog posts combined. So the way I see it, he has earned my support.

Of course, I support him every time I purchase one of his lectures or workshops or books too, but that's a direct exchange: value given for value received on a concentrated topic.

I also wanted to repay him for all the gems I've mined from his blog posts over the years. Frankly, without demeaning his books, lectures and workshops in the slightest, I've learned as much or more from his blog posts.

Hence the donation via Patreon.

But this morning I shut down my Patreon account. They're on the verge of changing their fees (again) and they just changed their terms of service again.

Then they banged the final nail into the coffin. In a "do not reply" email, they said my alternative to accepting those changes was to close my account.

The quickest way to make me do what you don't want me to do is offer me an ultimatum.

Companies that send me Do Not Reply emails leave a bad taste in my mouth. Companies that offer "take it or leave it" terms tend to make me want to leave it.

I'll still support Dean, but without the clearing-house middle man. I'll send the same recurring payment directly to him via PayPal.

Part Two

As some of you know, I also decided to open my own Patronage page on my main website instead of going with Patreon. (If you haven't visited, see <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.)

I offer real value there in the form of rewards to those who find my stories entertaining or my nonfiction works or blog posts helpful or educational.

And I offer those rewards in my own specially tailored tiers instead of bending to Patreon's rules.

Finally, instead of going through a middle-man, those who glean value from my work can donate directly to me via PayPal or by personal check on a one-time or recurring basis.

If you enjoy my fiction or if you learn from my nonfiction books or blog posts, I encourage you to check out the rewards by clicking the link above (or the Patronage link in the menu at either HarveyStanbrough.com or HESTanbrough.com).

For a small monthly donation, you can get a lot more entertainment for your dollar and/or more quickly flatten the learning curve of your writing career.

Best of all, the money-grubbers at the Patreon clearing-house won't get a cut for doing basically nothing.

Note: *As long as I seem to have decended* into an advertising pitch (grin), I also still offer audio lectures on several aspects of writing at <https://harveystanbrough.com/lecture-series/>.

And for those who want to focus on a particular aspect of their writing, I'm still open to taking on another mentorship or two. Anything from the mechanics of the language to the techniques of storytelling. To discuss a mentorship arrangement, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

If you enjoy truly great thrillers and if you like FREE, visit <https://geni.us/ngnTumlinson>. They aren't all Kevin J. Tumlinson's books, but some are and they're all from names you'll recognize.

Rolled out at 2:15 this morning and looked longingly at the coffee pot. Then I decided Nope and went back to bed for another two hours. (grin)

Came out to the Hovel by 4:30, coffee in hand, and wrote everything above. To the house at a little after 7 for a break.

Today, whatever else I accomplish, I'll get the covers for my more recent *two* WIPs up on my website. Hard to believe I let things slide that far.

Back to the Hovel at 8 to begin updating the Action-Adventure page on the main website and creating new pages for Blackwell Ops 5 & 6.

I've also decided to make some sweeping new changes to my author website, combining my publisher website with it. I'll do some of that today. More than likely, this (Daily Journal) website will be up for a facelift next.

I started my publisher website several years ago primarily to catch the eye of booksellers. In all that time, I've sold books at a discount to readers several times, but never once to a bookseller. So it's time for a change.

I'll also make that site more "reader" friendly and shift "writers" more over to this one. I'm looking forward to the journey.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Fantastic Writing Advice” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fantastic-writing-advice/>.

See the comments on “Great Advice from Joe Lansdale” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-advice-from-joe-lansdale/#comments>.

See “First Page Critique – Broken Thrones” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-broken-thrones.html>.

See “T. S. Eliot, Crime Fiction Critic” at <https://crimereads.com/t-s-eliot-crime-fiction-critic/>. Fascinating.

See “We’ve Always Been Into Psychological Thrillers” at <https://crimereads.com/weve-always-been-into-psychological-thrillers/>. (see Erin Kelly’s website at <https://erinkelly.co.uk/>. She has a blog.)

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1120

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 43669
Total fiction words for the year..... 261470
Total nonfiction words for the month... 34790
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 111860
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 373330

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, May 1](#)

[May 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

A productive day

In the ongoing saga

Another professional writer I follow

Topic: Yes, Virginia, Writers Lie.

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

I think I'm over the bug. I had a really productive day yesterday, both physically and otherwise.

I swapped-out parts of my in-home office with parts of my Hovel to make the latter more comfortable and more of an office. There's more to do, but a lot of it is done.

I also did some major revamping of my main website (more to come). I hope you'll drop by <https://harveystanbrough.com> and have a look.

Finally, I made a few small changes to this Daily Journal website. (Also a lot more to come.)

I'm excited about the changes, both current and upcoming.

In the ongoing saga of my current (previous? finished?) WIP, I've changed my mind again.

If you didn't notice (I didn't), my thought about reading through the whole thing was only conscious-mind stuff, a way to keep me from sending it to my first readers.

How do I know it was conscious-mind stuff?

Because conscious-mind stuff is ALWAYS negative and ALWAYS based on fear. (As you can see, I'm still reminding myself of that now and then after 5 years of telling the conscious mind to shut up when it comes to my fiction.)

I chose not to just send the thing to my first readers like I always do because I was afraid they might find fault. See how the conscious mind can creep in?

But I'm back to my version of normal now. I trust my first readers completely. They're honest with me when something works (for them) and they're honest with me when it doesn't.

So this morning I'll cycle through the last bit I wrote on the Blackwell Ops 6, then send it off to my first readers, put it out of my mind and move on to the next project.

Another professional writer I follow has just opened a Patreon account. He did so in order to write and publish (only to his Patreon subscribers) "short stories and novelettes" in the pulp tradition.

Good for him. My only question, if I wanted to ask it, which I don't, is why isn't he also publishing those works to the market a month after he publishes them exclusively to Patreon?

His business, but in my opinion, he's missing a major bet. If he writes those works fast (i.e., into the dark) they will probably be better than his "normal" writing, for which he prepares outlines, revises and rewrites, etc.

I hope he's doing this partly as an experiment to see what sort of feedback he gets from his readers on his "pulp" work. Just food for thought.

Topic: Yes, Virginia, Writers Lie.*

A day or two ago on another writer's website, the writer went on and on, seemingly taking offense to the notion that writers lie.

Her take was this:

"No, good writers don't lie. They build a world and characters from their own beliefs and worldbuilding so everything is true.

Bad writers who use sloppy or lazy writing to justify false behavior or world changes lie all the time."

Seriously? (uneasy grin)

Yeah, I can't agree with that.

I honestly don't mind being considered a liar as a fictionist. I wear the term as a badge of honor. (grin) In fact, I openly brag about it. And that can't possibly be a surprise to you, given that the tagline on my writer website reads, "I will lie to you. And you will enjoy it."

Not once has anyone taken offense at that tongue-in-cheek statement. Well, not that I know of, though I suppose in today's world, anything is possible.

But to my knowledge, not once has any potential reader read that tagline and decided to turn away because they don't want to do business with a liar. (grin)

And believe me, readers like that are just mean-spirited enough to let you know why they refuse to even consider buying your books.

Of course, the joke's on them. (grin) I've already been entertained by what I wrote. If they miss it, that's their bad luck, not mine.

I don't have to tell you, the word "lie" has many connotations. No mentally well-adjusted human being believes it's all right to tell a lie with the intent of causing harm to others.

But my buddies and I get together now and then to philosophize and "swap lies" (recall and tell stories) and remember our past as it should have been (maybe) instead of how it really was. No harm, no foul, eh?

Along the same line, extremely good writers admit to "lying" all the time. For only one example of many, witness Lawrence Sanders' nonfiction masterpiece (in my opinion) [Telling Lies for Fun and Profit](#).

Do writers lie with bad intentions, attempting to do harm to others? No, of course not.

But if we can lighten up just a little bit, they do "lie" in a tongue-in-cheek, harmless, happy kind of way.

It's a little like a two year old cupping a caterpillar behind her back after swiping that hand past her mouth.

With a faux-surprise look on her face, her mother says, "Where'd that caterpillar go?"

And the two year old, with a straight face, says, "I ate it."

So did she "lie" or did she "tell a story"?

The answer is Yes.

Writers tell made-up stories. It's what we do. Maybe the writer sees those stories as his or her "truth," though frankly that seems more than a little haughty to me.

No matter what the writer believes, what s/he has written in a pure fiction are still harmless, pretty lies that transport the reader to an alternate reality for awhile.

That's good enough for me.

*The title of this topic is a play on "'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," one sentence from an editorial titled "Is There a Santa Claus?". Via Wikipedia, "the editorial appeared in the

September 21, 1897, edition of The (New York) Sun and has since become part of popular Christmas folklore in the United States.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yes,_Virginia,_there_is_a_Santa_Claus)

Rolled out at 4, went to the Hovel to write a lot of the stuff above and to further update my writer website a bit.

To the house at 7 to visit a little with my wife (did I mention the poor baby has a raging head cold?), then back here to write more of the stuff above and glean items for “Of “Interest.”

At 8:30, I began cycling through the last scene of BO6. By 10 a.m., I’d added the necessary front and back matter and sent it off to my wonderful first readers. (Thanks, Nan and Robert!)

Now for a break, during which I will return to physical endeavors. (grin)

I finished rebuilding a small set of drawers for my new “desk” in the Hovel by 11.

I’m anxious to get back to writing, but I don’t want to hurry into my next fiction project. So I’ll take the rest of today to ease back out of my few days’ retirement and start writing again tomorrow or (more likely) Friday. (Tomorrow morning will be interrupted with a routine doc appointment.)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “W.S. Merwin” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/99843-2/>. Wonderful.

See the comments on “Ignore Name Calling...” at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/ignore-name-calling-be-proud-of-what-you-choose-to-do/>.

See the comments on “Fantastic Writing Advice” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fantastic-writing-advice/#comments>.

See “First Page Critique: They’re Gone” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/04/first-page-critique-theyre-gone.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1240 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1240

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	261470
Total nonfiction words for the month...	1240
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	113100
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	374570
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

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

[The Daily Journal, Thurssday, May 2](#)

[May 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Yesterday, I stayed...

Topic Part 1: On What Beginning Writers Believe

Topic Part 2: Business, Schmizzness

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Yesterday, I stayed on the computer long after I planned to leave. As a result, I didn't give much thought to what fiction I'll write next, so I definitely won't start anything new today.

I keep getting a feeling my next WIP will be something completely different.

I'll read Joe Lansdale's article again sometime today. I like people who are up front and plain spoken, and the guy gives me ideas.

Long post today. Gird yourselves.

Topic Part 1: On What Beginning Writers Believe

I got into a brief discussion recently with a person who wanted to talk about beginning writers.

The gist was basically a list of probably valid complaints:

Beginning writers populate the “writer boards” and exchange the same tired advice that doesn’t work.

They think they’re going to write a novel, hit the bestseller lists, and never have to work another day in their lives.

They don’t look at writing as a business.

And on and on.

My initial response was So what? How does what they think or do affect me?

But let me take the complaints one at a time.

If these folks populate the “writer boards” (whatever those are), what do I care? I don’t attend. In fact, I also don’t attend other places where beginning writers are likely to gather, like critique groups, writing groups and writer conferences. By and large, those are places for the exchanging of myths. If you still need those, that’s fine. I don’t.

So wherever beginning writers gather, chances are, I won’t be there unless I’ve been invited — and paid, well — to speak to the group.

Not because I’m a snob or whatever, but because I’m too busy writing. Writers write.

Well, and because I’m looking forward, not back.

After all, there was a time when I too played groupie to writer’s groups etc. You know, before I got tired of hearing the same old clichéd stuff that doesn’t work. Back before I was an actual writer, when all I had was talking about writing.

But, the second complaint goes, these beginning writers believe they’re going to write a novel, hit the bestseller lists, etc. (Here, I kind of sense an implied exclamation point accompanied by near-hyperventilation.)

My response is pretty much the same: <shrug> Okay. But again, so what?

The thing is, those folks are living the dream. Maybe you and I think it’s a stupid dream, but it’s THEIR dream. And frankly, it’s one I suspect we’ve all lived before.

I know I did, way back in the day.

So what right do I have to tear it down for them? They won't listen or understand until they're ready. And again, what they think or believe and do or don't do has absolutely no effect on me or my writing anyway, so why should I care?

The real point is, you're either immune to their silliness or you aren't. If you are, move on. Spend your time writing and looking forward.

If you aren't, well, then you're still one of them. But that's all right too. You'll grow when you're ready.

Life thus far has gone by way too quickly, so I'm a bottom-line kind of guy. And my bottom line with regard to beginning writers is this:

1. If they come to me for advice, I'll do my absolute best to help them.
2. If they come to me WITH advice, I don't bother arguing. I most often smile, nod, and say something like, "Hey, when you're right, you're right." Then they feel good, I feel snide and witty, and we're both happy.

Then I go on about my business, preferably with other people who have stopped depending on fairy dust, left the past behind, and want to improve their craft as much as I want to improve mine.

But I said I "go on about my business," didn't I?

Trust me, that's only a figure of speech.

Topic Part 2: Business, Schmizzness

Did I spell that right, do you think?

The final gritch about beginning writers was that they don't look at writing as a business.

Again, in the first place, So what? What do I care? (Trust me, I really don't.)

Now then, starting right here I could easily be flip and pretend that I look at writing as a business. I really do understand that's what I'm "supposed" to do.

I could even pretend that writing-as-business is something I adhere to every single stinkin' day.

But the thing is, I DON'T look at it that way, and it ISN'T something I adhere to. At all. <shrug>I'm just not bent that way.

Beginning writers don't treat writing as a business?

Neither do I. Not really.

I mean, I guard my copyright and my IP zealously, and I still force myself to follow Heinlein's Rule 4 (put your work on the market), albeit grudgingly.

Oh, and my wife takes some depreciation of office equipment and expenses for research trips and such as that off our taxes. But really, that's about it.

And if I had to do even that much on my own, I promise, it wouldn't get done. Form 1040EZ is my buddy. If it weren't for my wife, Form 1040EZ and I would hang out and have beers once a year. Probably on the afternoon of April 15.

I hasten to add, I'm truly happy, even thrilled, for those of you who are able to look at writing as a business and still enjoy it. Seriously. If you are able to look at writing as a business, more power to you.

But even Ms. Writing Business herself, Kristine Kathryn Rusch, emphasizes in her post today in "Of Interest" that keeping the writing fun is the key to all things writing.

So there you go.

For me, personally, writing really is fun. That isn't just something I say. I really do write to entertain myself.

Even as I'm writing, I'll flinch away from the screen at the horror of what just came through my fingertips.

Or I'll laugh out loud, or I'll find myself approaching tears.

A lot of times — often right in the middle of a scene — I'll suddenly push back from my desk and say something like, "Wow, where the [heck] did THAT come from?"

Most often when I'm through writing for the day, I'm a very happy version of exhausted.

And even as I'm walking away from the Hovel and that magical little writing 'puter, Hal, I'm wishing my life away, hoping the afternoon and the night will pass quickly so I can get back to the story.

Please understand, I'm not exaggerating here, and I'm not cheerleading. I *literally* can't think of anything that's more fun than being immersed in whatever story I'm telling at the moment.

So why in the world would I want to risk screwing that up by slathering it with something as stodgy and impersonal and boring (to me) as *This Must Be Business!?* (Gawd, I almost put myself to sleep just writing that clause.)

Actually, if I DID look at writing as a business, I probably wouldn't make as much money at it. And I KNOW I wouldn't have as much fun. I mean, just having to put my work on the market is a major drain on my fun-o-meter.

And I only do that much “business” because Mr. Heinlein said I have to, and I decided awhile back to adhere stubbornly to his rules. But then, that’s why I am where I am today as a writer.

Yet if I were forced to look at writing as a business, I probably wouldn’t write at all.

Don’t get me wrong. Making money every month on my stories is wonderful. It’s a great little ego-boost.

Knowing that other people all over the world are entertained enough by my stories to give me money is even more wonderful.

But far and away the best sensation, to me, is recording whatever story my characters feel like telling me at the time. And that’s all right here, between me, Hal and the characters.

So there it is. No pretense, no foo-foo, no tongue-in-cheek BS. Just the plain truth.

I write fiction because writing fiction is fun.

For me, there is nothing better.

Rolled out at 2 a.m. when my kitten ripped my left forearm on her way out of what must have been a horrendous nightmare. I picked her up, comforted her until her breathing and her little heartrate calmed, then went to find a small bandage.

Because I have a pacer-tech appointment this morning, I’m going to post this early. Then my intention is to take the rest of the day to do nothing.

So I’ll talk with you again tomorrow. Thanks for being here.

Of Interest

See “The Covers of This Book” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-covers-of-this-book/>. This, at least, is one problem I do not have. (grin) Most of the time.

See “Business Musings: Good Goals” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/01/business-musings-good-goals/>.

See “Writing Bundle One Week Left” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-bundle-one-week-left/>. I highly recommend this if you haven’t gotten it yet.

See Prasenjeet Kumar’s question and Dean’s response (last two comments) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fantastic-writing-advice/#comments>.

See “Crime Fiction Research Links” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/crime-fiction-research-links.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1440 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1440

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 261470
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2680
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 114540
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 376010

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, May 3](#)

[May 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

A roundup of story starters

If you write short stories

I'm still considering

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

This morning I have a roundup of story starters for you. I'm even thinking about adding a page of these to the Daily Journal website (HEStanbrough.com). If I do they will be across different genres.

Today, as I got these from CrimeReads.com articles, most of them are Mystery, Crime, Distopian fiction, etc.

The idea is to read any articles that interest you. If your creative voice leaps at some of what you read, write an opening. If it runs, run with it.

Note: Not all of the story starters are limited to what the title says. Use your imagination. Happy writing!

“The Doomed Romances of Noir” at <https://crimereads.com/the-doomed-romances-of-noir/>.

“The Power and the Pain of Post-Apocalyptic Detective Fiction” at <https://crimereads.com/the-power-and-the-pain-of-post-apocalyptic-detective-fiction/>.

“Crime Fiction, Thrillers, and the Importance of Setting” at <https://crimereads.com/crime-fiction-thrillers-and-the-importance-of-setting/>.

That's probably more than enough for now.

PLEASE visit the website and let me know whether you found this useful in a comment, or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

I'm interested in knowing whether this is a waste of time.

If you write short stories that “reflect the Western lifestyle,” you can submit them to Rope and Wire, a website dedicated to the Western genre and the western way of life.

There's no monetary payment, but Scott Gese, the administrator of the site, is very supportive of western writers.

You can find submission guidelines at <https://www.ropeandwire.com/writers-wanted.html>.

I'm still considering what I want to write next. Oddly, I'm not really in a hurry. The feeling I have is that it's more important to get this “right,” whatever that means.

It won't be another Blackwell Ops novel at the moment. There's plenty left to write in that world, and plenty to write in a spin-off series (which I set up in BO5).

But of the 8 novels I've written in the last four months, 6 were Blackwell Ops novels. I need a change.

I'm putting a couple of gentle limits on myself too:

1. I'd like my next project to be a novel and something over 60,000 words. (I want to live with it for awhile.)
2. I'd like it to be something different than I've ever written, or at least something different than I've written in a good while.

Really, that's about it.

UPDATE: I'm toying with something, basically seeing where it takes me. I'll report word counts as I go (after all, I've written the words) but no promises at the moment that it will continue.

Rolled out at 3:30 this morning and spent some time gleaning some of my western short stories and formatting them a bit for submission to Rope and Wire. That prompted the little insertion two sections above this. (grin) I've had a story published there before.

At 10 a.m. I settled on an idea, opened a new Word doc, and wrote until 11:30, about a normal session for me.

I'm hopeful. You'll see the working title below. We'll see where it goes.

Taking a break at noon. I might write more today and I might not. I always start a new project slowly, and as this one is currently tentative, it might be even slower than usual.

Nope, no more writing today. During my break, I actually sat down and enjoy a few innings of baseball. (grin)

Tomorrow morning early I'll be back at the plate myself, trying to hit one more home run. I like home runs. Home runs are good.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Week Two Great Challenge Update" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/week-two-great-challenge-update/>.

See "Writing The True Story of "The Oldest Living Godfather" at <https://crimereads.com/writing-the-the-true-story-of-the-oldest-living-godfather/>.

Fiction Words: 1538

Nonfiction Words: 630 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2168

Writing of **In the Cantina at Noon** (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538

Total fiction words for the month..... 1538

Total fiction words for the year..... 263008

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3310

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 115170

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 378178

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Rope and Wire](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, May 4](#)

[May 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Delayed start

I labeled one

Topic: Letting It Fly

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Sometimes the way my brain works annoys me.

I rolled out early this morning specifically so I could have fun (write) early, but I'm also a writing instructor.

So my brain gave that mentoring role priority. I'm not complaining. I just think it's an interesting curiosity.

I took about an hour to respond to an email that should have taken a few minutes max. I mentally meandered around, eventually finding (I hope) the right words to convey what I wanted to convey.

Then a realization struck me right out of the blue — something I should have realized a few weeks ago — and I took close to another hour to write another email to another writer.

Just like that, the first two hours of the day were gone (again, not complaining) and I hadn't even started today's edition of the Journal, much less looked for items for "Of Interest," etc.

I labeled one of the items "In today's Journal" yesterday "A roundup of story starters."

I shouldn't have done that. I forgot how tightly most writers limit themselves.

In my mind, "story" is all-encompassing. It means "short story, novella, novel" etc.

But chances are, if you DON'T write "short" stories, you didn't click the links and discover the possible story starters.

If you didn't, I encourage you to do so. There are some great, creative-flow-invoking tidbits in those articles that will almost certainly pique your interest.

And to address another often self-imposed limit, despite the fact all the articles are from CrimeReads, the ideas they spawn won't all go to a particular genre.

If you write fantasy, they'll move you in that direction. If you write romance or westerns or SF or whatever, they'll speak to you in that way.

The ideas are going into YOUR mind, so they'll shape-shift themselves to suit what YOU need them to be for your chosen genre. Okay, I'll shut up now.

Topic: Letting It Fly

This will be brief.

One of my mentoring students emailed me that she has decided, with her writing, to just "let it fly."

I share it here for my other mentoring student and for all of you.

First, do I even need to say "Good, that's perfect"?

But then she wrote, “[Because t]his is a first effort... there will more than likely be many changes and midcourse corrections.”

My response was this:

“No, other than normal copyediting (typos, etc.) there more than likely won’t.

“That your writing will ‘more than likely’ need ‘changes and midcourse corrections’ is some nonsense that you (like all of us) were taught by non-writers and by other writers who have listened to non-writers.

“Actually, once you learn to trust your subconscious — once you learn to trust your characters to tell their own story (and I’ll keep saying it until you get it) — your original voice will come through and you’ll begin to find your readership.”

All of that is true, folks.

Once you learn to truly “let it fly” and then not go chasing after it with a bag full of critical-voice doubts, you will have taken the first major step toward being a lagabout like me. (grin)

As I mentioned above, I rolled out at a little after 2 this morning and was in the Hovel by 2:30. Then I wrote two emails, checked for items for “Of Interest” and wrote the stuff above.

Probably no fiction writing today to speak of. I’m very excited about my new project and I really hope it takes off.

However, I have to give some thought to structure on this one before I begin writing in earnest. I suspect it’s going to be a series of short stories that, when taken as a whole, will also comprise a novel. Probably a long novel.

I’ll spend the balance of the day with my wife, helping her through the last dregs as she emerges from her illness.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See “10-4” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/10-4.html>. Chock full of gems. Read at least the first paragraph. Two or three times.

See Michael’s “Who Can You Trust?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/who-can-you-trust/>.

For some great pics of Dean and Kris, see “Another Great Year! Thanks, Kris!” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/another-great-year-thanks-kris/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 730 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 730

Writing of **In the Cantina at Noon** (novel?)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 1538
Total fiction words for the year..... 263008
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4040
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 115900
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 378908

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Michaele Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Sunday, May 5

[May 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Happy Cinco de Mayo!

Some numbers

What is a professional writer?

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Happy Cinco de Mayo! Though it isn't really Mexican Independence Day.

If you'd like to know what Cinco de Mayo really signifies, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and I'll forward you a cool email I received this morning from Kevin Tumlinson.

For some reason, partly spurred-on by an email I wrote to a mentoring student, this morning I decided to see how much I've written in novels and novellas in the past 4 years and 6 months.

So I set up a new spreadsheet and ran a sum function. Not counting short stories, I've written 2,109,454 words of published fiction in the past 4.5 years (54 months).

Obviously that also doesn't include nonfiction, either books or this Journal. I'd be almost afraid to add those in. (grin))

But just in novels and novellas, that's an average of just over 39,000 words per month. A paltry 1300 words per day.

So I've spent an average of one hour per day — one lousy hour — working on novels for the past 4.5 years.

See why I so often say I feel like a slacker? (grin)

But maybe more importantly, see what you can do if you average writing only one hour a day?

If you hit 1300 words per day every day for a year, that's 474,500 words per year.

That's five "full-length" (by traditional publishing's standards) novels per year.

I'm kind of dragging my feet this morning. It's a stupid thing to do, given the fluid nature of Time. How quickly it passes and how quickly it's gone.

Last night, I read the first chapter of my new WIP aloud to my wife. Ostensibly, I did that because I knew doing so would reveal any flaws in the WIP.

But secretly, I wanted to determine the WIP's potential and, with that, my level of interest. As I wrote here a day or two ago, I would like to live with this one for awhile.

Well, reading it aloud definitely determined my level of interest. In fact, it fired me up.

For the first time in quite awhile, I felt like I could only barely wait for the afternoon and evening to pass so I could get back to writing. I'm pretty sure that's the best feeling in the world.

So why am I dragging my feet? Well, it's Sunday. On weekends, family life takes precedence.

And this morning I had an epiphany about one of my mentoring students and asked her to call me so we could discuss it.

In other words, when I got to the Hovel this morning I was wearing a couple other hats.

I might still write some on the WIP today, depending on other things. But if I don't write on it today, Lord willing, both it and I will still be here tomorrow morning.

And I'm anxious. I'm looking forward to writing the story my characters want to give me. But I'm not frantic about it, and that's kind of neat too.

A day or two ago, there was some discussion over at PWW about what constitutes a professional writer: money? production? number of friends he has if his cat doesn't leave?

And as I wrote the second paragraph before this one, my own definition came to me:

A professional writer is one who has decided he or she is a professional writer, based on his/her having developed a habit of writing — a deeply ingrained habit that remains constant and steady even when external forces act upon it.

Professionalism is a state of being that is based on the production of written works. And the production of written works is based on habit.

It doesn't matter at all that the production varies from day to day and sometimes even drops off to nothing during life rolls.

Even when it isn't evident, it's always there. It's always in the background, providing a calm assurance of who you are.

Rolled out early this morning, but was consumed with the epiphany I had concerning my mentoring student. The call went well and everything's finally on track.

I also had a call from my friend Robert to round out the day. We shared some laughs and talked a little about writing.

Now I'm going to head up to the house and devote the rest of the day to my bride.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Escapism Rocks!" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/escapism-rocks.html>.

See "First, You Have to Write the Damned Thing" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/first-you-have-to-write-the-damned-thing/>. Humor. It's what's for breakfast.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 2150 (790, Journal) (1360, mentoring email)
Total words for the day: 2150

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel?)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 1538
Total fiction words for the year..... 263008
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6190
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 118050
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 381058

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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 Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Monday, May 6

[May 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Topic: How I Became...

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Topic: How I Became a Professional Fiction Writer

Sometimes it's difficult to remember that a scant 5 years ago I knew almost nothing about writing fiction.

Oh, I knew (and taught) mechanics: grammar, punctuation, the use of sentences and fragments, and some of the finer nuances passive vs. active construction, past tense vs. present tense and so on.

But about writing? I knew nada.

I'd written bits and pieces off and on for most of my life (poems, essays, articles, a few stories).

But it was only after I rediscovered Dean Wesley Smith in February 2014 and started following his blog that I began to learn what being a writer and the writing process is really all about.

(I'd met and talked with him years before at a conference or two where we were both presenting, but at the time he wasn't teaching like he is now.)

But in February 2014 I started reading his blog every day. Sometimes, admittedly, I read it only to watch him go off the deep end, which I fully expected to happen. Only he didn't.

And on April 15 of that year I finally "dared to be bad" (Dean's term), meaning I dared to screw up. I dared to "fail."

I tried writing into the dark. I remember clearly thinking WITD worked for Dean only because he'd been writing for so long and had so many publications out there, etc. I remember thinking no possible way was WITD going to work for me.

But something about getting out of my own way and letting my subconscious tell the story made sense. After all, my subconscious has been making up stories since long before I even knew there was an alphabet.

So rather than dismissing WITD out of hand, I figured what harm could it do to try it through one short story?

On that day I started a personal challenge (egged on by Dean) to write at least one short story every week.

(In his attempt to write one short story every week for a year, he'd failed when his streak broke at "only" 46 short stories. That was the first time I'd heard the term "fail to success.")

I also decided to try writing into the dark.

I wrote "Consuela," the first of what would be 76 short stories written in 72 straight weeks. "Consuela" was under 1600 words and written totally into the dark. Looking back on it now, it lacks pacing, and I knew absolutely nothing about grounding the reader.

Still (I was paying attention to reviews at the time), readers loved it. And more importantly, I loved it. I couldn't believe how good the story was, how alive it seemed.

(If you would like to read “Consuela” free, click <https://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ConsuelaD2D.pdf>.)

That encouraged me, so I wrote another short story into the dark, and another, and another, and soon I was hooked.

Of course my conscious mind still tried to intrude, but soon I learned to recognize that voice and shove it aside. I had to concentrate on recognizing it at first, but soon it became second nature. No way was I going to allow it to put a damper on the sheer joy I felt when writing into the dark.

Then I figured if Dean had harbored this wonderful secret, what else might he know? What else did he know that I thought might only work for him but in reality would work for anyone who trusted it?

Then he talked in a blog post about Dreams vs. Goals and how and why to set goals.

I set a daily word count goal (3,000 words per day) and I hit it on most days. The “large” word-count goal helped keep me writing into the dark. If I wanted to hit my goal, there was no time for rewriting and hovering over words and sentences. And it all worked So Well!

I started taking lectures and workshops, eagerly absorbing everything I could get. Now and then, I still thought some of what he was saying would work only for him (he had so many years in the business and was so successful) but not for a beginner like me.

In every case, I was wrong. In every case, what he was teaching worked wonders for me and for my writing.

Then I got to thinking, I’d already proven to myself that WITD worked for short stories. But how in the world could it possibly work for whole novels (critical voice)?

Well, I should at least give it a try, right?

So on October 19, a scant 6 months after I’d started writing short stories in earnest (and into the dark), I sat down, opened a new Word doc, and wrote this paragraph:

Wes Crowley leaned forward and poked at an ember that had popped out of the campfire a moment earlier. “Been a long trail this time, boys.” His attention fixed on the ember, he worked the tip of the stick under the edge nearest him, then flipped it backward into the fire. A few sparks released. “Sure lookin’ forward to gettin’ back.” He looked up, a tired, easy grin on his face. “What about you, Mac?” ”

And my first novel, *Leaving Amarillo*, was underway. Writing into the dark and driven by my daily word-count goal, the novel was finished twenty-some days later

Almost without me noticing, the characters had led me through the story sentence by sentence, scene by scene, and right up to the end, which they handed me on a silver platter.

Dean was right again. I was amazed. I published that novel on November 11, 2014.

Still, it took me hearing Dean's Heinlein's Rules lecture in January 2015 to really understand what WITD was and to begin to discover the magic of Heinlein's Rules. By then I'd written 40 new short stories and had begun my 4th novel (Confessions of a Professional Psychopath).

That's when the little light came on. That's when I finally understood the value of ongoing learning (which I'd already been doing vs. talking about learning). And that's when I realized I was a professional fiction writer.

I continued taking Dean's craft workshops, still writing all the while. For the next couple of years my almost-daily routine was learning, writing on the current novel, and remembering that I had a short story due at the end of every week. And I've never looked back.

I don't know everything there is to know about writing in general or about writing fiction in particular, but I know a hell of a lot more than I did 5 years ago. (grin)

And yesterday I realized how very good it feels to be able to cut that learning curve for others. What it took me a year to learn initially (February 2014 to January 2015) — trust the subconscious, quiet the critical mind, write into the dark — I'll be able to teach one of my mentoring students in only two or three months.

And once I've absorbed the lessons I've learned from Dean, once I've put them into practice and made them my own, I can share those with you, here, in topics and snippets.

Does life get any better than that?

Rolled out a little after 2, headed to the Hovel, wrote all of the stuff above. A break at around 5, then back here to find items for "Of Interest," then to the WIP. Onward!

So I did all that stuff, turned the water on in the yard, screwed around with email etc. for awhile, and finally saddled up to meet Wes at the cantina at 9:30. He won't be there 'til noon, but I wanted to be sure I get a good seat. (grin)

Well, Wes didn't make it to the cantina yet. But I have a feeling he'll be there in the morning.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Are Only Humans Creative? Plus, 6 Ways Creativity Improves Health" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/are-only-humans-creative-plus-6-ways-creativity-improves-health.html>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see “Take Me Back To” an interesting research website at <https://takemeback.to/>.

See “14 Markets for Themed Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/14-themed-calls-for-submissions/>. Some of these have quickly approaching deadlines, so take a look today.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Perennials” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/06/free-fiction-monday-perennials-2/>.

See “The Open Library” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-open-library/>.

Fiction Words: 2456

Nonfiction Words: 1410 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3866

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel?)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538

Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994

Total fiction words for the month..... 3994

Total fiction words for the year..... 265464

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7600

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 119460

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 384924

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, May 7](#)

[May 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Sign up for this!

Rare Photos!

Topic: To Share Something Interesting

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Penny Sansevieri of Author Marketing Experts is conducting a free webinar on Marketing on May 16 at 11 a.m. It's hosted in collaboration with Draft2Digital.

Be sure to register. Penny will email a recording of the event to all registrants even if they can't attend live.

Sign up at <https://www.amarketingexpert.com/marketing-basics-and-beyond-webinar-draft2digital>.

Recently unearthed! An actual photo of my creative voice!



And to give him equal time, here's a pic of my critical voice:



Any questions?

Topic: To Share Something Interesting

I have a feeling the writing of *In the Cantina at Noon* is going to take awhile, not only to write but to start. What's weird about that is that I don't mind. I'm too excited to mind. And today I found out I'm actually doubly excited. (grin)

For one thing, I get to spend some quality time in a cantina with my old buddy Wes Crowley again.

For another, I'm starting over on the WIP to appease my two year-old subconscious (see the guy in the pic above).

As you can probably tell from the pic, the little guy's excited. He's all over the place. Here's why:

When I wrote the opening for *In the Cantina at Noon*, I wrote it in what English teachers would call third-person limited omniscient.

That's also how I wrote the 10-novel series that precedes this story, so it felt natural. But I've learned a lot since the original saga ended, not to mention how much I've learned since I started the first book.

So when I was about 4,000 words into the WIP, my two year old tugged on my sleeve. "Hey, how about letting the characters tell the story?"

I shrugged him off. "I am."

"No, I mean how about letting them tell the story *directly*. How about setting that narrator in the corner and letting Wes and the others speak for themselves? Or don't you trust them?"

Well, you probably know how a two year old can nag. Besides, he was making sense and wearing a S&W Model 19 Combat Magnum. So who am I to argue?

So I saved the WIP with a slightly different file name and started through it again, changing from third-person blah blah blah to first-person with alternating POV characters.

Interesting. I've written several first-person POV stories and novels, but never one with alternating viewpoints.

Intellectually, I know it can be done. More importantly, I'm confident I can do it. Though frankly the thought of it is a little scary. Since I haven't done it this way before, it's an experiment. I'm taking a major risk, and that's got my adrenaline pumping. (See my post over on the big site today.)

So I'm not only excited to get to spend time with my old friend Wes again, but as a writer I'm excited to get to try something that, for me, is brand new.

Honestly, I'm *so* excited that it was all I could do to come here and share this as a topic. (grin) I hope it helps you in some way.

Rolled out at 3 this morning after catching up on my sleep. Wrote a little on the WIP, had a revelation, wrote the stuff above and took a break a little before 6. When I come back, it's straight to the WIP.

And straight to the WIP it was. Mostly cycling through the new version. I think it's going to work out well.

Interesting how much more of the story comes through (and more cleanly) when it comes directly from the character in first-person POV. This was a revelation for me too. It pretty much guarantees I'll never write in third-person again except possibly in prologues.

Anyway, despite my excitement, I cycled/wrote in one-hour segments, taking time every hour for a break, sometimes to do other off-computer things.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Week Three Great Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/week-three-great-challenge/>. Scroll down, too, to see an example of writing sales copy.

See "Things We Can Learn From Good Openings In Movies" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/its-a-gas-things-we-can-learnfrom-good-openings-in-movies.html>.

See "Writers Need Adventure — Don't They?" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/writers-need-adventure-dont-they/>.

Fiction Words: 1876

Nonfiction Words: 700 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2576

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538

Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994

Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870

Total fiction words for the month..... 5870

Total fiction words for the year..... 267340

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8300

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 120160
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 387500

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

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

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, May 8](#)

[May 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Kristine Kathryn Rusch

I wrote a whole long

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Kristine Kathryn Rusch is conducting a Kickstarter with a goal of putting her (huge) Diving Universe novels in hardback.

I mention this here because of the rewards offered at the \$15 (ebook) and \$50 (trade paperback) level. At those levels, in addition to The Renegat (latest DU novel) Kris offers “two large books of all the extra scenes and materials not used in the Diving novels, including a number of essays...[for] writers who want to see how writing a major novel often has a lot of unused parts when completed.”

Because Kris is maybe one of the best writers who has ever lived, this intrigues me, so I thought it might intrigue some of you. I mean, how much could we learn from reading just those excerpted parts and the accompanying essays?

To read about the Kickstarter and see the rewards, visit
<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/403649867/the-diving-universe>.

I wrote a whole long topic here about being careful how much you share of-and-about your work in progress, but I decided I was doing it again myself and decided not to post it. Not yet, anyway.

In this Journal, I want to share my writing experiences: what I've learned, what I learn as I go, etc. Mostly that's in the hope that what I share will help some of you in your own writing.

But in that endeavor, sometimes I share too much.

Sharing the numbers is wonderful. It helps keep me accountable, and maybe (I hope) it helps invigorate some of you by showing you what is possible when you 1) spend time in the chair and 2) keep coming back.

But as it turns out, sometimes sharing the process itself is harmful, not to mention a little embarrassing.

For now, suffice it to say I'm having considerable trouble with my WIP. I'll come back to it when I have something to come back to. I do believe I know what the problem is, but I'll share that after the fact, if I was right.

Rolled out at 3:30 this morning. Took care of business in the Hovel, then moved to the writing a little before 6. A little more cycling this morning, then onward into the WIP.

Cycled some, did some other things, wrote some, wrote the topic above. Around 10:30, I stopped to head to the grocery and take care of a few other chores.

Back at 12:30. I looked over the WIP, still have zero idea which way it will go (or whether it will go at all).

I'll call it a day and talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Read the first two comments on "Week Three Great Challenge" at
<https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/week-three-great-challenge/#comments>.

See "Character ARCs – Creating Characters Your Readers Won't Forget 2" at
<https://terryodell.com/character-arcs-creating-characters-your-readers-wont-forget-2/>.

See "ACDF: My New, Most Important Alphabet" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/acdf-my-new-most-important-alphabet.html>.

See “Loose Lips Sink Careers” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/03/loose-lips-sink-careers.html>.

See “Get The New Diving Novel Early!” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/07/get-the-new-diving-novel-early/>.

Fiction Words: 1038

Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1528

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538

Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994

Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870

Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908

Total fiction words for the month..... 6908

Total fiction words for the year..... 268378

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8790

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 120650

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 389028

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

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](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Thursday, May 9

[May 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Kristine Kathryn Rusch (again)

Kristine Kathryn Rusch (yet again)

Topic: Yesterday, I Shared

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Too important to be buried in “Of Interest.” If you read nothing else today, read “Business Musings: Patreon, Copyright, And Personal Choice” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/08/business-musings-patreon-copyright-and-personal-choice/>.

Kris’ Kickstarter has already funded and is well on its way to the first stretch goal (see Dean’s post in “Of Interest”).

Frankly, I hesitated yesterday. I was going to fund it at the \$50 level because I wanted the notes (in paper, so I could easily study them) on what she omitted and why.

But when the \$50 pledge automatically turned into \$62 because of shipping, that annoyed me. If the situation were reversed, I would absorb the \$12 shipping and pay it out of the \$50 pledge. But everyone’s different, I guess.

Anyway, I went ahead and jumped aboard this morning. I figure the essays alone are worth \$62 (to me), and of course you can get them for only \$15 if you don’t have to have paper.

Topic: Yesterday, I Shared

that I’m having trouble with my WIP. It’s annoying (and a little embarrassing), especially because when I shared that info, I had no idea why I was having trouble.

Now I do. It hit me like a heavily clichéd ton of bricks this morning.

As an aside, why does it have to be a ton of bricks? Doesn’t a ton of anything still weigh a ton and carry a distinct life risk should it land on you?

But I digress.

A kind comment from fellow pro-writer Karen Riggs encouraged me to share a little more. In fact, her comment removed the veil and enabled me to clearly and immediately identify the problem.

Critical voice.

I’m not immune. Usually my critical voice costs me a few minutes or maybe an hour or two. This time around, it cost me two precious DAYS of writing time.

And it was a very LOUD, obnoxious critical voice. So loud and obnoxious and in-your-face that I didn't recognize it at first.

In fact, if you were paying attention over the past couple of days to what I wrote in the Journal, you probably saw it too. If you did, you saw it before I did:

CV: "Wouldn't first-person POV be better for telling this story?"

Me: "You know, maybe it would."

CV a day later: "Well, you tried that. But maybe third-person limited-omniscient POV would be better after all. That IS how you wrote the other installments of the saga, isn't it?"

Me: "You know, maybe it would at that."

All conscious, critical mind crap. And yes, I do mean "crap." To paraphrase Ray Bradbury, "Nothing good in literature ever came from the conscious, critical mind."

As you know, I'm a firm believer in that paraphrased quote, and I'm an old, experienced hand at guarding against my own critical voice.

And yet I let it in.

So the "lesson" here is this: If it can happen to me, it can happen to you. Be wary.

You probably won't always catch your own critical voice when it creeps in (or when it shoves the door open and stomps in, as mind did to me in this case), but you CAN catch it, relegate it back to its assigned corner of your mind, and make it shut up for awhile.

How? By putting your fingers on the keyboard, opening yourself to letting the story simply happen, and writing the next sentence.

When you've reached that point (as I now have yet again), repeat after me:

Just write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence.

Don't worry about where the story's going or how it's "presented" or anything else. Those concerns are none of your business. They belong to the reader.

Just write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence.

That's what I'll be doing for much of the day today.

Before my wife leaves for work this morning, I'll ask her to make supper tonight (one of my usual chores). I have some catching up to do.

*

A side note about numbers: From today through the end of this WIP, the numbers below will reflect words that I “cut.”

In other words, I’ll keep the numbers since I did write the words, but starting today I’ll be doing a redraft. Just to be clear, that means I’ll toss out the whole thing and start over.

(I was going to toss out only everything after the 1900-word segment currently labeled “Prologue,” but Wes says the story is going to start in a different place.)

So here we go. (grin)

Rolled out a little after 3, checked for items for “Of Interest” and wrote much of the “Kris” stuff above.

Then I checked email, encountered Karen’s comment (Thanks, Karen!) and wrote the topic. And just like that, after two horrible days, I’m back on track.

To the new WIP at 5:30. By 8:20 (with three very short breaks), I’d written just over 3000 new words. As I said, I’m back.

A brief break at 8:20 to see my wife off. At 8:40, back to the WIP. By 10:40, another 2000 words. Now for a longer break.

Took a short walk (a little over a mile) in the desert east of my house. Came back to add to “Of Interest” and answer email.

At noon I started cycling back through what I’ve written today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “That Went Well!” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/that-went-well/>.

See “Road Work” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/road-work.html>. And not just “road work” but ANY detailed description should enable your reader to see, hear, feel, etc. the scene, and for a reason.

See “The 25+ Best Writing Tools in 2019” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-tools/>. Grain of salt. For example, I recommend against ANY “editing tools” (your brain is better).

See “Point of View: First, Second, and Third Person POV” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/point-of-view>. I recommend focusing on first person and third-person limited.

See “The Real Lives of Private Investigators” at <https://crimereads.com/the-real-lives-of-private-investigators/>.

As an experiment, see the latest version of Kevin Tumlinson’s newsletter at <https://author.email/mail/w/pGowSzQ88OSMlp7S763tZEWg/ZXM0dKrz3aDSmZd5EwZjLA/JK1AJMBrApTb8HaElwqERA>.

Fiction Words: 5807

Nonfiction Words: 1050 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 6857

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538
Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994
Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870
Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908
Day 5..... 5807 words. Total words to date..... 12715

Total fiction words for the month..... 12715
Total fiction words for the year..... 274185
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9840
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 121700
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 395885

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Kevin Tumlinson](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, May 10](#)

[May 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Kristine Kathryn Rusch (one more time)

Bundle time again

Mentoring still open

Almost had a minor melt down

Topic: Boxed Sets

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Kris added a second stretch goal and more rewards to her Kickstarter. Read about it at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/403649867/the-diving-universe/posts/2503773>.

Yesterday I learned my Science Fantasy novel In the Siberian Fields (StoneThread Publishing, 2016) will be included in the forthcoming bundle, Gods Among the Stars. (grin)

When that one goes live, my work will be available in 10 active bundles. Woohoo!

To see the current bundles, visit <https://harveystanbrough.com/bundles/>.

I still have a spot or two open to mentor other writers.

As I was telling another potential mentoring client this morning, because of all that I share in the Journal, over time you can learn pretty much everything I know.

Especially if you read the Journal AND go back through the archives or cut to the chase and download [The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life](#).

So why do I offer mentoring at all?

Because in mentoring, I can

develop a program specifically for your needs in writing,

focus on precisely what you need when you need it, and

vastly cut your learning curve in both time and information.

I can mentor you in any aspect of writing, editing, publishing or any combination of those (or parts of those).

If you think mentoring might help, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Let me know where you are in the (writing, publishing, etc.) process and what you need help with.

Of course, any time you have a specific question, you can also just email me and ask. (grin) I'm pretty much always here.

Almost had a minor melt down this morning.

I was glancing through my New Fiction spreadsheet (it contains all 300+ titles I've published since early 2011) and noted that I had Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task scheduled for release on May 15.

Of course, that's only five days from now, and I haven't even heard back from my first readers yet (my fault, not theirs). Oops. Panic attack time.

So I hurried off to my D2D, Amazon and Smashwords accounts to double-check.

Sure enough, I'd actually scheduled it for release on June 1, not May 15. I'd simply recorded the wrong date on the spreadsheet. Whew! (grin)

Yeah, it ain't easy bein' me.

As an aside, you know I started writing and publishing in earnest in April 2014, right?

Just in case you wondered (I did, so I counted), I published only 53 titles – all short stories, collections, anthologies and nonfiction – from February 2011 through August 2013. Everything else came from April 2014 to now. (grin)

Topic: Boxed Sets

Because of a newsletter I received recently from Reedsy.com about boxed sets, I'm going to be putting together some of those soon. And I'm excited about that.

Why?

For two reasons:

One, because it creates yet another revenue stream from my books.

Two, because (according to Reedsy), readers who look for and buy boxed sets are not necessarily the same readers who read in a given genre. In other words, with boxed sets, I'll be reaching a whole new audience.

I'll probably put together at least one multi-genre boxed set that contains the first book of each of my series.

Then I'll put together the Nick Spalding series in one, my PI/detective series in probably four or five different boxed sets (1-3, 4-6 etc. plus an omnibus that contains all 11 or 12), one or two or three for Blackwell Ops and so on.

Of course, putting series novels in boxed sets make perfect sense.

But if you have stand-alone novels that are in the same genre or are otherwise related, you can also put those in a boxed set. And I also have a lot of stand-alone novels.

I've been doing this for a long time with my short stories. Every time I write and publish ten short stories, I have ten new streams of revenue, right?

Wrong. When I write ten short stories, I actually have the potential for 13 streams of revenue: the 10 original stories, plus 2 five-story collections and 1 ten-story collection.

So why not do the same with novels? Especially since there's a whole new audience waiting to be tapped?

Even if you've written only two novels, you can create a boxed set and have 3 revenue streams instead of 2. Unlike a dream, this is something that really is within your control.

How many people will buy them? Well, that's the dream part. You have no control over that.

Except that if you don't put them out there, nobody CAN buy them.

Food for thought.

Note: Just in case you received that Reedsy newsletter too, there's an error in it.

Ricardo notes, "Important: you cannot publish a box set wide if any of the books in the box set is enrolled in KDP Select. Inversely, you cannot publish a box set on Amazon if any of the books in it are available on other retailers."

In that second sentence, he meant "...you cannot publish a box set EXCLUSIVELY on Amazon if any of the books in it are available on other retailers."

In other words, you CAN offer a boxed set in Amazon AND in other retailers as long as you don't go exclusive with Amazon.

That's a big difference.

Note 2: To read about the free Reedsy Book Editor (for typesetting print books) visit <https://reedsy.com/write-a-book>. I'm not specifically "recommending" it. I haven't checked it

out personally yet, but it's there and it looks interesting.

Rolled out at 2:30, to the Hovel to write all the stuff above and look for items for "Of Interest."

As almost always, DWS' post helped me a lot. It validated something I'm up to right now. (grin) I expect today to be a good writing day.

At 5:40 I shifted gears yet again and did a little admin stuff, double checking the bundles I have listed on my author site against the active bundles listed on BundleRabbit.

To the house for a break at 6:10. Then a little more admin stuff.

Finally to the novel at 8:30. A LOT of cycling this morning, mostly moving segments from here to there, shifting things around, double-checking and correcting names and timelines.

During the rest of the day, I encountered more difficulties, but I recognize them now as part of the process for this novel. Every novel writes differently.

By the very nature of this particular novel (Wes tells tales in the cantina and then continues his life), the first tale he has to tell comes directly (though not word for word) from *The Right Cut*, the 10th novel in the previously written saga. Which I finished way back in July, 2016.

So there's some copying and pasting involved, the previously mentioned double-checking of names and dates and timelines, etc. So the going on this one will be quick on some days, and it will drag on others.

Yesterday was a quick day. Today is a dragging day. Despite both, or maybe because of both, the novel continues to advance in its own way (again, every novel writes differently) and in its own time.

The chief attribute of this novel, once I stilled the critical voice, is that it's a great deal of fun.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See the Passive Guy's take on Kris Rusch's "Patreon, Copyright, and Personal Choice" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/patreon-copyright-and-personal-choice/>. This is very important.

See "Update on My Stuff" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/update-on-my-stuff/>. I was excited and hopeful to see this, and I wasn't disappointed. (grin) Gems to be gleaned.

See "Reader Friday: Writing Goals" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/reader-friday-writing-goals.html>.

See “Adrenaline Rush – Writing Suspense 1” at <https://terryodell.com/adrenaline-rush-writing-suspense-1/>.

See “The Heroes of Friday, This Time, Includes You!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-heroes-of-friday-this-time-includes-you/>. Be patient. Good post.

See “Public Knowledge Wants to Solve the Misinformation Problem” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/public-knowledge-wants-to-solve-the-misinformation-problem/>. Long but thoughtful and good.

Fiction Words: 1957

Nonfiction Words: 1310 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3267

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538
Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994
Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870
Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908
Day 5..... 5807 words. Total words to date..... 12715
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 14672

Total fiction words for the month..... 14672
Total fiction words for the year..... 276142
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 123010
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 399152

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, May 11](#)

[May 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

Today will be a fairly short day

I'm not sure

Topic: I'm a Hack

Daily diary

Of Interest

The numbers

Today will be a fairly short day since it's Saturday. I'll spend some time with the WIP, then some time with my wife.

I'm not sure whether I'm actually writing right now (telling a new story, putting new words on the page) so much as taking some enjoyable time AWAY from actual writing. Or more succinctly, away from writing for publication. At least that's how it feels.

I AM writing, but I'm writing something that's maybe already been written. To use some silly psycho-babble, I'm "giving myself permission" to just go where I wanna go and do what I wanna do. At the moment, that's much more important than whether or not this WIP will ever see the light of day.

When this is all through, if the WIP is nothing more than Wes retelling a story that's already been told, I might not publish it at all. Or I might "publish" it only to my first readers (as a bonus) and to my donors. And I might put it on the website as a free download.

Either way, I will have had the distinct pleasure of spending some quality time with Wes again, and that's good enough for me.

Plus that attitude keeps me from fretting (critical mind) and keeps me from getting in a hurry.

Topic: I'm a Hack

In [today's Pro Writers Writing post](#), Michael Lockhart discusses the term "hack" (the noun), as in a shortcut that some folks seek or use in order to save time and/or keep from having to endure a learning curve.

But that term (again, the noun) also has another meaning. It is often used, derogatorily, to indicate a writer who is suspected of taking such a shortcut, primarily in quality.

By that definition, I am a hack. Not that I actually take any shortcuts, but those who don't know me or know only my output *suspect* me of taking shortcuts. How else could I write as much as I do and publish it as often as I do?

Most of us have heard even the more-famous writers from the pulp era referred to as hacks. Never mind that their work has been around, and popular, for close to 80 years. And I know novelists today who are referred to (or even refer to themselves) as hacks or hack writers.

In actuality, writers whom some call “hacks” aren’t taking shortcuts at all. Actually, they have a work ethic, meaning they spend more time in the chair.

Writing a 100,000 word novel — again, where “writing” is defined as “putting new words on the “page” — takes about 100 hours.

If a writer spreads that 100 hours over a period of a year (so about 274 words per day, on average) or two or three years (a lot fewer words per day), there is a greater chance critics will believe his work *must* be of good quality.

But if another writer compresses those same 100 hours into one month (3334 words per day), he must be a hack.

The real difference, of course, is that the first writer has plenty of non-writing time to edit, revise, rewrite and polish his original voice off the work. And yes, those are all non-writing pursuits.

Meanwhile, the second writer has told a good story and moved on to the next one. And the next one. And the next one.

At the end of that year, the first writer will have a sanitized, sterile (and probably boring) story that smells of disinfectant and sounds exactly like all the others in the genre.

At the end of that same year, if he can keep up the pace, the “hack” will have written TWELVE good stories — and moved on to the next one.

The thing is

- Professional long-term writers don’t hover over one work, editing, revising, etc. They write.
- Professional long-term writers don’t look back. They look forward.

As a result they turn out more work more quickly, which creates the illusion (and false assumption) that their writing can’t possibly be of good quality. All silliness.

Professional writers, by and large, have settled with the idea that they are entertainers, nothing more or less. Their stories exist to entertain readers, not to change society or the world.

If that’s what a hack is, I’m proud to be counted among them.

Rolled out right on time at 3. Spent some time reading things for “Of Interest,” writing the stuff above, and screwing off.

Taking a break at 6:30.

Back to the Hovel and back to the WIP at 7:20.

The word counts will grow slowly for the next day or two as I'm still shifting things around. No sweat. Still having an absolute ball. The "Fiction Words" below are all new words.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Mixing It Up With Nonfiction" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/mixing-it-up-with-nonfiction.html>.

See "Three Tips For Finding A Short Story Idea" at <https://pekoablaze.wordpress.com/2019/05/06/three-ways-that-writers-make-stories-faster-or-slower-to-read/>. Thought I'd include this, mostly because it's a slow news day.

In the same vein, see "Three Ways That Writers Make Stories Faster Or Slower To Read" at <https://pekoablaze.wordpress.com/2019/05/06/three-ways-that-writers-make-stories-faster-or-slower-to-read/>.

If you're still considering traditional publishing, get your free copy of The 2019 Guide to Manuscript Publishers (who do not require an agent) at <https://www.authorspublish.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/The-2019-Guide-to-Manuscript-Publishers.pdf>.

Fiction Words: 1867

Nonfiction Words: 850 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2717

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538

Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994

Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870

Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908

Day 5..... 5807 words. Total words to date..... 12715

Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 14672

Day 7..... 1867 words. Total words to date..... 16539

Total fiction words for the month..... 16539

Total fiction words for the year..... 278009

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12000

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 123860

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 401869

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	193
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#)Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Michaele Lockhard](#), [Pekoe Blaze](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, May 12](#)

[May 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- Happy belated Mother's Day
- Quotes of the Day
- Topic: Verified — Yep, I'm a Hack
- Daily diary
- Of Interest
- The numbers

To any moms out there, a heartfelt happy belated Mother's Day.

I know, it's still Mother's Day, but most of it will be over by the time many of you read this. I should have mentioned it in yesterday's journal.

Quotes of the Day

“[T]he shift I felt when I finished my first novel. Once I knew I could do it, I knew that I could learn to be a better writer.” Shaunta Grimes*

Also, Shaunta (and a lot of others) say “Practice and learn. Repeat every day.”

In a related note, from Ray Bradbury, “Just write every day of your life. Read intensely. Then see what happens. Most of my friends who are put on that diet have very pleasant careers.”

*Unfortunately, Shaunta Grimes does not have a website that I could find. She posts on Medium, for which of course you must pay a fee to participate. However, I did find one guest post I thought might be useful to some. (See “Of Interest.”)

Topic: Verified — Yep, I'm a Hack

And really, I don't mind that term. Again, it comes from people who don't know me, so what do I care what they think?

But for some reason I mind very much when other professional writers refer derogatorily to me or others as a "pantser." Ugh. A plague on their exclusive Amazon accounts.

In today's "Of Interest" you'll see a link to the Killzone blog and a post by James Scott Bell. The condescension was palpable. Frankly, as Mr. Bell is also an indie writer and publisher, I was a little surprised.

I maintained my own version of decorum, but I had to comment. After all, a thrown gauntlet is a thrown gauntlet.

I added his post to today's "Of Interest" just in case you want to read it, not because I found anything of value in it. (I didn't, though usually his posts are dripping gems.)

Anyway, here's my response to his post:

"As a dedicated practitioner of writing off into the unknown — and thereby being only the first of hundreds of readers who are entertained when my characters tell their own story — let me be the first 'pantser' to say I agree that Structure is important.

"However, I learn and absorb Structure (from you et al and from reading fiction extensively) with my conscious, critical mind. Just as I learned sentence structure (and the use of fragments) and the appropriate use of punctuation or to always dot the lower-case I or to always cross a T when writing.

"I don't [consciously] 'think' about structure as I write anymore than I 'think' about whether to dot an I or cross a T or whether the end of a sentence needs a period or a question mark.

"Once I take it on board (i.e., learn it) a given technique (including structure) becomes automatic and seeps through my fingers and into the story as I write.

"I simply prefer not to force my authorial will on my characters' story as they live their lives, anymore than I would attempt to force my will on my neighbors as they live their lives.

"Of course, every writer is different.

"I personally can't bring myself to outline a novel before I write it because if I already knew every plot twist, character trait, etc. I would be bored to tears as I wrote. It would be like trying to watch and enjoy a film when I already knew the ending or trying to watch and enjoy a baseball game after someone had already told me the score.

"My characters entertain me as they race through the story. I am the fortunate Recorder they've invited to drop into the story with them. I attempt to keep up as I record what they say and do,

enter and extract themselves from various situations, solve crimes, battle aliens, solve murders or ride wild on a good horse in a noble endeavor.

“I’m thrilled that I don’t know what’s coming next.

“And revision? Yes. I run a spell checker and I have a first reader who checks for any typos or inconsistencies. I generally spend all of a half-hour applying those fixes (if I agree with them) before allowing my toddling little novel out the door.

“But beyond that, I personally prefer not to polish my original voice off the story with endless revisions and rewrites. I prefer instead to write a story cleanly the first time through, publish it and move on to the next story.

“Nothing about my personal writing process should seem threatening-to or evoke derogatory or condescending terms (‘pantser’) from those who have a different process (outlining, revising, rewriting, polishing, etc.). Are these folks ‘plodders’? Maybe. I just don’t care.

“After all, my process has no bearing on others’ processes (or theirs on mine), and neither does my success as a novelist have any bearing on others’ success or lack thereof.”

*

Now, to continue the thought just a bit...

YES, Oh Mighty Outliners-Revisers-Rewriters-Polishers (whom you will note I have not referred to derogatorily as “plodders”), we NON-control freaks who choose to do things differently from the way we were taught by non-writers during our formative years are fully aware that you believe we are wrong and that we will all go to hell as a result.

However, even if that is our fate, certainly YOU won’t suffer so much as a sunburn as we plunge into the fiery pit, eh? So how about you back off a little, do your own thing and stop obsessing over how we do ours?

Okay, I’ll shut up now. (grin)

Rolled out right at 3 despite staying up a bit late to watch two Eagles concerts in their entirety. Talk about some great writing. Some of their song lyrics are just flat stunning.

To the Hovel where I did all the usual things. To the house for a break at 5, then back to the Hovel to finish writing the stuff above.

To the novel at 6:40 off and on. Some cycling, and a little over 1500 new words. Abbreviated day today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “How to Be a Better Artist (There Is Only One Way)” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-be-a-better-artist-there-is-only-one-way/>.

See “Avoid the R. U. E. Pitfall” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/avoid-the-r-u-e-pitfall/>.

See “How Tiny Goals Changed My Life And Made Me a Real Writer” at <https://goinswriter.com/tiny-goals/>.

See Jeff Goins’ website at <https://goinswriter.com/>. Browse. You might find something of use to you.

See “Using the Argument Against Transformation to Strengthen Your Story” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/using-the-argument-against-transformation-to-strengthen-your-story.html>.

Fiction Words: 1749

Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2879

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538
Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994
Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870
Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908
Day 5..... 5807 words. Total words to date..... 12715
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 14672
Day 7..... 1867 words. Total words to date..... 16539
Day 8..... 1748 words. Total words to date..... 18288

Total fiction words for the month..... 18288
Total fiction words for the year..... 279758
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13130
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 124990
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 404748

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jeff Goins](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Shaunta Grimes](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, May 13](#)

[May 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- Welcome to Helen B
- Quotes of the Day
- When I came to work
- Topic: On "Quality" Writing
- Daily diary
- Of Interest
- The numbers

Welcome to Helen B and a few others who recently joined us here at the Journal. I hope you will find it helpful.

Quotes of the Day

"I never had success as a goal. I had this drive to to write the stories that came to me." Danielle Steel

"Some of my ideas will start off as mundane, but as I write them they become magical—and I can never predict it." Danielle Steel

When I came to work this morning, emails were waiting for me from my first readers on Blackwell Ops 6. So I updated that file. Woohoo! The cover and promo doc for that one are already done too, so I'll upload it to distributors this morning.

While I was in the midst of uploading BOps 6, I realized I hadn't yet uploaded BOps 5 to BundleRabbit (it released on May 1). So I did that too.

It's kind of nice to have so many books coming out that I forgot to upload my most recent release to one major distribution stream. (grin) Nice but also annoying. You know.

Topic: On "Quality" Writing

I wasn't going to write a topic today. I have a WIP to write. (grin)

But over at Marilyn Byerley's blog, someone wrote "I've just started writing, and I'm paranoid about my sentence lengths. Too long? Too short? Just right? Help!"

As a result, Marilyn wrote [“How Long Should a Sentence Be”](#).

When I saw the premise, I physically shuddered. Back in the day, back before I was an actual fiction writer, I too obsessed over words, sentences and paragraphs.

Marilyn handled the topic well, limited as it was in scope.

But here, I thought I'd take a swipe at the broader premise: Beyond learning the basics of grammar, syntax and punctuation, how can writers ensure the quality of our stories? Not only words and sentences, but paragraphs, plot, characterization, narrative vs. dialogue, etc. etc. etc. ad nauseam?

The simplest, best and most direct answer I can give you is Let Go.

I mean once you've finished writing a story, don't hover (revise, rewrite, tweak) trying to make it perfect. Let it go and write the next one. This is a concept that's foreign to many writers. It's called Practice.

Back in the day, like most writers I obeyed what I was taught (mostly by non-writers) at every level in high school and college and even in many writers' groups: to hover. (Again, revise, rewrite, tweak, polish, ad nauseam.)

And let me tell you, I labored mightily. I consciously considered and intentionally selected each word. I checked and double-checked to make sure each sentence was precise, each paragraph was the correct length, each scene perfect. I worried over the balance of exposition and dialogue. I fretted that maybe I wasn't giving the characters equal time.

I outlined. I wrote character sketches. I developed mind maps and sign posts. And on and on. The only thing I didn't do was actually write a story.

I probably lost weight sweating over Quality. Writing was work, like any other work.

Then one day I had an epiphany: I'm a writer, not a critic.

Judging the quality of my writing isn't my job. That's the job of the reader. My job is to write the stuff, period. I'm a writer. Writers write.

So I stopped fretting so much. I wrote more and worried less.

I soon learned I was on the right path. Egged on by my devotion to Heinlein's Rules, I published every short story I wrote. If I thought it was wonderful, I published it. If I thought it was horrible, I still published it. Because judging it wasn't my job.

And one day I received a glowing email from a reader. It was all about “Old Suits,” a 2500-word short story I'd written and published even though I personally thought it was maybe, possibly, marginally all right at best.

My mindset was that I'd taken the time to write the blasted thing, so I might as well slap a cover on it and publish it.

Wow, am I ever glad I did. That reader said it was one of the best short stories she'd ever read. She even compared it with the work of some big-name writers. ([Download a free copy of "Old Suits" here.](#))

That's the day I learned that the old saying "A writer is the worst judge of his own work" is actually a truism.

From that day forward, I stopped attempting to judge the quality of my work.

Later, I learned from Dean Wesley Smith that no matter what we think of ourselves, writing is only what we do, not some "calling" complete with an angelic chorus.

Writers truly are "only" entertainers. We write stories. That's all. Other people like what we write or they don't, and in the meantime we're writing more stories.

The thing is, if we're doing it right, the story entertains US as we write it, and that's enough. (If it doesn't, don't write it. Duh.) After that we release it to the world so it can entertain others (or not). Yawn.

Once I stopped pursuing quality (perfection) — once I understood that my stories weren't "important" at all but were only a few minutes' or hours' entertainment — I wrote a LOT more.

Meaning instead of hovering over a particular story until I got it "right," I moved on to the next story. In other words, I practiced.

And guess what? The quality of my stories improved.

If I could teach fiction writers only one thing today, it would be this: Trust yourself. Write the best story you can at your current skill level, then let it go and write the next one. Lather, rinse, repeat, and don't look back. Again, it's called Practice.

But I can't teach writers anything until they're ready to learn it. The best I can hope for as a teacher is that I'm the person who happens to be around when they ARE ready to hear it. (grin)

In the meantime, I can only share my experiences and tell other writers what works for me. Then I have to fall back on Every Writer Is Different and just let it go.

Which is completely appropriate. After all, it's your life and your time and your career. And fortunately, how anyone else chooses to do things has absolutely no effect on my productivity or my sales.

- So if you Just Write and don't sweat the small stuff, welcome to the club. Glad to have you. Isn't this easy and fun? (grin)
- If you prefer to labor over every word and every sentence, more power to you. Whatever works.

- And if you fall somewhere in between, that's fine too.

After all, every writer is different.

Rolled out way early at 1 this morning. Beats me. (shrug)

I did all of the stuff above, took a break at 3, then uploaded BOps 6, then sent BOps 6 to my donors via email.

A long break back to the house.

Well, I was moving to the WIP at 9 a.m., and then the urge to write the topic above hit me. (grin) So I did that.

Taking a break at 10:20. It will be interesting to see how much writing I get done today.

Finally to the novel at 11:20.

I got one chapter done. Calling it a little early today. I'm tired.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Dips, Bumps, and Hillocks" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/dips-bumps-and-hillocks/>.

See "Workshop Decisions" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/workshop-decisions/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams' newsletter, see "How the Hell Has Danielle Steele Managed to Write 179 Books?" at <https://www.glamour.com/story/danielle-steele-books-interview>. Validations, folks. Validation. (Thanks, Linda!)

Also via Linda, see "Why Trying to Be Perfect Won't Help You Achieve Your Goals (And What Will)" at <https://jamesclear.com/repetitions>.

See "Adrenaline Rush – Writing Suspense 2" at <https://terryodell.com/adrenaline-rush-writing-suspense-2/>. An excellent recap.

See "19 Publishers that Accept Science Fiction or Fantasy Novels" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/19-science-fiction-manuscript-publishers/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: The Young Shall See Visions and the Old Dream Dreams" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/13/free-fiction-monday-the-young-shall-see-visions-and-the-old-dream-dreams-2/>.

Fiction Words: 1221

Nonfiction Words: 1270 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2491

Writing of *In the Cantina at Noon* (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538
Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994
Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870
Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908
Day 5..... 5807 words. Total words to date..... 12715
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 14672
Day 7..... 1867 words. Total words to date..... 16539
Day 8..... 1748 words. Total words to date..... 18288
Day 9..... 1221 words. Total words to date..... 19509

Total fiction words for the month..... 19509
Total fiction words for the year..... 280979
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14400
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 128280
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 407239

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Danielle Steel](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, May 14](#)

[May 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- Quote of the Day
- In the past two days
- Topic: How to Write "Complicated Stories" into the Dark
- Daily diary
- Of Interest
- The numbers

Quote of the Day

From The Passive Guy: “Writing well means never having to say, ‘I guess you had to be there.’”

Jef Mallett

In the past two days, I came up with two topics that are so huge they want badly to be nonfiction books. One is How to Quiet the Critical Voice, and the other is Writing High-Action Scenes.

Of course, the former probably won’t sell five copies. (grin) The latter will sell well, but the market is saturated with books on the topic.

Well, unless you weed out all the nonfiction book writers out there who have never written an action scene in their life. Of course, most people don’t tend to weed-out anything.

Problem is, I’m in the middle of a WIP. So I really don’t WANT to “just” write a nonfiction book right now. So I’m thinking about how I can do that.

So anyway, I’ll kind’a sort’a be thinking about that. Any input, feel free to comment on the site or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Topic: How to Write “Complicated Stories” into the Dark

On Dean’s website yesterday, Mark Kuhn suggested Dean do “a workshop that covers how to write complicated stories into the dark.”

Mark then mentioned a specific story and wrote, “I can’t see how such an incredibly readable story like that can possibly be written into the dark. It is so intricate. ... It’s just heckin amazing.”

I had exactly the same doubts almost exactly five years ago when I first stumbled upon Dean Wesley Smith’s website. In his post that day, Dean was talking about a technique he called Writing Into the Dark (WITD).

To keep this topic fairly short, here’s what I wrote (slightly revised) in response to Mark’s comment. For the more recent Journal subscribers, this will also provide a quick rundown of yours truly as a writer and instructor:

I’ve been writing fiction in earnest for only five years and one month. Dean Wesley Smith and my willingness to take a chance made that possible.

I was certain WITD would work fine for such an experienced writer as Dean, but it could never possibly work for me.

So to prove to myself it wouldn’t work... I tried it. After all, it isn’t like there are any consequences if it doesn’t work, right? (grin) So what did I have to lose?

Only it DID work.

I had to keep pushing down my critical voice at first and remind myself to just let the characters tell their own story. (After all, they're the ones who are living it.) But it worked, and it worked big time.

So I did these three things:

- I established a daily word-count goal,
- I entered the amazing world of WITD, and
- to keep me on track, I decided to adhere to Heinlein's Rules.

And I haven't looked back.

Today, thanks to Dean and thanks to me taking that chance, I have over 50 novels and novellas and almost 200 short stories. All in five years. And yes, they sell well.

As an added bonus, folks, I swear, WITD is the most fun you can have with your clothes on.

Now, in this blog and by example, I try to pay it forward by teaching others the same things I learned from Dean, including my own spin as I practiced and made the techniques my own.

Some of the stories you write will be complex, complicated stories. Some will be simpler and more straight-forward. But the point is, only the characters know in advance.

If you trust them, quiet your conscious, critical mind and Just Write the Next Sentence, Write the Next Sentence, Write the Next Sentence, they will lead you through to the end.

Along the way, they can (and will) sometimes come up with twists and turns and complications you won't believe.

But if you trust them and Just Write the Next Sentence, you'll be amazed at the stories they'll tell you.

Tomorrow, a topic on ways to quiet the critical mind. Probably.

Rolled out at 2:30, made my way to the Hovel and wrote the stuff above. A break at 5.

Back to the Hovel at 5:20 and to the novel at 5:40.

Amazing where the time goes. I wrote off and on for almost two hours yet got fewer than 1000 words. Took a break at 8:20 to see my wife off, then remembered I have a webinar to listen to at 9. So I'll be back after the webinar.

At 9:20 I bowed out of the webinar. It was right on the edge of being a bait and switch. It was advertised as being presented by Jeff Goins, who instead only popped in now and then. So annoying when they do that.

Taking a break up to the house at 9:45, then back to the novel at 10:30.

A lot of write/cycle/write/cycle bits today. I'm in another high-action scene. I might do another topic on that in a day or two.

I keep distracting myself, and I'm tired, so I'm going to call it again. Another low-number day, but still having a ton of fun when I dive in. Have I said how much I'm loving being back with ol' Wes Crowley?

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Tribute to a Mentor" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/tribute-to-a-mentor.html>.

See "That Was Nuts" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/that-was-nuts/>.

See Dean's "Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing" series at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/killing-the-sacred-cows-of-publishing/>. Bookmark it. Take your time. Or just order the books.

Need book covers? Via Linda Mae Adams, see "CoverMint" at <https://www.covermint.design/>.

See "Book Cover Refresh #2" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/05/14/book-cover-refresh-2/>.

See Duke Southard's "A Tale of Two Books — Part Two" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/a-tale-of-two-books-part-two/>.

In a bit of serendipity, see "Paragraphing" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/prowriters/paragraphing/>. This should go nicely with Duke's post above.

See "Exonerations and Complications: The Evil Side of DNA Evidence" at <https://www.leelofland.com/exonerations-and-complications-the-evil-side-of-dna-evidence/>.

Fiction Words: 1365

Nonfiction Words: 1010 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2375

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 1..... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 1538

Day 2..... 2456 words. Total words to date..... 3994

Day 3..... 1876 words. Total words to date..... 5870
Day 4..... 1038 words. Total words to date..... 6908
Day 5..... 5807 words. Total words to date..... 12715
Day 6..... 1957 words. Total words to date..... 14672
Day 7..... 1867 words. Total words to date..... 16539
Day 8..... 1748 words. Total words to date..... 18288
Day 9..... 1221 words. Total words to date..... 19509
Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874

Total fiction words for the month..... 20874
Total fiction words for the year..... 282344
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 127270
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 409614

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CoverMint Design](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Linda Maye Adams](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#),
[Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, May 15](#)

[May 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

Quote of the Day
Well, without really planning to
Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Intro)
Daily diary
Of Interest
The numbers

Quote of the Day

From Jeff Goins' newsletter: "You don't have to want to be a writer. You just have to write."

Well, without really planning to, I guess I'll take a shot at writing the critical-voice nonfiction book.

As DWS has done before me (and as I did over on the big blog with *Writing the Character-Driven Story*), I plan to write the entire book a chapter at a time here in the Journal in topics.

I figure now is the perfect time since it will cut into my fiction-writing time. I don't want to get through my time with Wes too quickly anyway. I want to spread the writing sessions with him over more days than usual.

A disclaimer: I can't say whether this will actually become a book. But I already do have at least four "chapters" for you on this topic.

So here's the first installment.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Intro)

Well, you can't. Not entirely. There, I said it.

Quieting the critical voice is an ongoing process. But the critical voice does visit less often as you become more experienced at telling it to shut up and leave you alone.

Recognizing it does become easier with time, and remanding it to a cell in a back corner of your brain becomes easier too.

The conscious, critical voice exists to protect you from yourself. That is its primary function.

It has its good purposes too. For example, we learn new information and new techniques with our conscious mind.

But it has no place in actual writing. Once you're actively engaged in writing a story (of any length) you need to set that conscious, critical voice aside.

For just one example, you have to let go of the urge to critique what you've just written.

Read over it as a Reader for enjoyment, yes. You read for enjoyment with the subconscious mind, suspending critical disbelief. So do that.

And allow your fingers to rest on the keyboard as you read. If your characters (your subconscious) are moved to add something, let them. But again, that's all from the subconscious, creative mind.

If you find yourself being critical (negative), that's the critical voice.

Don't focus on how many times you used "that" vs. "which" (they aren't interchangeable anyway).

Don't worry about sentence structure, paragraph length, or anything else you've been taught.

All of that stuff is from the critical voice. It's always negative, and it's always useless.

Because you WERE taught those things, right? So what your characters and the story need of them will come through your subconscious, creative mind as your fingers move on the keyboard.

And it will come automatically. Like dotting I's and crossing T's and putting a period at the end of a sentence.

But wait. You say capitalizing the first word of a sentence and putting a period at the end DOES come naturally but those other things don't?

That's because you were TAUGHT that they don't. You were taught to double-check yourself. You were taught to not trust yourself.

Now, if you want to be a writer — and more importantly, if you want to actually ENJOY being a writer — you have to let all that negativity go.

You have to learn to trust yourself.

You have to learn to quiet your critical voice.

In every case, the urgings that come from the critical mind are based on fear. They are always, ALWAYS negative.

The simplest fears are stated bluntly by the critical voice: "I can't do this" or "Writing a novel is overwhelming" or "What was I thinking?" or "Maybe someday" or "No way can I get published anyway."

The majority of would-be writers are stopped cold by these fears alone.

But the more common fears lie in wait for writers who get beyond those simplest ones and decide to actually write. These critical-mind stumbling blocks are a little more complex and a lot less straightforward.

Most of the time they're difficult to recognize because they're disguised as delays (as opposed to outright refusal to allow you to write or reinforcement of the outright certainty that you "can't").

But the result is the same: Your manuscript remains in your mind, unwritten.

Or you've started it and it lays in a drawer or remains in your computer, unfinished.

Or you've finished it but it remains unsubmitted and unpublished.

The critical voice has new tricks for each level of this journey. I'll look at each level and help you recognize as many of the tricks as possible.

But let's start at the beginning. Let's say you want to write a novel. And let's say you've gotten past all the "I can't do this" stuff.

Now you've entered the realm of the "Prep Delays." What are those?

I'll be back with Chapter 1 to tell you.

Rolled out at 3. I was enticed by an email from MailChimp to read their new Terms of Use, which I did (an hour I'll never get back).

Couldn't leave well enough alone, so I also checked stats while I was there and learned that only around 65% of my Journal subscribers are actually opening the email. A sure cure for an elevated ego. Oh well.

If those of you who DO read the Journal have any recommendations or suggestions, please either drop a comment on the site or email me. Seriously, I'm listening.

Wrote the stuff above off and on, took breaks at 5 and 6:30, then at a little after 8 (now) to see my wife off. Back and to the WIP soon.

In the writing today, in preparation for Wes beginning to recount his story in his own words, I had to go back and re-read Chapter 12 of *The Right Cut*, the final novel of the original Wes Crowley series.

That has to be the most emotion-jerking chapter I've ever written. Like so many of us, I wondered momentarily whether I'd even written it or whether maybe someone else wrote it. Looks like today will be a good writing day, if a rough one emotionally.

So as it turned out, I wrote almost continually from 9:30 to 2:30 with a few short breaks and a couple of longer (20-minute) ones.

It was a good day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Adrenaline Rush – Writing Suspense 3" at <https://terryodell.com/adrenaline-rush-writing-suspense-3/>.

See "Free Lecture, Classic Workshop, and Workshop Discounts" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/free-lecture-classic-workshop-and-workshop-discounts/>.

See Alison Holt's "You must close your eyes" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/you-must-close-your-eyes/>.

For some nostalgia and strictly for fun, see "TIGER BEAT and Other Things That Made Me a Reader" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/tiger-beat-and-other-things-that-made-me-a-reader.html>.

Fiction Words: 3696

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4816

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874

Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570

Total fiction words for the month..... 24570

Total fiction words for the year..... 286040

Total nonfiction words for the month... 16530

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 128390

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 414430

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, May 16](#)

[May 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- By pure chance
- Just a reminder
- Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 1)
- Daily diary
- Of Interest
- The numbers

By pure chance, there are two items in “Of Interest” today about Kickstarter. Weird.

One is by Kris Rusch, who usually blogs about actual, nitty-gritty writer-business things. The other is by Thad McIlroy, who posts on items that interest me (and to which I subscribe) about once a year.

Yet the two of them both posted blogs on Kickstarter today, one more or less a how-to about Kickstarter Present and one about Kickstarter Future.

What’s weirder, both are informative and neither are actual projects, asking for donations. If you’ve ever wondered how Kickstarter works, don’t miss those articles.

I’ve noticed a lot of coincidences exactly like this lately. Somewhere, something is aligning, and the alignment bodes well. Somewhere, something very good is about to happen.

Just a reminder and a disclaimer — I’m writing the Critical Voice book “live” on this blog. I’m not paying a lot of attention to spelling, etc. I do a lot of copy/pasting so I might get a paragraph out of order here or there. So please remember this is the “rough draft.”

Even my nonfiction writing is largely a product of my creative subconscious. (I’m not even using an outline, although outlines can be useful for nonfiction books.)

But you’re seeing it here without benefit of it having been passed through a first reader. If you buy the book after all of this is over (IF in the end there’s enough info and I actually publish it as a book) you’ll get the “clean” version.

Now, without further ado...

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 1)

Chapter 1: Recognizing the Critical Voice “Prep” Delays

First, don’t expect a lot of help getting past your critical voice, either the prep delays or the rest. Well, from me, yes, but not from anyone else.

Fiction writers by definition should be the most open-minded, experiment-enthused, adrenaline-based, ooh-let’s-try-this people on Earth. The fact that you’re reading this tells me you probably are one of those folks.

But most writers and would-be writers are not.

If you’ll allow me a digression, most writers and would-be writers, like lemmings headed for the nearest cliff, take the easy path and simply do what they’ve been taught. I hasten to add that ALL of us have taken that path at one time or another before we learned a better way.

In their formative years, most writers and would-be writers were taught (mostly by non-writers) things that simply don't work.

Things like outlining (by any name), creating character sketches, world building, coming up with plot points, knowing the end in advance, and so on.

All of these are prep delays, and all of them are a direct result of (and a direct PRODUCT of) the conscious, critical mind.

***The critical voice LIKES the easy path.
The critical voice SUGGESTS the easy path, pretty much 24/7/365.***

Wrap your head around this: You CANNOT write an outline or a character sketch or build a fictional world or lay out the plot points or the end of your story in advance with your creative subconscious mind. You literally can't.

The creative subconscious simply isn't interested in planning and plotting and knowing things in advance.

Your creative subconscious wants to play and have fun. It wants to sit alone in a room and just make shit up.

(Note: Did your critical mind just advise you not to continue reading this if I'm going to use "bad" language? If so, good. That was a test. But your critical mind isn't protecting you from bad language. It's protecting you from learning ways to shut it up.)

If the language offended you, I do apologize. It was just my way of illustrating that the critical voice is trying to protect you. Check it out:

- If you don't write or don't finish what you write, nobody can criticize or disapprove of what you've written.
- If you finish but don't submit or publish what you write, nobody can reject what you've written or write a bad review.

Still, I can hear some of you saying those things DO work. For just one example, maybe you have personally fully outlined a book and then actually wrote the book.

Congratulations. Good for you. But was the book exciting to you as you wrote it?

Or was it a bit like watching a movie (ahem, or reading a book) or watching a football or baseball or basketball game after some moron already told you the ending or the score?

Yet writers and would-be writers continue over and over for years on end to do those same things that don't work, sometimes despite having personally collected a Fort-Knox-sized vault full of proof (unfinished manuscripts, rejections, etc.) that those things don't work.

And almost every other writer and would-be writer they encounter reinforces those same silly habits by repeating them ad nauseam in writers' boards (whatever those are) and writers' groups and critique groups.

But that's fine, really. To each his or her own. Hey, every writer is different. I only get annoyed when they cross-pollinate, teaching other writers that same bad information that doesn't work.

Still, you can't really blame them. Change is scary (critical voice = fear). And pretty much every writing instructor, writers' group member, critique group member, et al whom you know also has a conscious, critical voice.

And pretty much every one of them obeys it.

Why?

Because they were TAUGHT to obey it, and the unknown can be frightening (again, critical voice = fear).

Again, during their high school and college years, all of those folks were taught all the same inane things you and I were taught about preparing to write and actual writing. And again, mostly by non-writers.

They, like you, were actively taught to buy-in to all the critical-voice delays.

So if you really want to be a successful writer, you'll just have to gird your loins, be brave, and overcome these things yourself.

But be prepared for ridicule even as you become more and more successful. I call it the "braying jackass" syndrome. They're everywhere.

I can hear it: "Okay, so when are you going to actually tell me what the critical-voice prep delays are?"

Actually, I already have.

The critical voice says BEFORE you can write your novel (negative, "You aren't ready to actually write it yet") you have to

- Outline (mind-map, put up sign posts, lay out plot points, twists, etc. ad nauseam),
- "Create" Characters (write character sketches, assign character types and traits, etc.), and
- "Create" Your Setting (research, world-build, design interiors of rooms and buildings, etc.).
- And it's also a great idea to know the ending before you start writing.
- Oh, and take some writing courses. (This one comes mostly after high school and college.)

So you spend a few days or weeks or months doing all of that.

“Well,” the critical-voice says with a mental pat on the back, “at least you finished the outline. Great job!”

But for some reason, you don't feel accomplished. For some reason you experience an odd sinking feeling in your gut. Chances are you're bone-weary of the story. And now you have to actually write it.

But you already know every plot point, every twist and turn, every character, and the ending. Where's the excitement in writing something you already know?

And if you're TOO tired of it, you stick the outline (and all the other “prep” stuff) into a drawer or a computer file and forget it for awhile. You know. Let it simmer (or whatever term you want to use) for a week or two. Or maybe a month. Or maybe forever.

And finally, if you AREN'T bored with it (or if you're just determined to finish), maybe you finally sit down to write that novel.

And that's when the non-writing post-prep delays hit.

Yep, your conscious, critical mind — the same one that so recently applauded you for finishing your outline — now tosses up a bunch more delays. Can'ts. Fears.

And that's Chapter 2.

Rolled out at 3:30, checked email, checked for items of interest and read those, then wrote the stuff above. Took a breakfast break at 6:30, then back to the hovel.

I'm beginning to think maybe my musings on the critical voice might actually turn into a nonfiction book. As with my fiction, it seems the more I write, the more I want to write.

I basically screwed off while eating and for awhile afterward (spider solitaire is evil), then took a break to go see Mona off at a little after 8.

A little over 1000 words from 9 to 10, then another break up to the house.

Watching a webinar I'd forgotten about. It starts at 11 and runs for about an hour. Plus this is a short day, so no more fiction writing today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Important. And pass it on...” at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2006/10/important-and-pass-it-on.html>. This is from way back in 2006, but it's still timely.

See “Business Musings: Kickstarter Stress” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/15/business-musings-kickstarter-stress/>.

See “Kickstarter Looks at the Future of Publishing” at <https://thefutureofpublishing.com/2019/05/kickstarter-looks-at-the-future-of-publishing/>.

See “The Complete Guide to Ebook Distribution” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/ebook-distribution/>.

See Dan Baldwin’s “Offend Me, Please, You Racist Swine!” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/offend-me-please-you-racist-swine/>.

Fiction Words: 1050

Nonfiction Words: 1560 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2610

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874

Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570

Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620

Total fiction words for the month..... 25620

Total fiction words for the year..... 287090

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18090

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 129950

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 417040

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

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Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Neil Gaiman](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [The Future of Publishing](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Friday, May 17

[May 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- A very long post today

- Quotes of the Day
- I've updated the site
- Today in "Of Interest"
- Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 2)
- Daily diary
- Of Interest
- The numbers

A very long post today. Hang in there. I think it will be worthwhile.

Quotes of the Day

Via Terry Odell, "There is a difference between a book of two hundred pages from the very beginning, and a book of two hundred pages which is the result of an original eight hundred pages. The six hundred are there. Only you don't see them." Elie Wiesel

The trick of writing into the dark and letting a story simply be the length it needs to be is that you don't write those 400 extra pages in the first place.

And another quote, via The Passive Guy:

"In times of profound change, the learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." Eric Hoffer

Truedat, I think. Keep learning, folks.

I've updated both my writer site and the Journal website. I hope you'll stop by and take a look.

Any writer tools, although they're still warehoused on my author site, are available only under the For Writers tab there.

Because I want to give back, I've also slashed prices on my audio lectures. You can see those at <https://harveystanbrough.com/lecture-series/>. And yes, I recorded them myself. (grin)

Today in "Of Interest" The Passive Guy considers "cultural appropriation." This is a no-win proposition.

If you write about a culture or include characters from any culture other than your own, you may be accused of "appropriating" that culture.

If you don't write about any culture other than your own or at least include a character from another culture, you may be accused of marginalizing those outside your own culture.

It's all a crock'a crap.

This is much more a control issue than an issue of any kind of “appropriation.” There are people out there who, during every waking hour, strive to make sure others speak, think, and write what they want you to speak, think, and write. Any variance is seen as an “offense”.

I agree with The Passive Guy. You write your story, and I’ll write mine.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2: Recognizing the Critical Voice Post-Prep Delays

First, an explanation.

In the previous chapter I mentioned that one of the big prep delays is the critical mind suggestion that you take some writing courses.

We all have weak areas. We all have things to learn about the basics of the language and about writing. We all have areas in which we want to improve. You’re reading this constitutes you taking a writing course.

Taking writing courses is not a bad thing. Intentionally delaying your writing by taking a writing course is a bad thing.

I’ve written over 50 novels and novellas and almost 200 short stories, yet I still take writing courses that interest me. But my writing comes first.

The secret is to learn with the conscious mind and write with the creative subconscious.

I write the best story I know how to write At My Current Skill Level. Then I publish it. When I learn something new from another writing course, I apply it to FUTURE stories, not to past ones.

Always look forward, not back.

So at this point, you’ve either written your outline and gotten through all the other prep delays or you’ve decided to ignore all that and Just Write Your Story (and if so, good for you).

Now you can write your novel.

Well, except that now the non-writing delays hit. I call these the Post-Prep Delays, and they’re brought to you, as always, by our primary sponsor: The Critical Voice.

I and many other professional writers have mentioned before that it’s great to have an ideal writing setup:

- It’s a good idea to have a dedicated writing computer.
- Pretty much everyone knows it’s a good idea to have an ergonomic chair and keyboard and mouse. After all, carpal-tunnel syndrome is a thing and so is neck, back and shoulder pain.

- And your writing surface (desk) should be the right height.
- As should the oversized monitor you need because your eyes are going buggy.
- Oh, and A Room of One's Own is also nice.

Those things are all legit, but if you aren't writing (or if you stop writing) because you don't have all of them in place yet, that's just another excuse offered up by the conscious, critical mind.

There's no law that says you can't begin writing with whatever you have before you've acquired all of the things in the list above.

If any of those become absolute must-haves before you're "able" to write a word, your critical voice is the boss of you.

But let's continue. Let's say you have all the right equipment you need or want and that it's all set up to your precise specs.

Now you can write, right?

Maybe. Maybe not.

After all, you don't have exactly the right mouse pad. You know, the one with a picture of roses on it or the one with your teenage son's graduation photo (the good pose) on it or a plain pink or blue or black one.

And probably a mouse pad in any design would be better if it had one of those bulging wrist thingies at the leading edge. Wouldn't it?

So you can't write just yet (negative = critical voice). Or it would be no use to try to write yet (negative = critical voice). You would be too distracted anyway by the lack of one or more of those things, wouldn't you? (negative = critical voice).

So you have to wait until you've acquired those things.

Oh, and you need a real writer's mug for your coffee or tea. And of course, the right wicker or leather or terra cotta coaster on which the cup will rest to protect your desk.

BUT... once all of that is in place, at last, all excuses are exhausted and you can write.

Oh, except that you have to fill that special writer's mug with coffee or tea.

And you have to double-check to make sure you fed the dog and/or cat.

And did you remember to clean out the cat's litter boxes?

Oh, and you have to put on a load of laundry. But hey, no biggie. That'll take only a few minutes anyway, right? After all, the washing machine does the actual work, right? It isn't as if you have to carry your clothing down to the stream and beat it on rocks, right? Right?

So it's only a little delay.

Well, you might as well play a game or two of Spider Solitaire since the wash cycle takes only a half-hour or so. No reason to start writing only to have to stop, right (negative = critical voice)?

And then the wash is over, so you put the stuff in the dryer and the phone rings and you quickly agree to have lunch with a friend. When you get home, though, you will *absolutely* sit down and write.

After you put the water on that ash tree. It's been looking poorly lately.

And oh crap, you realize the dryer isn't running so it must be done. You don't want the clothes to wrinkle so you'd better pull them out and fold them.

And put them away. You can't leave stacks of clothes all over the house.

And by the time you've put them away, it's only a half-hour before you'll need to start supper. Well, more Spider Solitaire.

And after supper, there's TV and that ball game you want to watch or that movie you've been dying to see.

And before you know it, the question becomes Where did the time go?

But it's all right, really. You DID get a lot done (though no writing) so no real biggie. You can start writing your story tomorrow.

Well, if nothing else comes up. Which of course it will.

I've been through everything above and more...

- Even after I'd already committed myself to writing into the dark.
- Even after I'd already committed myself to writing at least one short story per week for at least a year.
- Even after I'd already learned through application how freeing and fun writing into the dark was.

Procrastination is your enemy. As Nike used to say in their ads, [If there's something you want to do] Just Do It. Or the Brooklyn version. "Hey, jus'doita'ready!"

Of course, we all would like to have our ideal setup, but until you're able to acquire that setup,

- Any laptop, desktop or sheet of paper and pen will do.

- Any flat surface, even the coffee table or the floor or a chest of drawers (if you stand) or your lap, will serve as your writing desk.
- Any chair will do (add a pillow).
- Any room in the house or area outside (or table at the local coffee shop) will do.

I know. Been there, done that. I'm fortunate in that I now have what I consider my own personal near-perfect writing setup. But I collected and refined it over 5+ years. And I was writing steadily the whole time. An average of around 2500 words per day.

The point is, the critical voice can use ANY of those considerations or any of the smaller considerations (getting coffee, feeding the cat, etc.) to stop you from writing.

And every time, the ability of the critical voice to stop you is fear-based.

But what is there to be afraid of really? You're only telling a story, and which story you're telling doesn't even matter. What matters is THAT you write, not WHAT you write.

The good news, despite other respected opinions to the contrary, is that the critical voice does NOT grow stronger the longer it goes unchecked.

It grows more persistent, yes. Because you've given it power, probably it appears every time you sit down to write. And once you beat it one time, the next time it might seem a little louder. But it doesn't get any stronger.

How do I know it doesn't get stronger?

Because in every case, it takes only a little push to get yourself over the hump that is the critical voice. And especially at first, you'll have to do that repeatedly and often. (shrug) So you'll get a lot of practice.

You can beat the critical voice at any given time by sitting down at the keyboard, putting your fingers on the keys, and Writing Anyway.

It's okay to acknowledge that you'd rather have a different computer or desk or mouse pad or coffee mug or whatever.

It's okay to be a little frightened of the unknown, or to wish you had the perfect coffee mug or mouse pad.

It's okay to realize you haven't fed the cat. (Well, I recommend establishing a routine to take care of that and other such matters before you even sit down to write.)

But it's not okay to let those things stop you from writing.

***Write Anyway.
It really is that simple.***

If you want to KEEP beating the critical voice (and you do), you only have to decide every time it makes an appearance to Write Anyway.

If writing weren't important to you, you wouldn't be reading this. Again, it's not WHAT you write, but THAT you write.

So isn't writing more important than where you write or on what computer or in what chair or in what environment or surrounded by what stuff?

So Write Anyway.

Every time the critical voice rears its ugly head, Write Anyway is your decision to make.

And there's a positive effect.

Every time you choose to Write Anyway, you're not only training your critical mind to shut up and go sit in a corner. You're also reinforcing your creative mind. You're slowly convincing the creative mind that you're actually serious, that it can safely come out to play now.

So the critical mind can't grow stronger, but you CAN make it weaker and less persistent. And at the same time, you're making your creative mind stronger and more bold.

Soon, very soon, every time you sit down at the keyboard and put your fingers on the computer, the characters in your creative mind will spring to the forefront, ready to tell their story. And if the critical mind DOES surge again, what do you do?

That's right. Write Anyway.

There. Isn't that better? Now you can go ahead and write the next paragraph or that short story or the next scene of that novel.

Sooner than you think, your characters will lead you through to the end of the story. Then you can go ahead and publish the thing. Woohoo! Right? Right?

Well, except the critical mind will be waiting at that juncture with a whole new round of delays. So be ready.

More on that in the next chapter.

By the way, for these posts "How to Quiet the Critical Voice" is a good title. After all, you all know what I'm talking about.

If this series becomes a book, though, I have to make the title more explanatory. Right now I'm thinking "How the Conscious, Critical Mind Can Kill Your Writing and How You Can Make It Go Away."

Thoughts or suggestions (other than length)?

Rolled out at 2:30, followed my usual routine and wrote everything above. Some breaks, a little cycling/writing, then realized the wind was tugging at the door of the Hovel.

I remembered it was supposed to blow increasingly hard today, so I took a walk (about a mile) while it wasn't blowing as hard and as hot as it will be later. (grin)

My little girl cat was especially loving this morning, purring and rubbing all over me, so I spent a little extra time with her. She really does ask so little.

I'm taking my sweet time with my WIP. I'm cycling through parts of it more than one time (because I like it), writing a bit here and there. And I can't begin to describe for you how great that is. It's a real honor to get to spend some time with Wes again.

To the novel at 9:30. By 10:20 I had added slightly over 400 new words and took a break.

After that I variously wrote a little, fiddled with my websites and did some other stuff. As I've mentioned earlier, despite occasional sprints when the characters won't allow me to leave the WIP, I'm taking my time with this one. It's different and very relaxing to sometimes only write a little over 1000 words of fiction in a day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Should Writers Write What They Don't Know?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/should-writers-write-what-they-dont-know/>. Much ado about nothing.

See "Pikes Peak Writers Conference Recaps" at <https://terryodell.com/pikes-peak-writers-conference-recaps/>.

See "Entrapment: Inducement is the Key Word" at <https://www.leelofland.com/entrapment-inducement-is-the-key-word/>.

See "Dare to Be Vulnerable in Your Writing" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/dare-to-be-vulnerable-in-your-writing/>.

See "June Workshops and Descriptions" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/june-workshops-and-descriptions/>.

Fiction Words: 1622

Nonfiction Words: 2490 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4112

Writing of *In the Cantina at Noon* (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242

Total fiction words for the month..... 27242
Total fiction words for the year..... 288712
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20580
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 132440
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 421152

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
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Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, May 18](#)

[May 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- *My bride and I
- *I'll be glad
- *All good fiction
- *As I was writing
- *Daily diary
- *Of Interest
- *The numbers

My bride and I have a fun trip planned to Sierra Vista today where we'll visit an estate sale, then attend a gun show, then visit the commissary to grab some grub, plus lunch somewhere in all that.

So I had a decision to make. So no topic today (Chapter 3 will keep). Instead I'll write a bit more on the WIP and on this Journal with my available time. Enjoy the respite. (grin)

Just a quick musing — I'll be glad when/if Dean Wesley Smith gets settled enough into his new home and new routines that he goes back to posting his daily fiction word counts.

In addition to the gems of writing advice he dropped so often in his posts, his word counts were one of the main reasons I checked his blog every day.

And yes, that's also why I started writing a Daily Journal and it's why I list my word counts. I don't really need the external motivation his word counts provided anymore, but in my early days as a pro writer I was SO motivated by his production. His numbers are what fueled my own production, at least up through last month.

I admit I'm kind of taking it easy at the moment. For the first time in five years, I'm not worrying about numbers so much as just enjoying writing my current WIP, visiting with Wes Crowley, and chatting with you all. After this one's written, I suspect I'll go back to more production-based writing. Nice to give my mind a break while still writing a novel.

Okay, maybe just a mini-topic, suggested by a recent conversation with a friend.

I've said it before and I'll keep saying it: All Good Fiction Is Character-Driven.

In every case, regardless of genre, the Story is not about science (SF) or the time period or setting (western, SF, historical fiction), the ticking-bomb (thrillers), the magic (fantasy), etc.

In every case, the Story is about how the characters wield or DEAL WITH the science, the world in which they live, the ticking bomb, the magic etc.

If that weren't true, there would be no cross-over in genres. SF would be ALL about science, westerns would be ALL about creaking saddle leather and six-guns, fantasy would be ALL about magic, etc.

In other words, they would all be nonfiction.

But since it is true, as a reader maybe consider expanding your reading. A romance that takes place in an action-adventure novel or in a western is still a romance. A lifelong cowboy and lawman is as likely to want to walk onto the creaking deck of a sailing ship as the next guy.

And as a writer, try not to spend any mental energy forcing your "tough guy" to avoid romance, have empathy for others, etc. Let him live to his personal code, whatever it is. Try not to force your "bad guy" to never do a kindness for others, or your "wilting lilly" to never stand up for himself.

Real people are complex. Real characters are too. Just sayin'.

Another very short topic, of sorts — *As I was writing*, another thought occurred. Cycling isn't always about reading over what you've written and allowing your characters to add things you missed.

Cycling is also about being unstuck in the timeline of your novel.

This morning, as the story developed and I wrote a new scene, a character did something I didn't expect. (They often do that, and I am endlessly grateful.)

But as a result of him doing something I didn't expect, I stopped writing, used Word's Find function to cycle back to a particular place several thousand words earlier in the WIP, and inserted two short sentences that would directly feed the new scene I had just written.

Readers read a novel from A to Z. But the writer can write A through F, then jump back to B to insert something that will foreshadow or add more depth to G (or that will make H possible at all), and then return to the new scene to continue.

As the reader reads, s/he is amazed at how it all worked out, how it fits together so seamlessly. It leaves the reader with the feeling that the writer must be a genius.

But the writer isn't a genius at all. S/he's only attentive in listening to his/her characters.

Rolled out at 2:30. To the novel at 4. I added only about 600 words in the first hour. Took a short break up at the house, and when I came back, took a few more minutes to take a couple of pics of moonset over the nearby mountains.

Was headed back to the WIP at 5:15 when I decided to write a 600 word guest post for marketing guru Penny Sansevieri. I got that written and sent off (you'll see it soon as a topic in the Journal) and then I had a couple of emails to answer.

Back to the WIP at 6:15.

I called it at 6:45 so I could file this edition of the Journal and get ready for the trip. If this were a normal day, I might have dropped 4000 words today. But time off is important too. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Message in a Book" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/message-in-a-book.html>.

Fiction Words: 1413

Nonfiction Words: 920 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2333

Writing of **In the Cantina at Noon** (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655

Total fiction words for the month..... 28655
Total fiction words for the year..... 290125
Total nonfiction words for the month... 21500
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 133360
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 423485

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
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](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, May 19](#)

[May 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * My friend Dan
- * Weird how writers say
- * Topic: My Own Stages of Becoming a Fiction Writer
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

My friend Dan Baldwin will be dropping by today mid-morning or a little later. We'll enjoy a couple of cigars and, no doubt, a lot of talk about writing.

It's always enjoyable visiting with Dan. I invariably learn something new or realize something I'd forgotten.

So I'll devote the first couple of hours this morning (after the Journal stuff) to the WIP, then post this early.

As another friend and I were discussing recently, it's weird how writers say they have trouble coming up with ideas.

In today's "Of Interest" the first two posts are not specifically about writing, but they're both so chock full of story ideas I would be remiss if I didn't share them here.

Eight or ten story ideas occurred to me from the first article alone, and not all of the SF.

[Micheale Lockhart's post on PWW yesterday](#) similarly wasn't about writing (she said) but it too stirs thought and contains story ideas so I've listed it as the third item in "Of Interest."

Finally, Dawn Turner's "Oops! ... Wait. Maybe Not?" over at <http://prowriterswriting.com/oops-wait-maybe-not/> led me directly to write the short topic below.

Topic: My Own Stages of Becoming a Fiction Writer

This topic isn't specifically on Critical Voice, but it's closely associated, so it might become part of the eventual book.

I experienced exactly what Dawn is talking about in her post. The "oops" moments I refer to below are not misspellings, wrong words (waist for waste) etc. They're places where the the conscious, critical mind is telling you (wrongly) the story has gone in a "wrong" direction.

With 20/20 hindsight, I can now delineate my own experience with this phenomenon in three stages:

Stage 1: Back before I became an actual fiction writer, in my teens through my early 30s, I occasionally wrote a short story.

Each time I wrote, I encountered those "oops" moments, where something about what I'd written just didn't seem right.

As I was writing, I stopped and "fixed" the offensive passage every time. And of course, I fixed even more during revisions and rewrites.

But each time I "fixed" something (either as I was writing or in revision) I experienced a sinking feeling in my gut.

I ignored it, continued to fix and revise and rewrite and polish. And I published nothing, even in the "little literary" magazines of the time that paid only in contributor copies.

(Interesting to note, maybe, that during this time, I DID become a successful poet, selling widely and being nominated for several major awards. Oddly, my poems just flowed out and I allowed them to do so.)

Stage 2: In my 30s through my 50s, still before I became an actual fiction writer, I still occasionally wrote a short story.

I continued to experience that “oops” feeling now and then, but for some reason I most often did not fix things as I wrote. Instead, I waited until I revised and rewrote.

I did begin to notice that I had fewer things to fix during revision and rewrite though I didn't recognize why. But even then when I fixed things, I continued to experience that sinking feeling. I stubbornly plowed ahead with the fix anyway. After all, I wanted to make the story perfect.

Stage 3: Finally, in my early 60s I found Heinlein's Rules and writing into the dark. I became aware of the duality of the mind and the roles of each part:

- * The conscious mind is critical and wants to save me from the embarrassment of rejection.
- * The subconscious mind is creative and doesn't care either way; it just wants to have fun.

And finally, over a period of a year or so during which I was becoming a professional fiction writer, all of that sank in.

In an epiphany, I recognized that I was being a control freak. As a result, I learned to trust myself and my creative subconscious and let the characters tell their own story.

When the urge to “fix” something struck (as it still does, though rarely), I laughed at it and continued to let the story unfold as the characters wanted it to. And I no longer revise or rewrite (conscious, critical mind activities). Ever.

I do cycle back (creative subconscious) every thousand words or so as I go, but the only role the critical mind has in my writing now is to “decide” whether to apply a fix that's recommended by my first readers.

- * If it's something that will distract a knowledgeable reader, I apply the recommended fix.
- * If it's something that probably won't distract the reader, I don't.

The point is, in my early days of exploring fiction writing (roughly 47 years) I didn't recognize the “oops” voice for what it was. It was the critical mind, telling me what I'd written was flawed and interrupting the writing.

And the sinking feeling?

I finally recognized that too. It was my creative subconscious, telling me to “undo” what I'd fixed, that in fixing it I was destroying the original story and my original voice.

Today, I just have fun with my writing. I let my characters tell stories to entertain me. Then I publish them so they can entertain others or not.

Sure, the money matters. I'm still amazed and a little humbled when the royalties pour in and my bank account grows.

But my first true payment is how entertained I am by the characters who pour their stories out for me to enjoy.

If I go to my grave with any regrets, it will be that I didn't find Heinlein's Rules and writing off into the dark much earlier.

It will be that I didn't come across someone like Dean Wesley Smith (or me, today) much earlier.

I hope as you read this you are in your 20s, 30s, 40s or 50s. If so, and if you can hear, you're far and away ahead of the game. And if you're in your 60s or later, well, as it was for me, better later than never.

Rolled out a little before 2. I read a lot more than usual while finding things for "Of Interest" and wrote the short topic above.

To the novel at 5:30. With breaks, I cycled some, then wrote some, and wound up with just over 2000 words on the day.

Dan came and went. Now on to the rest of the day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Did Aliens Really Abduct Granger Taylor?" at <http://dyingwords.net/did-aliens-really-abduct-granger-taylor/>. Wow. Roughly a million story ideas, and not all SF.

See "On This Day..." at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/on-this-day/>.

See "Readin' and Writin': A Love Story" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/readin-and-writin/>.

See "Why I Love Going Back in Time" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/why-i-love-going-back-in-time.html>.

Via CrimeReads, see "James Ellroy finally has happiness in his sights" at <https://www.1843magazine.com/features/james-ellroy-finally-has-happiness-in-his-sights>.

Via Phillip McCollum, see “Stan Lee talking about ignoring the naysayers” at <https://twitter.com/Bollywoodirect/status/1127485641569124352?s=03>. Remember this the next time someone tells you to write to market or write to what they think is the next big thing (or “westerns don’t sell” or or or).

Fiction Words: 2098

Nonfiction Words: 1220 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3318

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753

Total fiction words for the month..... 30753
Total fiction words for the year..... 292223
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22720
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 134580
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 426803

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... X
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 193
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stan Lee](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, May 20](#)

[May 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * A friend emailed me
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 3)
- * Daily diary

- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

A friend emailed me today to ask whether we wanted more readers over at the PWW blog. He said at his table at the RWA (Romance Writers of America) meeting on Saturday, everyone else at the table was talking about worthwhile blogs. But he kept PWW to himself because he didn't know for sure whether we wanted more readers.

Let me be as clear as I can: PLEASE spread the word about PWW. Not that I have a particular horse in that race. I don't.

But PLEASE ALSO tell other writers about this Journal, HEStanbrough.com.

Over the next short while, the Daily Journal will be my go-to site for writers. The bigger site, HarveyStanbrough.com, will transition to my author site and be more geared for readers.

In both cases, I and the writers of PWW are writing to help other writers. So yes, of course we want more readers.

Any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. Thanks.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 3)

Chapter 3: Recognizing the Critical Voice Pre-Publication Delays

Let's flash forward. Say you finally stop procrastinating and actually write the thing. You've typed The End. It's done.

Now comes the second round of major critical mind delays, again, approved and encouraged by every writer's group and critique group you know, not to mention your high school and college English teachers.

Now it's time to

- * Put your finished manuscript in a drawer to let it cool off,
- * Read over it again later with "fresh eyes" and revise as you go,
- * Send it to a series of "beta readers" (by definition, critiquers),
- * Revise per your beta readers' input,
- * Rewrite at least ___ times (everyone says so),
- * Re-send to your beta readers,
- * Revise per your beta readers' input,
- * Do a final word-by-word polishing (everyone says so).

Whew!

Let me say at the start, this entire process is fear-based. And silly.

Even the list above is nothing more than a series of delays instigated by your conscious, critical mind to keep you from suffering rejection or bad reviews. To protect you from ridicule.

Yes, everyone does it. Yes, everyone says to do it. But the perpetuation of a myth doesn't make it a good (or valid) idea.

On the surface, it sounds as if you're attempting to make your work "better," or even "the best it can be." But defining "better" or "best" is a slippery endeavor.

What does making what you've written "better" or "the best it can be" even mean?

Okay, I suspect we can all agree right off the top that it means making the manuscript "clean," right? But that takes only one pass by a good copyeditor. So why all that other stuff?

Again, because everyone says so. Including your own critical mind.

Long-time professional fiction writer Dean Wesley Smith says the notion that doing the things on the list above will improve your work is a "myth." He is more generous than I am.

The notion that doing those things will improve your work is a Lie, plain and simple. In fact, doing those things will actually harm your work. Irreparably.

I'll explain why over the next chapter, taking the items on the list one at a time.

But for now, let me say I've been there, done that, and don't even want the t-shirt.

In my early days as a budding fiction writer (about the first 47 years), I listened — closely — to my critical voice. It was (and is) a compilation of all the things I learned from my (non-writer) English teachers and from other would-be writers.

As a result, I read over each word, sentence and paragraph in my short story manuscript critically.

I replaced words with other words, replaced sentence structures with other sentence structures, "improved" paragraphs in various ways (for example, making sure each paragraph covered one sub-topic like I was taught in school).

And every time I made a change required by my critical mind — every single time — I experienced a sinking feeling in my gut.

Something was telling me NOT to change that word or sentence structure or paragraph. Something was telling me to leave it alone and Just Write.

Of course, I ignored that little voice and forged ahead. I revised, rewrote, and polished like a "real" writer is supposed to, and then I submitted what I'd written for publication.

And nothing I submitted was accepted. Nothing. Even by the “little literary” magazines that abounded back then and paid only in contributor’s copies.

Of course I assumed that meant I needed to “pay my dues” and revise, rewrite, and polish even more.

I would bet my last dollar you’ve experienced that sinking feeling too when you’ve revised or rewritten before you send your manuscript to beta readers or whomever else.

So what makes you think you won’t you feel it when you revise or rewrite after you’ve sent it to all those people?

You will feel it, only now it will present as a false positive: “Ooh, the beta reader’s right. I should change that.” And you do.

It never occurs to you that the beta reader is only one reader of potentially millions who are out there waiting to read what you’ve written.

With what you innately know about human nature and human taste, do you really believe all of those millions of readers will agree with that one lone beta reader?

But let’s leave that for the moment. I want to bring up a point that’s always intrigued me.

Writers are the worst judges of our own work.

We’ve all heard and repeated that all our lives. We believe it, vehemently.

Yet for some reason, we’re selective in its application.

We’re selective because “Writers are the worst judges of our own work” is the flagship thought of the critical mind.

Its sole purpose is to keep you from publishing your work or submitting it for publication.

Think about that.

When you believe what you’ve written is Good — meaning you intend to publish it or send it out for publication — “Writers are the worst judges of our own work” leaps to the forefront.

That saying is a truism, right? So your work can’t possibly be good just because you think it is.

So you dive headlong into the myth (the lie) that revising, rewriting, input from beta readers, etc. will “improve” the work.

Hence the delays in the list at the beginning of this chapter.

Yet when we believe something we've written is Bad, "Writer are the worst judges of their own work" is suddenly nowhere to be seen. When we believe our work is bad, we simply accept that it's bad.

Isn't that interesting? But why does it happen?

Because the critical voice has already won. You've already decided not to publish the work or submit it for publication.

Instead, you stick it deep into a drawer or filing cabinet or computer file (or a blazing fireplace) and it never sees the light of day.

I hear it all the time even from other successful professional writers: "My first three novels sucked. Fortunately they will never see the light of day."

How many more readers would have enjoyed their work had they published those first three novels? How much larger would their readership have been?

I'll let you think about that. See you in the next chapter, where I'll start making my way through the list.

Rolled out at 2:30 and made my way to the Hovel. Wrote all of the stuff above plus another chapter of the nonfiction book, then took a break at around 6:30.

Back to the Hovel to eat breakfast (soda crackers, swiss cheese and sliced turkey) and play a little Spider Solitaire.

By 7:40 I couldn't stand being away from the WIP any longer and turned to it.

Wrote a little over 1000 words, then got sidetracked. I realized I also had a good short story I could excerpt from the novel.

The short story is titled "Miguel's First" and runs at a little over 3400 words.

Anyway, I wanted to get the next chapter of the critical voice book out to you, so I'm calling it for today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Almost to Another Stretch Goal" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/almost-to-another-stretch-goal/>.

Via Linda Mae Adams' newsletter, see "Getting the 'feel' of your book's setting" at <https://alisonmortonauthor.com/2019/05/jennifer-c-wilson-getting-the-feel-of-your-books-setting/>.

See Sean Monaghan's "Momentum" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/momentum/>.

To view a book-marketing video from industry leader Penny Sansevieri, click <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T3q8Zs0yyvei7KIltmERo2cF7c11YG8S/view>. This is meat-and-potatoes stuff with some great pointers.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Dancers Like Children" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/20/free-fiction-monday-dancers-like-children-2/>.

Fiction Words: 1222

Nonfiction Words: 1450 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2672

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874

Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570

Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620

Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242

Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655

Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753

Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975

Total fiction words for the month..... 31975

Total fiction words for the year..... 293445

Total nonfiction words for the month... 24170

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 136030

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 429475

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Morton](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Penny Sansevieri](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Sean Monaghan](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, May 21

[May 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * From Kris Rusch
- * Topic: A Digression
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

From the Too Good to Pass Up department, see Kris Rusch's "Good News" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/20/good-news/>.

Topic: A Digression

Note: Chapter 4 of *How to Quiet the Critical Voice* will appear here tomorrow. I had it ready to go, but this has to take precedence.

Wow. Especially considering that I'm smack in the midst of writing a nonfiction book on beating the critical voice, I had to talk about this.

For an excellent example of someone who for right or wrong is fully immersed in the myths, see PJ Parrish's "Before And After: Does Your First Draft Look Good Naked?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/before-and-after-does-yourfirst-draft-look-good-naked.html>.

[PJ Parrish](#) is actually a writing team of two sisters. Her novels have appeared on both the New York Times and USA Today bestseller lists. She has written 15 novels and one novella.

I tried to read two of her novels. I wasn't able to get into the story in either of them. I'm supposed to say that was only a matter of my personal taste, but in my opinion it was because the books were flawed with various things that either pulled me out of the story or didn't allow me to get into the story in the first place.

As you already know, I do not see that as a matter of personal taste. I see that as a matter of the writer not being knowledgeable of either the basics of the language or the techniques used to pull the reader into the story (or both).

Furthermore, I'm convinced some of the things that kept me from getting into the story were the direct result of PJ rewriting and "polishing."

I didn't leave a comment on the post. I knew doing so would be a waste of my time. I also didn't want to disagree with the author in her own house (the KillZone blog).

But if I were asked on the record, "Does Your First Draft Look Good Naked?" I would answer, "Yes. It does."

And I would answer immediately, confidently, and unequivocally.

My “first draft” looks good for only one reason: I write it that way.

Even as “fast” as I write, you couldn’t pay me enough to make me write a sloppy first draft, then go back and rewrite it.

To me, that makes as much sense as filling a wheelbarrow with dirt, moving it partway toward the destination, then dumping it. Why? So I can come back tomorrow, load the dirt into the wheelbarrow again, and move farther toward the destination.

Every time I rewrite, I’m refilling the wheelbarrow. Uhh, no. Bad idea. I’m lazy. I don’t like touching work twice, much less several times.

So I write my story “clean” the first time through. I cycle back every thousand words or so to clean up any small errors that pop up (misspellings, etc.) and to allow the characters to add what I missed as I wrote. Then I keep writing.

After that I run a spell check, send it off to my first readers, apply their recommendations (if I agree). Then I publish it. Period.

All of that being said, once you’ve gotten through the intro and Chapters 1–10 of the book I’m writing on how to beat the critical voice, you’re free to do whatever you want.

It’s absolutely true that every writer is different.

However, it’s also absolutely true that you can train yourself to be whatever kind of writer you want to be.

You can take the easy path and train yourself to remain embroiled in the myths, or you can square your shoulders, puff out your chest and take a chance on Trusting Yourself and your own original voice.

It’s strictly up to you.

Just a couple of days ago as a friend and I were talking, I was reminded of an in-person seminar I taught on Writing Off Into the Dark. Around a dozen writers attended the seminar.

Of those dozen or so writers, all but one left enthused about writing into the dark.

But as close as I can figure, maybe 3 were able to break away completely from the myths and are still writing off into the dark.

Of the others, some still say they are but occasionally drop little “tells” that they really aren’t. And that’s fine. Whatever works for them.

The one who couldn't bring herself to even try the technique told me (even before the seminar was over, as I recall) that she simply couldn't do it.

She "had," she said, to write word-by-word, line-by-line, and attempt to make her story perfect. Then, she said, she would revise, rewrite and polish.

I remember wondering why she would do that if she'd already rendered the story "perfect." I guess the revising and rewriting was an attempt to make it "more" perfect.

But what could I do? I only smiled and told her that was fine, that every writer is different.

The funny thing is, I actually saw the fear on her face, just as if she was standing on a railroad track, her shoe caught, and she'd just decided to let the shoe go and leap out of the way.

I'm not kidding. The look on her face was that filled with fear.

I remember thinking at the time, that was the actual face of the critical voice. It was as if she'd been possessed by a demon and the demon was letting me see its face.

Anyway, again, what could I do? For that matter, what can I do even now?

Nothing.

I really don't expect other writers to accept what I'm saying at face value. I only hope they'll do what I did: be skeptical, but try it on their own terms. But be honest with themselves and really try it.

The thing is, if it doesn't work, they've lost nothing but the time it took for them to try it.

But if it *does* work, it will open up a fresh new world they'd never imagined possible.

I know this for a fact, because I live in that world.

But I honestly don't write all this stuff, including writing a nonfiction book "live" right here in posts, because I think everyone is listening.

I don't even write it in an attempt to change anyone's mind. Really.

I do it because I know there might be ONE writer listening and I really want to pay forward the best thing that ever happened to me.

I hope for your sake you're that one writer.

Back tomorrow with Chapter 4 of How to Quiet the Critical Voice.

Very slow start today. I didn't get up until almost 5 a.m., a true oddity for me.

Got to the Hovel, did all my usual stuff, and ran across the KillZone blog post that prompted today's impromptu topic.

Finally to the novel at 10. With one short break, I wrote a little over 2000 words before noon, then took a slightly longer break.

The story is racing along, happily with no end in sight.

Whoa. Over an hour break. I got a lot done during that hour, but still.

Back to the novel at 1:15. Then Wes' son asked him a question and I had to do a little research, which meant reading back over some of Wes' earlier adventures.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Just a Day" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/just-a-day/>. Uncanny, given that I was just wondering about this myself.

See "What Is a Scene?" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/what-is-a-scene/>.

Via CrimeReads, see "Hannibal Lecter's Creator Cooks Up Something New (No Fava Beans or Chianti) (Interview) at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/18/books/thomas-harris-new-book.html>.

See "We've just improved your status!" at <http://draft2digital.activehosted.com/index.php?action=social&chash=42a0e188f5033bc65bf8d78622277c4e.723&s=164b78ccc71ecb0de5a698f35ebbe2f6>.

See "The True Cost of Multitasking Isn't Productivity—It's Mental Health" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-true-cost-of-multitasking-isnt-productivity-its-mental-health/>.

See "Are You Self-Publishing Audio Books?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/are-you-self-publishing-audio-books/>. The big takeaway: Read All Publishing Contracts Closely.

Fiction Words: 2586

Nonfiction Words: 1300 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3886

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753
Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975
Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561

Total fiction words for the month..... 34561
Total fiction words for the year..... 296031
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25470
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 137330
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 433361

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic The Daily Journal](#), [Wednesday, May 22](#)

[May 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Subscriptions to the Journal
- * In light of that
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 4)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Subscriptions to the Journal might be changing soon. The thing is, I'm not some big marketing master. I'm just a writer who wants to share my experiences with other writers.

Via Linda Mae Adams, see David Gaughran's "Time To Ditch Mailchimp?" at <https://davidgaughran.com/2019/05/16/mailchimp-alternatives-criticism-changes-pricing-plans/>.

I've been aware of this for a week or so and have read MailChimp's new Terms of Use. If you don't personally use MailChimp, no worries.

If I can do so seamlessly, I'll be switching to a new service (probably [MailerLite](#)), so you won't have to resubscribe, etc.

If I can't do that seamlessly, I'll let you know what's up once I decide. I don't like dealing with underhanded companies.

Especially in light of the coming changes above, I'm also considering starting a newsletter over on [HarveyStanbrough.com](#) for fans of my fiction.

At the moment I'm flipping a coin. Should I start a whole separate venture (newsletter) or should I slowly transition the blog over there to a blog for fans of my fiction?

The former would be more focused, I suppose.

Then again, I'm already familiar with the blog format. And I have posts pre-posted over there out through mid-August 2019. Between now and the time I stop posting blogs about writing, I could "practice" posting intermediate posts about my novels and series, the characters, etc.

So maybe that's my answer. But at the moment, I just don't know. Any ideas or thoughts? Yeah, I know. Whaddayou care, amIright? (grin) Okay, here's your dose of stuff for the day.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 4)

Chapter 4: Attacking the List

More than likely there are some stubborn folks out there clinging to the myths like a toddler clinging to his favorite blankie. (By the way, refusal to let go of the myths is also a function of the critical mind.)

So in this chapter I'll talk about the list that headed up the previous chapter. For your convenience, that list was

1. Put your finished manuscript in a drawer to let it cool off,
2. Read over it again later with "fresh eyes" and revise as you go,
3. Send it to a series of "beta readers" (by definition, critiquers),
4. Revise per your beta readers' input,
5. Rewrite at least ___ times (everyone says so),
6. Re-send to your beta readers,
7. Revise per your beta readers' input,
8. Do a final word-by-word polishing (everyone says so).

Let's take them one at a time.

1. Put your finished manuscript in a drawer to let it cool off.

Admittedly, I have an overactive sense of urgency. That being said, whenever I see this one, I wonder how many thousands of readers might have been looking for and bought and enjoyed exactly that story while it languished in my drawer.

But that concern aside, if you don't cycle as you go (much more on cycling in Part 2 of this book), this one might be a good idea.

If so, it's the only good idea on the list.

If you set the manuscript aside for a few days, then read over the whole thing on the computer and strictly for enjoyment — meaning **STRICTLY AS A READER** (not critically) — and allow your fingers to rest on the keyboard as you do, this can be a good thing.

Why allow your fingers to rest on the keyboard as you read?

Because as you read **AS A READER** (with your creative subconscious, your sense of disbelief suspended) your characters will change or add what needs to be changed or added. In every case, these will be things you don't consciously think about.

If you do this, I recommend you also read aloud. If you do, your creative subconscious will “catch” a lot more things, like “the the” and so on.

2. Read over it again later with “fresh eyes” and revise as you go.

Okay, so if the first item on the list gets a pass and can be a good idea, why not this one too?

Because of that word: revise.

Revision and rewriting are both products of the critical mind, and they both evoke the critical voice.

The notion of “revising” makes you want to “look for” (conscious mind) things to revise or replace.

Never allow your critical mind into your work.

And there's something else you should never allow into your work: other people, and especially other writers or those who fancy themselves writers.

Which brings us to

3. Send your manuscript to a series of “beta readers.”

I've never done this, but I've heard the term widely used, so I had to look it up.

By definition, “beta readers” are people whom you invite to critique your work. But if you aren’t going to let your own critical mind into your work, why would you let someone else’s?

This is not a good idea, nor is it harmless. In fact, this is actively a bad idea.

For one thing, you’re telling your subconscious mind you don’t trust it.

For another, you’re allowing other people into your work.

If those people are writers or fancy themselves writers, chances are they’re going to offer opinions on how they would write it, with “it” being a word, sentence, opening, scene, ending, etc.

H.G. Wells famously noted that “No compulsion in the world is stronger than the urge to edit someone else’s document.”

Which leads us to

4. Revise per your beta readers’ input.

There’s the R word again — revise — and this time it’s coupled with allowing others and how they would do it into your work.

Just Don’t.

Per Chapter 3, if you do and if you’re very lucky, you will experience that sinking feeling. And you deserve to. If you experience it, obey that little voice. It will say exactly what I said in the previous very short paragraph: Just Don’t.

5. Rewrite at least ___ times.

Ahh, there it is. The other R word.

How many times have I heard writers (both published and unpublished) say to do this? Dozens. Maybe hundreds.

And in every case, they say they do it because “Everyone says so.”

Well, maybe almost everyone says so. That’s because they’re all trapped in the vicious cycle of the same myth, believing the same lie.

But I don’t. I don’t do it, and I don’t advise others to do it. And I never will.

I left the blank space in this one because various writers and publishers set a minimum number of times a writer should rewrite.

The editor-in-chief for one publication (a short story magazine that will remain nameless but that I actively hope is defunct now) once told me via email, “We’ll read your story soon and get back to you, but just so you know, we require a minimum of three rewrites before we’ll seriously consider a story for publication.”

Did you catch that “we’ll read your story soon but”?

She effectively rejected the story without having bothered to read it first. Seriously?

I wrote back immediately to withdraw the story from consideration.

Out of the kindness of my heart, I also recommended they put that requirement in their submission guidelines so prospective contributors could see it up front.

I never heard back from her and I never checked to see whether they’d amended their guidelines per my suggestion.

I’ll skip the next two items on the list (6 and 7) because they’re a post-beta-reader-and-revision repeat of the third and fourth items.

Which leaves us with

8. Do a final word-by-word polishing.

Again, because “Everyone says so.”

And again, not everyone. Not Dean Wesley Smith. Not Stephen King. Not Lawrence Block. Not any other long-term professional writers that I know of. And not me.

Ignore the list above, folks. That’s my advice.

The best example of stupidity is doing something that doesn’t work — especially when it can actually do harm — over and over again in the hope that it will work the next time.

Okay, so as long as I’m being free and easy with the advice, what do I recommend?

Longtime readers of my Daily Journal at <https://hestanbrough.com> already know.

But for those of you who don’t, go ahead and flip the page. I’ll start covering that in Chapter 5.

Rolled out at 3 a.m. Read Linda’s email, then David Gaughran’s take on MailChimp (he’s right).

Then I saw that someone had bought my audio course on Writing Narrative. So I sent out those audio files. (The process is more time-consuming than I remembered.)

Finally started checking around for items “Of Interest” at 4.

To the house at 5 for a short break, then to feed the neighbors’ horses (next door).

Finally to the novel at 6. Another break at 7:45. Which turned into a trip to the post office and the local store. (grin)

Back to the novel at 9:30. Wrote off and on for a couple of hours. Even with the door of the Hovel closed (and the Hovel has walls three feet thick) the wind is so loud today it’s a constant annoyance.

At noon I took care of another chore, tearing down cardboard boxes that have accumulated in the rear of the Hovel. Soon I’ll need to turn on my portable swamp cooler, so I needed to get those out of the way.

Weird, weird day. I was headed back to the novel at 1 when I was sidetracked yet again. I’m gonna call it a day and come back to it tomorrow. Maybe with my internet turned off.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See “Want to Work With Me?” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/want-to-work-with-me/>.

See “Use It” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/use-it.html>.

See Alison Holt’s “Begin with an individual” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/begin-with-an-individual/>.

See “Plot Threads – Taming the Kraken” at <https://terryodell.com/plot-threads-and-continuity-taming-kraken/>. (My inclusion of this link is not an endorsement. I personally trust my characters to tell their entire story without leaving plot holes or dangling threads. However, to each his/her own.)

Fiction Words: 1890

Nonfiction Words: 1650 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3540

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753

Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975
Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561
Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451

Total fiction words for the month..... 36451
Total fiction words for the year..... 297921
Total nonfiction words for the month... 27120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 138980
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 436901

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [Critical Voice Book](#), [David Gaughran](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#),
[Linda Maye Adams](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, May 23](#)

[May 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Happy birthday to my dad
- * Short day today
- * Note
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 6) (See the note below.)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Happy birthday to my dad. He would have been 91 today.

Short day today, so this will be a brief post other than the topic below. Of course, short days and long days don't matter as much on this WIP since I'm in no rush to finish it. (grin)

Note: I decided to turn the "digression" I wrote on May 21 into Chapter 5 of the book. If you missed it, you can read it here <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-tuesday-may-21/>.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 6)

Chapter 6: Paying Your Dues — What's That Mean?

I was going to talk about what I recommend writers do instead of following all the items on that silly list in the previous chapter.

But I thought maybe I ought to talk about paying your dues first. It ties in. And yeah, paying your dues is a thing.

But chances are, it doesn't necessarily mean what you think it means.

Most writers believe "paying your dues" means laboring for long hours to "perfect" their craft doing all the things I've been preaching against in this book: outlining, editing, revising, rewriting, etc.

And then going on a years-long agent hunt. The difficulty of finding an agent, many believe, is all part of paying your dues.

When you finally land an agent, you submit what you've "perfected" to her, and she will most often require (!!!) another set of revisions and rewriting.

(I put the !!! after "require" because an agent should never be allowed to "require" anything of you. She works for you, remember? Not the other way around.)

And when those revisions and rewriting are finished and the agent finally deems your work acceptable, she ostensibly begins trying to place your work with a publisher. This can take another year or two or five. All of which many writers believe is just part of paying their dues.

And if a publisher bites and the agent makes a deal, the book goes into the publisher's catalogue where it will languish for another year or so before it finally appears on shelves in a dwindling number of brick-and-mortar stores. Again, it's all part of paying your dues.

Only it isn't. And you aren't.

Paying your dues doesn't mean hovering over one work. You can't "perfect" your craft, ever. Art can't be perfected. You can only improve your craft with subsequent bits of art, applying what you learned the previous time.

But you can't even improve your craft if you spend all of your time hovering over one work.

So paying your dues doesn't mean revising, rewriting, and polishing the same work over and over while waiting a number of years for your rewriting skills to improve.

To help me explain, imagine for a moment that all publishers still paid exactly one cent per word.

If that were the case, and if you wanted to make a living as a writer, you'd quickly realize that every time you revise or rewrite, you're cutting into your own profits.

How many pennies would you have to make in a given month to live comfortably? Do your own math.

Time equals money. It's as true in writing as in any other art form or any other business.

And improving your craft requires practice. Again, it's as important in writing as in any other art form.

But back to money for a moment: You're paid for the finished product.

Just remember this: How much you're paid on an hourly basis is strictly up to you. You are paid what you believe you are worth.

Here's what I mean.

At one cent per word, the going rate for a 60,000-word novel is \$600.

If you write a clean first draft of your novel in 60 writing hours (because you believe in yourself), you'll make \$600. So ten dollars an hour. (Not bad at all back in the day of a penny per word.)

But if you spend 60 hours writing, then another 60 hours revising, then another 60 hours rewriting, then another 60 hours polishing because you don't believe in your own abilities, you'll still be paid the same \$600.

Only now it's divided by 240 hours: So now you're making two point five dollars per hour. Again, you are paid what you believe you're worth. And you did it to yourself.

Let that sink in for a moment.

Again, paying your dues doesn't mean hovering. Paying your dues means practicing. Many, many long-term professional writers have said the same thing.

Paying your dues means improving your WRITING skills — your storytelling skills — not your editing and revision and rewriting skills. It means believing in yourself, moving forward, not back, and not standing still.

Many long-term professional writers also say when you've written and published 1,000,000 words (yeah, that's six zeroes) you will have approached the ability to be a good storyteller.

And no, writing and then rewriting a 60,000 word novel doesn't add up to 120,000 words of practice.

So how do you practice?

First, by never hovering. By always looking forward, not back. You practice by writing the best story you can at your current skill level, learning something new, then writing the next book. Then writing the next book. Then writing the next book.

But here, let's get all the pigs in one pen so we can look at them.

As I mentioned a little earlier, you are paid to write. What you are NOT paid to do is

- * Outline,
- * Prepare character sketches,
- * Research locations and settings,
- * Know the ending in advance, or
- * Take writing courses.

In short, you are not paid to delay writing your short story or novel.

And after you've written, you also are not paid to

- * Let your finished manuscript cool off,
- * Read over it again with "fresh eyes,"
- * Edit,
- * Revise,
- * Send it to a series of "beta readers,"
- * Revise again,
- * Rewrite however many times, or
- * Polish.

You're paid for what you publish (or what you submit to the publisher that is accepted). You're paid for the finished product. And your per-hour rate boils down to whether you believe in yourself.

Keep moving forward.

If you're a person who needs a routine or a pattern, instead of trapping yourself in one place, writing, editing, revising, and rewriting, get into this pattern: Write, learn, write, learn, and write some more.

You will be richer for it in more ways than one.

Okay, so with that out of the way, in the next chapter I'll begin telling you what I recommend.

Rolled out late at 4. Searched for items “Of Interest” and immediately enrolled in Dean’s “Learn Along” (see below). This is a fantastic opportunity, and very inexpensive considering all the knowledge I plan to gain.

With limited time today, to the novel at 6:30.

I wrote off and on with breaks and had a pretty good day, especially for a short day. And the novel’s still running.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Inventory” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/22/business-musings-inventory/>.

See “Learn Along With Dean” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/learn-along-with-dean/>. I’m definitely taking this one. Already signed up.

See Dean’s posts on The Magic Bakery at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/tag/magic-bakery/>. Or just go buy the book. (grin)

For those of you who write short, see “SICK: Now Seeking Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/sick-now-seeking-submissions/>.

Also see “9 Free Writing Contests” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/9-free-writing-contests/>.

Fiction Words: 2961

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4141

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874

Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570

Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620

Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242

Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655

Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753

Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975

Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451

Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412

Total fiction words for the month..... 39412

Total fiction words for the year..... 300882

Total nonfiction words for the month... 28300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 140160
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 441042

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, May 24](#)

[May 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Dean's offer to learn
- * Very long topic today
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 7)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Dean's offer to learn along with him as he and Kris attend the licensing expo in Las Vegas is nothing short of an astounding and exceptional opportunity.

If you're on the fence about his offer to learn what he learns as he attends, at least watch the free introductory video (see "Of Interest").

And just so you know, he's also including his The Magic Bakery (licensing) classic workshop to all attendees free of charge (a \$150 value).

We have a very long topic today. I almost decided to split it into two topics. I thought it might be easier to absorb that way. But for me, the two halves are inextricably interwoven. In the book, they'll be presented in one chapter, so I decided not to split them here either.

Still, it might take more than one reading to absorb the sheer volume of information in this topic. So get your favorite beverage and settle back in a comfy chair. Here it comes (grin):

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 7)

Chapter 7: Following Heinlein's Rules and Writing Into the Dark (WITD)

Heinlein's Rules (officially, "Heinlein's Business Habits for Writers") and writing into the dark are two very different things, but wow do they ever go hand in hand.

I am not exaggerating in the slightest when I say that becoming aware of Heinlein's Rules and the technique of writing into the dark literally changed my life.

Of course, the Rules and the technique themselves didn't change anything. But my becoming aware of them gave me the opportunity to change my life. After that it was all up to me.

I immediately bought into the Rules. That was easy. In fact, as I read them (see below) I thought, "Well duh."

But to say I was skeptical of the technique of writing into the dark is an understatement.

Sure, I thought, it works for Dean Wesley Smith and other long-time professional writers, but they've been writing for XX number of years and have written XXX number of novels and other major works.

In other words, I was absolutely certain WITD wouldn't work for me.

So I tried it. Mostly to prove to myself that it wouldn't work. Once I proved that, I could leave it behind and go back to my comfort zone: writing, editing, revising, and rewriting.

Any of this sound familiar so far?

But it never happened. Once I tried writing into the dark, I never went back and I never regretted it. Once I got over the major hump of letting go of all the silly myths we were all taught about writing and once I learned to trust myself, my own abilities and my subconscious, WITD got easier and easier. As an added bonus, suddenly writing was fun! In fact, it was the most fun I'd ever had.

A little history — As I write this book (May, 2019), I became aware of Heinlein's Rules and began writing into the dark exactly five years and two months ago.

In that time, I've written and published 43 novels (I'm working on novel 44 as I write this), 7 novellas, and almost 200 short stories. I've also compiled 30 short story collections, plus boxed sets of some of the novels and novellas.

In other words, I currently have well over 300 individual streams of revenue trickling or pouring into my bank account every month from sales of those works.

Heinlein's Rules are both simple and harder than hell to follow:

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you write.
3. You must refrain from rewriting except to editorial order. (Harlan Ellison added “and then only if you agree.”)
4. You must put it on the market.
5. You must keep it on the market until it sells.

That’s it. That’s all. There’s nothing else to it.

In my case, though Heinlein didn’t say so, I took “You must write” to mean “You must write every day.” That doesn’t mean You have to write every day, but it worked for me.

Anyway, just following Rule 1 of Heinlein’s Rules will help you write off into the dark.

But first you have to understand that Thinking about writing or Talking about writing is not writing. Likewise, Researching, Editing, Revising and Rewriting are not writing. You can call them “writing-related” activities if it makes you feel better, but Writing is putting new words on the page. Period.

I won’t go into anymore detail here about Heinlein’s Rules, but you can get a complete, free, annotated copy by clicking <http://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Heinleins-Business-Habits-Annotated-2.pdf>.

You can find many free versions of the rules online, too, but most often they’re someone’s “interpretation” of the rules. You know — when someone says, “What Heinlein meant was”

But the rules don’t need to be interpreted. They’re clear and concise, and — assuming (as Heinlein did) that you have a basic grasp of the fundamentals of grammar and punctuation — if you follow them you *will* be a professional writer.

So let’s get down to writing into the dark.

First, at the most fundamental level, writing into the dark (or writing into the unknown, if that’s better for you) simply means writing without first creating an outline.

It’s a technique by which you write one clean draft, send it to a first reader or copyeditor, apply the “fixes” they recommend (and that you agree with), and then publish it. Period.

WITD means writing without first knowing where the story is going. Without giving it a conscious (critical mind) thought.

And it means as you write and you’re suddenly overcome with fear because you don’t know where the story is going next, you push the fear down and simply write the next sentence that occurs to you. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Lather, rinse, repeat.

I took this technique, which I first learned from Dean Wesley Smith, and ran with it. I made it my own. If I hadn't, I wouldn't be teaching it or touting it.

How did I make it my own?

By continuous repetition. From the first short story I wrote “into the dark” ([“Consuela”](#)) to the WIP I’m working on today (my 44th novel), I haven’t put a word of fiction on the page that wasn’t me writing into the dark.

In other words, I haven’t consciously “thought” my way through any of those 240+ short stories, novels or novellas. Not one. And I should tell you, I haven’t ever had as much fun with my writing as I had after I started writing into the dark. Writing, now, is a sheer joy.

Anyway, somewhere along the line as I made it mine, “writing into the dark” became “letting the characters tell their own story.” For me, at least, that’s an important distinction.

That you allow the characters to tell their own story is paramount.

After all, it’s THEIR story, not yours. They, not you, are the ones who are living it.

Still LTCTTOS isn’t quite as catchy as WITD, is it? (grin) So I still refer to it as writing into the dark. But it’s the same thing, except maybe drilled down a little deeper.

If you want to try writing into the dark (and I really hope you do), there are two key steps:

1. Let Go — If you want to WITD, you have to let go of all the silly myths we were all taught about writing: that it’s “hard work”; that you must revise and rewrite, etc.

In other words, you have to let go of your fear of writing and your fear of finishing. Those boil down to a fear of rejection, which of course is a fear of failure and maybe embarrassment.

The easiest way for me to finally let go of all that was by reminding myself that I was telling stories before I even realized an alphabet existed. That was long before I knew how to form a capital letter A with two longer lines and a shorter one, much less before I knew how to form sentences. And so were you.

2. Trust your characters — At times (many times) while writing into the dark, your characters will say and do things that seem not to make sense. Many, many times you won’t know where the story’s going next.

This is one of the big places where the critical mind will pop up. First, it’ll say, “Wait, that doesn’t make sense” or “Oh my god! Where does the story go next?”

If you listen, you WILL go astray. NEVER OBEY THE CRITICAL MIND.

When the critical voice pops up with thoughts like those, ignore it. Period. When that happens to me, I even laugh out loud and say (out loud) “Shut up. It’s none of your business.”

I trust my characters to tell their story. I write the next sentence that occurs to me (the next sentence my characters give me, in either dialogue or narrative). And every time I do that, the critical voice limps away to its corner and stops bugging me.

(If you just thought “But what if you’re wrong?” that’s your critical mind using fear to stop you. And at the moment, you aren’t even writing! How insane is that? Just remember, ANY negative voice comes from the critical mind.)

If you Trust your characters and just write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, etc. the characters will lead you through to the end of the story.

And it doesn’t matter whether it’s a short story or a 100,000-word novel. Writing into the dark, trusting the characters to tell their own story, works.

Think about it for a moment: If your neighbor or friend is telling you a story and says something that is intriguing but that doesn’t make sense with what they’ve already said, do you interrupt them with “That doesn’t make sense” or do you wait and let them finish?

Show your characters the same consideration. Tell the critical voice to shut up, then type the next sentence.

Need more convincing?

Consider this: I have absolutely no stake in your writing, or in your writing process. As a decent human being, I would like very much to see you succeed, but the bottom line is, I don’t care. Not in any real way.

That’s because how you choose to write doesn’t personally affect me either directly or indirectly. I’m offering this book only for your own edification. To give you the chance to change your own life.

If you choose to (try to) adhere to Heinlein’s Rules, good for you. You will be richer for it.

If you choose to give writing into the dark “the old college try” (or if you choose not to), it won’t affect me either way.

But if you DO both of those things, there’s literally no limit to the personal rewards you can glean.

What rewards? They will range from the intangible (sense of accomplishment, freedom from someone else’s “rules,” writing in your own original voice, etc.) to actual, physical rewards. Like more titles on the shelf, increased discoverability, and more money in your bank account.

Again, I don't have a dog in the hunt, but I do hope you'll at least give writing into the dark a legitimate try. You will be richer for it, and who knows? Maybe someday you'll be writing a blog and mention that you learned it from me and then made it your own.

Two final notes:

1. If you attempt to follow Heinlein's Rules, you WILL fall off them occasionally. That's fine. When you realize you've slipped, just get back on.
2. If you do try WITD and succeed, please feel free to email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com to let me know how it goes. If you do it right and stick with it, it can't fail.

Good luck!

Rolled out at 3 this morning, got to the Hovel and wrote all of the above. Today will be a self-imposed short day again. There are two baseball games I want to watch this afternoon. (grin) So I'll try to wrap up my writing and all the other stuff I'm doing by noon today.

To the house for a break at 5 and again at 7:30.

I was headed to the novel at 9, but honestly the day got away from me. I had a flash for tomorrow's topic. So I opened a Notepad document to jot down a few ideas.

Next thing I knew. I'd written the entire thing (though I'll report those words after I read over it tomorrow). And like I said, today is a short day.

So not a bad day of writing, but I do miss not visiting with Wes et al today. Even though this is the first day I've missed since the 6th of May. (grin) But I'll get back to the WIP in the morning.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "I Jumped The Gun" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/i-jumped-the-gun/>.

See "The 1 Percent Rule: Why a Few People Get Most of the Rewards in Life" at <https://jamesclear.com/the-1-percent-rule>. Stay with it, then turn it to your advantage. This explains why one writer is a bestseller (repeatedly) and another is lucky to sell 1000 copies.

See "A Memorial Day Potpourri" at <https://terryodell.com/a-memorial-day-potpourri/>.

See "How Many Serial Murderers Stalk Your Streets? 2019 Stats" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/how-many-serial-murderers-stalk-your-streets-2019-stats/>.

See “Deadly Plastic: 3D Gun Printing” at <https://www.leelofland.com/deadly-plastic-3d-gun-printing/>. For those of you who might want to include such weapons in your fiction.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 2230 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 2230

Writing of *In the Cantina at Noon* (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
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Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 39412
Total fiction words for the year..... 300882
Total nonfiction words for the month... 305300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 142390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 443272

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Clear](#), [Lee Lofland](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, May 25](#)

[May 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Dude, where's my royalties
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 8)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day: "There's many a bestseller that could have been prevented by a good teacher." Flannery O'Connor

In "Of Interest" you'll see "Dude, Where's My Royalties?" When I'd read the article, a quick scene popped into my head:

Me tapping him on the shoulder. "Um, pardon me."

He turns around, smiling, his eyebrows arched. "Yes?"

I try to maintain a polite smile and fail. "Why in the HELL are you not indie publishing?"

Very frustrating. When you think about going tradpub, I suggest you lie down until the thought passes.

Chapter 8: Cycling

What I call "cycling" goes hand in hand with writing into the dark.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned that WITD is a technique by which you write one clean draft, send it to a first reader or copyeditor, apply the "fixes" they recommend (and that you agree with), and then publish it. Period.

That's two-thirds of the basic formula. The rest of it is what I call "cycling," a term first coined by Dean Wesley Smith (as far as I know) but one appropriate enough that I kept it.

On the surface, this will seem to many of you like revision or rewriting. Actually, you can call it whatever you want. Labels don't matter. What matters is the technique itself.

And like everything else in this book, the great divider between what works and what doesn't is the critical mind.

Editing is most definitely a function of the critical mind. You can't edit with your creative subconscious. Likewise (in my mind), revision and rewriting are both functions of the critical mind. You can't revise or rewrite with the creative subconscious.

In fact, if you choose to revise or rewrite something your characters wrote, you're actually harming your process.

If you're going to evoke the critical mind to "fix" what the creative mind wrote, why should the creative mind bother showing up at all? And even if it does continue to show up, it won't do so joyfully.

The entire key to being able to write freely off into the dark is trusting your subconscious, creative mind.

Yet if you choose to revise or rewrite, you're telling your subconscious, creative mind that you DON'T trust it. That it has little or no value. That is a serious mistake, and you will pay for it.

Want a shortcut to not being able to come up with story ideas? Want a shortcut to writing being difficult at best? Telling your subconscious it was wrong is the best shortcut I know.

We use the creative subconscious for both writing and reading fiction. When you buy a novel and "suspend your sense of disbelief," that means you're setting your conscious, critical mind aside. You aren't there to inspect the author's technique. You're there to read and be entertained.

(If the author has polished his original voice off the novel, rendering it boring, or if he isn't advanced enough in the craft to pull you into the story, that's a different matter. But the REASON you pick up a novel in the first place is to be entertained.)

Enter cycling while you're writing.

Cycling, like writing and reading, is a function of the creative subconscious.

Basically, it means you're "unstuck in time" in your storyline. Although the reader will read your short story or novel in a straight line from A to Z, you don't have to write it that way.

Say you're writing along into the dark and suddenly Aunt Marge, one of your characters, pulls a .32 caliber revolver out of the pocket of her housecoat.

It's a complete surprise to you. Remember, the characters, not you, are telling the story. You're only recording it for them.

But where in the world did Aunt Marge get a revolver? She doesn't seem the type.

If you were following some silly outline, of course, you would delete that part and make Aunt Marge mind her manners and act more "in character" with the character sketch you did of her earlier.

But since you're writing into the dark, you didn't do a character sketch or an outline. You're trusting your characters to tell the story.

So instead of straightening out Aunt Marge, you stop, cycle back in the manuscript to the point where Aunt Marge puts on her housecoat.

And the characters reveal that as she's about to leave the bedroom, she decides for whatever reason — call it an urge — to slip her deceased husband's .32 caliber Owl revolver into the pocket of her housecoat.

Then you go back to where you stopped writing and write the next sentence.

So that's one major use of cycling: to foreshadow or set up an event that you didn't see coming (because You aren't telling the story... your characters are).

Another major use of cycling is to allow your characters to add things you might have missed as you race through the story with them, trying to keep up.

Dean Wesley Smith told me he cycles back regularly about every 400 to 500 words. Hemingway would begin each day by reading back through what he'd written the day before. I cycle back once per session, so about every 900 to 1200 words.

After I've written for about an hour, I save the document and then take a break. Meaning I get up out of the chair and get away from the story. The break might be only a few minutes — say, a walk to the house and back — or, if I have a chore to attend to, my break might last a half-hour or an hour or longer.

But no matter how long the break is, when I come back to write, I sit down, scroll back to where I started writing the previous session, and put my fingers on the keyboard.

Then I begin reading what I wrote. Just reading it, as a reader. Not as a critic, not as an editor, and not as a writer.

Note that this is not revision. I'm not reading critically and "deciding" what to add or delete.

I'm only reading as a reader, with my creative subconscious engaged. I've suspended my sense of disbelief (my critical mind).

And as I read, I allow my fingers to rest on the keyboard. And if the characters make them move, I let them move.

With me, most often, my characters add depth to the scene. After all, the eventual reader of your story or novel can only sense (see, hear, smell, feel, taste) what you put on the page.

So most often as I read (my fingers resting on the keyboard), my characters add some important detail, some important bit of the setting, that I didn't notice as we ran through the story.

Just so you know, I don't always see the importance of what they add, but that's conscious-mind stuff so I push it down and add the detail anyway. Apparently the characters see the importance of it, and as I keep saying, it's their story, not mine.

But again, this isn't simply revision by another name. This has nothing at all to do with the conscious, critical mind.

If, as I'm cycling, I "hear" a negative thought (like "Really? Is that detail important?"), I know it's my critical mind trying to push through. And I ignore it.

I also ignore things like "Ugh, that sentence is too long" or "Didn't you use 'that' too many times in this paragraph?" or even "This is boring. It's too much description."

Fortunately, that doesn't happen very often to me. Why? Because I'm just reading as a reader, not critically. So if a sentence is "too long" or I used "that" too many times, I won't even notice. Again, I'm just reading and enjoying the story, not "looking for" (critical mind) "problems." I'm not reading critically.

A brief digression: as long as the description of the setting and the events come through the POV character — meaning they're filtered through the POV character's senses and accompanied by his or her opinions of the setting or events — they can't be "too much."

Some of you are probably thinking, "But what if the description doesn't have anything to do with the story?"

First off, if you're writing into the dark, you have no idea where the story's going, so how can you know whether the details have something to do with the story?

The only time there's too much anything on the page is when it's coming from the writer (critical mind: "I'd better add this") instead of the POV character.

Besides you've taken a solemn oath to let the characters tell their own story, right? So fuggitaboutit.

Secondly, if the POV character noticed it and thought it was important enough to mention, who are you to tell him he's wrong?

Again, fuggitaboutit. Finish cycling through the scene, and when you get back to the white space where you stopped writing before your break, Write the Next Sentence.

That's cycling in a nutshell. And that, my friends, is how you write a clean first draft.

Okay, so what's next? That's coming up in the next chapter.

Abbreviated day today. My son and his family are visiting. (Yay!) To the novel at 5. Did a little cycling, then headed to the house for a break, and while I was there my son showed up. Back later.

An good breakfast and some good conversation, and to the novel for awhile at 7:30. I might get only cycling done today. Either way, it's fine.

Tell you what. I'm gonna go ahead and post this so the RSS subscribers get the topic early. If I get a chance to write anymore later today, I'll add the numbers in tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "A Question From My Daughter" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/a-question-from-my-daughter.html>.

See "The Curious Incident of the Dog & the Missing Royalties" (especially PG's take) at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-curious-incident-of-the-dog-the-missing-royalties/>.

See "Dude, Where's My Royalties?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/dude-wheres-my-royalties/>.

See Michael Lockhart's "Historical Novels—Perceptions and Interesting Definitions" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/historical-novels-and-interesting-definitions/>.

See "Some Really Fun Photos" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-really-fun-photos/>.

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Total words for the day: 1720

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

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Total fiction words for the month..... 39412
Total fiction words for the year..... 300882
Total nonfiction words for the month... 32250

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 144110
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 444992

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
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 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Micheale Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, May 26](#)

[May 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * If you haven't yet taken part
- * I wasn't going to write
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (new Intro)
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 9)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

If you haven't yet taken part in Kris Rusch's Kickstarter, why not?

Anyway, now is the time to jump in. For as little as \$5.00 (five dollars) you will get around \$500.00 (five hundred dollars) worth of books, lectures, workshops, etc. Just sayin'.

Today, Kris' Kickstarter campaign hit the 4th stretch goal. So everybody who supported it gets everything at their support level PLUS all the stretch goals. You can find the Kickstarter at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/403649867/the-diving-universe/>.

I wasn't going to write a topic for today. I was going to take the day off from nonfiction and ride with Wes for awhile.

Then I encountered the first item in "Of Interest" and decided to offer up both my rewrite (it's nonfiction) of the Introduction to the book AND to write the next chapter of How to Quiet the Critical Voice.

I'm doing this not only because it will address a particular need of the person who instigated the post in "Of Interest," but because it might. If anyone truly NEEDS this series of posts, it's that would-be writer and the group of which he is a prime example.

First, specifically for that writer (and those writers) I'm going to post the rewritten (again, it's nonfiction) Introduction. In the original form, it was too far-reaching and delved into too many things I covered in later chapters.

Then, for those of you who've been following along, I'll post the all-new Chapter 9. So another long post today.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (new Intro)

Introduction

Well, you can't. Not entirely. There, I said it.

But writing should be fun. It should be an escape for you, just as your story will be an escape for your eventual readers. And nothing about listening to input from a negative Nellie is ever fun.

The fun in writing begins when you stop allowing negative input — from anyone or anyplace — into your writing process.

Yet practically everything we've learned over the years was either how to delay writing (outline, character sketch, world-build, etc.) or negative (what you write will not be good so you must revise, rewrite and polish).

And in every case, we learned all of that from one of two sources:

* At first we learned it from non-writers, like our English and Composition teachers in school at various levels.

* And later the same delays and negatives were reinforced by other would-be writers and writers who were taught exactly the same things by the same non-writers.

Quieting the critical voice is an ongoing process.

First you must learn to recognize it. That's easy. Anything that delays you from writing or is negative comes from the critical mind. Period.

Second, you must learn to make the critical voice shut up and leave you alone. That isn't as easy, but you can do it. The critical voice will visit less often as you become more experienced at telling it to shut up and leave you alone.

You can learn (quickly) to recognize it. And you can learn, with time and practice, to remand it to a cell in a back corner of your brain. The ability to do that is a direct result of your desire to write.

But what is the conscious, critical voice?

The conscious, critical voice exists to protect you from yourself. Its sole purpose in writing is to KEEP you from writing, and if you write, to KEEP you from finishing what you write, and if you finish what you write, to KEEP you from publishing what you've written.

To be fair, the conscious, critical mind has its good purposes too. For example, we learn new information and new techniques with our conscious mind.

But it has no place in actual writing. Once you're actively engaged in writing a story (of any length) you need to set that conscious, critical voice aside.

For just one example, you have to let go of the urge to critique (critical mind) what you've just written. Read over it as a Reader for enjoyment, yes. You read for enjoyment with the subconscious mind, suspending the critical sense of disbelief. So do that. (Much more on this in Chapter 8.)

But if you find yourself being critical (negative), that's the critical voice.

You've been taking in Story since you were too young to even be aware there was an alphabet, so well before you began to commit words to paper. What you learned about telling stories seeped into your subconscious. It's waiting there for you to tap into it.

Consider thought — later, in school at various levels — you were taught to capitalize the first word of sentences and to dot the lower-case I and cross the T and put a period or a question mark at the end of a sentence.

So you do those things automatically. Without “thinking” about it. Without evoking the conscious, critical mind.

Likewise, once you learn to trust yourself and let go of all the negative thoughts and delaying tactics, you can engage your creative subconscious and Just Write.

But wait. You say capitalizing the first word of a sentence and putting a period at the end DOES come naturally but the various parts of telling a story don't?

That's because you were TAUGHT that they don't. You were taught to double-check yourself. You were taught to not trust yourself.

Now, if you want to be a writer—and more importantly, if you want to actually ENJOY being a writer—you have to let all that negativity go.

You have to learn to trust yourself.

And you have to learn to quiet your critical voice.

In every case, the urgings that come from the critical mind are based on fear. They are always, ALWAYS negative.

The simplest fears are stated bluntly by the critical voice: “I can’t do this” or “Writing a novel is overwhelming” or “What was I thinking?” or “Maybe someday” or “No way can I get published anyway.”

The majority of would-be writers are stopped cold by these fears alone.

But the more common and stronger fears lie in wait for writers who get beyond those simplest ones and decide to actually write. These critical-mind stumbling blocks are a little more complex and a lot less straightforward.

Most of the time they’re difficult to recognize because they’re disguised as delays (as opposed to outright refusal to allow you to write or reinforcement of the outright certainty that you “can’t”).

But the result is the same:

- * Your manuscript remains in your mind, unwritten.
- * Or you’ve started it and it lays in a drawer or remains in your computer, unfinished.
- * Or you’ve finished it but it remains unsubmitted and unpublished.

The critical voice has new tricks for each level of this journey. In this book, I’ll look at each level and help you recognize as many of the tricks as possible. This will not be an easy journey for you. It wasn’t an easy journey for me. But I promise, the benefits far outweigh the initial discomfort as you purge the myths you’ve been taught about writing.

Now, if you experience fear while reading this, that fear is coming from your critical mind. It doesn’t want you to learn the techniques I outline in this book. I strongly recommend you finish the entire book. Then, if you’re still experiencing the fear (you will be) put the techniques into practice. Soon the fears will diminish.

But let’s start at the beginning. Let’s say you want to write a novel. And let’s say you’ve gotten past all the “I can’t do this” stuff.

Now you’ve entered the realm of the “Prep Delays.” What are those?

I’ll be back with Chapter 1 to tell you.

Note: You can find the succeeding chapters at the links below:

[Chapter 1: Recognizing the Critical Voice Prep Delays](#)

[Chapter 2: Recognizing the Critical Voice Post-Prep Delays](#)

[Chapter 3: Recognizing the Critical Voice Pre-Publication Delays](#)

[Chapter 4: Attacking the List](#)

[Chapter 5: A Digression](#)

[Chapter 6: Paying Your Dues — What’s That Mean?](#)

[Chapter 7: Following Heinlein’s Rules and Writing Into the Dark \(WITD\)](#)

[Chapter 8: Cycling](#)

Which brings us to...

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 9)

Chapter 9: Now What?

In the previous chapter, I wrote, “If you choose to revise or rewrite something your characters wrote, you’re actually harming your process.”

That is, if you choose to allow your critical mind to jump into the process and “correct” your creative subconscious, you’re teaching your subconscious that you don’t trust it after all.

Yet the whole purpose behind writing into the dark is to trust your subconscious. To trust your characters to tell their own story, the story that they themselves (not you) are living.

So once your creative subconscious learns that you’re going to revise and rewrite what it gives you anyway, why should it bother giving you any other stories to write?

That alone should be enough to cause you to reconsider your policy of revising and rewriting.

But if it isn’t, consider this: The worst way you are harming yourself when you revise or rewrite is by changing or outright censoring your own unique voice.

As I write this, in the past few days I had a comment via email from a writer:

He mentioned that David Farland recently wrote a post in which he mentioned “that [creating a] ‘too original’ world would overload and bore reader.”

As I told that writer,

“I haven’t read that post, but in my opinion there is no such thing as “too original.” For one thing, there ARE no original ideas or original worlds. Everything has already been written.

“The only thing that’s original and unique is your voice, the way YOU present the idea and the way YOU describe the world. And the only way to do that is to write off into the dark and allow your characters to tell their own story. It really is that simple.”

Almost every call for manuscripts or submission guideline I’ve ever read has said the publication or publisher is look for “a unique voice,” a voice and style that are uniquely your own.

Then they advise you to edit, revise and rewrite. And you take that to mean until your work “sounds like” their (or your) favorite author. Hmmm.

Now don’t get me wrong. There is nothing at all wrong with wanting to enjoy the same level of success as Hemingway or Chandler or Rusch or King.

And it’s also all right that your voice is informed by the voices of your favorite authors. In fact, it’s inevitable.

However, all of those folks (and every other professional long-term writer) achieved their success by writing in their own unique, original authorial voice. And because they did, they set trends. Notice, they SET trends. They did not FOLLOW trends.

But in consciously (critical mind) editing, revising or rewriting your work so it sounds more like the work of someone else, you will “polish” (another English-teacher term directly from corporate-speak) your unique voice OFF the work.

And you will be left with a manuscript that reads like the works of those other authors, but one that is written far below their level of skill. After all, you can write only at your own skill level.

So it will sound like something that is not unique to you, that doesn’t have the ring of your truth, and that looks exactly like everything else in the acquisition editor’s slushpile.

So what’s next?

What’s next is Practice.

There was a time when little Billy Shakespeare (and little Ernest Hemingway and little Kristine Katherine Rusch et al) didn’t even know there was an alphabet, much less how to actually form the letters, and much, much less how to write so much as a sentence.

Just like me. Just like you.

The difference was that they were driven to practice their craft. They were driven to write story after story, novel after novel, learning more each time and applying what they learned to the next story or novel. Always moving forward, not back, and not hovering.

I often get the question, “Shouldn’t I go back and rewrite my first short story (or novel) and include what I’ve learned up to this point?”

And my answer is always No. Let it stand. That story or novel is in your past, not your present or your future. Keep moving forward.

So how do you practice?

The same way you increase your chance at discoverability by readers. You write a story or novel to the best of your current ability, and you publish it. Then you write the next story or novel. Then the next. Then the next.

Along the way, you’ll read blog posts from reputable sources like [Dean Wesley Smith](#) or [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#) or [yours truly](#). You’ll read nonfiction books on writing by reputable writers (meaning fictionists who know what they’re doing), again by Dean Wesley Smith or Lawrence Block or me. You take writing courses online or at your local college.

You’ll do all of those things with your conscious, critical mind. If something feels right, you should accept it and internalize it; if it doesn’t, you should consider it and then move on. What you need (for example, pacing techniques or adding depth or story structure, etc.) will filter down into your subconscious and come out through your fingers as you’re writing, without conscious thought.

(As an important aside, if you ever hear any writing instructor say something like “I know it when I see it but it’s difficult to explain,” I recommend you leave the class immediately and don’t come back. That so-called “instructor” should be doing something other than teaching writing.)

All of this brings us to the post-partum period of writing a novel. So what is that?

For many writers, when a story is finished, they feel a need to take some time off. I won’t run down any other writer’s process. I can only speak to my own experience.

For me, when I finish a novel, I experience no joy, no elation and no real post-partum desire to do something else for awhile. No feeling that I need to escape writing. After all, writing IS my escape.

Instead, when I finish a novel I experience a time of sadness because the story is over, which means I won’t get to hang out with those characters for awhile, or maybe ever again.

Bummer. But to get over that feeling, I begin the next story or novel, sometimes on the same day, often on the next day, and almost always within a few days.

Just as in life, I celebrate beginnings, not endings. Just as I mourn the death of a family member or friend as briefly as possible, I celebrate a birth at the time and every year for the foreseeable future.

So what do I do (and recommend doing) when I finish a story or novel?

I look forward, not back. I don't allow much time for mourning the end of a novel, and I don't take much time off from doing what I love. I understand that I'm a lucky, lucky guy.

I write the next story or novel. And the next. And the next.

If you still feel your conscious, critical mind injecting negatives ("But I can't write a novel!" "This is all too much to take in!" "Maybe this works for other, more experienced writers, but not for me!") I suggest you go back and re-read this book.

Then, when you're ready, move on to the next chapter on publishing or submitting your work for publication.

Rolled out late at a little after 4 this morning. I won't write any fiction today (3rd day in a row!) as the visit with my son and his family is ongoing, but I wanted to get this out. So here it is.

Probably no topic tomorrow, at least not in the Critical Mind series. I need to ride with Wes for awhile.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Let's Help a New Writer Out" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/lets-help-a-new-writer-out.html>. Oh my. And Oh. My. God. Yes, read this (as any nonfiction) critically.

See "MurderCon: Interrogating LAPD Detective Paul Bishop" at <https://www.leelofland.com/murdercon-interrogating-lapd-detective-paul-bishop/>.

See Karla Brandenburg's "Post Partum period of writing a book" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/post-partum-period-of-writing-a-book/>.

See "Moral Rights" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/moral-rights/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 2610 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2610

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874

Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570

Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620

Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242

Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753
Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975
Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561
Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 39412
Total fiction words for the year..... 300882
Total nonfiction words for the month... 34860
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 146720
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 447602

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, May 27](#)

[May 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Does anyone ever
- * According to Dean
- * Once again, I wasn't going to write
- * Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 10)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Does anyone ever come up to you and open a conversation with "Still writing?" If so, how do you respond?

I finally decided to have fun with it. A year or so ago when I went to see my "primary care" doctor, he smiled. "So, are you still writing?"

I smiled back. “Yes. But how about you? Still patching people up?”

We laughed and laughed. But I’m pretty sure I didn’t need the shot he gave me later. (joking)

According to Dean (see “Of Interest”) not many writers have signed up for his learn-along course. I am amazed and frankly stymied.

I signed up immediately, and if he’d done this back when I had only a handful of short stories written, I’d have signed up then. This is truly priceless knowledge that will be valuable for years and years to come.

I really hope for your sake you take advantage of this learn-along. I mean all of you, though I admit I do have a few specific writer friends in mind. (grin)

Once again, I wasn’t going to write a topic for today. Then yesterday afternoon I took a cigar break out at the Hovel. I hate sitting and doing nothing, and besides, something new occurred to me. The result is Chapter 10.

Topic: How to Quiet the Critical Voice (Chapter 10)

Chapter 10: Creating and Using a Reverse Outline

Bear with me. When I first started writing this chapter, I was going to make this an addendum to Chapter 8: Cycling. But the more I explored this topic, the more I understood it deserved a chapter of its own.

Ever since I first came across the technique of using a “reverse outline” to keep track of where the story’s been (never where it’s going), I’ve found the technique useful.

I create a reverse outline as I write. Many major long-term professional writers do this too. At least one I know jots notes with a pen on a yellow legal pad that he keeps next to his writing computer. Another uses spiral-bound notebooks.

I type mine on a Notepad (.txt) document. I keep it open off to one side of the Word document that contains my WIP. And yes, when the novel’s finished, I save that file in the same folder with the novel itself and other novel-specific files.

Most often I create or add to the reverse outline when I return from a break, usually while cycling through what I wrote during the previous session.

But again, don’t be confused. Although this is called a reverse “outline,” it isn’t really an outline at all in the original, negative, control-freak sense of the word.

The reverse outline doesn't come from the conscious, critical mind, and it doesn't tell me where the story is going. It tells me where the story has been.

A typical reverse outline for me will consist of

- * the title of the work;
- * an ongoing list of major and minor characters (and their relationship to each other, if any);
- * a list of place names (cities, neighborhoods, towns, particular buildings, particular rooms) in which scenes appear; and
- * any story-specific lists. I add to each of these lists as the story progresses and new character- or place-names appear.

By way of example, in the reverse outline for my current WIP (as I write this), in addition to the lists above, I have all of these story-specific lists:

- * the names of the characters (and who they are) gathered around Wes' table in the cantina as he recounts a particular tale;
- * the room-by-room layout of Wes' hacienda and the outbuildings;
- * the list of bad guys who harmed his family in the previous book (because they figure in this story too);
- * a list of the bad guys who appear in the current WIP;
- * a list of the Guerrero Rangers, a specialized law enforcement group Wes established awhile back but who are still active;
- * a list of Wes' wife's family members, as well as his children, grandchildren, and grand neices and nephews (for possible future stories);
- * a list of the people buried in the family plot near the hacienda, in order of their location; and
- * a list of good character- and place-names that jumped out at me while I was writing but that I have not yet used.

This might sound like an awful lot of work, but it isn't.

Once you establish the basic reverse outline (all of ten minutes at the most), it takes only a minute or two during cycling to add to the lists and jot down a few notes about what happened in each chapter.

And those notes are really what comprise the reverse outline.

Following the lists, I write the chapter numbers down the left side of the page, 1 through however many chapters I think the story might run. (I can always add more later.)

Then, alongside each chapter number, I write a brief summary of what happened in that chapter. Again, I do that after it's written, never before.

The chapter (or scene) summary might include which characters appeared (and sometimes how they were dressed), the major event and setting of the chapter, and so on. Anything I might need to "remember" later in the story. My typical chapter summary is around 20 words or so.

Once I've created a reverse outline, if I suddenly need to cycle back and find when in the story Aunt Marge put on her housecoat (so I can see when I need to slip a .32 caliber Owl revolver into her pocket), I can quickly refer to my reverse outline instead of going back and searching through the entire novel.

As you can probably imagine, this is a major time saver, and of course, I recommend it. If I didn't, it wouldn't be part of this book.

A quick few notes on writing a novel series —

The reverse outline as described above is intended to be used per novel. That is, each novel I write, whether or not it's part of a series, has its own reverse outline.

However, this is also an excellent way to create a "series bible." The difference is that the series bible might contain all of the above PLUS notes about the overall arc of the characters and events in the series. Again, this would be written after the fact, as the characters appear and as the events occur.

For me personally, I find it useful to open a new Notepad document, then copy and paste the reverse outlines from each novel in the series — in sequence, of course — into the new Notepad document, which then becomes my series bible.

Once the series bible is up to date, you might be tempted to go back and delete some repetitious information.

I don't do that since sometimes the characters who appear in one series novel will also appear in others. So I let the series bible stand as-is, basically a compilation of all the reverse outlines from the individual novels in the series.

So what does any of this have to do with quieting the critical mind?

Nothing directly, but it's a great way to reinforce your trust in the creative subconscious and to keep the conscious, critical mind at bay once you're writing. "Yes, I'm using an outline, but I'm not allowing you (Critical Mind) to create it."

Of course, it's also a really great way to keep track of what-happened-when as you wrote.

But the critical mind will take every opportunity to try to trip you up. So if you choose to use a reverse outline, be ready to defend it against the critical voice.

Often as I'm jotting chapter notes in my reverse outline, my critical mind says, "Ooh, maybe this will happen next!"

When it does that, I ignore it. I don't even write the "idea" down because it came from my critical mind. I don't want to give my critical voice even the slightest inroad.

Instead I just go back to the story and read through what I've written (cycling) with my fingers on the keyboard. When I reach the place where I took a break, I write the next sentence that occurs to me, then the next, then the next.

And just like that, I'm right back into the flow of the story — the characters' story — and where they want it to go next.

This way I'm always in the subconscious creative mind, always creating, never critiquing. I guard jealously against the intrusion of my conscious, critical mind on the very personal relationship I have with the character in my WIP.

Criticizing or judging my work is not my job, ever. That's the job of my readers.

I'll leave that to them.

Rolled out at 4 this morning after a rough night. Anyway, I'm posting this hyper-early so I can visit with my son before he takes off later today.

If I write any fiction today (there's a chance) I'll post the numbers tomorrow.

Also, the Critical Voice book is winding down, with only two or three chapters to be posted. I'll probably post the next chapter tomorrow, and the last chapter or two probably on Wednesday and (maybe) Thursday.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Not Many Writers Want To Make Money" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/not-many-writers-want-to-make-money/>.

See "What's to Be Done with an Author's Pen Name?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/whats-to-be-done-with-an-authors-pen-name/>. This spurred my opening comment at the beginning of today's post. (grin)

Some good comments on “Let’s Help a New Writer Out” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/lets-help-a-new-writer-out.html#comments>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1560 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1560

Writing of **In the Cantina at Noon** (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753
Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975
Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561
Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 39412
Total fiction words for the year..... 300882
Total nonfiction words for the month... 36420
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 148280
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 449162

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, May 28](#)

[May 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quotes of the day
- * What I posted to Facebook yesterday
- * I'll get back
- * Topic: Topic: What? Most Scenes Don't Lend Themselves Visually?
- * On a side note
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all of time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and it will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is nor how valuable nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open.” Martha Graham

I've never heard a better justification for writing from the creative subconscious and not judging your own work. Just sayin'.

“[Y]our responsibility is to create. Your job is share what you have to offer from where you are right now. ... Your concern is to do the work, not to judge it. Your concern is to fall in love with the process, not to grade the outcome.” James Clear

What I posted to Facebook yesterday...

Any writers out there?

New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Dean Wesley Smith is offering for only \$200 to allow you to “learn-along” with him during the upcoming Las Vegas Licensing Expo.

Your intellectual property (IP) is valuable beyond what you can imagine. Don't just skip over this opportunity. Read the details at <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/>.

I'll get back to the Critical Mind book in a day or two, but first I need to talk about a couple of other things.

Topic: What? Most Scenes Don't Lend Themselves Visually?

Recently another writer, in talking about covers in a blog post, wrote, “Most scenes don't lend themselves visually. So when you write your story, include 3-4 scenes that are visual.”

Frankly, I was stymied by that statement. I suppose the writer's premise was that a cover should convey a scene from the story, but I'm just guessing.

In the first place, the cover and specific scenes don't necessarily have anything to do with each other. The cover should convey the genre and overall tone of the novel.

WVG Publishing offers an excellent lecture on cover design at <http://wvg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/>. The publisher talks about cover-art selection per genre, colors, font selection, etc.

Other statements in the same post told me this writer is mired in the critical mind and in the myths about writing. For that reason, I didn't bother to comment on the post itself. I didn't want to appear argumentative. Hey, every writer is different.

But the writer's contention that "Most scenes don't lend themselves visually" is sheer misinformation and served as the catalyst for this topic.

The truth is, most scenes ARE visual. I can't think of even one scene that isn't, in my work or in anyone else's (including the works I've read by the author of the original post).

If a scene lacks anything, most often it is a lack of the other physical senses.

In my experience, all writers convey visual clues in scenes, but few include the POV character's sense of smell, hearing, taste and feeling, either physical or emotional.

For much more on this (and on what a scene is), see my posts on writing scenes at

<https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/chapter-6-writing-setting-part-i/>

<https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/chapter-6-writing-setting-and-notes-on-writing-the-scene-part-ii/>

<https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/what-is-a-scene/>.

Several other posts on my author blog also touch on the topic of scenes, but those three posts nail the question pretty well. And two of them are included in my book, [Writing the Character-Driven Story](#).

On a side note (you might call this a rant), more and more often recently I find myself wondering why I bother to stand in the path of the tidal wave that is the standard collective take on the craft of writing. It isn't going to go away, that's for sure.

I mean, despite actual historical evidence, I can't even convince writers that what currently passes for conventional wisdom (the myths that you must outline, rewrite, etc.) has actually been

around, out of the entire history of the human race, only since the 1960s or 1970s. So around 50 years, give or take.

So why do I bother?

I mean, I could just as easily go about my business, write my own short stories and novels, and let other writers and would-be writers discover the truth (or not) in their own good time.

After all, if the majority of would-be writers want to spend thousands of dollars on conferences and writing seminars and workshops and books (many by people parroting the same old crap) and then never write a word, what does it matter to me?

And if the majority of actual writers — many of whom have been made aware of Heinlein's Rules and the writing into the dark technique — choose to ignore those and plod along in the conscious, critical mind, writing outlines, doing numerous revisions and rewrites until their work contains no inkling of their original voice, really, what do I care?

The timeless wisdom of Heinlein's Rules and the boundless freedom (and preservation of your original voice) of writing into the dark are there for the taking, yet so few are even willing try them.

And the repetitive (and horrible) advice drones on in writers' organizations, critique groups and blog posts.

Just this morning, I saw a writer whom I actually admire and respect tell a younger writer that instead of writing "The cop leaned in [over a suspect]" (intimidating, right?) s/he should write "[The cop] invaded the petite woman's personal space." Ugh. Really? Political correctness, anyone?

And in the past week alone I've seen writers I respect tell other writers that writing is "hard work"; that they should outline, revise, and rewrite; that they should let others into their work via critiques; that they should take a break between projects to avoid "writer burnout" (whatever that is) etc. etc. ad nauseam.

I have to say, some of those posts literally cause me to feel physically tired.

Now, if you're wielding a shovel and digging ditches eight hours a day, I can understand you might experience muscle fatigue (muscle burnout).

I can even understand carpal tunnel syndrome or maybe finger fatigue or eye fatigue from staring at a computer screen all day. But "writer's burnout"? Seriously?

C'mon, folks. You sit alone in a room and make stuff up. Ideas are literally everywhere. And if you're doing it right, you aren't even living the story you're writing. You're only recording what your characters say and do. And you're having fun doing it! So how in the world can you possibly "burn out"?

Unless you're attempting to force the story on the characters with an outline or unless you're teaching your creative voice you don't respect it by revising and rewriting with your conscious, critical mind what it creates. I can understand how that would quickly get tiring and lead to burnout. Or to your critical mind *telling* you you're burnt out.

But whatever. The point is, the fact that so many other would-be writers and writers buy into that stuff doesn't have even the slightest effect on my own writing or my own storytelling ability.

So again, what do I care? And why do I bother to be one of only two (as far as I can tell) persistent voices yelling in the wilderness against the insanity?

Well, I know why I bother, of course, or at least why I've bothered up to this point: If even one writer or would-be writer out there gleans from my silly posts the enduring work ethic (Heinlein's Rules) and freedom to be true to his or her own voice (WITD) that I discovered with HR and WITD, then my regulary going hoarse in the attempt to spread the word is worthwhile to me.

After all, if Dean Wesley Smith hadn't been willing to share his advice — practically all of which goes directly against the overwhelming deluge of myths and misinformation — I wouldn't be a successful short story writer and novelist today.

Still, as an instructor I have to remain unattached to outcome. I have to share what I know to be true, and then let others take it or leave it as they wish. Otherwise I'll descend into a fit of screaming meemies and last be seen racing across the desert, pulling at what little hair I have left as if it's on fire, and babbling incoherently.

As I mentioned before, I have no idea what "writer's burnout" is supposed to be. But I have a sneaking suspicion I'm beginning to experince "instructor burnout" or maybe "blogger burnout."

So write however you want. I mean, it really is your choice, and I personally don't care.

You can plod along for a year or two or five if you want to, attempting to squeeze a story out of your conscious, critical mind. In the meantime, I and others who've caught on will have written and published another 12 or 25 or 50 novels.

If you're of a particular dramatic bent you can even tell yourself and anyone else who will listen what a "terrible burden" you must bear for your "art," and all because you felt "compelled" to answer some mysterious, ethereal "calling" to be a writer.

Or you can get over yourself, sit down at your computer or note pad, lay your ears back and just have a blast recording the stories that your characters are living.

It really is that simple, and it really is the most fun you can have with your clothes on. And it's much more rewarding and somehow less tiring than simply going with the flow.

I wish it for you.

Rolled out at 2 this morning and was in the Hovel by 2:30. My critical mind tried to tell me I could take one more day off to get back to normal after the visit this past weekend (grin). But the best way to get back into a routine is, well, to get back into a routine. (Wes says, “If you want t’get back in the saddle, y’gotta put a foot in the stirrup.”)

I suspect I have only one more chapter on the Critical Mind book, and then maybe an addendum or two, one of which I’ve already written. I’ll more than likely finalize the last chapter today and post it tomorrow.

Then I’ll post any addenda on succeeding days and be done with it.

So to get back into my routine, I went to bed early last night, got up, and started my day.

Had a few short breaks while writing the stuff above and researching “Of Interest,” then to the house for a longer break at 8. When I get back, I will turn a blind eye to the naysayers and wander off into my WIP for an enjoyable few hours.

To the novel at a little after 9. I felt like I needed to read through it to bring myself up to date, but realized I had only started my reverse outline, so I brough that up to date too, skimming through the novel. A break at 10:15.

Back to the read-through and reverse outline at 10:30.

I started writing on the novel again at 11:30, and at about 11:45 it took a serious twist. One that will require some cycling back.

And with the cycling back came a lot of new words. After a little more cycling tomorrow, the story should be back in the flow.

Calling it a little early today. I’m pooped. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “How We Learn” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-we-learn/>.

See “Just A Few Hours Left...” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/27/just-a-few-hours-left/>.

See “First Page Critique: Go” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/05/first-page-critique-go.html>
BUT be sure to read the comments.

See “Ian Fleming Explains How to Write a Thriller” at <https://lithub.com/ian-fleming-explains-how-to-write-a-thriller/>. Simply put, this should be required reading for every writer, not only writers of thrillers.

See the comments on “Not Many Writers Want To Make Money” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/not-many-writers-want-to-make-money/#comments>. Unbelievable.

See “Martha Graham on the Hidden Danger of Comparing Yourself to Others” at <https://jamesclear.com/quality-comparison>. Goes along with my posts on quieting the critical mind.

See “Malware” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/malware/>.

See “16 Major Book Publishers Always Open to Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/16-major-book-publishers-always-open-to-submissions/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Japanese Sword” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/27/free-fiction-monday-the-japanese-sword-2/>.

Fiction Words: 1192

Nonfiction Words: 2050 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3242

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753
Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975
Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561
Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604

Total fiction words for the month..... 40604
Total fiction words for the year..... 302074
Total nonfiction words for the month... 38470
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 150330
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 452404

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Clear](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, May 29

[May 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Before I get started
- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: On Licensing
- * On a side note
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Before I really get started today, I want to welcome a new subscriber, Andrea, to the Journal. Glad you could join us. If you'd like to see the entire book I'm writing on how to quiet the critical voice, scroll down a couple of posts and you'll see a list of links to all those posts.

Quote of the Day

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” Mahatma Ghandi

Topic: On Licensing

Just so you know, although I occasionally add links to “Of Interest” that present viewpoints with which I disagree, I would N-E-V-E-R actually RECOMMEND anything that I hadn't fully vetted and in which I didn't have complete confidence.

That's one reason I'm writing and posting here, free, the chapters of the Critical Mind book instead of just recommending, like 99% of writers and all nonwriters everywhere, that you outline, revise, rewrite, etc.

I've always felt a huge sense of responsibility to others, and that extends to those who follow this Journal. Trust, to me, is paramount. That's why I would never recommend anything that even hints of being a scam or a bad deal.

And that is the main reason I was so surprised that few, if any, of my Daily Journal subscribers had signed up to attend the virtual Las Vegas Licensing Expo via Dean Wesley Smith's "learn-along."

Bearing that in mind, I was going to write and post the final chapter on the Critical Mind book today, but frankly, this is more important at the moment.

If you write at all, it's important that you understand the value of your short story or novel. It's important to understand what you own: That includes not only copyright, but the copyright as Intellectual Property (IP) and the right to license that IP. (Hence my pushing Dean's learn-along of the Licensing Expo.)

As an aside, licensing is the one big reason I've always been so frantic about getting the next short story or novel out. Because the next one might be the one that someone out there (film producer, toy manufacturer, game creator, etc.) is looking for.

On the other hand, my very first short story or novel might be the one they're looking for, and me putting out more work and getting my name out there more widely might be what leads them to find that short story or novel.

But I digress. Here's what instigated this topic:

One writer wrote to ask me about Dean's licensing Learn-Along. The exact question was, "What is it exactly?"

What the writer was really asking is "What is licensing, and for that matter, what is copyright?"

Now, I'm certain the writer believes s/he understands copyright. But copyright, IP, and licensing go hand in hand. They are inextricably connected. Frankly, if you don't understand the value of licensing (and learning about licensing), you don't understand copyright.

But before I get started on explaining licensing (in a very limited way), I have two recommendations:

First, if you have the same question, I strongly recommend you read Dean's last two or three blog posts and the comments after them. You can find them at <https://deanwesleysmith.com>. (They were in "Of Interest" over the past few days.)

Second, I strongly recommend you get a copy of [The Copyright Handbook \(NOLO\)](#).

I'll do my best to explain licensing as briefly as possible:

Say you own a hotel with 100 rooms. When you “sell” a room for the night, you aren’t actually selling it. You’re licensing its use for one night. Tomorrow, that person will move out, but you will still have that room to “sell” (license) again. Even if you “sell” 365 reservations for that room in one year, you still have it to sell (license, rent) in the future.

If you had actually “sold” that room, that would mean it now belongs to whomever you sold it to (like a condo) and you would have only 99 rooms still available in your hotel.

When you write a novel and “sell” it on Amazon or B&N or wherever, you aren’t actually selling it. You’re licensing it (they’re renting it) for one person to read. But ONLY to read. (That’s why Amazon et al can, at will, “erase” any ebooks you bought from them that are currently in your e-reader.)

And that’s where copyright, IP and licensing come into play.

That reader isn’t allowed to make a movie of your story. He isn’t allowed to produce a line of action figures based on one of your characters. He isn’t allowed to create an electronic game based on your characters or your storyline. He isn’t allowed to do anything else to make money on your story.

Unless you sell him a license to do so. which (for me) is why understanding licensing and all the ways you can use it is extremely important.

The cost of that license is up to you as the copyright owner. (I recommend you hire an IP attorney to help you negotiate the contract. Type “IP Attorneys” and the name of your city into a search engine.)

The license to READ your book costs maybe \$4.99. But would you sell a license to turn your book into a movie for only \$4.99? (Um, no.) Would you sell a license to produce a line of action figures based on one of your characters or to create an electronic game based on your characters or your storyline for only \$4.99?

Of course not.

If you would, I have some choice ocean-front (someday) property here in southeast Arizona you might be interested in buying.

The point is, you don’t sell your work outright, you license it. And you can do that repeatedly for your entire lifetime plus 70 years on each story or novel you’ve written.

UNLESS you go to a traditional publisher and sign away your copyright for that nice \$5,000 or \$50,000 advance. (I freely admit, another zero might do it for me.) If you do that, then THEY own it and can license it for millions to the aforementioned film producers, toy companies, game creators et al.

THAT'S the value of IP. That's why traditional publishers can afford (and laugh all the way to the bank) to pay you a \$5,000 or even a \$50,000 advance for all rights to your book, and then never even publish it if they don't want to. The IP (copyright) for that one book adds MILLIONS to the value of their company.

And that's exactly why Dean's Learn-Along is so important. If you've written even one short story, you are potentially sitting on millions of dollars in revenue. FOR ONE SHORT STORY.

And now you have the astounding opportunity for only two hundred lousy bucks (and really, only \$50) to learn along with Dean — as he learns at the actual Las Vegas Licensing Expo — more about licensing opportunities: what they are, how to find them, how to entice them to find you, etc. ect. ad nauseam.

But I totally get it. I do.

Writers are the best when it comes to devaluating their own writing. If you think what you've written sucks, well, you believe you must be right. It must suck. But if you've written something you think is really GOOD... then you must be wrong because writers are the worst judges of their own work.

Do you not see how ludicrous that is?

How good your work is isn't up to you. It's up to whomever reads it. It's THEIR job, not yours, to judge your work.

And if one of those readers is a film producer or a toy manufacturer or a game creator and you aren't up to date on copyright, IP and licensing information, they WILL take you to the cleaners.

They might even pay you \$5000 cash, right up front, then turn around and make MILLIONS selling just the OPTION to film your one poor little short story. Maybe even the one that you thought sucked.

And just so I say it here in public, having more work "out there" doesn't automatically mean you're any closer to getting a movie deal or whatever. It just means there are more opportunities for them to find you and your work.

In Dean's Learn Along, which costs only \$200, he actually includes his Magic Bakery Classic Workshop (which explains copyright), a \$150 value. So really, he's inviting you to attend the Las Vegas Licensing Expo (virtually) for only fifty bucks.

Okay, so that's my spiel on the topic. Back tomorrow with more on the Critical Mind book. And I won't talk anymore about the Licensing Expo. I'm really anxious to have the Critical Mind book over and done with so I can get back full-force to having fun writing my WIP.

Rolled out at 3. Read my email, wrote the stuff above. Took a break at 5, then fed the horses, got another cup of coffee, and back to the Hovel.

Then I decided to post a special in-between post over on HarveyStanbrough.com using the topic above. It will appear on Saturday, June 1. Might as well share the opportunity with those folks too.

After a spate of emails (do emails come in a spate or a flurry?), I'm off to work on the Critical Mind book at 9:30.

I'm going to devote my time to finishing that before I return to my WIP. Otherwise I'll keep putting off the nonfiction book, and as I mentioned above, it's close enough to completion that I just want to get the thing done.

And around 11, as I was looking over the book, I realized I hadn't said anything about the critical mind delays that strike WHILE you're writing.

There wasn't a lot to say on that topic, so I decided to add that to the beginning of Chapter 3. In the book, that chapter will now be titled Chapter 3: Recognizing the Critical Voice Writing and Pre-Publication Delays. I'll publish the additional information tomorrow in a topic titled "Chapter 3 Extension: Recognizing the Writing Delays."

Well, it's almost 1 p.m. and as it turns out the book will have two more chapters. I'll publish Chapter 11 here on Friday and Chapter 12 here on Saturday. (I'll report those nonfiction numbers on the days I post them.)

Then, sometime or other, I'll create a cover (grumble) and a promo doc (grumble grumble) and publish the thing. Heinlein's Rule 4 has always been the most difficult for me to follow.

But I'll do it. Just in case anyone out in the wider world wants to read it.

Now I'm gonna go watch some baseball or something.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Time Travel, Romance, and Licensing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/time-travel-romance-and-licensing/>.

See "Flying Cops and Their Guns: Write it Right!" at <https://www.leelofland.com/flying-cops-and-their-guns-write-it-right/>.

See The Passive Guy's TAKE on "Ian Fleming Explains How to Write a Thriller" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/ian-fleming-explains-how-to-write-a-thriller/>.

See “Writing Roundup – Paying It Back and Forward” at <https://terryodell.com/writing-roundup-paying-it-back-and-forward/>.

See Duke Southard’s “Write What You Know” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/write-what-you-know/>.

See Alison Holt’s “Different Strokes” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/different-strokes/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1870 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1870

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 10... 1365 words. Total words to date..... 20874
Day 11... 3696 words. Total words to date..... 24570
Day 14... 1050 words. Total words to date..... 25620
Day 15... 1622 words. Total words to date..... 27242
Day 16... 1413 words. Total words to date..... 28655
Day 17... 2098 words. Total words to date..... 30753
Day 18... 1222 words. Total words to date..... 31975
Day 19... 2586 words. Total words to date..... 34561
Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604
Day 23... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 40604
Total fiction words for the year..... 302074
Total nonfiction words for the month... 40340
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 152200
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 454274

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Intellectual Property](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Licensing](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, May 30](#)

[May 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * A much better description
- * Well, I did it
- * Topic: Quieting the Critical Mind (Chapter 3 Extension)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

In today's "Of Interest," Kris Rusch offers a much better description of the Licensing Expo (what it is, why it exists, why it matters) than I ever could.

One more note on the whole learning-about-licensing thing: If you don't want to (or can't) part with the money for Dean's learn-along, you can get at least some of the same stuff for less by signing up with Kris Rusch's Patreon page. Details in her post today, mentioned in "Of Interest."

Well, I did it. This morning during a long break I moved my other computer and wide-screen monitor to the hovel. Hal's speakers don't work right, and it's so old the ports are worn out so it won't take separate speakers (grin).

So I moved the other 'puter (Hal2) out here so I can listen to my courses, answer email, etc. on it. Which also takes email off my writing 'puter again and puts it on my business computer where it belongs.

It feels good to have my writing 'puter separate again, but I did everything on it for a long time, so we'll see how it all works out.

Topic: Quieting the Critical Mind

Chapter 3 Extension: Recognizing the Writing Delays

Now you're actually writing the book. This is a time when you don't want input from instructors, coaches, critique partners, et al.

I recommend never letting anyone else into your work while it's in progress. Your own critical voice is already there, waiting at every step to trip you up. You don't need other critical voices crammed in there too.

Your critical mind will give you more than enough to "think" about even during this stage, while you're actually writing.

* Maybe you'll write "that" in a sentence. And maybe that one time it will suddenly pull you from the subconscious, creative mind as you wonder whether you're using "that" too much (negative = critical mind).

* Oh goodness! Should you maybe go back and count them and make sure to alternate "that" and "which"? (No, you shouldn't. For one thing, they aren't interchangeable.)

* Or was that sentence too long (negative = critical mind)? It certainly felt too long. Maybe you should rethink that sentence (think = critical mind).

* Or what about that paragraph? Was it too long (negative = critical mind)? Was it too short, sitting there all by itself (negative = critical mind)?

* Or what about the scene length or chapter length? Too long or too short (negative = critical mind)?

And a slew of other negative thoughts will hit:

* I don't know where the story's going. Maybe I should have done an outline. Everyone says to do that.

* Does my character feel real enough? Maybe I should have done a character sketch. Everyone says to do that.

* How am i ever going to market this thing? (Well, first you have to finish writing it.)

* I'm certainly no Stephen King or Nora Roberts or Danielle Steel.

* Besides, hasn't this story already been written?

* Will anyone ever want to read this anyway?

* Why did I ever think I could do this?

And on and on and on.

And you just have to get through them.

Critical-mind intrusions will happen more often and feel stronger (or louder) at the beginning and end of your work in progress (WIP).

They will feel stronger or louder at the beginning because it's easier to make you stop writing when you don't have so much time invested.

And they will feel stronger or louder near the end because "Oh my god, are you really going to finish and publish this thing?" So the critical mind pulls out all stops and goes for the jugular.

But again, you just have to get through them.

Every time it rears its ugly little head, you have to tell the critical mind to shut up and get out of your business. Then you have to write the next sentence.

In short, you have to Trust Yourself. Trust your creative subconscious. Trust your characters to tell their own story. Especially now that you're in the middle of the process.

It's common wisdom among long-term professional writers that many stories "bog down" at the one-third, one-half, or two-thirds point.

In every case, that's because the critical mind is attacking.

At the one-third point, the "new" has worn off of the story and you aren't sure you want to continue (negative = critical mind).

At the halfway point, you're mired in the story and uncertain (negative = critical mind) where it's going next.

At the two-thirds point, same thing. You're mired in the story, uncertain where it's going next AND you're threatening to actually finish it.

Again, any negative thought comes from the critical mind. And the "fix" for that is the same every time: Push down the critical voice, write the next sentence that occurs to you, and go on about the story.

This isn't something that might happen to you. This is something that, if you're writing, WILL happen to you. Forewarned is forearmed. Push down the critical voice and get on with it.

(Following this in the book is the original Chapter 3, The Pre-Publication Delays, which you've already seen. Tomorrow I'll publish Chapter 11: Turning the Fear Around.)

Rolled out at 2:30. With most of the above pre-posted, I get to write today (after feeding the horses, moving my office, etc. as described above).

Still cycling today, weaving-in the twist my characters threw me a couple of days ago. This is a little "risky" (for lack of a better word) in a critical-mind kind of way. It's easy to allow the critical voice in while weaving in a new story thread, because it's such slow going. So even at this point in my career as a writer, I have to be careful about keeping the conscious, critical mind out of my writing.

Finally to the novel at 10.

I cycled through until noon, then took a break for lunch and chores.

Back to the novel at 1:30. Finished cycling at 3. Woohoo! Tomorrow, all new story writing off into the dark!

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Licensing Expo Prep 1” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/05/29/business-musings-licensing-expo-prep-1/>. A much better explanation than mine on licensing and what the Licensing Expo is.

See Dan Baldwin’s “Verbal Contract Abuse – Part II” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/verbal-contract-abuse-part-ii/>.

See “About Twelve Hours Left” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/about-twelve-hours-left/>.

See “John Douglas on His Life’s Work: Talking with Killers” at <https://crimereads.com/john-douglas-on-his-lifes-work-talking-with-killers/>.

Interesting comments on “Time Travel, Romance, and Licensing” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/time-travel-romance-and-licensing/#comments>.

Fiction Words: 1718

Nonfiction Words: 1100 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2818

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451

Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412

Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604

Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322

Total fiction words for the month..... 40604

Total fiction words for the year..... 302074

Total nonfiction words for the month... 42322

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 153300

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 457092

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dan Baldwin](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, May 29](#)

[May 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Lazy day today
- * Topic: Quietening the Critical Mind (Chapter 11)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Lazy day today for some reason. Well, I know the reason, really.

I'm writing, but I'm piddling, taking my time, allowing distractions. This has never happened to me before, and I'm certain the WIP is behind it. Well, I'm certain my feelings for the WIP are behind it.

I'm both anxious to write this story and wary of writing it too fast. I want to write it but I don't want to approach the end. So I'm more likely to be happy with a 1000-word day. (Today, in a half-hearted effort to overcome this, when I realized I'd reached 1100 words I told myself to take a break and then come back and keep writing.)

Always before, I routinely made 3000 words per day and pushed for 4000 or 5000 words in a day. And often reached it with no problem.

With all of my other other books, including the ones in the series that leads to this novel, I just wanted to get through the story. And as I neared the end, I wanted to rush through it, type it as fast as I could and put it behind me so I could begin the next book.

But with this one, it just isn't that way.

It isn't that this book or this story is "special" or "important" either, not in any broader sense (as in "the novel as event"). But it's incredibly important to me personally. It's important that I enjoy this time with these characters.

And not just enjoy it but revel in it, cherish it. I feel an even stronger sense of nostalgia for the characters than I do for the defunct time period in which they lived. I'm just hoping one (or more) of them will want to take off in their own series in the time and place where they live.

But unfortunately, the time and place is passing even as they live it. Even they are aware of it passing away. It's as if the sun, in its daily trek across the sky, drags a little more of the time

period with it as it drops over the horizon. And now, it's dragging the last bits of the era along, and what's worse, it's going without a struggle.

That's me as a wistful, nostalgic reader. For me as a professional fiction writer, even with this story, I want to race along with the characters as always, striving to keep up and record what they say and do. But the eventual result of that is that I will near and then reach the end of the story.

And I don't want to reach the end of this one. I just don't. So just in case anyone wondered, there you go.

Now I'll go back and see whether maybe I can lift my feet and run with them again instead of trudging along sluggishly as I have been.

Topic: Quieting the Critical Mind

Chapter 11: Turning the Fear Around

I was thinking maybe this chapter should have come at the front of the book. But until you learned to recognize the critical mind delays for what they are, this wouldn't have done you a lot of good.

I hope you noticed as you went through each stage — prep delays, post-prep delays, writing delays, and pre-publication delays — that all of those are negative and based on fear.

More often than not, it's a fear of failure. A fear that someone out there won't like what you've written.

It's the fear that an acquisition editor at a magazine or at a publishing house will reject your story or novel. Or that a reader will write a bad review.

But the thing is, So What?

What if you *do* get a rejection slip? What if a reader *does* write a bad review? So what?

They don't know you personally.

No acquisitions editor is going to remember your name. If you get a rejection, especially in a form letter, they probably didn't read past the first page or two. Chances are they don't even know your name.

If it was a paper submission, the editor probably just stuck the form letter in the self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) you provided and dropped it into the outgoing mail box.

When I was editing for three literary magazines simultaneously, I didn't have time to read everything that came in.

If a short story or essay didn't grab me within the first page or so, back into the SASE it went.

For poetry, I soon developed the habit of reading the words down the right side of the poem first. (The end of the poetic line is the most powerful position in a poem.) If those words interested me, I read the poem. If they didn't, back into the SASE it went.

If an editor rejects an electronic submission, most of the time they don't even bother sending a rejection. They just don't send an acceptance letter or email. Many of them put the form rejection in their guidelines with something like, "If you haven't heard from us within X months, consider your work rejected."

And even if your work is rejected, nobody's going to come to your house to point at you and laugh or beat you up.

Besides, chances are, if your story or novel is rejected at one magazine or publisher — and if you follow Heinlein's Rule 5, "Keep it on the market" — it will be accepted at another.

In his essay titled "On the Writing of Speculative Fiction" (On Worlds Beyond: The Science of Science Fiction Writing, Fantasy Press, 1947), Robert Heinlein wrote,

"I shall assume that you can type, ... 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."

Then he listed the "business habits" that today are referred to as Heinlein's Rules. In the next paragraph, after saying plainly that his business habits "are amazingly hard to follow," he wrote,

"But if you will follow them, it matters not how you write, you will find some editor somewhere, sometime, so unwary or so desperate for copy as to buy the worst old dog that you, or I, or anybody else, can throw at him."

Now don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Don't assume just because his "business habits" were included in an essay on speculative fiction and included in a book by Fantasy Press that they're only for speculative fiction writers.

If you only read them, you will see that they aren't. And if you haven't read them, you're cheating yourself.

And all self-deprecation and joking aside, history is replete with examples of now-famous novels that were rejected umpteen times before they found a home. If you don't believe me, just type "Famous novels that were rejected" into any search engine.

All of that being said, you'll still be a lot more comfortable if you can somehow manage to overcome your fear of failure.

I've found only one foolproof way to do that: Turn the fear around. Instead of being afraid of how you'll feel if you write, be afraid of how you'll feel if you don't.

The only real failure for a writer is to not write.

First, set a goal and make it specific. Ideally, it will be something that is within your reach but makes you stretch.

My goal was a daily word-count goal. I was determined to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day. I write 800 to 1200 words per hour (that's a blazing-fast 14 to 17 words per minute). So 3000 words per day, including short breaks, boiled down to 4 hours in the chair per day. That was doable for me.

I hit it on most days.

But soon I realized when I didn't hit it, Nothing Bad Happened. I didn't get any nasty phone calls or emails. Nobody came to my house to rough me up. Nothing happened.

And whether I exceeded my goal, met it, or didn't meet it, the goal reset to zero the next day.

So I had no chance at all to rest on my laurels or wallow in my bereavement. I had a new daily goal to meet. Amazing how that will drive you to the keyboard.

And another amazing thing happened. When I hit or exceeded my daily goal just one time I knew I could do it again. Just makes sense, right?

And when I hit my goal for two days in a row, then three, then ten, then twenty, suddenly I had a streak going. And the desire to not break the streak drove me back to the computer even on days when I didn't feel like writing.

And my fear of failure vanished, or rather it reversed. I was suddenly far more afraid of not meeting my goal than I was of writing.

I had turned the fear around.

After I had that streak going, of course I eventually missed on my goal to write a particular number of words.

But on the other hand, I figured at least I had written something that day.

So I kept going. I still aimed for my daily word count of 3000 publishable words of fiction each day, but now I had a new streak: Now I'd gone a certain number of days without missing writing fiction.

Even when I fell a little short of my daily word count goal, I'd still written something, and that streak drove me to write more. And my critical mind spent more and more time sulking in its corner instead of messing with me.

Then one day I realized instead of being afraid of what would happen if I wrote every day, I was afraid of what would happen if I DIDN'T write every day (my streak would end).

Later I set another goal: to write at least one short story per week. (I also still had the goal to write 3000 words of publishable fiction every day, so this wasn't that difficult.)

So I started writing one short story per week. (Later, this continued while I was writing novels.)

And again, I turned the fear around. Instead of being afraid of what might happen if I finished a story (rejection), suddenly I was more afraid of what might happen if I DIDN'T finish the story (failure to meet my goal). That would mean, again, my one-story-per-week streak had ended.

That streak did end eventually. But I wrote at least one short story every week for 70 weeks. And I admit, it gave me quite a sense of accomplishment.

But didn't I "fail" since my streak ended?

Well, yes, in a way. But I failed to success. Because I set that goal in the first place and strived to reach it, I had 70-some more short stories (and the attendant collections) out there earning me money.

So what do I recommend to get over the fear the critical mind keeps throwing at you?

Turn the fear around.

Instead of being afraid of what will happen if you write, be afraid of how you'll feel if you don't write.

Once I found Heinlein's Rules and writing into the dark, I never looked back. I understood THAT I wrote was important, but WHAT I wrote (the particular story or novel) wasn't.

That enabled me to more easily ignore the pressure from all sides to write character sketches and outlines, to know in advance where the story was going, and all that nonsense.

If I had succumbed to that fear — if I had succumbed to the notion that WHAT I wrote (the story) was more important than THAT I wrote — today I would have finished and published no more than five novels and a handful of short stories. Instead of 50+ novels and novellas and almost 200 short stories.

Instead of being afraid of what will happen if you don't write character sketches and outlines, and then revise and rewrite, be afraid of your writing time — your escape, fun time — becoming work. Because if you do all of that (write character sketches, and so on), it will.

Set a goal, one that is attainable but that will stretch your abilities, then call on that stubborn streak your mother didn't like. Put your fanny in the chair, put your fingers on the keyboard and write.

See you in the next chapter.

Rolled out at 3 a.m. Finally to the novel, sort of, at 6. I wrote a little, cycled back to add some character descriptions here and there (so the reader can “see” the character that I see), then added the stuff I wove into the story yesterday to my reverse outline.

Took a break around 8. Back to the novel at 8:40 where I read over and revised Chapter 11 above (yes, revised... it’s a nonfiction book) a little bit for clarity.

Back to the novel at 9:30. Wrote a little, pattered a little, did some online shopping, took a break at 10:30. Then I wrote the first part of the Journal above.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “How Is The Writing Going?” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-is-the-writing-going/>. If you set goals for yourself (or if you don’t because you’re afraid to fail), this is an important post to read.

See “All Books Won’t Please Everyone” at <https://terryodell.com/all-books-wont-please-everyone/>.

See “Burglars: Experts or Unorganized Amateurs?” at <https://www.leelofland.com/burglars-experts-or-unorganized-amateurs/>.

Not directly about writing, but some great story ideas. See “The preachers getting rich from poor Americans” at <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-47675301>.

Fiction Words: 2313

Nonfiction Words: 2260 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4573

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451

Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412

Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604

Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322

Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635

Total fiction words for the month..... 44635

Total fiction words for the year..... 306105

Total nonfiction words for the month... 43700

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 155560
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 461665

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, June 1](#)

[June 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Thanks for the comments
- * By the way, Blackwell Ops 6
- * By the way (again)
- * By the way, Part 3
- * It's already June 1
- * Topic: Quietening the Critical Mind (Chapter 11)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Thanks for the comments, Diane and Karen. They not only encouraged me (see what you did?), but they also help the Journal's visibility on search engines.

Interesting to me that [Diane Darcy is a USA Today bestselling author](#) and that [Karen Riggs](#) is a relative beginner. Yet neither is willing to accept "good enough" and both are hungry to learn.

I like that.

By the way, Blackwell Ops 6 (remember that series?) officially released this morning. I was reminded when I received an email from Books2Read. You can find Blackwell Ops 6: Charlie Task, at <https://books2read.com/u/3kvoEO>.

By the way (again), in light of the WIP being the 11th novel in the Wes Crowley saga, and considering that it will almost certainly be completed by the end of June...

I've decided to make a special offer only to you, the readers of the Daily Journal.

If you'd like to read the first ten novels of the saga, you can download it from Smashwords at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/599718> for only \$10 (half-price). If you go that route, during checkout apply coupon code PT88Q (not case-sensitive).

OR you can email me at harvestanbrough@gmail.com and let me know you want it. I'll send you the book in Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF format for the same price. (You can pay me via PayPal at the same email address or by mailing a check to PO Box 604, St. David AZ 85630-0604.)

As an added bonus (grin), you'll get to see for yourself how my own writing has changed over the past five years. Book 4 of the saga (Leaving Amarillo) was actually the first novel I ever wrote. Then I wrote Books 5 & 6, then 1-3 and 7-10 (with other out-of-saga novels in between).

All of that being said, in full disclosure the WIP also reads well as a stand-alone novel.

Of course, [donors at any level](#) will get the WIP as soon as it's finished and back from my first readers.

By the way, Part 3—every now and then, folks email to say they liked something in the Journal, yet they very seldom (if ever) leave a comment on the Journal site itself.

In contract, those who read the PWW blog pretty much always leave a comment on that blog.

And of course, comments left on a blog help with the search-engine visibility of that blog.

I'm not being critical here At All (I promise), but just posing a survey:

1. In your opinion, am I screwing up by not sending only an excerpt of the Journal instead of sending the whole shebang in the email from MailChimp?
2. Would you personally be more inclined to leave a comment on the site if you received only an excerpt in your mailbox (and had to click through to the site to read the whole post)?

Feel free to respond to this two-question survey either by leaving a comment or by emailing me directly at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I'd really like your input on this.

Wow. June 1 already. And 2019! Frankly, I'm still wondering where 1978 went. (grin) Anyway, today will probably be a short day. I'd planned to get out here early (which I did) and to dive into the novel (which I did not).

Instead, this happened:

Topic: The “Requirements” of Writing Into the Dark

Every writing technique seems to levy its own set of requirements.

I don't know the name of it (or whether it has a name) but the most stringent requirements are levied by the method taught in most schools at every level from junior high school through university. We'll call this...

Method One.

The overall requirement of this method is that you stay in the conscious, critical mind before, during and after writing. That you ascend into an authorial ivory tower and control every aspect of the story from there.

This is the popular method that is presented in three stages.

STAGE ONE requires a lot of preparation before the writer ever writes the first word of the actual story: character sketches, outlining, etc.

When all of that is done, only then can the writer proceed to

STAGE TWO: filling in the gaps in the outline with the details of the actual story. But always meticulously, word by carefully selected word, sentence by meticulously crafted sentence.

Have you heard writers say they're lucky to finish a page (250 words) in a day? Yeah, they're partaking of this method and (I'd bet) working from an outline.

The writer who embraces this method knows the beginning, middle and end of the story in advance.

* S/he has charted exactly where to begin the rising action.

* S/he knows precisely where and how badly the character fails in the increasingly difficult try-fail cycles.

* And s/he knows when to ramp-up the action for the massive climax in which the protagonist finally succeeds and wins the fair maiden's hand or outwits the bad guy or defeats the huge, evil, multinational corporation.

(Or dies, in classic tragedy, but even then s/he dies in the success of his/her quest. The Lord of the Rings would be a classic tragedy had the fires of the exploding Mount Doom consumed the hobbits who dropped the ring into the volcano.)

Then, after the writer types The End, comes

STAGE THREE. During this “testing” stage the writer engages beta readers (I envision the army of droids in whichever Star Wars episode that is).

The beta readers, also in critical mind, critique what the writer has written and remit reams of the same Good Advice that has been bouncing around between non-writers and “trained” writers for the last five or six decades.

(Well, maybe it isn’t an army of droid-like beta readers, and maybe they don’t remit “reams” of advice. Maybe I’m exaggerating, but only a little.)

This perpetual-motion machine began operation at about the same time university professors received the mandate to “publish or perish,” but that’s a topic for another time.

Then, when our intrepid writer receives the input from the beta readers, s/he begins the first of what s/he anticipates will be several rewrites.

Wait, what?

From the back of the class in the Dunces Section — and I write “Dunces” because some might be offended by “the Dumbass Section” or even by “the Original Thought Section” — I have a question.

And I’m fervent about it. I’m practically leaping from my chair, my hand straining toward the ceiling. Like a simian who hasn’t been to the bathroom all day, I’m yelling “Ooh! Ooh!” at the top of my lungs.

But the teacher won’t call on me.

Because she already knows what my question will be. It will make too much sense and be impossible for her to answer.

My question is this: “If the writer meticulously planned everything in advance, then ‘crafted’ the story carefully word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence, why does s/he now have to rewrite? Huh? Why?”

But as I said, the teacher won’t call on me. Hey, I know me. I probably wouldn’t call on me either.

But it’s still a valid question, isn’t it? And it’s a question for which nobody has yet offered up an answer.

And really, it’s impossible to answer. It’s a paradox, like the question about God and that big rock.

If God is omnipotent, can He create a rock so large and heavy that even He can’t move it? (But if He can’t move it, is He really omnipotent?)

Same question here. If the writer meticulously planned everything in advance, then ‘crafted’ the story carefully word by word and sentence by sentence, why does s/he now have to rewrite? And if s/he has to rewrite, then why didn’t s/he plan MORE meticulously and craft MORE carefully in the first place?

*

Just to give it due time, let me talk for a second about the second major writing technique. We’ll call this one...

Method Two.

Now Method Two is a hybrid. It even invokes the subconscious creative mind, sort of.

I say “sort of” because those who use this method are actually training their subconscious creative mind that it’s worthless and untrusted.

In this technique, writers are encouraged to “freewrite,” which by most definitions means rambling along in the general direction of the story line. So far so good, right?

These writers too are expected to prepare character sketches and an outline in advance (though they don’t have to), but when it comes to the actual writing, they’re encouraged to “write sloppy, just get the words on the page so you have something to edit later.”

Bingo. Write sloppy so you have something to edit later. Right there you’re teaching your creative subconscious not to bother contributing its best work. Why? Because no matter what it does, you’re going to call on the conscious, critical mind to “correct” it anyway.

Closely akin to this group are those who tout the ageless wisdom “Write. You can’t edit a blank page.” Many of those writers who accept the (to me, derogatory) term “pantsers” fit into this category as well.

(And yes, I find that term derogatory. After all, I don’t call those who squeeze a plot point so hard it screams “plodders.”)

*

And then there’s the third major writing technique: “method” sounds a little haughty, so we’ll just call this one...

Writing into the Dark (WITD).

About which, if you’ve been paying attention for the past five-plus years, you already know as much as I do.

All of Which brings us to the reason for this post. I know. Really long intro, huh?

THE STRENGTH OF WRITING INTO THE DARK isn't derived from requirements.

The strength of Writing into the Dark is derived from Letting Go of requirements.

Unlike Method One above, Writing into the Dark asks that you let go of all the nonsense you've been taught and Just Write. But again, letting go isn't a requirement.

You can still prepare character sketches and outlines and then write off into the dark.

The difference is, when your characters do things that aren't in line with the character sketches you created, you get rid of or change the character sketches (instead of forcing the characters back into line as you would under Method One).

And when the story veers off in a direction not anticipated on your meticulously planned outline, you go back and correct the outline to bring it in line with the story (instead of "correcting" the story and forcing it back into line with the outline).

And unlike both Methods One and Two, Writing into the Dark asks that you follow Heinlein's Rule 3: Don't rewrite.

Okay, this one's pretty much a requirement, but not really. You CAN go ahead and rewrite, but if you do, be prepared to suffer those little nausea-pangs in your gut when your subconscious screams, "*No! Don't do that!*" and you do it anyway. If you don't know what I mean yet, you will.

Really, Writing into the Dark "requires" only a realization: that it isn't "your" story. That the characters, not you, are living it, so in actuality it's *their* story. So who better to tell it than them?

Methods One and Two require you to ascend into the Authorial Ivory (Control) Tower for the purpose of manipulating the characters and story like puppets on a string.

Writing into the Dark recommends you strip off the tux and lux (my made-up term for luxury shoes) or the formal ball gown and spike heels, put on jeans, a t-shirt and running shoes, and roll off the parapet into the trenches of the story WITH your characters.

There — while the "authors" struggle with the staggering responsibility of tugging just hard enough on just the right string at just the right time — you, a mere "writer," will be racing wildly through the story WITH your characters, laughing and doing your level best to keep up as you scribble down what they say and do.

So tell me... who do you suppose enjoys the writing process more? Who do you suppose has more fun?

And much more importantly, who do you suppose tells the more authentic story in their own voice and style?

Back tomorrow with what I expect will be the final chapter of the Critical Mind book.

Rolled out early at 2 this morning. Checked email, etc. then wrote the topic above. It too will probably end up in the Critical Mind book.

I might not make it to the WIP this morning at all. I still have to find items for “Of Interest” and then update my spreadsheet to get it ready for June. (I should have done that last night, but I forgot.)

To the house for a brief break, partly to see whether the trip to Sierra Vista is still on for today. If so, I won’t write fiction today and will post this early. If not, well.... (grin)

No trip to SV today. Finally finished collecting items for “Of Interest” (there’s a lot there) and turned to the novel at 7.

But there was too much other going on. I wrote (I dunno) maybe three or four hundred words on the novel, if that, but was constantly distracted with Other Stuff, all of which was important.

So I’m closing this tome out early. I’ll spend the day doing Other Things and get back to the WIP tomorrow. I’ll count what little I wrote today then. An auspicious beginning for June, eh? (grin)

Have a great weekend, eveyone!

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Michael Lockhart’s “The Power of Particularity” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-power-of-particularity/>.

Very interesting comments (aside from mine) on “How Is The Writing Going?” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-is-the-writing-going/#comments>.

See “Again” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/again.html>.

See “Why Do Employers Lowball Creatives?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-do-employers-lowball-creatives-a-new-study-has-answers/>. Great comments following the post too.

In a related note, see Harlan Ellison’s take on creatives being paid (or not) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj5IV23g-fE>.

See TPG’s take on “On the Existential Fear of Losing Your Online Persona” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/on-the-existential-fear-of-losing-your-online-persona/>. Some great tips in this one.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 2350 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 2350

Writing of *In the Cantina at Noon* (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604
Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322
Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635
Day 25... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0
Total fiction words for the year..... 306105
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2350
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 157910
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 464015

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harlan Ellison](#), [KillZone Blog](#),
[Michaele Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#),
[Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, June 2](#)

[June 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Today you'll see
- * Thanks to those who
- * Yesterday I asked
- * Topic: Quietening the Critical Mind (Chapter 13)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

In response to my request for feedback on the Journal, one writer wrote, “I have not given much feedback because some of my impressions are not universal, just personal.”

My response: “The longer I’ve lived, the more I’ve noticed that what I or others believe to be personal is also personal to some 80% of other people (so universal). Just sayin’.”

If you believe your comment is too personal and that’s the only reason you’re holding back, post it anyway. You never know who else might find it or my response useful.

Today you’ll see that the topic below is labeled Chapter 13. The number is correct. I decided to insert yesterday’s topic into the book as Chapter 12.

Thanks to those who left comments yesterday and to those who leave a comment on any post. I appreciate it. Comments drive visibility on search engines. Thanks especially to Anonymous Lynn (grin), the apparently prolific novelist, for explaining why she doesn’t normally leave comments. That was helpful too.

(Lynn, if you’re out there, let us know your author name(s), book title(s) and genre(s) and I’ll repay the favor of your comment by doing a little publicity for you. Even if your books are selling well, more is better, right?)

Yesterday I asked whether subscribers might be more prone to leave comments on posts in this Journal if I switch back to an excerpt-only version in MailChimp.

I received input from one commenter, two people via email and one commenter a month or two ago. So evidently it doesn’t matter. Which opens the door to a whole other thought process

I guess I’ll leave it as-is, at least for now. But I’ll ask you to please at least share this Journal among your writers’ groups and with your writer friends. And let me know you’ve done that. I am not a mushroom. (grin)

Topic: Quietening the Critical Mind

Chapter 13: Publishing Your Work (or Submitting it for Publication)

Of all of Heinlein’s Rules, the most difficult for me personally is Rule 4: “You must put it on the market.” That means you must submit your work for publication or (in my case) publish it.

I fall off that one constantly.

I don’t fall off because I fear what readers might think or because I fear bad reviews. I don’t.

Whether and how much readers enjoy my stories and novels is up to the readers and completely beyond my control. And frankly, I don't care. I hope they like my stories, but if they don't, that's fine too.

I fall off Heinlein's Rule 4 because of a different kind of fear. A fear (or dislike) of doing the work to publish the thing instead of spending my time writing.

I enjoy actually creating covers, but finding great cover art, creating the cover, creating a promo doc (see below) and so on takes up a lot of time when I could be writing.

Could I avert some of the learning curve and pay someone to produce a cover for me?

Of course. But I like knowing that I personally gave my novel every possible chance to do well, and on my terms. I like being responsible for my own outcomes. But I don't care for actually doing the work itself.

Every time I finish anything — even a novel — I want SO badly to move into the next one that it's easy for me to let Rule 4 slide. And I do.

At one time I had four novels that were finished but unpublished. The writing was done, the first readers had sent me their input and I had applied what I agreed with, and the copyedit was finished. Yet I let the novels languish.

So how did I finally overcome having fallen off Heinlein's Rule 4?

Simple. I thought of how many *millions* of possible readers were browsing various ebook outlets (Amazon, B&N, etc.) looking for exactly the kind of novels I write (or even for new novels by me) while my four novels were languishing in my computer, unpublished.

When that thought finally hit, the first of those novels could have been available for two months, the second six weeks, the third a month and the last two weeks.

So that's sixty (forty-five, thirty and fifteen days that I'd robbed myself of hundreds or thousands of potential sales on those novels by letting them sit in my computer. And once a day's gone, you can't get it back.

That revived my sense of urgency. I did the covers and promo docs, and published the novels.

In other words, once again I turned the fear around. The fear that a reader might want to read my novel when it wasn't available quickly overcame the fear or dislike of doing the work to make that happen.

But maybe you're looking for a how-to on publishing. Okay. Really, there are only three ways, and only two viable ways.

Traditional Publishing (a viable option that I do not recommend)

I've had two nonfiction books published via traditional publishers. Both enjoyed (and still do) brisk sales.

At the time, I had a then-large royalty rate of 10%. So each time one copy sold, I received, respectively, \$1.09 and \$1.49. (Out of that, of course, I had to deduct the cost of gasoline, hotels, etc. as I traveled to promote them.)

Fortunately I got all rights reverted to me later. Both are now independently published. Today when those books sell (which they do, well), I earn \$8.79 on the first and \$11.99 on the other. Per copy. I also earn between 70 and 80% royalties on every copy of every novel, novella, short story and short story collection I sell. Oh, and on my poetry collections.

I would never go back to traditional publishing unless I was offered a non-refundable advance in the high six figures (anything over \$500,000 would do it for a single book).

Why? Because traditional publishing contracts these days suck. Traditional publishers insist on taking all rights (print, digital, film, etc.) for the life of the copyright (your life plus 70 years in the US).

Still, some folks want the "validation" of a traditional publishing contract. Which is to say the approval of an overworked, underpaid 20-something acquisitions editor in a place like New York. Still, I get that.

If that's you, when your book is finished, you can begin the arduous, time-consuming process of seeking a literary agent (despite all the warnings against them) with the eventual goal of landing a major traditional publisher if you want to.

You can also approach traditional publishers that accept unagented submissions, and when you get a nibble, either hire an IP attorney (preferable) or phone whatever literary agent you would like to have. S/he will be more than happy to take 15% of your advance and royalties for negotiating the contract, and just like that, you'll have an agent. (Though I have to say, this is a little like signing over 15% of the deed to your house to the guy who mows your yard once a week.)

But if that's what you want to do, that's fine. Different strokes. Hey, it's your book, your time, and your career. Pursue it however you want. I'll be pleased for you no matter what. After all, your choice will cost me neither time nor money.

Subsidy Publishing (a far less-than-viable option)

I have to mention this one because so many people still flock to subsidy publishers.

Let me put it as plainly as I can: Stay away from subsidy publishers. If *any* company requires you to pay them an up-front fee to publish your book, it's a scam, plain and simple.

Many such companies tout themselves as a way to self-publish. But going with a subsidy publisher is not self-publishing.

Many will also require a royalty split on top of charging you an up-front fee. No matter how good they sound, stay away from them. They're bogus. They're running a scam. They're playing on your ego as a writer. Period.

If you choose to ignore this advice, please be sure to read the contract closely. More than likely it will be filled with shocking clauses that should make you run screaming out of the room. Like "no-rights-reversion" clauses and "no-compete" clauses and "we-now-own-you" clauses.

A little off-topic, but this is also why I warn people away from "free" web hosting and design services. Read the terms of service closely. Many of the "free" services 1) will nickel and dime you to death, and 2) own your content because it's kept on their servers. Go with WordPress.org (not .com). Stay away from free, or at least remember that you get what you pay for, there are no free lunches, and a host of other glib clichés that are nonetheless true.

I'm not kidding. Be very careful out there.

An important distinction: If you want to pay someone to copyedit your book or to create a cover for you, that's fine. Those folks are providing a one-time service for a fee, not acting as your publisher.

Indie Publishing (Self-Publishing, highly recommended)

I could write a whole book on indie publishing. In fact, I have. (Read on.)

For a long time, there was a stigma attached to self-publishing. By and large, that's gone now.

Back in the day, readers (and sadly, many writers) frowned on writers who believed enough in themselves and their work to self-publish. I never quite understood their reasoning, and I still don't.

After all, if a skilled craftsman in ANY other trade or art discipline decides to open his or her own plumbing business, restaurant, law office, gallery, etc. nobody bats an eye. And they shouldn't. Instead, people gather around from near and far to congratulate the "entrepreneur."

But when a writer decides to open his own business as a self-publisher, they say he's doing it for "vanity."

Get real. Again, the decision to self-publish only means you are confident in yourself and your work, and you'd rather make money for yourself than give some faceless publishing company somewhere 80+% of your royalties.

If you've thought about becoming an independent publisher and aren't sure where to start, I recommend you visit <https://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/> (all free) and pick up any or all of

- * A Fact Sheet Toward Efficiency in Epublishing
- * The Essentials of Digital Publishing
- * Quick Guide to Self-Publishing & FAQs

Again, these are all free of charge and they're all filled with valid information.

Hey, what can I say? I live to serve. (yawn, stretch)

See you down the road.

By the way, if you have any questions or concerns regarding anything that appears anywhere in this book, please feel free to email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

This book will never go out of print (well, unless some moron kicks the plug out of the wall for all of us), so if you email me and I haven't gone off-planet by then, I'll be more than happy to answer your questions or concerns.

In the meantime, feel free to visit my author website at <https://harveystanbrough.com> or my Daily Journal (writer website) at <https://hestanbrough.com>.

Happy writing!

*

For Daily Journal subscribers: This concludes the How to Quiet the Critical Voice book. If I omitted anything or if you'd like me to expand on anything, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and let me know. Thanks!

Rolled out at 3 this morning, played on the internet for awhile, which took me to my daily "busy time" (let the babies out, feed the horses, etc.) at 5.

At 5:30, I posted and reworked the topic above. To the novel at 6:40.

Short day again today. Very soon, in response to one of the folks who was kind enough to respond to my survey, I'll begin adding in a little more personal substance in this daily diary section. But for today, I have to run.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “The Power of the Telling Detail” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/the-power-of-the-telling-detail.html>.

See Karen Riggs’ “Who decides what words mean?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/who-decides-what-words-mean/>.

Fiction Words: 1017

Nonfiction Words: 1720 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2737

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451

Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412

Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604

Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322

Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635

Day 25... 1017 words. Total words to date..... 45652

Total fiction words for the month..... 1017

Total fiction words for the year..... 307122

Total nonfiction words for the month... 4070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 159630

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 466752

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Monday, June 3

[June 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

* Quotes of the Day

* Thanks

* A new goal

- * Topic: On Sharing and Copyright
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“They say ‘write what you know,’ which frankly I just find a dull truism. I say, write what you write. Write what engages you. What you know will just shine through.” Sean Monaghan

“Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic.” Carl Sagan

And I titled this next poem fragment, by Robert J. Sadler,

A Poem to Define Poetry or Fiction

“a written sculpture
that conveys its own vocabulary
into the outstretched arms
of someone else’s dictionary”

As always, thanks to those who commented over the past day or two. I appreciate you taking the time to visit the site and leave a comment or email me privately.

I will always show my appreciation with a reply to your comment or email.

I haven’t used a word-count goal for awhile, but for the foreseeable future, I’ve decided to set a personal word-count goal of 3000 publishable words of fiction per day.

(I state it that specifically as a way of notifying my subconscious mind to be ready to play for a long time each day this week. The subconscious is always listening.)

I’m doing this because it’s time to kick the novel into high gear, which is to say, it’s time to stop dragging my feet and let the characters keep running.

Thus far while writing this novel, on most days I’ve hit around a thousand words and then told my characters, “That’s enough for today.”

A few times (always on “short” days), the characters said, “Well, all right.” I had the distinct feeling they were taking pity on me that I couldn’t stay longer.

But every other time, they frowned, crossed their arms, and grumbled. “Whatever. Wimp.”

You haven't lived until you've seen rough outlaws AND the grizzled hero of your story sitting on horseback, their arms crossed, glaring at you. They refused even to do me the honor of shooting me.

So from today until I finish this book, I'm going to reward their loyalty to me (and call their bluff) by letting them run as long as they like. Or until I just flat can't keep up anymore. But most of them are old too, so I think they'll understand if that happens.

Of course, I have three "short days" per week. But I know that in advance, so instead of adjusting the word-count goal for those days, I'll adjust what time I get up, what time I get to work on the novel, etc. Like everyone else, I have 24 hours in a day. And I don't have a "day job" so what I do with those hours is up to me. So it's all within my control.

I probably won't comment on this further. You'll see the results for yourself in the word counts below.

Topic: On Sharing and Copyright

Even though I offer Journal content free of charge, it's still copyrighted as my intellectual property (see the copyright notice at the very bottom of the Journal website).

I offer it free only for the personal use of my subscribers, whomever they choose to share it with, and other readers. But my offering it on the blog does not make it available for any commercial purposes.

I mention this for two reasons:

One, I suddenly understand why every now and then a reader will write to ask me whether it's all right to share my blog post. I suspect they ask because they fear sharing my post without asking permission will constitute a copyright infringement.

My answer is always the same: Yes. Of course it's all right. And sharing my posts or a link to my posts free of charge even without my permission is not copyright infringement.

If I didn't want the content to be widely available to the public (widely shared), I would either put up a paywall or not post it in the first place. So yes, please share!

(Now, if you shared something, even free, that was behind a paywall and therefore obviously not intended for free public consumption, that would be a copyright infringement.)

Two, any commercial use of my posts without my permission IS copyright infringement.

I mention this because an acquaintance who lives in Russia mentioned (innocently) in an email that he's "thinking about translating [the Critical Voice posts] to Russian."

I don't believe he had any untoward intentions. For one thing, he mentioned it to me up front. For another, he added "(or maybe writing the same stuff [myself]). But of course I should prove their effective[ness] by my own texts."

Still, that second part told me he has commercial intentions (he intends to sell the resulting book).

So after discussing another matter with him, I added

"Caution on translating anything I've written, though. You can translate it for your personal use of course, but not in writing for public dissemination and not for sale.

"Writing a translation would require a contract between the two of us. If you think the Critical Voice book (or any of my nonfiction books) would sell well in the Russian language, I'd be willing to talk with you about licensing Russian Translation Rights either for an up-front fee, a royalty split, or a combination of the two."

Again, I don't believe for a second my acquaintance had any intention of translating my work into Russian without my permission and then selling it in his own name. Still, it seemed appropriate to issue the caution.

As to whether he should be able to write a Russian translation and offer it *free* to the public, I believe not.

If he translated the book and offered it free, he would not directly benefit financially from the book, but the distribution would harm my own potential sales of a Russian translation.

So I believe that would also constitute a copyright infringement. (I'll have to consult my copy of The Copyright Handbook to verify that belief.)

(If all of this sounds like Greek to you, I recommend you get your own copy of The Copyright Handbook and/or take Dean Wesley Smith's classic online workshop on The Magic Bakery.)

Rolled out right at 3 a.m. To the Hovel where I checked email and came away with the topic above. I appreciated the email because it clarified a couple of things in my own mind (and offered up the topic).

To the house a little before 5 to let the babies out, then a brief search to find my kitten had escaped the yard (despite my admonishment to stay inside the fence).

Found her, carried her back to the yard (I don't like her having to traverse the rough gravel driveway on those little pads), then out to feed the horses.

Who shied away from me despite my carrying a tub full of alfalfa and bermuda grass, I suppose because I smelled a little of my kitten. She terrifies them.

To the novel (sort of... to the reverse outline) at 6:30, after which I'll take a long break. My 4000 word stint will begin around 8:30.

To the house at 6:45.

To the novel at 9. Wrote about 500 words, then sidetracked for awhile to cycle back and add some character descriptions (that weren't important earlier), then update the reverse outline.

I'm not keeping up with recording the breaks and writing sessions very well, but at noon (with a LOT of cycling, a couple of breaks and updating of the reverse outline) I'd added only 1600 words to the WIP. A break now, and we'll see what the rest of the day brings. Check the final numbers below.

Nope. Fell about a half-hour short today but I'm pooped. I failed to succeed. I'm well over 3,000 words farther along than I would have been *without* the goal. (grin) Plus my cycling and reverse outline are up to date.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Did You Forget to Mention You're a Writer?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/did-you-forget-to-mention-youre-a-writer.html>. Excellent post, and fun.

See Sean Monaghan's "You are always doing research" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/you-are-always-doing-research/>. This fits in wonderfully with the next item.

See "Are You Offending Readers With Your Books? Probably" at <https://terryodell.com/are-you-offending-readers-with-your-books-probably/>. Ooh! Ooh! And see the comments afterward. (grin)

See "16 Themed Calls for Submissions for June 2019" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/16-themed-calls-for-submissions-for-june-2019/>.

Via Linda Mae Adams, see Sue Weems' "How to Hone Your Writer's Eye by Simply Paying Attention" at <https://thewritepractice.com/writers-eye/>. Some good stuff there.

You might want to check out The Write Practice at <https://thewritepractice.com/blog>. As always, take what works for you and leave the rest. I'll be checking their blog from time to time also and sharing here what I find that I believe is valid.

See "Relaxing Before the Expo" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/relaxing-before-the-expo/>. Some great pics and a lesson or two from Lady Gaga.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Hollywood Ending" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/03/free-fiction-monday-hollywood-ending-2/>.

Fiction Words: 3328

Nonfiction Words: 1510 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4838

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451

Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412

Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604

Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322

Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635

Day 25... 1017 words. Total words to date..... 45652

Day 26... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 48980

Total fiction words for the month..... 4345

Total fiction words for the year..... 310450

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5580

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 161140

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 471590

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Carl Sagan](#), [Cycling](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Robert J. Sadler](#), [Sean Monaghan](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Write Practice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, June 4](#)

[June 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * I learned today
- * A value too good to pass up
- * In honor of a promise
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“Nothing stinks like a pile of unpublished writing.” Sylvia Plath

Harvey’s addendum: “Yes. And ‘A writer is the worst judge of his own work’ is as valid for work you think is horrible as it is for work you think is good. So don’t prejudge for your readers. Follow Heinlein’s Rule 4, publish it and let the readers decide whether it stinks.”

I learned today, through Phillip McCollum’s interview (see “Of Interest”) about yet another distribution platform.

Publish Drive seems at first glance similar to Draft2Digital. I haven’t looked into it deeply yet (but will), but if you’d like to check it out, click <https://www.publishdrive.com/>.

A Value Too Good to Pass Up

If you design your own covers (and for that matter, if you do the layout of the paper edition of your own books), look into Affinity Publisher.

For years, I’ve touted Serif PagePlus for cover design. Now the same company, under their new Affinity brand, is about to release Affinity Publisher. I ordered my copy yesterday.

Both Serif PagePlus and Affinity Publisher are viable, very inexpensive, and user-friendly alternatives to Adobe products.

Affinity Publisher costs only \$44.99. (Compare that to Adobe’s price for their full-service software.) Because I was in the beta program, I was able to preorder it yesterday for \$34.99.

You can STILL download the FREE beta at <https://affinity.serif.com/en-us/publisher/>.

In honor of a promise to (at least) one reader who enjoys reading about more day-to-day things, I’ll be including more of those in the daily diary segment of this Journal. Those of you who don’t care for that sort of thing can skim or skip it.

Rolled out late at 4. Ugh. Only an hour to start my day. Time flies when you’re groggy and have things to do. Anyway, rolling out late disturbed my usual routine.

Got back to the house to let the babies out at 5, fed the horses about 5:30, and to my dismay, didn’t see my two bunnies this morning. Two little rabbits, one cottontail and one jackrabbit, have been visiting lately, probably to nibble on alfalfa in the hay barn.

The jack would fit in your two hands side by side, and the cottontail could snuggle up in one hand. Not that they will or have time. They each have their morning routines too. Theirs, I assume, does not include coffee.

I ordered and received a signal splitter for the hard-wired internet in the Hovel so I can answer email, view lectures, etc. on my business computer while still being able to do spot research on my writing 'puter. And so Dropbox will sync on both computers.

I worked on setting that up for about a half-hour, filled with anticipation and expectations.

However, the splitter does not work. One computer gets the signal fine and the other gets zilch point squat. I'll continue working the problem and report here just in case you're faced with a similar conundrum.

From around 7 to 8, I redesigned the logo for the top of this Journal to add a little color and make it more descriptive, all while still not dipping too far down the page. I might do more later, but for now I like it.

A break at 8, and to the novel when I get back.

Nope, when I got back I went back to the drawing board with my logo for the top of the Journal. It's a lot different now, and better (IMHO). Check it out at <https://hestanbrough.com>.

Finally to the novel (mea culpa) at 10:15.

Wow. I wrote very little on the novel up to 12:30 (and without a break). I found a glitch in the timeline and had to cycle back and fix it. Now for a break, and then back to it.

1:45 (after watching Phillip McCollum's interview and doing some other stuff), back to the novel.

About 2:20 I ran out of steam. I let the day slip away from me and got nowhere close to my word-count goal. But the good thing is, it resets tomorrow morning.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Write Now Show Interview" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/write-now-show-interview/>. This is a pretty good interview (Thanks, Phillip) and as an added bonus, it includes a brief clip of Ray Bradbury.

See "The Secret to Being a Successful Writer" at <http://dyingwords.net/the-secret-to-being-a-successful-writer/>.

See “The #1 Mistake New Self-Publishers Make That Leaves Them Vulnerable to Publishing Scams” at <https://annerallen.com/2019/06/1-mistake-vulnerable-publishing-scams/>. Read it. Believe it.

See The Passive Guy’s take on the above entry at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-1-mistake-new-self-publishers-make-that-leaves-them-vulnerable-to-publishing-scams/>.

See Duke Southard’s “Dialogue- A Short-cut?” (and join the discussion) at <http://prowriterswriting.com/dialogue-a-cop-out/>.

Strictly as a cautionary tale (you’ll see what I mean), see “First Page Critique: When Is It Time To Let A Story Idea Die?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/first-page-critique-when-is-it-time-to-let-a-story-idea-die.html>. You all know my take. If you don’t, read my comment after the post. How does she not wonder how many copies of her “bad” book would’ve sold had she let readers decide?

And from the OMG Department, see “Where to Find Trigger Warnings for Books” (No, I’m not kidding) at <https://bookriot.com/2019/05/30/trigger-warnings-for-books/>.

Fiction Words: 1538

Nonfiction Words: 870 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2408

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604
Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322
Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635
Day 25... 1017 words. Total words to date..... 45652
Day 26... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 48980
Day 27... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 50518

Total fiction words for the month..... 5883
Total fiction words for the year..... 311988
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 162010
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 473998

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AnneRAllen.com](#), [BookRiot.com](#), [Duke Southard](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, June 5

[June 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Thanks
- * Topic: A Review of PublishDrive...
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“The breath of disappointment is drawn from the air of expectation.” Michael Grant in The Black Book Investigation Series by Robert J. Sadler

“Sometimes things just don't line up right. That's why they make tomorrows.” Wes Crowley in the Wes Crowley saga

Thanks to those of you who have downloaded the 10-novel Wes Crowley saga from Smashwords. If you haven't jumped aboard yet, there's still time.

Visit <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/599718> and during checkout apply coupon code **PT88Q** (not case-sensitive). You'll get the entire saga in one book for half-price. The coupon expires on July 1.

OR you can email me at harvestanbrough@gmail.com and let me know you want it. I'll send you the book in Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF format for the same price. (You can pay me via PayPal at the same email address or by mailing a check to PO Box 604, St. David AZ 85630-0604.)

Topic: A Review of PublishDrive and a Comparison of Ebook Distributors

I spent a few minutes looking over PublishDrive (<https://www.publishdrive.com/>) this morning. In that time I

- * read the FAQs,

- * looked over the list of markets to whom they distribute, and
- * read their notes about the submission process.

As a result, I can't personally recommend using PublishDrive.

PublishDrive Compared to Other Distributors

All three distributors below distribute to the same major markets: Amazon (but I do that myself), Rakuten Kobo, Kobo Plus, Barnes&Noble, and various subscriber services (like Scribd).

Draft2Digital (<https://draft2digital.com>) is my personal favorite. I strongly recommend using them (and another distributor).

D2D takes its fees in a royalty share. They get "about 10%" of every sale. (The percentage varies depending on the specific market. I understand the different markets, so I'm okay with that.)

The D2D interface is intuitive and user-friendly. Although D2D doesn't currently offer as many markets as PublishDrive offers, the ease of use of their interface is a definite plus.

I can upload a new title (in Microsoft Word) to D2D and download the finished .mobi and .epub versions in 2 to 5 minutes. Time and ease of use is important to me.

Smashwords (<https://smashwords.com>)

Smashwords also takes its fees in a royalty share. They also get "about 10%" of every sale, though you do earn a significantly higher royalty on sales made through the Smashwords store, a fact that speaks to their honesty.

Smashwords has a somewhat clunky but user-friendly interface, offers distribution to most of the same stores as PublishDrive (and D2D), and as an added plus, also has their own store. Smashwords also offers user-generated coupons. And I'm used to Smashwords.

I can upload a new title (in Microsoft Word) and download the finished .mobi and .epub versions in 10 to 15 minutes. Smashwords also offers a free ISBN for those markets that require it.

PublishDrive (<https://publishdrive.com>)

Notably, only PublishDrive offers distribution to two apparently major China markets: Dangdang and CNPeReading. (Somehow, CNPeReading allegedly offers a 300% royalty (!), which I found suspicious and off-putting.) They also offer distribution to a few tiny, nation-specific European markets and a few others.

With PublishDrive you also have either the free option of either a royalty split (10% of every sale to PublishDrive) or a subscription (but you keep 100% of royalties) for \$100.00 per month.

PublishDrive prefers users upload an .epub document, though they do accept Microsoft Word. If I used them I would upload the .epub that I download from D2D, so....

If I used PublishDrive at all I would distribute my books through them only to the two China markets and the handful of other small markets not offered by D2D or Smashwords.

So the Upshot

Between the ease of using D2D's interface, the markets offered by D2D and Smashwords, and the convenience of the Smashwords online store, the time it would take me personally to learn a new interface isn't worth the few extra markets I would gain by using PublishDrive. Again, time is important to me.

However, if you're new to epublishing, I do recommend you check out all three (and any others you come across) and do your own comparison.

Thanks again to Phillip McCollum for pointing out PublishDrive in the first place.

Rolled out at 2 this morning, but it was a slow start. I didn't get to the Hovel until around 2:20, when I began looking over PublishDrive and wrote the topic above. That took until almost 4 a.m.

To the house at 4:30 for a break. Spent some quality time with my little girl cat in the cool earliest light of the pre-dawn.

If you need to talk to God, either to petition or just to say thanks, I've always found that calm pre-dawn light is the best time for such communication. I learned that from Wes Crowley. I try to catch Him while He's just waking up and maybe a little unaware of how insignificant I am in all of His creation.

Coyotes yelping and yowling in the distance interrupted my time with my little girl when she ran back into the house. (Not that she's scared, she would tell you, but she knows how important she is to me.) But the song dogs soon faded into the distance and she came back outside.

Back at 5:30 to feed the horses, then back to the house to change clothes.

To the Hovel where I wrote more of the above and spent some time in thought. Finally to the novel at 7.

A long break at 7:30, then back to the novel at 8:30. A little spot research, some cycling and some new writing for around 1100 words before another break at 9:30.

Mostly I spent that time with the baby too, who showed off how fast she could run, etc. She never fails to put a smile on my face. Back to the novel at 10. Wrote about another 1000 words, then shifted gears and did some work on the Journal website.

Well, I was GOING TO add all the posts about the Critical Voice book into a new category and then add it to the menu. (I actually did that originally.)

Then I realized that wouldn't be efficient for anyone who wanted to view the rough chapters of the book in order.

So I created a new page instead titled Quieting the Critical Voice. It took some time, but the chapters are listed there from the Intro through Chapter 14 (yeah, 14), and the links lead you to the post in which that topic resides.

I recommend after you click a link, search for "Topic" (or scroll down laboriously). Hardly ideal, but hey, you have to do SOME work, right? (grin) By the way, I'm still open to input for the Critical Voice book. You're all first readers. If I missed something or you need more elaboration, etc. email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Or leave a comment on the site.

That took a lot more time than I expected (about an hour), and now it's a little after noon. Taking a break.

I was ready to say it looks like I should've set my daily goal at 3000 words instead of 4000. (Joking. A goal is a goal.) Then I took a short break, came back and wrote a little more.

Pretty good day for a change. BUT the goal resets to zero in the morning. (grin) Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Had Fun Today" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/had-fun-today/>.

See "Let's Argue!" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/lets-argue.html>.

See "A Worthy Guide to the Publishing Industry" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/a-worthy-guide-to-the-publishing-industry/>. To TPG's take I would add only that going wide is better than going exclusive with Amazon.

See "Write What You Know – Good Advice or Not?" at <https://terryodell.com/write-what-you-know-good-advice-or-not/>.

See Alison Holt's "Changing Flavors Midstream" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/changing-flavors-midstream/>.

Fiction Words: 4327

Nonfiction Words: 1250 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 5577

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604
Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322
Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635
Day 25... 1017 words. Total words to date..... 45652
Day 26... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 48980
Day 27... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 50518
Day 28... 4327 words. Total words to date..... 54845

Total fiction words for the month..... 10210
Total fiction words for the year..... 316315
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 163260
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 479575

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, June 6](#)

[June 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Welcome
- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: On Stereotypes and ...
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Sometimes I get behind, or for some reason don't think to welcome new subscribers. But I do appreciate each of you.

Welcome to Steven D, Maggie K, and Lynn, and to any others I missed along the way. I hope you will find the Journal of value.

Quote of the Day

On letting your characters tell their own story—

Over lunch in New York, Lee Child's agent look at him across the table, and mentioned that a particular scene in his latest manuscript might make more sense if it appeared in a different place.

Child listened carefully, and when the agent was through, Child smiled and said, "Oh, I agree with you. But that isn't how it happened."

Topic: On Stereotypes and Avoiding Offending Readers—A Reality Check

A few days ago an acquaintance posted an article in which she asked "How do you handle diversity as an author?" The thrust of the article was basically about whether writers should walk on eggshells in an effort to avoid "offending" anyone.

Okay, first, as you all know, I'm from the sticks and stones generation. A punch in the mouth will offend me. A knife to the gut or a bullet to the chest will offend me a great deal more.

But words? Not so much. I might get upset if I don't like what someone else says, especially when the feet of the speaker are firmly rooted (in my opinion) in ignorance.

But offended?

Nah, too haughty for me.

Today is June 6, the 75th anniversary of D Day. That happened a short 9 years before I was born.

On that day, thousands of young men (average age, 21 years old) stormed the beaches of Normandy. Many of them were "offended," some repeatedly, and not by some innocent, off-hand comment, much less from a fictional character. Their only "safe space" was at the foot of the cliffs, finally out of the line of sight of the German machine guns. A lot of them were offended to such a degree they didn't make it that far.

I mention this because I have one foot in that generation and one in my own, maybe because of my time in the Marine Corps.

But long before I embarked on that 21-year civilian-appreciation course—somewhere around age 5—I came to learn the world just isn't all about me and my sensitivities.

Now to writing—

No matter how softly you choose to tread, EVERY CHARACTER IS BASED ON A STEREOTYPE. There, I said it.

The good news is, it isn't your fault.

No matter how well you write a character, no matter whether you prepare a detailed character sketch or just trust the character to reveal his/her own traits as s/he comes to life, the reader WILL see and hear a stereotype when s/he first meets your character.

If a particularly "woke" reader says s/he doesn't "recognize" stereotypes, s/he's lying in a weak attempt to convince someone else how special s/he is. Period.

We as human beings ALWAYS see a stereotype when we notice someone else for the first time, even in real life. It's part of our primal instinct for survival. In most cases, we aren't even consciously aware we're doing it.

But in every direct and indirect interaction with anyone we haven't met before (in real life or in fiction), we first determine "type," then evaluate whether we perceive the person as a threat.

So stop trying to avoid writing stereotypes. You can't. It's an issue of perception, and you can't control the reader's perception.

The best you can do as a writer is hang on for the ride as the stereotypical character develops into a bad guy (antagonist or his helpers) or a good guy (protagonist or his helpers).

Now on this matter of diversity or a lack of diversity (in stories) or whatever else might "offend"—

As a writer and human, I laugh at all the yelling about diversity.

The very idea of diversity necessarily sets apart human beings and groups them by superficial traits: skin color, national origin, gender, sexual preference etc. Read Dr. Seuss' ["The Sneetches"](#) sometime and you'll see how ridiculous all of this is.

To me it's all silliness, and those writers who bend to it aren't bending to diversity. They're bending to the will of those who are yelling about diversity.

In the real world, in the most intense human times—for example, two people hunkered in a foxhole after dark in a bad place or crowded under a counter in a bank or a McDonald's out of sight of a gunman—most humans don't care who's crouched next to them, and superficial things don't matter. Each only cares, and is grateful, that the other is there.

My characters, like all other real people I know, are much more complex than the color of their skin or their gender or whether they wear a white hat or a black hat (or a hat at all) and on and on and on.

Do we notice those differences? OF COURSE. (See above about stereotypes.)

But do those superficial differences matter once we learn more about the person or character?
Not so much.

As a writer and the recorder of my characters' stories, I sit alone in a room, making stuff up.
That's all. I just write.

As the characters reveal things about themselves, I write those things. As they reveal their
"baggage" (for example, through an action or through a casual comment to a friend or a more
pointed one to an adversary or their opinion of a particular part of the setting) I write that too.

I write what I'm given to write. Neither I nor my characters set out with the intention to "offend"
anyone. We're only telling a story.

If a person or persons yell at me about diversity (or any other "offense"), I mark it up to them not
having met and come to know the people I'm writing about.

Then again, those who yell about things like diversity, even if they DID come to know a
character and believe s/he was portrayed accurately, would not admit it. For them, the "correct"
portrayal would simply become a hushed, inconvenient truth.

Hence, those who yell about diversity etc. are not living authentic lives. They're only yelling to
draw attention to themselves, and as a result, their opinions simply don't matter to me.

Yes, they, like me, all have freedom of speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment. But
nowhere does that amendment mention the guarantee of an audience.

And frankly, I don't like censorship and I don't care for narcissists enough to bend to their will.

Rolled out at 1:45 and was in the Hovel by 2. Read a lot for "Of Interest," then was headed
straight to the novel (it's a short day).

But I remembered a topic I wanted to write about, so I did that first.

To the novel at 3:40. I updated the reverse outline, took a break to let the babies out at 5, then
cycled through what I wrote yesterday.

At 5:30, a brief break to feed the horses. (They assured me I'm late and they haven't eaten for
days. They are experts in drama, these horses.)

Back to the novel, and then at 6:30, up to the house for a long break (shower, breakfast, and so
on). Back to the Hovel and the novel at 8:30.

A lot of back and forth with email, cycling and writing until around 11, then a break. Back to the
Hovel at 11:45.

Well, I messed around too much and fell a little short.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “More Learning Than My Poor Brain Can Handle” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/more-learning-than-my-poor-brain-can-handle/>.

See “Business Musings: Here It Comes” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/05/business-musings-here-it-comes/>.

See Dan Baldwin’s “Verbal Contract Abuse – Part III” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/verbal-contract-abuse-part-iii/>.

See “If You Want Pace & Tension...” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/if-you-want-pace-tension-stick-with-the-action-first-page-critique-of-escalation.html>.

Aw Jeez. To see more about the nonsense in the topic above, see the Passive Guy’s take on “Why I’m No Longer Reading Books by White Men” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-im-no-longer-reading-books-by-white-men/>.

Fiction Words: 3397

Nonfiction Words: 1350 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4747

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 20... 1890 words. Total words to date..... 36451
Day 21... 2961 words. Total words to date..... 39412
Day 22... 1192 words. Total words to date..... 40604
Day 23... 1718 words. Total words to date..... 42322
Day 24... 2313 words. Total words to date..... 44635
Day 25... 1017 words. Total words to date..... 45652
Day 26... 3328 words. Total words to date..... 48980
Day 27... 1538 words. Total words to date..... 50518
Day 28... 4327 words. Total words to date..... 54845
Day 29... 3397 words. Total words to date..... 58242

Total fiction words for the month..... 13607

Total fiction words for the year..... 319712

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9050

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 164610

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 484322

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dan Baldwin](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, June 7](#)

[June 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * So I don't forget
- * Those of you who follow
- * One commenter
- * The Hovel and an ethernet switch
- * Topic: An Admission
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

So I don't forget to tell you, a buddy and I are going camping this coming Monday through Wednesday. If I have time between now and then I'll write and pre-post something good with topics for those days. If not, well, I'll be back. (grin) Maybe.

Those of you who follow Pro Writers Writing might have noticed yesterday the wrong post (the one from the day before) went out. And this morning none went out.

As the admin of that site, I'm working on it.

Of course, that doesn't mean I'll fix it. At this point, I'm chalking it up to gnomes.

One commenter on yesterday's Journal (Thanks, Catherine) mentioned she enjoyed the Lee Child quote. To see and hear more from Lee Child, visit

* <http://theconversation.com/the-man-with-no-plot-how-i-watched-lee-child-write-a-jack-reacher-novel-51220>

* <https://www.leechild.com/author-interviews.php>

* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PaxX-DTGo0>

And you can find his website at <https://www.leechild.com/>.

As most of you know, I write in the Hovel, an adobe-like structure some 150 feet from my house. I do so mostly because it's a separate office, so that when I'm at "work" I'm at work, and when I'm home, I'm home.

And yes, I also do so because I enjoy cigars, and I don't like standing around in Arizona's 100+ degree heat to do that. As you might imagine, the solitude of the Hovel is nice too. The thing is literally a man cave, as a few of you can attest. (grin)

But both the Hovel and the house are adobe-like rammed-earth structures with walls that are two to three feet thick, so WiFi from one to the other was spotty at best and mostly nonexistent.

So if I was writing and needed to do spot research (word spellings or translations, etc.), I had to trudge up to the house, conduct the few seconds of research, then trudge back to the Hovel, all while trying to remember what I'd learned and stay in the story.

A couple of months ago, my son (Thanks, Roy!) hard-wired a Cat 7 ethernet cable from the router in my house to my computer in the Hovel. So that solved the spotty WiFi problem.

And yesterday, I finally bought a little 5-port ethernet switch for the Hovel (my office). So now I have both my business computer and my writing 'puter in the Hovel, both with incredibly fast internet.

Over time (as I develop new habits), having this ethernet switch should enable me to boost my productivity, maybe dramatically.

I'll handle all email, write this Journal (the rough version), view any online workshops, etc. on the business computer where they belong. I'll attend to those during breaks and/or non-writing time.

I'll still have the internet on the writing 'puter so I can pop online to conduct spot research as I write and so the two computers can talk via Dropbox. What I will NOT have on the writing 'puter are those distracting little pop-up email notifications.

This will mean fewer distractions during my writing time, and that that alone is completely worth the \$40 investment I made in buying the ethernet switch.

As I progress with tweaking this new arrangement, I won't update the Journal (again, the rough version) through the day, so the boring time-framed stuff will probably go away. What remains will be rough approximations of when I did what (if that) and the good stuff. (grin)

Topic: An Admission

This is more for those of you who are more or less new to writing into the dark and still experimenting with getting into a personal rhythm with your writing.

If you've established a personal rhythm in your process, you might even want to skip this.

I often advise writers (especially those new to writing into the dark) that they can use 15- or 30-minute segments of free time to write.

This is based on having tested your day to see where your wasted time is. You can do that by creating a grid of your normal waking hours in 15-minute increments, then writing in the grids what you did during that time.

The idea is to write down everything you do during the entire day. (For example, if you cook supper and then do the dishes from 5 to 7 every day, you can automatically block out those two hours.)

Soon you'll find that you have several 15- or 30- or even 60- minute increments during which you did nothing at all or that were otherwise wasted.

I recommend doing this for at least one normal weekday and one normal weekend day.

Then, having recognized those wasted time periods, you can seat yourself at the keyboard and write during those times.

It's also a good idea to sit down and Just Write for 15 or 30 minutes to figure out about how many words per hour you write.

Most professional writers average around 1000 words per hour. That sounds fast, but it's only 17 words per minute, which leaves a lot of time for staring off into space. How fast did you type in typing class in high school?

Even if you typed "only" 60 words per minute, if you could apply that to your WIP that would be 3600 words per hour. At that rate, you could finish writing a 60,000 word novel in about 17 hours. So three and a half hours per day for five days. Or two and a half hours per day for seven days.

But back to reality.

The 15-minute increment thing is absolutely valid advice that speaks to my personal mantra: Keep Coming Back. By writing during those otherwise wasted increments of time, you can accumulate larger word counts and make real progress on your WIP.

In my early days as a novelist (and sometimes even as a short story writer) I adhered to this advice. My days were much less structured then. I didn't have a day job, but I tended to things as they came up.

So to the admission— Today, I don't follow my own (and Dean Wesley Smith's) advice to fill those shorter increments of free time with writing.

Mostly I attribute that to my writing speed. My average when I'm writing calmly, a few words or sentences at a time, is around 1200 words per hour.

But when I'm in the midst of a scene and it takes off, I hit closer to 1500 words per hour. (That's still only a paltry 25 words per minute and leaves a lot of time for staring off into space.)

And because I write in bursts (scenes) of 800 to 1500 words, writing in those brief increments doesn't work for me personally.

Now when I have an odd few minutes when I don't want to get into the story yet (because I know it will run away with me and require more time than I have available), I do something stupid like play spider solitaire.

Yet I'm prolific because I keep coming back to those hour-long sessions and because I trust my readers to tell their own story and lead me through to the end.

An addendum—

Despite the fact that I no longer personally do it, writing in 15-minute or 30-minute increments is still sound advice from a "try it and see" standpoint. If it works for you, as it used to work for me, wonderful. If it doesn't, let it go and do what works for you.

The key, though, is to honestly try it. Don't let your critical voice tell you it doesn't work or won't work or isn't working.

Give it an honest try and see what happens. Chances are your productivity will come alive. But either way, eventually you will find your niche, your personal space and speed.

A second addendum—

Now, if you believe 1000 words per hour is a blazing-fast rate and you can't do it (critical mind) and you typically hit around 250 or 500 words per hour, DWS would say you need to "check in with yourself."

However, I'm not that nice.

If you're writing only 250 to 500 or whatever words per hour, no possible way are you in the story. You're concentrating (critical mind) on words and/or sentences. And no matter how you write, you have to let that nonsense go and get into the story.

You can't write into the dark until you learn to let go and just trust your subconscious. That is to say you have to trust your characters to tell their own story and that they will lead you through.

Because they will.

Rolled out at 2, checked the internet, spent an hour in frustration with a client who was obsessed over the number of email subscribers to her blog (not the subscribers themselves), then another hour writing the stuff above, staring at the screen, etc. I also wrote a topic, deleted it, and wrote the one you see above.

Took a brief break up to the house at 5 to let the babies out and get another cup of coffee. As I write this, it's almost 6 already and I'm headed out to feed the horses, then to the house to change clothes and grab breakfast. Then to the first fiction-writing session of the day.

Speaking of which, I feel like I'm approaching the end game of this novel. Not that I'm there yet, but that it's coming. As I mentioned in an earlier Journal, I dragged my feet at times because I didn't want this one to end.

On the other hand (there's always another hand) I don't remember the last time it took me 30 writing days or longer to write a novel. I feel a little like a slug.

Finally to the novel at 7:30.

My WIP seems to be running in starts and jerks and stops today. That tells me I'm getting close to the final bit for sure. As characters and situations culminate toward the end of the story, I always write more slowly as I move back and forth, letting the characters tie everything together.

Or maybe my subconscious still doesn't want me to finish. Or maybe my subconscious wants me to finish this one while I'm in the field (that would be a first) on Monday through Wednesday camping with my buddy. Who knows.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Robert J. Sadler's "Letting The Cat Out Of The Bag" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/letting-the-cat-out-of-the-bag/>.

See "Expo Finished..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/expo-finished/>.

See PG's take on "How Does Color Affect Your Potential Customers?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-does-color-affect-your-potential-customers/>. VERY useful information in PG's take.

See "Evidence Contamination: Sneezing, Coughing, and Talking" at <https://www.leelofland.com/evidence-contamination-sneezing-coughing-and-talking/>. I recommend scrolling down to "DNA Testing: The Process."

See “RONE Award Finalist for Falcon’s Prey” at <https://terryodell.com/rone-award-finalist-for-falcons-prey/>. Get a free novel from a PWW contributor!

Fiction Words: 4301

Nonfiction Words: 1810 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 6111

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 29... 3397 words. Total words to date..... 58242

Day 30... 4301 words. Total words to date..... 62543

Total fiction words for the month..... 17908

Total fiction words for the year..... 324013

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10860

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 166420

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 490433

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Robert J. Sadler](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, June 8](#)

[June 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quotes of the day
- * Be sure to read
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“Writing is not performance art. . . . Often it’s better to say you do money laundering or something else that the entire world isn’t convinced it knows how to do.” Michael Lockhart on sharing a work in progress with family and friends

“I think it’s a pretty good rule not to tell what a thing is about until it’s finished. If you do, you always seem to lose some of it. It never quite belongs to you so much again.” F. Scott Fitzgerald

Be sure to read Maggie King’s comment on yesterday’s post, and my response. The two combine to practically make a topic. (Thanks, Maggie!)

Anyone else out there struggling with any of the stuff in the Critical Voice book? Or in yesterday’s topic?

If you are, comment or [email me](#). I really do want to help. I still have room for mentoring students on a month by month basis, but I ALSO answer any questions or comments as thoroughly as I can free.

Commenting or emailing me might be the first step to overcoming and quieting your critical voice.

When I rolled over and looked at the clock this morning it was 4:25. WHAT?

So I got up in a frenzy, but no matter how fast you move after you get up, you can’t get that time back. I’m pretty sure only Superman pulled that off, and unfortunately, my cape and tights are at the cleaner’s. (grin)

So to the Hovel by about 4:45, answered a little email and a couple of comments. I wrote the stuff above, fed the horses and went back to the house for a brief break and to spend a couple of quality minutes with the little girl cat (she doesn’t ask much).

Back to the Hovel at 5:30 to finish my first mug of coffee (only 14 oz.) and check the rest of my email and then the internet for items of interest.

Finally at 6:10, to my second mug of coffee (20 oz.) and the novel.

At 7:10, a short break up to the house to change clothes. A little over 1000 new words on the WIP so far. (grin) Maybe I’ll put off a chore or two.

Back to the Hovel at 7:30. Cycled over the last scene (adding a little here and there) and updated the reverse outline.

At 9:15 and after another 1000 new words, up to the house for a break.

Back to the Hovel at 9:45. Back to the novel at 10:30. At 11:20, with another 1000 words written, I'm taking a break for lunch.

I thought the book would end today, but it didn't. Neither (I believe) is it going to wait for Monday to roll around. I'm stopping a little early. We'll see what happens tomorrow.

Back to the Hovel and the novel at 12.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Michael Lockhart's "Loose Talk—Putting Writing at Risk" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/loose-talk-putting-writing-at-risk/>. Chock full of excellent advice. I added this one to Writers' Resources on my website.

See "June Workshops" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/june-workshops/>.

See "25+ TERRIFIC Repetition Examples in Literature" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/repetition-examples>.

To pass some time, see "Funniest Book Ever?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/funniest-book-ever.html>.

Fiction Words: 3881

Nonfiction Words: 550 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4431

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 29... 3397 words. Total words to date..... 58242

Day 30... 4301 words. Total words to date..... 62543

Day 31... 3881 words. Total words to date..... 66424

Total fiction words for the month..... 21789

Total fiction words for the year..... 327894

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11410

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 166970

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 494864

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 6

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Michaele Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, June 9](#)

[June 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Welcome
- * I'm working on
- * Quotes of the day
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Welcome to Bob B, a brother-at-arms. Glad to virtually meet you, Bob.

I'm working on boiling down to its essence the technique of writing into the dark. It's such a simple process that it has to have a tiny black hole (or a prime number or a seed) at the center of it somewhere.

It's never been a secret that the entirety of the universe comes down to a simple equation: $x/x = 1$ (though scientists haven't found it yet). Surely WITD has an explanation that is just as simple.

Maybe "The characters are living the story. Let them tell it." But that doesn't quite cover it, does it?

Or maybe "Let go. Have fun. Write what the characters give you." Nah. Too choppy.

Or maybe "Let the readers decide." Nope. Not enough.

Hmm. I'll work on it.

In the meantime, say your friend John is telling you and a nine other friends a story he thought was humorous. Say he says something you find a little unbelievable. Would you interrupt him and say "It couldn't have happened that way"?

Probably not. Probably you would let him finish.

So show your characters the same courtesy. Of the ten neighbors listening to John's story, chances are 5 or 6 will love it and laugh out loud, a few more will smile and think it's all right, and a couple will think it's disgusting.

Quotes of the Day on Writing

"If we listened to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair. We'd never have a friendship. ... Well, that's nonsense. You've got to jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down." Ray Bradbury

"[On the writing of Farewell Summer] It was when I was 22 and, you might say, put on my first pair of tennis shoes, and ran like crazy." Ray Bradbury

"Dare to be bad." Dean Wesley Smith

Rolled out just before midnight (!). But I felt rested, so... and I have a lot to do today, so... and I'm dumber than a bag of hammers, so... (grin). Maybe I'll grab a nap later today. (Yeah, right.)

Did the usual internet thing and found a lot. To the novel at 2:40. Slow going this morning. Proof positive I'm in the end run.

Took a break around 3:20, another around 5. Fiddled around waiting for Dean to post to his blog, wrote a few quick topics to pre-post while I'm on the road for the next few days. To feed the horses at 5:40.

Around 1500 words by 6:45. Now up to the house to do the chore I put off yesterday (mowing the yard, which is predominantly dust and weeds).

Back to the hovel at 9. Spent some time with email and tidying up my Novels folder, mostly grouping series novels in Series Name folders.

Back to the novel at 9:45. GACK! The characters threw me a curve. I'm glad in a way (the novel won't end quite as soon). Probably it will still end today.

Wow. It's 1:20 now. I've written a new unexpected chapter and filled in some new information in other chapters. But the book should be finished in one or two more sessions.

One of my best days ever. The novel is finished.

Talk with you again on Thursday.

Of Interest

Nothing from Dean yet as of this posting.

See Christopher Ridge's "Perfection" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-perfection-syndrome/>.

See "Should You Write Dreck?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/should-you-write-dreck.html>.

See "On Writing Sh*t" at <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/05/on-writing-shit.html>.

Also see "Your Book Marketing Plan Won't Work" at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/your-marketing-plan-wont-work.html>.

And "Trying Something New and Different" at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/trying-something-new-and-different.html>.

If you can't tell, I like Joe Konrath. I disagree with him at times, but I like him. He's a straight shooter, and it doesn't get better than that.

Fiction Words: 5555

Nonfiction Words: 660 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 6215

Writing of In the Cantina at Noon (novel)

Day 29... 3397 words. Total words to date..... 58242
Day 30... 4301 words. Total words to date..... 62543
Day 31... 3881 words. Total words to date..... 66424
Day 32... 5555 words. Total words to date..... 71979 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 27344
Total fiction words for the year..... 333449
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12070
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 167630
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 501079

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Christopher Ridge](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Thursday, June 13

[June 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I'm back
- * A solid recommendation
- * Quotes of the day
- * Possibly a New Endeavor
- * Topic: Possibly a New Endeavor
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest (a ton of good stuff)
- * The numbers

I'm back. I actually got back late yesterday morning, but I had a lot of email etc. to catch up on, so I let yesterday's post go as it was. (grin)

At least you got a topic, eh? Eh? (grin) Good to be back around you folks. Thanks for hanging around.

The break was good. My buddy said he came away with a new commitment concerning taking his writing in a particular direction. I came away jonesing to write and annoyed with myself for taking so much time off.

I also came away with one new notion: that when I finish one fiction project, I should start something new, that same day if possible, even if it's only a few hundred words. Something to keep the forward momentum going.

And why shouldn't it be possible? I'll institute that new habit once I begin writing again, which should be in a day or two.

In other words, for me, 'that' I write truly is more important than 'what' I write. Isaac Asimov, in his quote below, sums up my own feelings perfectly.

Time to rededicate myself to writing fiction.

Want a short but great nonfiction book that 1) will motivate you to write, 2) show you what is required to be considered "prolific," or 3) both?

If so—and I can't recommend this strongly enough—buy and read *Writing Secrets of the World's Most Prolific Authors* by Sean McLachlan. Great, great book.

Quotes of the Day

“Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.”
Robert Frost in “The Road Not Taken”

“Whenever I have endured or accomplished some difficult task—such as watching television, going out socially, or sleeping—I always look forward to rewarding myself with the small pleasure of getting back to my typewriter and writing something. This enables me to store up enough strength to endure the next interruption....” Isaac Asimov

“We are in the new pulp era of publishing.” Dean Wesley Smith

“Write it once, write it clean, turn it in [or publish it] and move on to the next story.” Dean Wesley Smith

Possibly a New Endeavor

In addition to all the other stuff I do, I’m thinking of starting a monthly magazine. One that contains only my own work.

It would be called Stanbrough Writes, it would be one more way of getting my work out there, and it would provide one more small stream of revenue for everything it contained.

I’ve been thinking off and on for a couple of years about doing this, but now the thoughts are beginning to gel.

Each issue would contain a complete novel and/or novella, at least one short story in a different genre, plus poems and essays and maybe a memoir. All from my own little warped mind.

I am very aware of the work involved. At one time I was the editor and publisher of three literary magazines simultaneously: The Roswell Literary Review, The Raintown Review: Poetry Edition, and The Raintown Review: Essay Edition. None of those ever contained any of my work. I was the editor, after all.

At the time (mid-1990s) we enjoyed a subscriber base of around 500 souls for each of those. Each was a quarterly journal. That means I had one magazine coming out every month for which I read and selected stories, poems, articles and essays. Some of you who are reading this had your work published in one or more of those journals.

I also did the layout and design, printed every issue myself with a desktop printer, carried the finished publications to a printer to have the edges trimmed, and then mailed them all out.

Saying it was a lot of work is a massive understatement.

The difference is that this new magazine would be filled only with my own novels, short stories, poems, essays and memoir, so there would be no editing involved. Another major difference is that this one would be electronic only.

Each issue would be available to subscribers early, and then available at the regular cover price two weeks to a month later via all the regular ebook channels.

I wonder whether anyone out there might be interested in subscribing to such a magazine. But either way, whether you would or wouldn't, I would very much appreciate any input.

Please leave your thoughts, questions or comments on the site at <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-thursday-june-13/> via the comment form, or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Thanks!

Topic: On Taking Time Off

Y'know, it's funny. Pretty much every time I hear a writer talk about "needing" to take time off (implying that they're tired) after finishing a novel, I wonder why.

When a novel ends, it ends abruptly, at least for me.

I experience a feeling of being slightly adrift after having been grounded with a particular set of characters for awhile. There's even a sense of grief and mourning that those characters are "gone," at least for the time being.

But I never get tired of writing. Never.

Sometimes, after a particularly long (meaning successful) day, when I've written 5000 or 6000 words of fiction plus another 1000 or so in the Journal, I'm tired. I'm used to writing only around 3000 words of fiction per day.

But even then I'm not tired of writing. Mostly I'm eye-tired and maybe even a little mentally fatigued. But I'm not tired of writing or tired of the story or tired of the characters.

That being said, I'm tired at the moment. I'll need a day or two to recuperate from the "time off" I took from writing. Go figure.

I finished a novel a few days ago, and I left the following day on a camping trip, which turned out to be two full days, two full nights and a tiny bit of yesterday morning.

I had originally hoped the trip might be longer by one day and one night. But I have to admit, in retrospect I'm glad it wasn't. Relaxing is exhausting. At least once I said to my friend, "Y'know, it's really hard for me to do nothing."

The thing is, I didn't go because I needed a break from writing. Maybe I went because I needed a break from my routine. Maybe. But definitely not from my writing routine.

And I went (without my computer) because the timing was convenient. One story was over, and I hadn't yet started a new story. So if I was going to take a break, the timing was ideal.

The trip DID provide a break from my routine. But even before we arrived, I missed even the routine itself. Especially the writing part of the routine. Maybe there's a lesson there for me.

One day into my "break," I regretted not having taken my computer because new ideas were pouring in and (damn it), I wanted to write! (grin)

But again, no computer. So I did the second-best thing. I read.

In two days, I read two (short) nonfiction books: the one I recommended above and *The Pulp Jungle* by Frank Gruber.

That second one was enjoyable for me, but not as informative as I thought it would be. It did make me wish the pulp journals were still flourishing though. Maybe that's why I'm thinking of starting my own magazine.

I got back late yesterday morning, caught up with email etc., and then—despite even the renewed adoration of my little girl cat—I came to the Hovel, fired up the computer, and wrote a lot of this stuff.

It felt SO good to have my fingers flying over the keys again.

Still, I find myself fatigued. Not from writing, but from taking a break from writing.

I'll write fiction again soon, but not today. I gotta rest. From resting. Anyone else see a paradox here?

I can only barely wait to write again, but for today I'll take care of a few other irons I have in the fire. Like giving more thought to the magazine idea above. (grin) I look forward to your input.

Rolled out at 2:30, went to the Hovel to add to the stuff above. I spent the next 3.5 hours catching up on "Of Interest," reading all of that and updating the section below, placating my little girl cat (reassuring her that Da' isn't leaving again), changing clothes, and feeding the horses.

Finally to sit, sip coffee and consider what I want to write next. (grin)

To the house at 7:15 for breakfast, to mull over a few ideas, and to spend some time with my wife before she heads out to work.

Back to the Hovel at 9. More thinking about new things I want to do and new ways to do them.

Short day today too, so I'm gonna publish this to the site and go rest. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "An Email to Jack on His Birthday" at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/an-email-to-jack-on-his-birthday.html>. Stick with it. This is a very good lesson for writers.

See "Free VPN Services to Stay Anonymous" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/free-vpn-services-to-stay-anonymous/>.

See "How To Approach a Licensee?" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-to-approach-a-licensee/>. I'm SO glad I'm part of the licensing expo (virtually, of course).

See "I Did Another Podcast" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/i-did-another-podcast/>. (You can also listen to the podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/writersofthefuture/21-dean-wesley-smith-international-bestselling-author-on-clean-first-drafts-and-dangers-of-rewrites>.)

See "The Complete Guide to Attracting a Loyal Audience for Your Writing" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-complete-guide-to-attracting-a-loyal-audience-for-your-writing/>.

See "Producing Audiobooks. Comparing ACX and Findaway Voices" at <https://terryodell.com/producing-audiobooks-comparing-acx-and-findaway-voices/>.

See "Confessions of a Book Reviewer" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/confessions-of-a-book-reviewer.html>.

See "Business Musings: Vexing Numbers" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/12/business-musings-vexing-numbers/>.

See (listen to) "How To Use BookBub to Sell More Books" at <https://www.novelmarting.com/190/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1650 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1650

Writing of (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month.....	27344
Total fiction words for the year.....	333449
Total nonfiction words for the month...	14730
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	170290
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	503739
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	6
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Author Media](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stanbrough Writes magazine](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, June 14](#)

[June 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Erratum
- * Today might be another non-writing day
- * Help from Kristine Kathryn Rusch
- * About the personal magazine
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest (a ton of good stuff)
- * The numbers

Yesterday in the Journal, I erred. I somehow managed to not list the correct topic title in the introductory bullet points. I apologize for any confusion.

Today might be another non fiction-writing day for me. I don't know. It's early yet, but I haven't settled yet on what I'd like to write next. So we'll see.

I don't have a problem with showing up and doing my job when I have a job to do. But figuring out which fictional world I want to play in next is a conundrum sometimes.

Yesterday I mentioned that once I start writing again, I intend to continue forward momentum by starting something new the same day I finish whatever I'm working on.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch had a good idea in that regard.

Let's say you have a series of books (or have just finished writing a novel), and you want to explore a side character. You can do that in the short form, and then publish that for your fans.

Not a bad idea. Doing that would bolster your number of short stories, and if a story took off, it would become a novel. And again, "what" you write isn't important. What's important is "that" you write.

In trying to determine whether to go ahead with a monthly magazine featuring only my own work, I set out to create a list of pros and cons.

Honestly, I could come up with only two cons:

- * it wouldn't be a challenge, at all, and
- * I dislike the time-drain involved in the publishing side (cover design, eformatting). And putting this magazine together will be ALL publishing, at least for the first four years.

On the other hand, the pros are considerable:

* I have enough material right now for 50 monthly issues even if I never write another word of fiction. That's with each issue containing a full novel or novella, 4 short stories, and numerous poems.

* In this new world of publishing, I could even take a few days to put all 50 issues together, design 50 covers, and upload them all to be released once a month for the next 50 months.

(Well, I could upload 12 at a time. I just checked. Smashwords [and probably D2D and Amazon] allows pre-releases only 12 months in advance. Still...)

* My own magazine would provide another outlet for my work and another stream of revenue.

* It would introduce my work to a new audience (those who prefer magazines).

* It would provide a broad new "sampler" of my work every month, increasing my discoverability.

* Eventually (if the magazine and I both run long enough), it would provide me with a deadline to produce new work.

Yeah, that last one, probably not so much, but maybe. But like I said at the beginning, one con is that it wouldn't be a challenge.

If I do launch Stanbrough Writes, you folks will be the first to know. (Thanks to those of you who gave me input, by the way. I appreciate it.)

Anyway, as with most of my thought processes, I brought all of this up in the first place (and am continuing to bore you with it) just in case it's something you might also want to try.

Rolled out at 2 this morning, hurried to the Hovel and found surprisingly little in the way of items for "Of Interest." Maybe a few items will pop up later today.

Each morning for about the past month, the horses have stood at the edge of their corral staring at the Hovel, waiting for me to come out and feed them.

This morning, apparently having spotted the neighbors' pickup (they're back from a trip), the horses stood at the far side of the corral, staring at the neighbors' house instead.

A break (from nothing) up to the house at 5 and another at 6:30. Now to poke around for something to write. Back to the house at 7:40 for a bit.

Around 10, a name and a title popped into my head. Should be interesting. I don't think I've ever started a story on just a name and a title before. You'll see them below.

It's almost funny. I always "poke around" for something to write after I finish a novel. I'm impatient, but the process always takes whatever time it takes. I go about whatever else I need to do. My only certainty is that the words haven't left me. And in the back of my mind, the whole time I'm wondering what I'll write next.

Then I'll hear a sound or smell a particular scent on the wind that stirs a memory. Or a character name or a bit of dialogue will pop into my head, and I'm off and running. Every single time.

This morning it was a name and a title. We'll see how that goes. (grin)

Wrote a short opening (under 300 words) and the thing took off. Woohoo! And I can already tell it's going to be a novel.

"New" novels (not in series) always go slow for me at first until I get to know the characters, etc. But I'm writing again, and there's no better feeling in the world.

Around noon, a break with about 1600 words in the bank.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “The Black Moment and Genre Expectations” at <https://terryodell.com/the-black-moment-and-genre-expectations/>. For the record, ALL genres have certain reader expectations, and it’s a good idea to hit all of them.

On a related note (sheer coincidence), see “How to Research Your Genre to Write Better Stories” at <https://thewritepractice.com/genre-research/>. The best way to “research” any genre is to read novels in that genre.

Fiction Words: 2803

Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3773

Writing of Sam Loredo and the Point of No Return (novel)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803

Total fiction words for the month..... 30147
Total fiction words for the year..... 336252
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 171260
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 507512

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stanbrough Writes magazine](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Write Practice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, June 15](#)

[June 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Happy Father’s Day (tomorrow)
- * I cast about my mind
- * Topic: How to Practice (and Improve)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Here in the US, tomorrow is Father's Day. Happy Father's Day to all the dads out there, in the US and elsewhere. I am blessed that my youngest son is visiting this weekend.

I cast about my mind this morning, fishing for ideas for a topic for today's Journal. I found too many, and they overlapped, but not in a good way.

Rather than complementing each other, they contrasted in that special way that, had I committed them to the page, might have caused you to be concerned (or convinced) that I had taken leave of my faculties.

So I abandoned the search and wrote this bit of drivel instead.

And of course, once I abandoned the search for a topic, one presented itself:

Topic: How to Practice (and Improve)

In writing, practice is everything. You'll hear it here, on Dean Wesley Smith's site, and from other sources. The importance of practice is heavily implied in Heinlein's Rules.

But what does it really mean to practice writing?

On the surface, practice means to keep writing and keep moving forward. "Forward momentum" is an excellent watchword for the writer.

It means to not hover over one work, nitpicking words and sentences and paragraphs in an effort to achieve perfection. (Besides, the very next reader will find vastly imperfect the perfection you created.)

It also means to not move backward, going back to apply some newly learned technique to a previous work or works. Rather, write to the best of your current ability and then let the work go out and stand on its own two shaky little legs.

Any practice will help improve your writing. After all, you're learning and improving all the time without even realizing it. Your subconscious is constantly absorbing new tricks and techniques from reading others' works to overhearing people talking in line in the grocery store to watching commercials.

But today I want to talk about FOCUSED practice.

Focused practice is different, and it's a great technique to try. But I do recommend you wait to try it until after you've learned to quiet the critical voice (by and large) and let your characters tell the story (always).

If you're ready, this is how to engage is focused practice:

1. Finish your WIP. Just continue as you have been, letting the characters tell the story until they lead you through to the end.

2. Take or review a course or technique you find interesting, one that you believe will improve your story. For example, adding all five senses as filtered through the POV character's observation and opinion of the setting. Or for another example, the structure of a particular kind of novel. (This second one is the one I'm practicing in my WIP.)

3. Learn (a function of the conscious mind) as much as you can about the technique that interests you, and boil it down as far as you can to one or two thick, juicy statements.

4. Once you've happened on (or settled on) your new WIP, before you start writing, focus on the technique you want to practice. Maybe even say aloud to your characters, "Okay, guys, as I write this one, we're going to focus on this technique."

5. Then forget about it and Just Write the WIP. As always, allow your characters to tell the story. They'll give you what they have (as always, in the sequence and timeframe THEY set) and lead you through to the end of the story as always.

But when the story's finished, it will contain at least most of the new technique you studied and internalized.

My Own Experience

A couple of years ago when I first learned the five-senses exercise, it immediately made sense to me. The more the POV character related what he saw, heard, smelled, tasted and felt (both physically and emotionally) of the setting and situations in the story, the more deeply the reader would be engaged and invested in the story. (He would see, hear, smell, taste and feel vicariously.)

The next WIP I wrote was much more engaging. The story pulled the reader to depth almost immediately and never let the reader surface until he stopped reading or finished the story.

And if he stopped reading, when he started again he was pulled right back to depth in the next opening, then held there until he stopped reading again.

In that first WIP (probably my 7th or 8th novel), I added more depth as I cycled back through each session. Today, writing with depth and pulling the reader into the story comes naturally to me so I don't even have to think about it. When I cycle back over a scene now, I have to add very little depth because it's already there, provided by my characters as I wrote.

Now, present day, I have a new technique I want to try.

In my recent study of a lot of the old pulp writers (the best of whom used the five senses to pull the readers to depth), I noticed that most of the pulp stories were almost nonstop action.

The structure? Intense action, followed by a short or very short lull, followed by intense action again, etc.

In my books up to this point (in all genres), I've given my readers more of a break than that.

I can write an intense action scene with slam-bang action, and I can write an intense action scene with a Sam Pekinpah kind of zoomed-in slow motion that still *feels* like slam-bang action, albeit even more intense because the POV character is zoomed-in on bits of the setting, the other character, etc.

But regardless, after each intense action scene, I gave the reader a calming break during which the characters and the reader could relax for awhile. Usually that lasted for a chapter. Sometimes longer.

As an aside, even the most thrilling thrillers being written by the NYT bestselling thriller writers are loaded with lengthy, calmer scenes that allow the reader to relax for awhile before dropping him back into the action.

So that's how I'll continue to write most of the time. I like it. My readers like it.

But for one book (at least), my current WIP, I wanted to see whether I could write this new structure: the all-but nonstop action embodied in the old pulp stories. Again, this was regardless of genre: SF, western, crime, detective/PI, noir, steamy romance, etc.

So far, I'm pulling it off. It isn't easy by any means. I still have to add the depth, for example, but maybe with far fewer but more-selective words and phrases. (I already had to go back and cut one full chapter. I'll save it if I can condense it from 1200 words to more like a couple hundred. But don't be dismayed. I'm learning and applying a new structure, remember?)

So the description will still be there, as filtered through the POV character's physical and emotional senses and opinions. But there will also be almost nonstop action with much shorter "breaks" in between. So a nonstop-action western but still with depth.

And I have to tell you, writing this is a great deal of fun. I have a feeling this new structure will get easier as I go. At the moment, the biggest problem is *watching* (critical mind) to be sure I don't let the action die away for too long. But my characters are watching for that too, so as usual it's a team effort. (grin)

How about you? How do you practice new techniques? Please share your thoughts, especially if you practice writing one clean draft from beginning to end.

Rolled out at 1 this morning to get some writing done before the normal day begins. That didn't work out as well as I'd hoped. I looked around a little for items for "Of Interest," then found a way to waste almost four hours.

Finally I knocked off the silliness and turned to the novel.

I cycled back through everything I wrote yesterday, getting back into the feel of the story. This is a western but it's a different kind than I've ever written before because I'm practicing something new. (See the topic above.)

With cycling and starting a new chapter, I managed just over a thousand words in the first session. Up to the house for a break. I might or might not write more today depending on how the day goes.

Nope. I came back to the Hovel for a cigar break and wrote the topic above. I'm gonna spend the day with my son and get back to the WIP in the morning.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Michael Lockhart's "Priming the Pump" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/priming-the-pump>.

See "July Workshops Available" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/july-workshops-available/>. Here's a chance to learn some of those new techniques I mentioned. (grin)

See "The Churn of the Screw" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/the-churn-of-the-screw.html>.

Fiction Words: 1035

Nonfiction Words: 1400 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2435

Writing of Sam Loredano and the Point of No Return (novel)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803

Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838

Total fiction words for the month..... 31182

Total fiction words for the year..... 337287

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17100

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 172660

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 509947

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Focused Practice](#), [How to Practice](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Micheale Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, June 16](#)

[June 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Well, no writing today, and only a short post here. I stayed up too late last night watching Men in Black 3. (grin)

This is a really good short series of movies with a great character arc for Agent J (Will Smith) and incredible writing.

Spent some time (over the first cigar of the day) checking and updating Facebook. First time in a couple of weeks.

As you know, a few days ago I finished writing my latest Wes Crowley novel. It was number 11 in the series (and I never expected to write even one western) and my 44th novel overall.

I expect to release it on July 1. (The tentative title is In the Cantina at Noon. I'll update here when it's available for pre-order.)

In the meantime, if you enjoy a good romantic western, for a limited time you can still download the 10-novel Wes Crowley saga from Smashwords for 50% off (only \$9.99).

Another way of looking at it, a lot of you depend on me for writing advice.

The saga includes the first novel I ever wrote. And the last novel in the series (before the one I just finished) was only my 16th novel. If you'd like to see how my own writing has changed as I learned and applied new techniques, this is your chance.

To take advantage of this offer, visit <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/599718> and during checkout apply coupon code **PT88Q** (not case-sensitive). You'll get the entire 10-novel saga, including all the original covers, in one book for half-price. The coupon expires on July 1.

I hope you enjoy a happy Father's Day today. I know I will. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Saturday Night Copyright” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/saturday-night-copyright/>. Don’t pass this up. Free knowledge, and there’s another link in the article.

See Terry Odell’s “Finding the Right Word and POV” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/finding-the-right-word-and-pov/>.

See “Tips for the Well-Mannered Writer” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/tips-for-the-well-mannered-writer.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 350

Writing of Sam Loredano and the Point of No Return (novel)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803
Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 31182
Total fiction words for the year..... 337287
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 173010
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 510287

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Wes Crowley saga](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, June 17](#)

[June 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Camping along the Gila
- * Thanks
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers



Leaving without my little girl

Because I said I would post photos of my recent camping trip along the Gila River in the Lower Gila Box Wilderness in southwest New Mexico, I'll add one pic to each post for awhile. You should be able to click on any photo to see a larger version.

First, why I find it difficult to leave even for a few hours, much less a few days. My little girl planted herself on my bag and gave me two options: either don't go or take her with me. Neither of those were viable.

Fortunately, she forgave me when I got back. But she reminded me in various ways that I am her Forever dad, not her Intermittent dad. (grin)

Thank you for all the encouragement through comments and via email re Stanbrough Writes, my magazine. My wife also liked the idea and even reminded me of a series of humorous articles I wrote for a now-defunct poetry slick, The Candlelight Poetry Journal.

So I've decided to go ahead with Stanbrough Writes. Now I only have to

- * set the subscription rates,
- * decide on a release date for the first issue,
- * write the promo material and make the announcement,
- * and put the thing together.

The last part will be the easiest. Stay tuned.

Rolled out at 1:30 and went outside to move the sprinkler while my coffee was making. It's too hot here to water the yard during the day (too much evaporates) so my wife and I decided to try something new.

Since she goes to bed later than I do and I get up so early, I set the sprinkler where I want it before I head off to bed. She turns it on after the wind dies down, and then I turn it off (or move it) when I get up.

Still in the Hovel by 2 to begin my routine. A break up to the house at 3:30, back to the Hovel at 3:50. More reading, and to the novel at 4:15 to read over it before I go to the house at 5 to let the babies out.

Finished cycling through and wrote for awhile. Just over 2000 words at 7:40 and back to the house for a long break.

Back to the Hovel at 9:20 and back to the novel at 10. Pretty good day today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

From Authors Publish Magazine, see "17 Mystery Publishers Open to Manuscript Submissions" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/17-mystery-publishers-open-to-manuscript-submissions/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, "Dave Farland's 'Write. Publish. Profit.' is available for two more days. This a huge bundle of different kinds of material like video courses, books, and even a discount from a cover site. It's all for \$49." If you're interested, see <https://infostack.io/wpp2/?affiliate=davidfarland#inside>. For \$49, maybe you can't go wrong. I'm not sure what the "affiliate" part of the URL is in reference to. I am not a paid or compensated affiliate of David Farland or anyone else.

See "Updates" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/updates/>. Opportunities.

See "Why Waiting is Difficult" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/why-waiting-is-difficult.html>. I left a comment.

See “Writer’s Guide To Dealing With Haters” at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/writers-guide-to-dealing-with-haters.html>. Good advice, sort of. Every time I hear the term “hater” I get a mental image of a five year old screaming and pointing at another five year old.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Safety Tests” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/17/free-fiction-monday-safety-tests-2/>.

If you want to see several short films about bookstores, see “The Last Bookstore in Downtown Los Angeles” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-last-bookstore-in-downtown-los-angeles/> and then scroll down from there.

Fiction Words: 4247

Nonfiction Words: 570 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4817

Writing of Sam Loredano and the Point of No Return (novel)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803

Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838

Day 3..... 4247 words. Total words to date..... 8085

Total fiction words for the month..... 35429

Total fiction words for the year..... 341534

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18120

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 173680

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 515214

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, June 18](#)

[June 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Camping along the Gila
- * Announcement from Draft2Digital
- * Stuff is stacking up
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers



Here's one of the reasons I return to the Gila Lower Box Wilderness when I want to go camping. This cliff is simply magnificent. Like the Grand Canyon, no photo can do it justice.

And because this is true wilderness, the area is filled with the extremes of weather and light.

The cliff itself changes color through the day. Toward sunset, for a few minutes, it looks like a cliff of pure gold.

More tomorrow.

From Draft2Digital (D2D)

On Thursday, June 27th, join D2D's own Marketing Masterminds—Kevin Tumlinson, Mark Lefebvre, and Dan Wood—as they answer your questions live and on-air during our first official Ask Us Anything!

Note: this is a FREE event. To register, [Click Here](#).

We'll also be taking questions live during the webinar. And we'll record the whole thing and make it available to you for free after the event. So even if you can't make it to the recording, you'll still get all the valuable, free author consulting.

We hope you'll invite all of the authors (and will-be authors) in your life to join in.

Whoof. Stuff is stacking up.

I have a novel going, though at the moment the characters are sticking to One Major Event so it might end up being a novelette or novella. (At the core, the only difference between a short story and a novel is that the short story is about One Event.)

Fun going where the characters lead me though. It's their story, so I'm just a hanger-on.

When the idea first occurred I was certain it would be a novel, albeit probably a short one given the genre.

But what should have been a secondary character on the first page quickly turned into a much more major character. And that was a decision made by my main character. The main character is a (very) alpha male and the secondary character is a (very) alpha female and it turned out they like each other. A lot. So....

Then I haven't forgotten about my last nonfiction book: How to Quiet the Critical Voice. I still need to put that together, do a promo doc and cover, and publish it.

And I have all the Las Vegas Expo Learn Along videos (plus the Magic Bakery videos) to view and listen to. (Still time to jump into that if you want to. It's still a steal at only \$200.)

And I have a magazine of my own writing to put together. Each issue will be a compilation of one novel from my backlist, 3-5 short stories, a few poems, and an article. I'm still thinking about writing one new (unpublished) short story or novelette (long short story) for each issue too.

Oh, and my last novel, In the Cantina at Noon, is due back soon from my first readers. So I'll need to create a promo doc and cover for that and get it out too.

Then there's publicity to be done for the Critical Voice book and the magazine and the novel. And a Daily Journal to publish and try to keep interesting.

And lord only knows what I'll come up with today or tomorrow or in the next five minutes. (grin)

So I'm gonna try again to split my day, writing on my WIP earlier to get my daily word count and then devoting more of the day to one or more of the projects above.

Sigh. It ain't easy bein' me. But it sure is fun. (grin)

Topic: On Sales Gimmicks

Some people will say anything to make a buck, and frankly, I despise liars.

Maybe that's why I latched on so tightly to Dean Wesley Smith when I found him. The guy's honest. He's even advised me before on which of his online workshops I shouldn't take because my writing is beyond what he teaches in them.

Today I received an email from a blog I subscribe to because occasionally they slip and pass out good advice.

The email read in part,

Hey Harvey,

I want to help you finish your book no matter what.

That's why I've just opened up a few slots for the introductory class of the No-Fail Novel Outlining course. This will be the *only novel outlining system that will make it almost impossible for you to fail at writing your book*. (emphasis added)

I have a feeling the "almost" in that paragraph is what keeps these folks from being sued.

In actuality, while you're writing the outline, you're already failing at writing your book. 'Cause you aren't writing your book. You're writing a stupid outline. Duh.

And no, I didn't email him back to point out that "outlining" is not synonymous with "writing your book." In fact, it's synonymous with *not* writing your book. It's synonymous with "writing your outline."

But wait. There's more. (grin)

One of the bullet points in the email read, "Whether you're a planner or a pantsler, make your book writing easier and more fun." Seriously? Obviously he's never experienced the joy of writing off into the dark and letting the characters tell their own story.

And on the website, the first two sentences in the sales pitch were

***How do you become a professional writer?
To be great at something, you need to practice.***

Like I said, every now and then they get something right. Unfortunately in this case, they don't have a clue what "practice" actually means.

But what really set me off was that this was a bait-and-switch email. A link in the email read, "You can get all the details about the course here."

When I clicked the link (mostly to find out how much they're scamming folks out of) it took me to the sales page I mentioned above. And it wasn't a sales page for the course they're hawking. It was a sales page that invited you to "join the community" for only \$15 or \$25 PER MONTH.

And yeah, after this experience I unsubscribed. To me, finding the occasional gem isn't worth putting up with liars and con artists. Screw 'em. And I don't mean that in a nice way.

Rolled out at 2:30. Looked around the internet. I found little of interest that wasn't either regurgitation of the same old stuff or insanely harmful to the writing process. Or both. So I went to the WIP and started cycling through what I wrote yesterday.

I'm gonna stop detailing my writing sessions, breaks and the other minor stuff in the Journal. It takes too much time and it even bores me.

I wrote quite a bit today, but decided to call it a little early so I can concentrate on some of the "business" things I listed above. Unless my characters throw me a curve, it still feels like this WIP is going to wrap as a novelette or maybe a novella. Maybe as early as tomorrow or the next day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Writing Got Me Behind" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-got-me-behind/>. I'm so blessed. I get annoyed when I can't write for a few days. Imagine your routine being disrupted for months on end.

Fiction Words: 2540

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3700

Writing of Sam Loredano and the Point of No Return (we'll see)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803
Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838
Day 3..... 4247 words. Total words to date..... 8085
Day 4..... 2540 words. Total words to date..... 10625

Total fiction words for the month..... 37969
Total fiction words for the year..... 344074
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 174840
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 518914

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

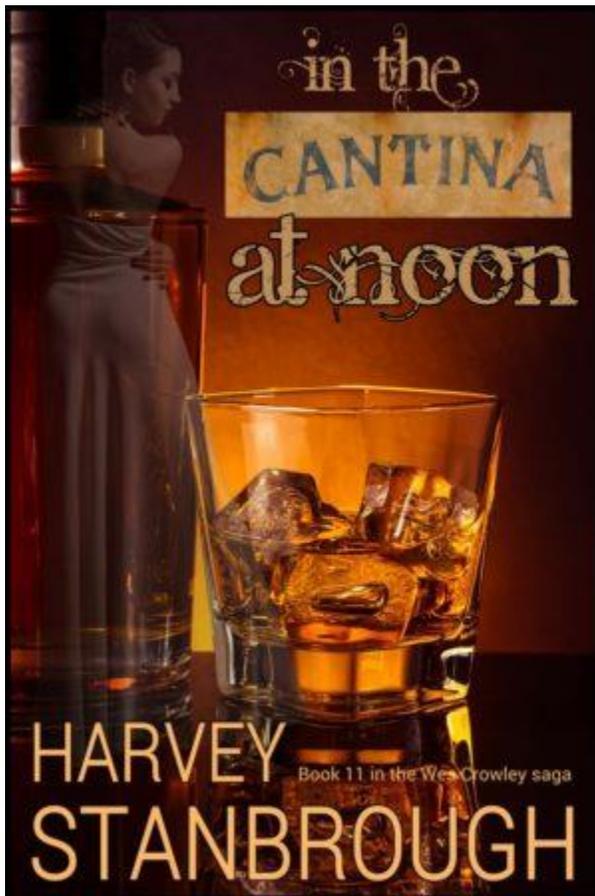
Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, June 19](#)

[June 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * A cover reveal and camping along the Gila
- * A word about Affinity Publisher
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers



Well, to be honest, I was annoying myself with attempting to remember to post a new picture each day. I know, I know. A lot of people read blogs for the pictures.

But this is a blog about writing. So to me, it should focus more on, you know, writing.

That being said, here's a cover reveal for you. This will be the cover of my previous novel. To see a larger pic, right click and then select Open Link in a New Tab.

However, for those of you who want to see more pictures of the denizens and environs of the Lower Gila Box Wilderness, I did also take an hour this morning to create a new page on the Journal website. It's called Camping Along the Gila, and it contains twelve pictures I took while I was there recently.

When you visit the page, you can click on any image to see it much larger (half-size of the original). If you'd care to purchase any of the originals (around 4000 x 3000 pixels) we can talk about that too. (grin)

The URL is <https://hestanbrough.com/camping-along-the-gila/>.

Can't afford a subscription to Adobe Suites? Want something just as good (in my opinion, better) to greatly enhance your ability to design covers, or even lay out your own print books?

I strongly urge you to look at Affinity Publisher. I bought it a week ago (no subscription required), and it's nothing short of wonderful.

Affinity Publisher does everything Adobe does, PLUS it's intuitive and user friendly.

To watch a live release announcement and demonstration (only a little over a half-hour), visit <https://affinity.serif.com/en-us/live/>.

Then, unless you're insane or stubborn beyond belief, visit <https://affinity.serif.com/en-us/> to read more about it.

The full paid version costs only \$49.99 USD, and at the moment they're offering it for 20% off.

Just sayin'.

Rolled out early at 1:30. Two hours later, I'd added the new stuff to the Journal website, but I'd done little else.

To the novel or whatever it is (grin) at 3:30 to cycle over what I wrote yesterday. In the new writing, a few things came up that caused me to cycle back to earlier in the book and add some foreshadowing.

Received a much-welcome phone call from a friend and noticed, while we were on the phone, my little girl was wandering around in the desert across the fence. So I rounded her up, finished the conversation, turned off the sprinkler in the yard, and checked my email.

There were several emails, some of which required my attention. Then the farrier pulled up outside to tend to the neighbors' horses, which of course set off my chihuahua, who sounds remarkably like a rottweiler when he barks.

Checked to see what was going on (and found the farrier), put a plug in the chihuahua, then added to the “Of Interest” section. After that I answered a couple more emails and was headed back to the WIP at 10:15 when I remembered the Affinity live launch was due, so I dropped in there.

Finally back to the WIP at 11 a.m.

Calling the writing day early again to do more publishing work. Soon I have to work on my bicycle too. I want to get it running right again. Maybe I can exercise without putting so much strain on my back.

As it stands, it looks like the WIP will wrap in only two or three thousand more words. At least it will make novella length.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “What Happens After You Hit The End?” at <https://terryodell.com/what-happens-after-you-hit-the-end/>. Of course, I left an unabashed comment. I’m often not very agashed. (grin)

See Alison Holt’s “Habits” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/habits/>.

See “Can Piracy Save Literature? a Bestselling Author Says Yes” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/can-piracy-save-literature-a-bestselling-author-says-yes/>.

See “Should Authors Have More Control over Their Covers?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/should-authors-have-more-control-over-their-covers/>. I offer a resounding YES!

See “What to Wear At A Gunfight” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/what-to-wear-at-a-gunfight.html>.

Fiction Words: 2495

Nonfiction Words: 660 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3155

Writing of Sam Loredo and the Point of No Return (novel? novella? we’ll see)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803
Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838
Day 3..... 4247 words. Total words to date..... 8085
Day 4..... 2540 words. Total words to date..... 10625
Day 5..... 2495 words. Total words to date..... 13120

Total fiction words for the month.....	40464
Total fiction words for the year.....	346569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	19940
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	175500
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	522069
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Alison Holt](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, June 20](#)

[June 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * From Kris Rusch's blog
- * Topic: Poking Fun at Horrible Advice
- * Sort-of Topic: Old Dogs, New Tricks, Nope
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

At the end of Kris Rusch's blog post on the Las Vegas Licensing Expo (see "Of Interest") was this:

Dean did a Learn-Along which has over 50 videos (so far) as he analyzed what he learned, so that it would stick in his head.

The Learn Along is \$200 and includes a classic workshop about copyright which retails for \$150. He'll only offer it for another two weeks or so, but if you want to deep dive into this, that's the way to go.

If you do, visit <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/p/learn-along>.

Topic: Poking Fun at Horrible Advice

I cleaned up my desktop this morning. I do that every week or so. I review Notepad docs that hold topics I've written, then check to make sure I've posted them, then move them to the trash.

I also review things I've downloaded over the past couple of weeks. I look them over, decide whether they might be helpful, are inert, or are harmful.

Occasionally (maybe one in ten items, and I'm being generous) are helpful. The rest, I drag to the trash.

This morning I found a PDF document that was both harmful and helpful. It was helpful in that it was so inane, it sparked this topic.

I won't mention the name of the author or the title of the PDF. My intention isn't to embarrass or even trash talk the guy, but a couple of titles, one from the "Other Books By" section and one from the "Free Books" section caught my attention.

When I say they caught my attention, I mean in the same way, if I was lying on a roof catching some rays when a guy in the alley below tossed up a grappling hook and two prongs ripped into my abdomen, that would catch my attention.

Part of the first title was "15 Days to Write and Submit a Short Story."

Seriously? Who takes 15 days to write a short story? It's never taken me longer than five or six hours, tops. At times that's been spread over two days, but fifteen? As a friend used to say in the Marine Corps, "I don't ***** think so."

I admit I was tempted to buy the book though, strictly as a humorous exercise. I'd really like to see what the author advises.

Does he spend XX number of hours writing character sketches and then refining them? How long does he advise spending on outlining the story? And when he finally puts his fingers on the keyboard, how does he overcome the boredom of writing something he already knows intimately?

But I'm not being fair. After all, I haven't read the book. Maybe he advocates writing a typical 3000 to 6000 word short story in spurts of only 200 or 400 very carefully considered words per day. Shrug. I don't know.

The other title that caught my attention was "10 Steps to Becoming a Writer."

Again, seriously?

There's only one step, folks. Ready?

1. Write.

Sort-of Topic: Old Dogs, New Tricks, Nope

Ugh. Live and (re)learn.

Yesterday, after I left the Hovel with the intention of doing some publishing stuff, I didn't.

Instead, I took the day off. Well, a few hours off. Meaning I puttered around doing unimportant little things or watched TV. It was refreshing. My only regret was that I didn't stick with the WIP and keep writing.

As I've said many, many times, writing is fun for me. It's an escape. Nothing is more fun for me than writing. Nothing.

Doing publishing stuff is work. It directly engages the conscious, critical mind. But yesterday, after I abandoned the WIP early, I realized I was tired. So I did nothing.

And I re-learned a lesson. Different strokes.

I'm always intrigued by the way others can intentionally split their day between writing and writing-related tasks, so occasionally I try it. But it never works out.

Maybe this time I'll remember for a longer period of time that just isn't who I am.

I can and do split my day every day between writing and NONwriting tasks (chores, etc.). But writing fiction comes first. A very close second is writing nonfiction and publishing this Journal every day. Third is everything else I have to do.

But writing-related tasks are sheer drudgery for me. Someday, I'll hire someone to format what I've written and do all the other things that are necessary for publication. But in the meantime, I'll continue to slog through it.

So a new resolution: When I'm actively engaged with a WIP, I'll Just Write. When I'm through writing fiction for the day (or during breaks as I write), I'll attend to all the little necessary nonwriting things I have to do.

When I've reached the end of a WIP, I'll run the spell check, send it off to my first readers, and turn my hand (probably the next day) to the boring, time-consuming drudgery of writing-related things that lead to making my work available to others.

Then I'll begin another WIP.

Well, unless I begin a WIP the same day or the day after I finish the current one. If that happens, so be it. The WIP takes priority. I can always slide the "work" of writing-related stuff out another week or two.

I won't fall off Heinlein's Rule 4 (my least favorite), but I'll push it back a little when necessary.

I don't recommend this for others, but for me it works. And I think maybe it's finally time to stick to what works.

Rolled out at 2. Today, once I get to the WIP, I'll keep writing until the story ends or until I'm through writing for the day. That's the plan. Then we'll see what's next.

Well, a short day today, and I got sidetracked watching UPS "live" as it got to within two blocks of my house, then went off on a tour of southeast Arizona. I am annoyed. (UPS has delivered here many times before.)

I put up with a lot, but if one driver's incompetence causes me to have to drive 45 miles one way to retrieve my package, I'm going to be annoyed.

Anyway, unless my characters throw me a major curve I'll finish the WIP tomorrow. It'll come in as a novella.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Licensing Expo Recap" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/19/business-musings-licensing-expo-recap/>.

See Dan Baldwin's "Don't Let Openings Close You Down" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/dont-let-openings-close-you-down/>.

Fiction Words: 1591

Nonfiction Words: 1110 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2701

Writing of Sam Loredo and the Point of No Return (novel? novella? we'll see)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803

Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838

Day 3..... 4247 words. Total words to date..... 8085

Day 4..... 2540 words. Total words to date..... 10625

Day 5..... 2495 words. Total words to date..... 13120

Day 6..... 1591 words. Total words to date..... 14719

Total fiction words for the month..... 42055

Total fiction words for the year..... 348160

Total nonfiction words for the month... 21050

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 176610

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 524770

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dan Baldwin](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, June 21](#)

[June 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Well, crap
- * Nothing much
- * Topic: Inanities and Definitions
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

The PWW post from yesterday posted today at 9 a.m. So I guess eventually the post for today will post. Maybe tomorrow. Whenever. In the meantime, I encourage you to check <http://prowriterswriting.com> each day to see what's new.

Nothing much of real value to write about today, and nothing much for "Of Interest" either. And I'm not in a good mood, primarily owing to my own stupidly high expectations.

So the following is what you get for today. Some would call it a "rant," but I spoke to it earlier and it confided to me that it self-identifies as a topic.

Topic: Inanities and Definitions

As another blogger wrote in the opening of his blog a few days ago, "Oh look. An axe. Let's grind it."

I stumbled over two such axes this morning, and both in the same place.

The title of a post on one blog I check each morning opened with a weary, untrue, and "cutesy" cliché, my least favorite kind.

Usually, a cliché is at least a truism, albeit one that has been repeated so often it's lost its overall effectiveness. That being said, it's still a truism. So once you get past the rolling-your-eyes stage, you can at least generally know it's good advice.

That was not the case this morning.

The title was "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus — Writing the Opposite Sex."

Bam! Just like that, a ridiculous cliché followed by a wrong-word usage (in my admittedly stubborn opinion). The title alone moved the needle on my Mood-O-Meter from Okay So Far to Slightly Peeved.

Still, I didn't mind it so much because at least it would lead to an informative article. Right? Right?

Wrong.

The entire "article" (again, derailing my excessively high expectations) was only twelve words long: "What are your biggest challenges in writing characters of the opposite sex?"

That's it. That's all. Nothing else.

And my needle shot from Slightly Peeved to a frowning, audibly muttered, right-posted, "*Seriously?*"

But I came there to read, so I read. And critiqued. And so you are the benefactors of that critique.

Whereas I had happily forgiven both the silliness and the wrong word in the title, now (in my mind) I attacked.

My first thought, directed at the first half of the title, was, "Umm, no. See, men are from *Earth* and women are from *Earth*, understand? And come to think of it, the rest of the universe is probably glad they're confined there, especially when they read nonsense like this."

My second thought was directed at the second half of the title: "When I write a female protagonist, I'm writing in the voice of the opposite 'gender,' not the opposite 'sex'."

To me, "sex" is a physical and spiritual act, a bonding, a coupling that results in the release of endorphines that further enhances attraction and the aforementioned bond. In short, it is something in which you engage if you're very fortunate.

"Gender," on the other hand, is type, meaning male or female, man or woman, biologically, regardless of sexual proclivities, leanings or preferences.

And yes, I'm aware of modern usages of the term "gender." Nor do I mind them (not that it's my place to mind them). By which I mean you can "identify" as a can of soup for all I care. Seriously, I don't care. None'a my business.

Which brings me to the response that popped into my head when I re-read the question, the twelve words that comprised the whole of the "article." So you don't have to scroll up, here it is again:

"What are your biggest challenges in writing characters of the opposite sex?"

My response? I have only one "challenge": I'm not a woman. I don't have the requisite parts.

I mean, I am decidedly (and happily) a male. That I will never be able or required to deliver a child from my body remains one of my greatest joys.

However, my status as a male in today's volatile, offense-motivated society brought to mind another question: Should I even be *allowed* to write female characters? When I attempt to do so, aren't I "appropriating" the female culture?

I mean, I already understand I'm not supposed to write about cultures other than my own because if I do, I'll be appropriating those.

But I suppose allowances must be made. So is it all right that I write female protagonists as long as they're at least within my own race (or my unique mixture of races)? Or would they also have to have my own hair and eye color? Or be the same height as I am? Or have my same mental problems?

And just like that, my needle got stuck on or... or... or... or....

Then, suddenly, I had an epiphany. Oddly enough, by relying on the new norm I was finally able to stop my racing mind.

The new norm says I can self-identify as whatever I want and everyone else has to accept that, right? At least openly.

So if it's socially acceptable that I "identify" in real life as Whatever I Want, problem solved.

I'll identify as a woman when I'm writing a female character, as a Mexican of either gender when I'm writing a Mexican character or as a buffalo of either gender when I'm writing a buffalo character.

No, really.

I can identify as a rose when I'm writing about a rose bush, except when I'm feeling particularly prickly, like right now. Then I'll identify as a thorn. The possibilities, endless as they are, caused my mind to begin racing again.

Then it dawned on me: I already self-identify as a writer. Therefore I can write whatever I want.

Woohoo!

By the way, happy summer solstice. May it be a great summer for everyone.

For various reasons, I didn't get to the WIP until 11. I found all sorts of distractions. I think I'm doing that delay thing again. I don't want the story to end, so I'm putting off writing it.

Incidentally, for those of you who followed the Critical Voice book as I wrote it, this is another example of turning the fear around.

I look forward to seeing where the story will go from here and how it will end, but I don't want it to end. I have zero fear of rejection, but why would I want something to end when I'm enjoying it so much?

Anyway, I'm still halfway hopeful my characters will throw me a curve today so the story will continue for awhile. I guess we'll see.

Well, the story didn't quite wrap today. Nor did the characters throw that hoped-for curve. Yet.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Licensing Learn Along" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/licensing-learn-along/>.

See Robert J. Sadler's "A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/a-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words/>. I suspect this one will spawn some discussion.

See "Editing Overused Words and a Peek at 2019's Banished Words" at <https://terryodell.com/editing-overused-words-and-a-peek-at-2019s-banished-words/>. Take along a shaker of salt.

Fiction Words: 1705

Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3865

Writing of Sam Loredo and the Point of No Return (novel? novella? we'll see)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803

Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838

Day 3..... 4247 words. Total words to date..... 8085

Day 4..... 2540 words. Total words to date..... 10625

Day 5..... 2495 words. Total words to date..... 13120
Day 6..... 1591 words. Total words to date..... 14719
Day 7..... 1705 words. Total words to date..... 16424

Total fiction words for the month..... 43760
Total fiction words for the year..... 349865
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22210
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 177770
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 527635

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... X
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 7
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[Robert J. Sadler](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, June 22](#)

[June 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Well, my son was coming down to spend the weekend with us, but the interstate between here and Flagstaff was closed near Phoenix due to a wildfire. So he ended up having to turn around and go back to Flag.

It's all right. We'll see him again soon.

In the meantime, I slept for only a few hours, restlessly, and finally got up. But I was wide awake, so I came to the Hovel and went straight to the WIP.

It wrapped as a novella after an hour and a half or so of writing.

Now I'm gonna check for items of interest, and then I'm going back inside a get a few more hours of sleep.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Michael Lockhart's "Words—To Take Your Heart Away" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/words-to-take-your-heart-away/>.

See "Challengers Doing Great!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/challengers-doing-great/>.

See "How To Create A Good Leader" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/how-to-create-a-good-leader.html>. It's been my experience that those things in the article are true. However, the character reveals those traits as the story unfolds. There is no "creating" involved.

See "30 Free Ebooks" at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/30-free-ebooks.html>. Free ebooks, plus maybe some marketing tips for your own work.

Fiction Words: 1473

Nonfiction Words: 220 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1693

Writing of Sam Loredano and the Point of No Return (novella)

Day 1..... 2803 words. Total words to date..... 2803
Day 2..... 1035 words. Total words to date..... 3838
Day 3..... 4247 words. Total words to date..... 8085
Day 4..... 2540 words. Total words to date..... 10625
Day 5..... 2495 words. Total words to date..... 13120
Day 6..... 1591 words. Total words to date..... 14719
Day 7..... 1705 words. Total words to date..... 16424
Day 8..... 1473 words. Total words to date..... 17897 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22430
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 177990
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 529328

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Micheale Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, June 23](#)

[June 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Happy Anniversary
- * My first readers
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Happy Actual Anniversary to my wife, who's put up with me for roughly 60 years, ever since June 23, 1984.

I turn out so much work so often my first readers are somewhat overworked. I hope they'll continue to provide input as they have so graciously for the past several novels, but I'm calling for backup.

If any of you would like to serve as first readers, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I'd like to have at least 5 or 6 first readers so I can spread the load a bit more lightly.

The requirements are simple:

1. Just Read.
2. If something pops out at you as you read, jot it down and let me know. Those things might be

- * repeated or wrong words (waste for waist, etc.)
- * any inconsistency (character wearing a blue coat going in and a brown coat coming out, character name change, etc.)
- * misspellings
- * information that strikes you as erroneous
- * and anything else that stops or confuses you.

In other words, don't "look for" things. Just suspend your sense of disbelief, read for pleasure and note things that pop out at you. Just as you do when you read anything for pleasure.

There are specific things I don't want too. For more information, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

You get to read the story before anyone else does. I also include your name in the credits and send you a free copy of the finished product. And there are other perks.

After a fairly long shopping trip to Sierra Vista yesterday and very little sleep the night before, I crashed for ten hours last night.

Rolled out at 3 this morning, my mind racing. I started and stopped this Journal entry three times this morning. My mind is all over the place. (grin)

I'm thinking I need to

- * start a newsletter,
- * put together the nonfiction book on Critical Voice
- * apply the input from one first reader to my previous novel
- * put together a few issues of my monthly magazine
- * read (aloud) the novella I just finished (vs. sending it to my first readers, who are overworked and besides, they have their own stuff to work on)
- * view/listen to the Learn Along videos and
- * start a new novel.

Because after all, I need to publish and promote the stuff I've written.

(My subconscious whines) "But if I don't write new stuff I won't have anything to publish and promote."

And writing is fun. The other stuff, not so much. But it has to be done. Everybody says so. (grin)

I (probably) won't write any fiction today, so I'll just leave this here for now. I'll come back later and let you know about the day.

I read the novella I just finished to my wife. It was a quick read. I liked it. She liked it. Tomorrow I'll put together a cover, get it out to my donors and get it on the publishing schedule.

Wow. I got involved watching a baseball game and almost forgot to file the Journal today. Oops. Anyway, here it is. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Dawn Turner's "Write What You Want to Read – Introduction" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/write-what-you-want-to-read-introduction/>. Absolutely great post.

See "Quick Saturday Post" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/quick-saturday-post/>.

See “Writing In Medias Res” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/writing-in-medias-res.html>. A few gems.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 580 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 580

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23010
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 178570
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 529908

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dawn Turner](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, June 24](#)

[June 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Of particular importance
- * Topic: Brief, Grouchy Thoughts on Publishing
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

In her June 22 post on PWW, Michaele Lockhart wrote about the importance of word choice. It was an excellent post, one that I thought would serve as a catalyst for dozens of comments.

It did not.

Early this morning, I realized why. Word choice is a topic about which any group of craft-wise and craft-serious writers could talk for days—or weeks—on end and never say the same thing twice.

So I left a comment on the post this morning that barely skimmed the surface of only two examples. You can read the post and the comments at <http://prowriterswriting.com/words-to-take-your-heart-away/>.

To see only a few of my other efforts to discuss this topic, see

[Write. What. You. Mean.](#)

[On Specificity and Clarity in Writing](#) and

[Human Parts Do Not Have Human Traits.](#)

Word choice matters. And if you're a writer, both building your vocabulary (adding words) and enhancing it (exploring the connotations of those words) should matter in the extreme.

Topic: Brief, Grouchy Thoughts on Publishing

As you know, recently I've been vascillating. I want to get back to writing fiction, but I have publishing things to do.

I take great pleasure in writing. The only pleasure I get from publishing is that after it's done, I get to write again.

Maybe it's so difficult for me to stay on Heinlein's Rule 4 ("You must put it on the market") because publishing is not an accomplishment. Publishing is only the culmination of an accomplishment. It isn't an end in itself. It's the necessary means to only a *possible, hoped-for* end that I can neither foretell nor foresee.

Publishing is the making available of what I've accomplished to others, for their possible—no guarantees—edification (nonfiction) or entertainment (fiction).

Publishing ends the possibility of personal involvement and control. Whatever results occur from the act of publishing reside in the realm of dreams, not goals.

That even goes to this Journal. I enjoy writing it, sharing my thoughts and so on. But that last part—the actual publication of the Journal at the end of the day—bores me almost to tears.

Each day I spend about a half-hour moving mechanically through the publishing process:

- * adding and subtracting numbers,
- * updating my word-count spreadsheet,
- * copying and pasting what I've written to the Journal website,

- * copying and pasting the resulting post to a Word document for posterity, and then
- * prepping the Notepad document for the next day's entries.

Again, writing the Journal is fun. Publishing it is sheer drudgery, and if it took longer than a half-hour, the Journal might not exist at all.

Apparently I'm a pleasure-based (goal-based) life form.

I can control how many words per day I write and how many stories or novels or nonfiction books I write. So those all fall within the realm of reality (goals).

But I cannot control how many copies a nonfiction book or short story or novel sells, or even whether readers are educated by my nonfiction or entertained by my fiction. Those are dreams.

So the necessity of publishing marks the end of my control and opens the door only to possibilities. And for that reason, it ranks way up there on my personal list of unpleasant tasks.

For most of my life, I've approached unpleasant tasks with a question and a statement. The question is, "If I don't do it, who will?" The statement is the less-dramatic but more-poignant old Mexican saying: "Lo que no puede remediarse debe ser tolerado." ("What cannot be remedied must be tolerated.")

So there you have it. Publishing is a necessary unpleasantness, merely something to be tolerated.

To maintain the status of my fiction writing as the reward it is, I'll dedicate today and possibly tomorrow to publishing tasks.

Rolled out at 2, researched and wrote the stuff above, then checked for items of interest. Not much out there.

I created a cover for and formatted the Sam Loredano novella I just finished, now titled Change of Plans. I'll get that out to donors later today.

The rest of the day will be spent in publishing hell as I work on other unproductive things.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Sean Monaghan's "Your first draft stinks, and other fallacies" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/your-first-draft-stinks-and-other-fallacies/>.

See "How To Investigate Serial Murder" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/how-to-investigate-serial-murder/>.

See “Behold! (The Power of Observation when Crafting a Mystery)” (“...on the challenges of incorporating an animal character in a mystery novel”) at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/behold-the-power-of-observation-when-crafting-a-mystery.html>.

See “Mundania Has Closed” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/06/mundania-has-closed.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 760 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 760

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 179330
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 530668

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sean Monaghan](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, June 25](#)

[June 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Early wrap up
- * Still looking
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“Truth, like light, blinds. Falsehood, on the contrary, is a beautiful twilight that enhances every object.” Albert Camus (via The Passive Voice)

As a guy who puts the truth in its proper perspective (lies) for a living, I really like this quote. Of course, I substituted “Fiction” for “Falsehood.” (grin)

Yesterday I created a cover and promo doc and distributed the Sam Loredano novella, now titled Change of Plans, to D2D, Amazon, Smashwords, and BundleRabbit. I also sent it to my donors and first readers, the latter as a gift for their hard work.

Then I applied the changes I agreed with from one first reader to the novel, In the Cantina at Noon. I already had the cover for it. Tomorrow I’ll prepare the promo doc and put it up for pre-order. It will release on July 1.

I started at around 3 a.m. and wrapped a little over 13 hours later at 4:20 p.m. Ugh. I hate working! (grin)

Later tomorrow I’ll look into putting together several issues of my personal magazine. I’ve pretty much decided that’s going to be a monthly sampler. Each issue will contain a novel or novella, a few short stories, some poems and maybe some articles.

Still looking for a few more readers to serve as first readers for my novels. If you’re interested, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Rolled out at 4 this morning. Late start, but I’ve found that only speeds up my morning routine, all the stuff I do before I start writing (or working). So I guess it all evens out.

I almost forgot I have a doctor appointment today at 2. Just routine. Still, I should be able to get a lot done before that.

I wrote a promo doc for In the Cantina at Noon, then uploaded the whole thing to D2D, Amazon and Smashwords for release on July 1.

My plan (sort of) was to begin compiling the first edition of my magazine/sampler. But around 9:30 I started reading through the the Critical Mind book. So I guess I’ll do that first and get it out there.

Turns out I’m adding quite a bit to it. I added over 600 words to the Introduction alone.

I’ll file this now so you have it and I’ll talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Getting Ready...” at <https://www.deanwesleymsmith.com/getting-ready/>.

See “Free Fiction Monday: Spaceships in the Desert” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/24/free-fiction-monday-spaceships-in-the-desert-2/>.

See “33 Romance Publishers Open to Direct Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/33-romance-publishers-open-to-direct-submissions/>.

See “A Search for Validation?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/a-search-for-validation/>.

See “DIY Massage for Writers” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/diy-massage-for-writers.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1630 (460, Journal; 1170, Critical Voice book)

Total words for the day: 1630

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233

Total fiction words for the year..... 351338

Total nonfiction words for the month... 24230

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 179790

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 531128

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, June 26](#)

[June 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: I Almost² (Squared)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“All generalizations are dangerous, even this one.” Alexandre Dumas

Topic: I Almost² (Squared)

1. I almost tossed out the Critical Voice book this morning.

After all, pretty much everything in the book flies in the face of one lie or another (DWS calls them “myths”) that writers have been taught over the years.

But if you’re one of the minority who were looking forward to the book, don’t sweat it. I will publish it.

The book is part of my way of paying forward the greatest gifts I’ve ever received when it comes to writing: Heinlein’s Rules, Writing Into the Dark, and Quieting the Critical Voice.

I figure maybe 100 writers out of a million will buy it and maybe 10 of those who buy it might actually try the techniques I outlined in it instead of dismissing them out of hand.

But if you are one of those who buy and read the book, and if you elect to try the suggestions I included in it, be prepared for ridicule.

And be prepared for the fact that, incredible as it sounds, the ridicule will most often come from other writers (and would-be writers).

1². I also almost published a topic here titled “On the Harm of Generalizations.”

But nope. Those who understand that one-size-fits-all blanket statements are harmful already get it, and those who don’t probably never will.

Today at long last, I finally fully understand why Dean Wesley Smith advised me years ago to never tell anyone I write only one draft, cleanly, the first time through.

Of course, it’s too late for me. I’ve been blabbing about it for years. A few people have benefitted. Most have not. But I’m thankful for that few.

To those few, if I may carry through Dean's advice, when anyone asks how many drafts *you* write, I strongly recommend you look them directly in the eyes and say, "Four. I write four drafts." Then the self-appointed critics out there will nod sagely and move on to the next topic.

What you *don't* tell them is that the first draft was the idea popping into your head, the second draft was writing it, the third was the ten minutes it took to run the spellchecker, and the fourth was the half-hour it took to apply fixes per your first reader's input.

Because according to most writers out there (generalization alert), anything that's written "fast" or in only one draft can't possibly be any good, could stand to be improved, etc. So don't leave them any room to tell you any of that. Tell them you write four drafts.

Many of these self-proclaimed critics are folks who rewrite X number of times.

I get their point. I do. And I agree fully.

1. Yes, my work *might* be improved if I went over it one more time.
2. Likewise, and following their reasoning, *their* work, even after X number of rewrites, *might* be improved if they rewrote it X+1. Or X+2. Or (let's cut to the chase) X+Y, where Y is a variable that can stretch all the way to infinity.

This is a belief that could easily lead to endless rewrites of one work instead of moving forward and practicing (writing the next novel). As to how they can't see that, frankly, I am stymied.

On the other hand, rewriting might also actually *harm* a work, and that is not a risk I'm willing to take.

At the very minimum, when you rewrite you're teaching your creative subconscious that you don't trust it and you're giving more power to the critical voice.

Hey, different strokes. Besides which, I don't write drafts. I write stories.

But in the future, instead of wasting my time trying to explain the fallacy of sweeping generalizations, I'll try to say nothing at all. And if I can't hold my foolish tongue, I'll try to remember to smile and say, "Y'know, when you're right, you're right." Which of course, says nothing at all.

Then I'll go back to writing, publishing, and making money.

Rolled out a little late at 3:30, checked the internet, then went straight to the Critical Voice book. Then I checked the internet again (I knew it was a mistake wandering into that void again) and wrote the topic above.

Back to the Critical Voice book, then back here to post my numbers for the day.

Finished the Critical Voice book (cycling and formatting) at around 11:20. I'll take a break now, then come back to write the promo doc, find cover art and create the cover, then publish the thing and get it off my desk.

I added 1210 words to it today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Lifetime Workshop Subscription" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lifetime-workshop-subscription/>.

See Alison Holt's "Shelves of Buttons and Ribbons" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/shelves-of-buttons-and-ribbons/>.

See "Ads for Authors Who Hate Math" (video) at <https://www.crowdcast.io/e/ads-for-authors-who-hate/register>. When you get there, click the blue Watch Replay button to the right. You might have to enter your email, etc.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 2050 (840, Journal; 1210, CM book)

Total words for the day: 2050

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233

Total fiction words for the year..... 351338

Total nonfiction words for the month... 25070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 180630

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 531968

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, June 27](#)

[June 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Recap
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“The ... published book, is not the holy grail. The story, the thing that the writer has created, is the holy grail. Before publication of any kind. Because publication is a license.” Kristine Kathryn Rusch (see “Of Interest”)

KKR's post today is nothing short of earth-shattering. Let s/he who has ears listen.

I really thought I'd get the Critical Voice book finalized and distributed yesterday. Didn't happen. So I'll do that today.

Had trouble finding cover art. A guy sitting at a desk frustrated and tugging at his hair would be good.

But the more I think of it, the more I'm thinking of just slapping a black cover on it with the title in white letters and shipping it.

I got over myself, created a good cover (it might remind you of something else [grin]), created the promo doc and the Smashwords edition, then uploaded to D2D, Amazon, Smashwords and BundleRabbit.

And just like that, it's off my desk.

The book is officially \$8.99.

You can currently order it from [Smashwords](#), or you can order directly from me by sending \$8 (11% off) via PayPal to harveystanbrough@gmail.com. (Also send me an email to let me know which version you want: Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF.)

Rolled out at 2. I got all of the above done before 6. Now for a break up to the house.

My wife has all day off on Thursday from now on. Later today, if I have time, I'll begin putting together the Stanbrough Monthly Sampler.

I'll report on the rest of today in a recap tomorrow. Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Rethinking The Writing Business (Part One)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/06/26/business-musings-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-one/>. This is so big, in my mind I've already preordered whatever book she comes up with out of this.

See Dan Baldwin's "Worshipping False Gods" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/worshipping-false-gods/>. A truly great post.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 350 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 350

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25420
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 180980
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 532318

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dan Baldwin](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, June 28](#)

[June 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Thanks
- * Recap
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

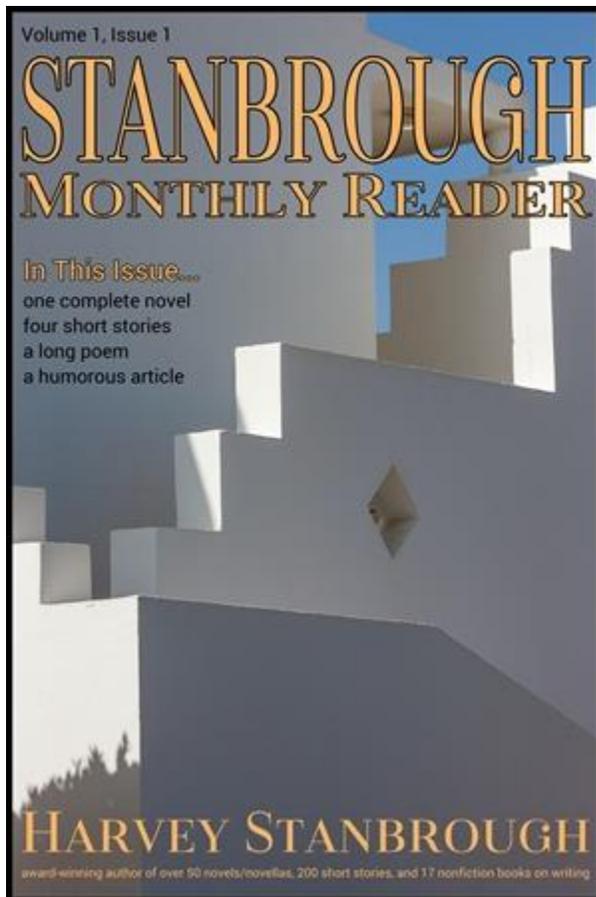
Thanks to Diane Darcy and Phillip McCollum. Both for their comments on yesterday's post and for spreading the word about the book. Phillip actually plugged it on his blog. (grin)

If any of you bought the Amazon version of Quiet the Critical Voice (and Write Fiction) and found it doesn't have a table of contents, I'm not sure why they did that. If you email me, I'll send you a Kindle version that DOES have a TOC. A table of contents is valuable in any nonfiction book.

Also, just so you know, you may feel free to copy anything I put on my blog posts for your own personal use. Obviously it's all copyrighted material so you shouldn't disseminate it (especially for money), but I'm putting it out there publicly, so feel free.

As I told Diane, that's one reason I put a tab on the website pointing to the Critical Voice posts, so you could find them more easily.

I think you'll get more out of the information if you buy and read the book after having read the initial posts, but that's all up to you. The posts are my way of giving back a little.



Yesterday I worked on putting together the first issue of Stanbrough Monthly Reader. (That's what I've decided to call it.) To the left is a mock-up cover of approximately how the first issue will look.

Mostly that was a trial run. Interesting process. I'll detail out some of that below for anyone who might be interested in doing something similar.

As it stands, I'm thinking each issue will contain a full novel, four or five short stories, a long poem (or a few shorter ones) and an article or two. I'm starting with my stand-alone (not in series) novels.

Stanbrough Monthly Reader won't really be a "magazine" (requires an ISSN) so much as a monthly series of boxed sets, albeit of different kinds of writing.

The articles I include probably will be humorous personal essays I wrote back in the day. I might also include a section for writers. I haven't decided yet. If I do include a section for writers, that will contain posts that have appeared in this blog at one time or another.

By comparison... when DWS started Smith's Monthly, it was a personal challenge he set for himself. Because he's so prolific, he wanted to fill his own magazine each month with new, original work. Smith's Monthly was (is) filled with a new novel and new short stories each month, as well as all or part of a nonfiction book, usually serialized.

I thought about doing that — after all, writing a novel each month is not difficult for me — but the pressure of trying to fill a magazine every month was immediate and all but overwhelming. Doing so would suck all the fun out of the writing process, so I won't follow his model.

Stanbrough Monthly Reader will be more of a sampler. It will be filled with previously published work, but will offer readers a broad sample of my work each month.

And I can guarantee every issue will contain something that nobody's ever seen before. So that's what will make it unique and (I hope) worth the subscription price to purchase.

All of that being said, and having built most of the first issue yesterday, I'm going to take my time putting it together.

In addition to manually creating the actual books, I want to set up a separate website just for the magazine. Then I'll also do some little things, like linking from this site and HarveyStanbrough.com to the new website and so on.

When I DO launch, I'll have the first several issues ready to go.

My goal date for the first issue is January 1, 2020, but knowing me it will probably launch sooner than that. And I don't doubt for a second that some of the above will change in the interim. Just the way my mind works. (grin)

Any questions on all this silliness, just email me. You know the address.

Rolled out at 3, wrote much of the stuff above, took a couple of breaks. I hope to work a little more on the first issue of Stanbrough Monthly Reader today. The first issue, once it's finalized, will also become a template for future issues.

In the meantime, though, I'm going to "attend" one of the online workshops I received from supporting the Diving Universe Kickstarter campaign. I'm getting behind on my learning a bit. (grin)

My goal is to start a new novel on July 1. No idea what it will be or in what world I'll write it, but I need to get back to writing fiction.

Between now and then, I'll attend other lectures, workshops or the learn-along, fine-tune the template for future issues of Stanbrough Monthly Reader, set up the website, and begin learning the new cover-design program I bought (Affinity Publisher <https://affinity.serif.com/en-us/publisher/>). Most of their products are intuitive, so it shouldn't be too difficult.

So I'll be having a lot of fun for the next few days. Of course, I'll tell you about some of it here in the Journal.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Still In A Bundle Going Now!” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/still-in-a-bundle-going-now/>. I recommend scrolling down to “Licensing Learn Along” and read what he wrote there.

See “New Punctuation?” at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/new-punctuation.html>. (Ignore his comment on “run-on sentences.” He’s thinking, erroneously, a run-on sentence is simply one with a lot of words. It is not. Interesting take on the “diple” though.)

See “Introducing ‘Author Website in a Box’ (beta)” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/introducing-author-website-in-a-box-beta/>.

See “FAQs: Music to Write By” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/faqs-music-to-write-by/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 940 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 940

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 26360
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 181920
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 533258

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stanbrough Monthly Reader](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, June 29](#)

[June 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Recap
- * Quiet the Critical Voice (and Write Fiction) and Change of Plans
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

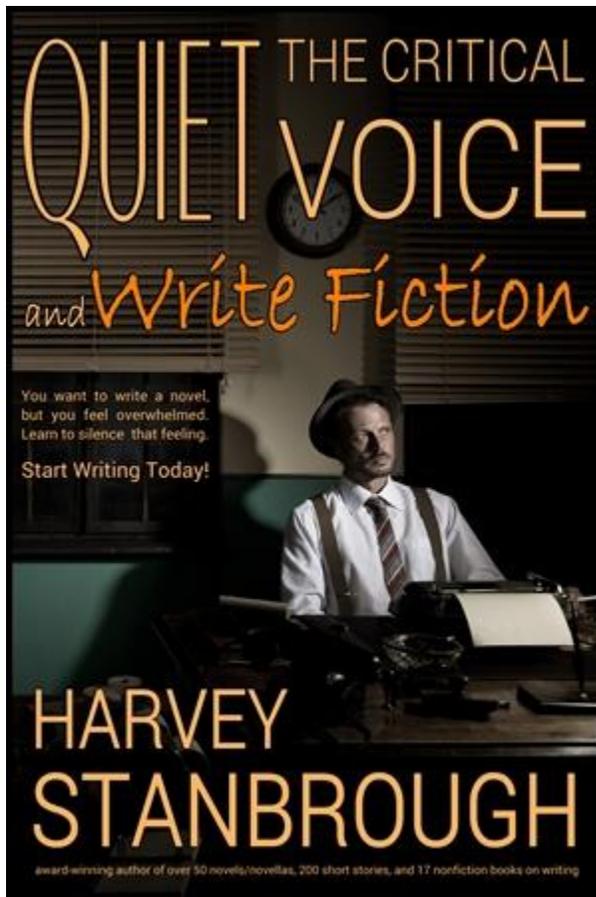
Yesterday I attended the Adding Suspense workshop and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's more of an awareness workshop than anything else, bent toward teaching the writer how to study the suspense element in other works.

For the workshop, DWS broke suspense down into five major elements, yet those elements are intertwined when at work in the novel. It was interesting to see how they interact (and are interdependent) on the micro level.

No telling how much I picked up that will seep into my subconscious and flow out through my fingers as I write. (grin)

Before you take this workshop, I strongly recommend you know how to pull the reader deep into the POV character's head, how to ground the reader deep in the setting, and how and how and when to use cliffhangers.

I didn't do much else yesterday.



For those who missed it, Quiet the Critical

Voice (and Write Fiction) is now available through all vendors via this universal link:

<https://books2read.com/u/bWRDNW>.

That's the cover for it on the left. I set the official price at \$8.99.

I found out yesterday, for some reason the Amazon edition does not have a table of contents. I'm not sure why.

I recommend you buy the book at either [Smashwords](#) — where you can download any version — or direct from me for 11% off by sending \$8 via PayPal to harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Then email me to let me know which version(s) you'd like.

Thanks for your continued support of my writing and my books.

I also recently released the novella, Change of Plans, a western romance starring Sam Lored. I won't bore you with the cover. You can see it (and find the book) at <https://books2read.com/u/b6jN2M>.

Rolled out at 3 this morning, groggy but determined.

Like yesterday, today and tomorrow also will be dedicated to learning. I'll watch a series of tutorials on [Affinity Publisher](#), then spend some time practicing what I learn.

Sometime this weekend I also plan to virtually attend Dean's Pacing workshop again, just to see whether I glean anything new this time around.

Of course this being the weekend, both days will be relatively short.

And as I've been telling my subconscious, who's chomping at the bit, we'll begin writing fiction again on Monday. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Michael Lockhart's "Random Musings on Controversy" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/random-musings-on-controversy/>. Great post.

See "Paul McCartney Took My Night" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/paul-mccartney-took-my-night/>.

See "False Crime" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/false-crime.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 380 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 380

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 26740
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 182300
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 533638

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe Hartlaub](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Micheale Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, June 30](#)

[June 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Recap
- * Topic: On Building Suspense and Creating Tension
- * The midpoint of the year
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Yesterday I remembered I hadn't updated my writer website at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#). So I added *In the Cantina at Noon* and *Change of Plans* to the Westerns page, then created new book pages for each of those.

Then I added *Quiet the Critical Voice* to the nonfiction books page. Sometime soon I probably should create a separate book page for each of those, but for the time being prospective readers can see the description at the buy link.

I also need to update the publisher website at [StoneThreadPublishing.com](#) soon. Maybe. That can wait a little while, as I'm seriously considering combining it with my writer website.

How seriously? I've already changed the title of the writer website to [Harvey Stanbrough and StoneThread Publishing](#). (grin)

My reasoning? I've had the separate publisher website up for at least 4 years, primarily to attract book buyers (bookstores). To date, I haven't received even one request for discounted copies. So what am I gonna do?

Topic: On Building Suspense and Creating Tension

I mentioned that I recently listened to a 6-week classic workshop from DWS titled "Adding Suspense." It was a useful workshop, but it became much more useful once I substituted "tension" for "suspense" as he spoke.

Suspense, of course, is not only an aspect of good fiction, but an old genre (think Alfred Hitchcock) that morphed into the modern thriller genre. Suspense remains also a tiny subgenre loosely bundled under mystery.

But aside from genres, suspense also has always been an aspect of fiction. Because I enjoy living in the POV character's head as I write, I (and the reader) experience not only the character's thoughts and reasons (motivations) for doing things, but his or her psyche.

That alone creates "psychological suspense," and those two words comprise an internet search tag for almost every book I've written.

That is why I never tell writers to "get deep into the POV character's head." Such advice presumes that you are external to the character. It sets you a chore, gives you a task. You have to "get into" the POV character's head.

Of course, that's all silliness and it requires an extra, unnecessary step.

The character already lives inside your mind. So you don't have to "get into" anything. You only have to get out of your own way. How?

Forget that you're a writer. Forget that you're telling a story, even that you're recording your character's story.

Instead, BE the POV character in every scene.

Don't try to figure out (critical mind) who he is. Just be the character, go with the flow, and let him write through your fingers.

What does this have to do with building suspense?

Building suspense is all about pacing, grounding the reader, and information flow (how and when you dole out information to the reader).

Maybe more importantly, suspense is all about when to suddenly STOP the information flow (with a cliffhanger) at the end of each scene.

Then there's white space.

But if your pacing was right as you led up to the cliffhanger, and if the cliffhanger was strong enough, and if you ground the reader again in the opening of the next scene on the other side of the white space—

The reader will flash past the white space and keep reading. The ability to have that effect on the reader constitutes writing a "page-turner."

But how to do all of that?

As I've written here before, most importantly,

1. Take. Your. Time.

Allow your POV character the time to describe the setting and his opinion of the setting. DON'T worry about whether what he's describing is important to the scene. If the POV character notices (sees, smells, feels, etc.) it, it matters. Don't argue. Just write it.

In the novella I recently finished, a reader emailed me to point out several details I'd written in the scene. Those details, he wrote, were "just enough to keep me on edge; to keep me reading; to cause me to tighten up my groin, to curl my toes, to turn the page." (Thanks, S.T.)

That's suspense.

To drill down just a little by way of example, in one scene early in that novella the POV character observed a man:

The man lay flat on his back, arms splayed. He was huge with a big square head. An angry red scar ran from the corner of his right eye almost to his mouth. His hat and a beat-up Winchester lay a few feet away. His black vest hung open, revealing a rough-cut thin silver star on the left chest of his sweat-stained white shirt. And he was very dead.

From a strictly Author perspective, I might have written "The man lay flat on his back, arms splayed. And he was very dead." It still probably would have been a good story. It would have created a little tension, maybe, but no suspense. And it wouldn't have been a page-turner.

But I took my time. I let the POV character observe, and I wrote down everything he observed *and his opinions of it*. Again, if the POV character notices it, it's important.

In the excerpted paragraph above, the man, the fact his arms were splayed, the red scar, his black vest, the thin silver star and the sweat-stained white shirt were all details. The man's hat and his Winchester were additional details.

That the man was "huge, with a big square head," that the red scar was "angry," and that the thin silver star was "rough-cut" were the POV character's *opinions* of the setting.

Those miniscule details added an extra layer of depth to the scene and, as it turned out, foreshadowed events yet to come.

Notice, I wrote "as it turned out."

When I wrote that scene, I had no notion of what would happen later in the story. None.

And I didn't cycle back from a later scene and add those details. I didn't have to because I *trusted* my POV character to tell his own story. I *trusted* him to know why those details were important even though I, as the writer, had no clue.

In other words, I wrote off into the dark.

2. Use appropriate pacing.

The scene I mentioned above was written in two paragraphs. The first was 69 words and four lines on the page (medium length) and contained five sentences, each focused on a particular view. You can see that in the excerpt above.

The second paragraph of that scene was 65 words and contained four sentences. The final sentence in both was a stunted mini-cliffhanger. The first consisted of five words: “And he was very dead.” The second consisted of only four words. Here’s the second paragraph of that scene:

The top of his forehead lay open with a wide black gouge, brain matter and blood mixing with the dust on his face and in his brown, stringy hair. His worn, brown-canvas pants were topped with a leather belt darkened by sweat. Below them, his scuffed brown boots moved once, first one, then the other, as if trying to walk away. Then they lay still.

In both paragraphs I used longer sentences to convey the rush of information the POV character was taking in, followed by a very short, terse sentence to put a cap on it. The longer sentences in each paragraph enabled the reader to take-in the details in the same way the POV character took them in.

The short, terse final sentence in each paragraph added tension. The details and POV character opinions in the paragraphs themselves added suspense.

3. Trust. Your. Character.

Trust your character. All the way through the story.

I didn’t write this story, folks. My POV character wrote it, albeit through my fingertips.

The two paragraph mini-scene above was only the fourth mini-scene in the story, and the POV character wrote all of it.

The mini-scene that opened the story was calm and mild, even serene; the second was exciting, with the POV character sensing danger and averting and resolving the danger; the third ramped-up the excitement and tension with the POV character approaching a large rock (behind which he found his would-be assailant) to see whether he’d resolved the danger; and the fourth mini-scene was the two paragraphs above.

For instructional purposes, I’ve decided to send you a PDF copy of the whole story if you want it.

I ask only that you read it through the first time for pleasure, then go back and break it down if you want to see the settings, pacing, POV character descriptions and opinions, etc.

If you’d like to see the importance of pacing (as a writer) and enjoy a good story (as a reader), email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

*

In the odd way that certain things seem to run in cycles, James Scott Bell, in today's "Of Interest" section, posted "Let No Good Tension Go Unstretched." Take along a salt shaker.

The midpoint of the year is a good time for self-assessment. Mine is below for all to see. I'm a little disappointed that I'm on pace to write only 700,000 words of fiction this year. I don't doubt that will improve as I go along, but I have to wonder how much.

Still, this is a valuable assessment as it redoubles my desire to write more fiction, tell more stories, in my endless pursuit to hit 1,000,000 words of fiction in a given year. (grin)

On the plus side, I'm also on pace to write well over 1,000,000 words of fiction and nonfiction combined this year. So that's good. I guess. But I'll still reach for the fiction overall goal.

Maybe I need to go back to a daily word count.

To hit 1,000,000 words of publishable fiction THIS year, I would have to write another 648,662 words this year, an average of 108,111 words per month for the next six months (184 days). I've done that before, so I know I could do it again.

BUT (to get specific), that would mean writing an average of 3526 words per day every day for the rest of the year. Chances are slim that will happen.

For comparison, in the first 181 days, I wrote 351,338 words of fiction, or on average, a paltry 1941 words per day.

Ridiculous. And yet some see me as prolific. How silly is that? (grin)

Rolled out at 3 this morning. Wrote the stuff above.

Today will be another day of learning, whether practicing with Affinity Publisher, reviewing another WMG Publishing lecture or workshop, or both. Or something else altogether. (grin)

Hope you have a great Sunday as well. Tomorrow I get to write again. Woohoo! (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Trademark for Fiction Writers..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/trademark-for-fiction-writers/>. He's begun the book on trademark.

See "Let No Good Tension Go Unstretched" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/06/let-no-good-tension-go-unstretched.html>.

See “My Father’s Fire – A New Mystery Novelette” at <https://phillipmccollum.com/my-fathers-fire-a-new-mystery-novelette/>. Phillip plugged my nonfiction book on critical voice a few days ago, so I thought I’d return the favor. (grin)

Note: I vet every item in “Of Interest.” No matter what I think personally of any particular source or topic, I will pass along a link to anything from which I think you might glean gems. On the other hand, I will never pass along a link to any information that I believe might actually harm the writing process.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1900 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1900

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 45233
Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
Total nonfiction words for the month... 28640
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 184200
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 535538

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Adding Suspense](#), [Cliffhangers](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Free Offer](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pacing](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Suspense](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, July 1](#)

[July 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Recap
- * Topic: On Writing This Journal and Teaching
- * Daily diary

- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

Via the Passive Voice, “People are always asking me, ‘What do you want people to say about you a hundred years from now?’ I want them to say, ‘Dang, don’t she still look good for her age?’” Dolly Parton

Yesterday I updated my production spreadsheet to get it ready for July. Then I looked over my notes from the Pacing workshop and decided I didn’t need to view it again.

Topic: On Writing This Journal and Teaching

Yesterday, I also looked way back on some blog posts I wrote back in the early to mid-1990s when I was still firmly entrenched as a Stage 1 writer. From the early 2000s through 2013, I was still mired in Stage 1 and 2 when I was writing at all.

So what are these “stages”?

From Dean Wesley Smith’s book, [Stages of a Fiction Writer](#) (yes, I recommend it),

Stage one writers focus only on the sentences, the grammar, the polish of a manuscript. They give lip service to better characters, endings, and so on, but will spend ten drafts getting that “perfect” first line because they heard somewhere that was important.

Stage two is a transition stage. Writers are starting to worry about story, but still focus on words and sentences.

Stage three writers have expanded out to be aware of story and characters and they notice pacing and so much more. Words are only tools to be used. They have a solid grasp of story, character, and setting and are constantly trying to get better at all three. They are writing at a decent pace. Early stage three writers will still rewrite at times to fix story, but middle and late third stage writers seldom rewrite.

Stage four writers are in the complete control of all aspects of writing and they’re still studying masters. What is important to a stage four writer is what the reader is experiencing at any given moment in the story.

Today, I’m a late Stage 3 writer and proceeding (practicing).

Pre-2014 my attention was tightly focused on things I already knew but didn’t *trust* that I knew: words, sentence structure, being sure each paragraph covered one full topic or subtopic (no more and no less), the use of punctuation as it was taught in school (how to respond to it as a reader), etc.

I didn't teach writing back then, though I did teach what I knew—mechanics—like sentence structure, punctuation (but for writers), the difference between phrases and clauses, what constitutes a run-on sentence or comma-splice, and dialogue.

I can still teach those mechanics, and I sometimes do (usually in conjunction with an edit) for those who need it.

But by and large, most professional fiction writers (mostly Stage 2 and 3) already have a solid grounding in those essentials.

Plus, a good copyeditor will catch and correct 99% of those little mechanical errors.

Aside #1—Though you should be careful that the copyeditor him/herself has at least a clue when it comes to things like sentence structure and punctuation. Copyeditors, like literary agents, are not licensed.

Nowadays I'm more interested in teaching (mostly through this Journal and mostly free) actual Writing—the techniques that lead to Story—and Story itself.

Fortunately, most of what I teach can be boiled down to one word: Trust.

If you TRUST that you have absorbed the mechanics, the simple act of trusting will automatically shift your focus from those mechanics to Story.

That shift, plus continued practice (not hovering), will move you from being a Stage 1 or 2 writer solidly into Stage 3. There you will begin to consider the effect the various aspects of your story (pacing, setting, POV, depth, characterization, etc.) will have on the reader. And you will be practicing reader manipulation.

You'll come to know instinctively how to pull the reader deep into the story. You'll come to know instinctively how to increase the reader's physical heart rate. You'll come to know instinctively when to speed up the pacing and when and how to slow it down to give the reader an intentional break.

You'll come to know how the reader is actually reacting to those various aspects of your story. (How do I know I was right about what readers were thinking and how they reacted? They've told me.)

In other words, in making that shift, you will actually release focus on what you're writing and Just Write the Story.

Your conscious-mind-focus will be on THAT you write vs. WHAT you write. Suddenly you will zealously guard your WIP against the intrusion of not only your own critical mind but against input from others.

And best of all, suddenly you won't worry about your WIP because if you TRUST, the WIP will take care of itself. At that point, all that will remain is for you to show up, put your fingers on the keyboard, and allow them to move under the direction of your POV character. Welcome to Stage 3.

At that point, if you think (conscious mind) at all now and then as you write, your thoughts will be on the reader.

Is the reader seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching (and feeling in an emotional way) the setting in which the scene is being played out?

If you've allowed the POV character to describe the setting and provide his opinions of it, then yes, the reader is getting it. And rapidly turning the pages of your book.

Aside #2—just so you know, if the description comes from the POV character (vs. the writer) and his opinions of the setting, you can't write "too much" description. Again, Just Write.

After all, the character is living the story; in each scene he knows what he notices and what he doesn't.

Again, you only have to Trust and don't allow your writer self—and especially your critical mind—to intrude. When you *do* allow your writer self or your critical mind to intrude, you're teaching your creative subconscious that you don't trust it.

When does that happen? While you're still in Stage 2: When YOU the writer steal the story from your POV character. When YOU the writer describe a setting (instead of letting the POV character describe it). When YOU the writer go over a finished manuscript, cutting and "tightening" and rewriting and polishing and whatever else.

To move into Stage 3, you have to trust not only that you know what you know (mechanics, etc.), but you have to trust in your characters' ability to tell their own story, albeit through your fingertips.

In other words, you have to *trust in your own ability* to write the best possible story at your current skill level.

But once you learn to Trust, all that remains is to practice. And truly, at that point the sky is the limit.

But before you can trust, you have to teach yourself to Let Go of

- * the mechanics—you have to trust that the mechanics are there
- * the fear of what might happen if you don't carefully manipulate those mechanics (which means you're manipulating the story itself)
- * the myth that your book will be "improved" if you hover over it, editing and rewriting however many times

It was interesting to look over some of those old blog posts and topics. Admittedly, from a strictly selfish standpoint, it was interesting to gauge my own progress since those days. How far I've come as a writer since back in the day when I was focused sentence by sentence on mechanics and words.

Today, things are different. Today, most of what I teach is advanced, Stage 3 writer stuff.

As a result, in my mind, I have a responsibility to the readers of this Journal just as I would have to the attendees if I were teaching a live writing seminar.

Would I teach something I know can actively harm the writing process? Would I teach something that might drag a Stage 3 writer back to fretting over words and punctuation and sentence constructions?

Uh, no. Never. Because I want to see you advance. If you need help with those mechanics, I can teach you that too, but I'll do so only in conjunction with the more advanced stuff.

I want to see you succeed, and (selfishly) I want to feel that I had a small hand in that. And maybe most importantly, I want to know you're having fun when you write. Because you can't have fun storytelling at Stage 1 and 2.

And finally, I want you to know you can trust me too.

To that end, despite how I feel personally about another writer, I will never recommend or link to a source that advocates any technique or practice that I believe would hinder or be detrimental to your writing process. Never.

On the other hand, I'm pretty much through trying to "convince" anyone of anything. Frankly, it isn't worth the hassle.

As I (with a smile) told the lady who flatly and stringently refused even to look at Heinlein's Rules because she doesn't write science fiction, "Hey, every writer's different." (grin)

Rolled out a little after 3 and looking forward to writing fiction today. At the moment, I still have no idea what I'm going to write or in what world.

Something's a little "off" with my kitten. Beginning yesterday at about 5 a.m., she's been skulking everywhere she goes, as if ducking under a ceiling only she can see while moving very carefully.

She's better this morning, after I spent more time than usual with her (outside, but where she could see me at all times), but we've yet to figure out what set off her defensive alarms.

My wife wondered aloud whether maybe an owl had tried to get her yesterday after I let her out in the dim light of pre-dawn and then came to the Hovel.

Whatever it was, I'll be watching more closely from now on, and the baby won't go outside until it's full daylight or unless I'm with her.

By 11 a.m. I'd written all of the above plus another topic for another time, but no fiction. (I was invested in the topic above.) I was also floored by Dean's new offering (see "Of Interest" below).

After a break for lunch, back to the Hovel at 11:30.

Where I continued to work on the topic above and do some other learning stuff of my own. Ran out of time, so no fiction again today. I did come up with a title that grabbed me (Marco's Way), so we'll see.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Licensing Transition" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/licensing-transition/>. This is so big, it practically took my breath away.

See Sean Monaghan's "Your First Draft Stinks, Part II: Fire Your Crit Group" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/your-first-draft-stinks-part-ii-fire-your-crit-group/>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see "Former CIA Operative Explains How Spies Use Disguises" (video) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JASUsVY5YJ8>. Extremely interesting and informative. I'd love to write a scene in which a character is removing a disguise bit by bit as he 'disappears' through a crowd.

See "How Can 1 Person Have 2 Different Sets of DNA?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/how-can-1-person-have-2-different-sets-of-dna.html>.

See "18 Themed Calls for Submissions – July 2019" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/18-themed-calls-for-submissions-july-2019/>.

Via The Passive Voice, see "Top 10 FAQs About Book Publicity and Promotion" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/07/top-10-faqs-about-book-publicity-and-promotion/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Patriotic Gestures" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/01/free-fiction-monday-patriotic-gestures-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1920 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1920

Writing of Marco's Way (novel)

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXXX
 Total fiction words for the year..... 351338
 Total nonfiction words for the month... 1920
 Total nonfiction words for the year..... 186120
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 537458

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sean Monaghan](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, July 2](#)

[July 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Recap
- * Topic: On Writing Fiction
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“It’s not Dostoevsky. It’s not going to tax your mental capacities. It’s not ahhrrt.” Judith Krantz on her writing

“I’ve been absolutely dead earnest and I’ve told the story I had in hand as best as I possibly could.” Herman Wouk on his writing

“I make no conscious effort to be tough, or hard-boiled, or grim, or any of the things I am usually called. I merely try to write as the character would write....” James M. Cain

“If your writing doesn’t keep you up at night, it won’t keep anyone else up either.” James M. Cain

“The academics don’t know that the only thing you can do for someone who wants to write is to buy him a typewriter.” James M. Cain

Topic: On Writing Fiction

Read again the quotes above.

All of them are from masterful and extremely successful writers, and the first two say better than I ever could: WHAT you write is not important; THAT you write is important.

And THAT you write is important only if you’re a writer. And then it’s important only in the same way that repairing one more automobile engine is important for a mechanic or clearing one more clogged drain is important for a plumber or preparing one more legal brief is important for a lawyer.

“Writer” isn’t some elevated calling to martyrdom (accompanied by an angelic chorus) anymore than is “Mechanic” or “Plumber” or “Lawyer.”

It’s just what we do. And we’re fortunate because it also happens to be what we love doing. I suspect not all mechanics, plumbers and lawyers can say the same.

So why spoil it by pretending what we write is precious?

At the risk of sounding egocentric, I write great stories that entertain readers and keep them turning pages.

But here’s the caveat: the stories aren’t precious or special. Like a song that lingers in the memory for an hour or a day and then fades away, the stories are nothing more than a moment’s entertainment.

And that’s all they are to me too. Even a day or two after I’ve finished writing the story, if a reader emails to ask me about a detail, chances are I won’t remember it. Chances are I’ll have to open the Word document, look up the detail and refresh my memory before I can even respond to the email.

That’s how precious my stories are. They are compilations of little black marks in a particular order that most readers happen to find entertaining. Nothing more.

I’m not surprised readers find my stories entertaining. After all, they surprised and entertained me as I wrote them, so I suspected when I published them that others would find them entertaining as well.

And there’s nothing egocentric about it. It’s basic statistics, basic probability: If your characters surprise and entertain you as you’re writing, most readers will be surprised and entertained as well.

Of all the long-term major writers I've talked with, read about or whose work I've studied, not one felt what he wrote was precious.

As Herman Wouk put it so succinctly in the quote above, in every case, they "told the story [they] had in hand as best as [they] possibly could."

Then they let it go and moved on to the next story. Which is exactly what I plan to do today.

A late addendum to the topic, the catalyst for which was another writer's blog post and the ongoing comments there—

I am stymied and mystified every time I read that a fiction writer conducts multiple "passes" on their "first draft" to "improve" it.

Seriously, how do these otherwise intelligent folks NOT understand?

Every time you change even one word that was provided by your subconscious, CREATIVE mind, you're teaching your creative subconscious that your critical mind knows better.

I know of no better or quicker way to silence your creative mind (or "stem the creative juices") and relegate the creative subconscious to the corner of your brain where the critical voice should be locked away.

It doesn't surprise me at all when those same writers also comment that they have trouble coming up with ideas.

Bail out of the hamster wheel, folks. Don't hover. Trust yourself. Trust your characters to tell their own story. Then publish it and move on. I swear to whatever God you believe in, if you follow this advice, someday you will thank me for it.

For the naysayers out there, YES, the story might be "better"—IN YOUR OPINION. But how many other readers would have liked it just as much or more if they were allowed to read in as it was originally written in your authentic, unique voice?

I personally never read a novel written by someone whom I know rewrites. There, I said it.

I can't. The whole time I'm reading (and encountering the inevitable glitches) I wonder whether the "glitch" was the result of an editing or rewriting pass.

That being said, I'm eager to read stories and novels by writers who do not rewrite. Those stories allow me unfettered access to the writer's deepest self.

Still, no, I didn't leave a comment to that effect on that writer's post. One, doing so would have been a waste of my time. Two, I'm not a great admirer of people who refuse to learn. I owe them nothing.

Rolled out late at 4 a.m., wrote most of the stuff above, then let the babies out at around 5. My little girl seems to have returned to a cat's version of normal.

I would like to come up with a new first name for the title that struck me yesterday. I feel like "Marco" just isn't it. Or maybe I don't want "Marco" to be it. Too many other connotations, the most bothersome being that echo of "Polo" every time it crosses my mind.

Still, I'll write what I was given. (grin, hint-hint, nudge-nudge)

At 10, I was finally finishing up the nonfiction stuff, adding links to "Of Interest," etc.

Kind of interesting. I don't think I've ever started a project based on only a two-word title before. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Guilty Pleasures: Goodbye To Two Of My Favorite Writers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/guilty-pleasures-goodbye-totwo-of-my-favorite-writers.html>.

Because it fits so well with today's topic, see "Cycling vs. Editing or Revising, Revisited" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/cycling-vs-editing-or-revising-revisited/>.

See "The Wit, Wisdom, and Noirs of James M. Cain" at <https://crimereads.com/the-wit-wisdom-and-noirs-of-james-m-cain/>.

See "Holy Smokes... It Is July!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/holy-smokes-it-is-july/>.

If you're a Facebook user, see "Researching Fiction and Facebook Settings" at <https://lindamayeadams.com/2019/07/02/researching-fiction-and-facebook-settings/>.

Fiction Words: 2159

Nonfiction Words: 1110 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3269

Writing of Marco's Way (novel)

Day 1..... 2159 words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 2159

Total fiction words for the year..... 353497

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3030

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 187230

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 540727

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James M. Cain](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 3](#)

[July 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * A brief note
- * Topic: On Dialogue
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

A Brief Note

My wife's birthday is tomorrow, July 4. Yes, that's what all the fireworks are really about.

Additionally, my youngest son came down last night to spend the next few days with us. As a result, my time with the Journal (and all other writing things) will be limited for the next few days.

I'll strive at least to list some items in "Of Interest" for you, and should the mood strike, I might even write a topic or two.

Otherwise, probably not a lot.

I hope you will have a pleasant Independence Day.

Topic: On Dialogue

Today in "Of Interest" you'll find a (rare) link to a Reedsy post that actually delivers mostly good information.

A few bones to pick:

1. In their rule 10, they use this example:

“Never underestimate me,” she said with a smirk.
“I wasn’t planning on it!” he replied. “You stole ‘The Unstealable Diamond,’ after all.”
“Well,” she said, “I had to find a way to get your attention.”
“You got my attention, all right.”
“I think we should celebrate with a night out,” she said. “Dinner’s on me.”
He remarked, “Dinner can be on you for the rest of our lives.”

Here’s how I would have written that example:

She smirked. “Never underestimate me.”
He frowned. “I wasn’t planning on it. You stole The Unstealable Diamond, after all.”
“Well, I had to find a way to get your attention.”
“You got my attention, all right.”
“I think we should celebrate with a night out,” she said. “Dinner’s on me.”
“Dinner can be on you for the rest of our lives.”

Just below that is a segment on How to format dialogue. Here are my notes, by their numbers:

1. DO NOT indent (begin a new paragraph) with each line of dialogue. DO indent each time a new character begins speaking or (sometimes) after the original character’s dialogue is broken by a narrative beat (she smiled, etc.).
4. Yes, if you exactly quote within a quote, use single quotation marks around the inner quote. But in this case, The Unstealable Diamond, since it’s capitalized, is the name of something. No single quotation marks.

The rest of the post is mostly valid. Where it isn’t valid, at least it isn’t harmful.

For a great deal more on writing dialogue, I recommend my award-winning Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction, which you can find at [Smashwords](#) (all eformats) or [Amazon](#).

Rolled out way late at 5 after a late night.

This writing thing never ceases to amaze me. With probably most of the day taken with visiting, I almost gave up on the idea of adding to my WIP this morning.

Honestly, I even thought about tanking the whole thing and starting over (or starting a whole new project) on July 7 or 8. (Critical mind, anyone?)

Then I opened the document and read over what I wrote yesterday. I assumed I wouldn’t like it, and that not liking it would validate my all-but-made decision to tank it.

Only it didn’t happen that way.

When I got back to the white space, my characters and their situation took over. My fingers began to move on the keyboard.

The next thing I knew, my cigar had gone out and I'd written the much of Chapter 3. Only 1014 words. I'll wait to file this edition of the Journal to see whether I write anymore today, but that's a good start on the day.

Nothing more today. Other things to do. I'll be back in the morning.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "Book Tour!" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/book-tour.html>. Check it out. He's writing his next book while on his book tour. Persistence, anyone?

See "How to Write Dialogue: 10 Simple Rules (Plus 5 Mistakes to Avoid!)" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-write-dialogue/>.

See "Watch the re-cast of our D2D AUA Webinar!" (video) at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/webinar-d2d-ask-us-anything-from-june-27-2019/>.

See "Microsoft's Ebook Apocalypse Shows the Dark Side of DRM" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/microsofts-ebook-apocalypse-shows-the-dark-side-of-drm/>.

In addition to TPG's take, I would remind readers that a license for an ebook really is the equivalent of the license you purchase to watch a film at a movie theater when you buy a ticket. You don't own the film. You license the right to watch it.

Likewise, you don't own an ebook whether or not it has DRM enabled. You only license the right to read it one time, or however many times you can read it before the license is revoked, if it is.

Fiction Words: 1014

Nonfiction Words: 770 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1784

Writing of Marco's Way (novel)

Day 1..... 2159 words. Total words to date..... 2159

Day 2..... 1014 words. Total words to date..... 3173

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173

Total fiction words for the year..... 354511

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3800

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 188000
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 542511

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Draft2Digital](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 4](#)

[July 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * A brief note
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Once again, happy Independence Day in the US.

Maybe no fiction writing today at all. Today is important for other reasons, so for today my fiction writing takes a lower priority.

If I do write anything today, I'll report those numbers in tomorrow's Journal.

Rolled out at 3. Worked on "Of Interest" and then screwed around awhile with spider solitaire. I just wasn't in the mood to play today, with anticipation of whatever else the day will hold.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See Dan Baldwin's "Flying by the Seat of Your Surprise" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/flying-by-the-seat-of-your-surprise/>. He even gives us a rare look at a work in progress.

See "An Amazing Research Resource [About] First Responders" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/an-amazing-research-resource-for-first-responders.html>.

See “BookBub for Authors: Everything You Need to Know” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/bookbub-for-authors/>. This post contains several other helpful links as well.

On this day of all days, see “Nike Nixes ‘Betsy Ross Flag’ Sneaker” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/nike-nixes-betsy-ross-flag-sneaker/>. Be sure to read the Passive Guy’s take. It is excellent.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 190 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 190

Writing of Marco’s Way (novel)

Day 1..... 2159 words. Total words to date..... 2159
Day 2..... 1014 words. Total words to date..... 3173
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3990
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 188190
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 542701

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dan Baldwin](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, July 5](#)

[July 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Kris Rusch, Patreon and licensing
- * Writers should be paid for their work
- * Call for first readers
- * Daily diary

- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

As writers, we're entering a new and exciting age beyond publishing, and we're being led (not surprisingly) by Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch (see "Of Interest").

Frankly, I feel sorry for writers who are not currently signed up for this Journal or for Kris' Business Musings posts. If you're a friend to your writer friends, please share this post widely.

Specifically because of how important Kris' Business Musings posts are, I just headed over to her Patreon page <https://www.patreon.com/kristinekathrynrusch> and signed up to donate \$5 per month. That small donation will get me Patreon-only posts plus her Business Musings, Writing, and Publishing posts as soon as they're finished.

For example, at the moment, she's already posted (on Patreon) "Business Musings: The Story (Rethinking The Writing Business Part Three)." It's an overwhelming, eye-opening, imagination-stirring post.

If you'd like to see it before next Thursday (when it will go public), I recommend you head over to her Patreon page yourself. Seriously, you can't learn this stuff too soon.

As just one example of the potential of licensing, I have a close writer friend (who shall remain nameless) whose main character in a series created a particular self-named cocktail.

Of course, that cocktail existed only in fiction. Well, up to a point.

Turns out a major restaurant created a new cocktail named for and based on the lead character in my friend's ongoing series. I'm sure it's a passive mutual-trade relationship.

Probably the restaurant sells at least some of those cocktails to readers of my friend's books because they're readers of his books.

And probably my friend gains new readers for his series because the actual physical cocktail exists in that restaurant.

By which I mean, with any luck at all, when the server takes drink orders and the customer asks about that particular cocktail, at a bare minimum the server tells the customer briefly about my friend's series and the protagonist for whom the drink is named.

(If that isn't currently how it works, I hope my friend will ask management to insist that it works that way from now on. You know, for the mutual-benefit thing.)

Disclaimer: I haven't talked with my friend about this, so honestly I don't know whether he and the restaurant management are working from a signed licensing agreement. I'm using this only as a real-world example.

Please bear with me.

The thing is, my friend has provided a license to that restaurant to sell that drink based on part of the story and the main character he concocted in his head.

Even if there was no signed licensing agreement between them, he still provided that license.

I'm admittedly still an infant regarding the ins and outs of licensing, but let's go there for a moment:

How much would that same restaurant have paid for the license to sell a cocktail named for a character from a Stephen King novel? Or named for a character from a Nora Roberts novel? Or, had he asked, named for a character from my friend's series?

I know. My friend isn't Stephen King or Nora Roberts. But you (and I and my friend) need to let that thought go. Because that really isn't the point.

The point is, the license in this case isn't about the author and his or her. In this case, the license is all about the particular cocktail and the character. And both of those are my friend's intellectual property (IP).

IP has value, folks. My friend's IP has value. So does mine, and so does yours. Start thinking in that direction.

Wow. My mind is swimming with possibilities, and I've only started.

In a related note, all writers should be paid for their work.

One of the most pervasive myths out there among beginning writers is that their work is worth nothing. That they should write and publish for "experience."

You know, just like brand new plumbers or mechanics or doctors or lawyers work free for experience. Yeah, right. See where I'm going with this?

Yet thousands and maybe millions of writers fall prey to the follow-on myth that they should not be paid for their work, or paid only in copies.

But no other professional would accept that, and in an ironic, ludicrous twist, even we writers would never expect them to.

You don't pay a plumber by taking a photo of the new pipes he installed and sending it to him. You don't pay the mechanic by sending him a recording of the sound of your engine running.

You don't pay the doctor who delivered your latest baby with a photo of the infant, and you definitely don't pay an attorney with a copy of the will he prepared for you.

We pay other professionals from whom we obtain services in money, and writers deserve to be paid the same way.

Yes, even beginning writers or writers whose work you've never read before (like plumbers, mechanics, doctors and attorneys you found in the Yellow Pages).

But writers are paid in royalties from book sales, right? How should we be paid otherwise?

Well, for one example, the often-vaunted Patreon.

I've thought about setting up a Patreon page myself, but their terms of service statement (TOS) stops me.

Those terms include a potential rights grab.

DWS and Kris Rusch know about this and still use Patreon, but they're also very careful about what they post there.

The thing is, I know me. I tend to share more than I should, so I just can't bring myself to use Patreon.

Of course, Patreon is quick to say they would never actually take anything that doesn't belong to them, but I learned awhile back to pay attention to how the contract (TOS) reads vs. what someone in the publicity department says.

The fact that they legally could take for themselves something I wrote (or at least tie me up in court for years) keeps me from signing on the dotted line.

So I set up my own version of patronage on my main website with a link from the Journal.

My "Rewards for Patrons" page mimics Patreon in many ways, but everything is within my control. With it, I've eliminated the middle man.

But not to worry. You can actually get much more from me directly than you could ever get from me via Patreon, because all of my fiction and nonfiction are included.

I've also decided to start a new series of topics that will be available only to those who are patrons. You can see that on my patronage page (see below).

You can view the levels and rewards at <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>. I hope you'll drop by and take a look.

Another way to read my work is to sign on as a first reader. As you know, I've been on a novel-writing binge for a few years now.

As a first reader, you'll get to read every new novel as I complete it. Typically I finish at least one novel per month. Yet your task as a first reader will be only to read for pleasure, then let me know if anything pops out at you as you read. That's it.

If you enjoy my fiction, this should be a no-brainer. If you haven't tried my fiction, this is an excellent opportunity to sample it.

If I select you as a first reader, your name will be listed in the credits of any books for which you serve as the first reader, and you'll also receive the "clean" version of the book on the day it's published, in your choice of Kindle, Nook/Apple or PDF.

Finally, I'm also pretty generous with my first readers.

Have questions about writing or publishing? Ask them. I'll respond.

See another book or books of mine you'd like to read? Let me know. Chances are I'll send it to you free.

Maybe best of all, if you're a writer and you think I write well, this is an excellent opportunity to study (or ask about) what I did and how and why. Or we (you and I) can even go further and put together a mentoring session specifically suited to what you need.

You're never too old or too advanced as a writer to learn. And frankly, unless you've written a lot more than I have, I can teach you things that will be useful to you.

If you're interested in becoming a first reader (or in mentoring, for that matter), email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and we'll talk about it.

And thanks for reading.

Rolled out at 3:30. Wrote the stuff above, walked back and forth, house to Hovel, to take care of the babies in various ways.

As I went to sleep last night, my WIP was strong in my mind. The POV character and others were racing around doing things. But I was just too tired to get up and come to the Hovel to write it all down.

My final thought as I drifted off was that I had to remember all that stuff. Which of course was a conscious, critical mind thought and was therefore ridiculous.

It's like being determined to remember an "idea" because they're so precious.

Only they aren't. Nor were the story directions etc. that were running through my mind last night.

Again I had to remind myself to trust the story, my characters, and my subconscious mind. What the story needs will come through my fingers as I need it. How long have I been doing this now? Forty-some novels? And each one better than the one before?

Yeah, it'll come. (grin) To the house again at 6:30 for a break. Back to the Hovel to work more on the stuff above, and finally to the novel at a little after 9.

Nope. Some bad news descended. Not on me personally, but on the family. No more writing today or maybe for the next couple of days.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: The Licensing Business (Rethinking The Writing Business Part Two)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/03/business-musings-the-licensing-business-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-two/>.

Not specifically about writing, but see “Top 10, 20, 30 Movies” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/top-10-20-30-movies/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1730 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1730

Writing of Marco’s Way (novel)

Day 1..... 2159 words. Total words to date..... 2159
Day 2..... 1014 words. Total words to date..... 3173
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5720
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 189920
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 544431

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, July 6](#)

[July 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Looking for resources
- * Licensing Learn Along
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

As you can tell from today's edition, "Of Interest" is slim pickings lately. If you know of any interesting or informative blogs or other resources that I don't list at least occasionally, please share in the comments below.

For anyone who's been thinking about jumping into the Licensing Learn Along, Dean's on the verge of closing it down. If you're interested (it's only \$200 and includes a separate workshop on copyright that's a \$150 value alone), visit <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/courses/> and scroll down to Licensing Learn Along.

Rolled out early at 1:30. My kitten got up too. While I was making coffee, she wanted to be picked up. It's a ritual we share each morning before I go off to the Hovel and she goes back to bed.

This morning, though, she accidentally clawed me in three places, each about 1/4 inch away from the next and all on my right hand. (Not her fault. My skin has lost elasticity.)

I'm right handed, so the ensuing first aid was difficult at best. (grin) As a result, I didn't get to the Hovel until around 2:15.

As I endeavored to focus on my WIP, the wounds on my hand kept seeping. I guess I couldn't get the BandAid on there tightly enough by myself. So all around, another non-writing day at least as far as fiction goes.

I'll post this, then talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Fun of Fiction" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-fun-of-fiction/>.

See “Writers’ Police Academy to Launch First Anthology” at <https://www.leelofland.com/writers-police-academy-to-launch-first-anthology-announces-two-contest-winners/>. I added this one because I suspect the anthology will be an excellent source of both entertainment and study for mystery/crime writers.

See “Writing Outdoors” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/writing-outdoors.html>. Just in case you get something out of it.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 310 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 310

Writing of Marco’s Way (novel)

Day 1..... 2159 words. Total words to date..... 2159
Day 2..... 1014 words. Total words to date..... 3173
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6030
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 190230
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 544741

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, July 7](#)

[July 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Not a lot
- * Topic: How Long Should A Book Be?
- * Daily diary

- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Not a lot to write about today, so this will be short. I did write a take-off topic I thought you might find useful though.

My son will leave for home this morning. It's been a great visit. I'll spend the balance of the day with my wife and/or watching and listening to (learning) some of the workshops I've invested in.

Tomorrow I'll get back to writing fiction.

On the learning front, be sure to read "Interview With A Serial Killer" in "Of Interest."

Some great nuances there to absorb so they become part of how your characters interact. Again, you don't have to apply any of these nuances or techniques consciously to your story. Just read. Your subconscious will take (and use) what it needs.

Topic: How Long Should A Book Be?

I'll tell you up front, I stole this topic from a post on Medium reference in *The Passive Voice*. The Passive Guy's very short take is in "Of Interest" below in case you want to read it and the excerpt from the original post.

Whoever wrote the OP got one thing almost right: "In theory, your book should be as long or short as it needs to be in order for you to tell your story."

Had the author omitted "In theory," s/he'd have nailed it.

Let me put it like this:

Your book should be as long or short as it needs to be to tell the story. Period.

Yes, there are genre conventions—reader expectations in particular genres—regarding length and a host of other things. But here's the thing: If you read books in the genre, even as you're absorbing Story you're also internalizing those reader expectations.

It isn't unusual for a High Fantasy (Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings*) to be a tome of well over 100,000 words. It isn't unusual for a Western to be 50,000 words. (I've broken that one on both extremes.) It isn't unusual for an Action-Adventure to be "long" at over 70,000 words or short at 35,000.

I thought for a long time Thrillers "should" be around 90,000 to 110,000. Then I read a grand master of the Thriller genre: Jack Higgins. What really defines a thriller are the stakes and the scope, which usually (but obviously not always) takes a lot of words to cover.

Romance is generally shorter or longer depending on the sub-genre. Same for Mystery (for example, cozies are seldom door-stoppers; Detective or PI novels might be a little longer; Crime novels are generally longer).

So the real take-away is to read in the genre in which you write. It's good for your soul, and it will help train your subconscious (as it takes in Story) to write to the approximate length of the genre.

And reading in your genre is also an excellent learning tool. When you read a book and part of it blows your socks off, finish reading it for pleasure, then go back and re-read the parts you loved to figure out how the writer did that.

In a related note, the author of the OP referenced in "Of Interest" also mentioned there are "two kinds of writers out there." Those who "write short first drafts and in revision, ... bulk things up" and those who "write long first drafts and in revision ... lean things down."

I submit there is another kind of writer. A third kind. A (dare I say "much"?) more advanced kind: The kind who trusts the characters to tell the(ir) story and writes through in one clean draft.

Those are the writers for whom writing will never become work. Those are the writers who understand a story is only as long as it needs to be. And those are the writers who will last as long as they want to.

Thank goodness.

Rolled out at 3, looked around on the internet a bit.

As I mentioned above, I'll spend most of today learning. My wife and business partner will learn licensing right along with me. (grin)

I hope today will be a day of learning for you too.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Wow. Want a master class on Interviewing? See "Interview With A Serial Killer" at <https://crimereads.com/interview-with-a-serial-killer/>.

See "How Long Should a Book Be?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-long-should-a-book-be/>.

See "Inspiration—Whose Idea is it Anyway?" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/inspiration-whos...dea-is-it-anyway/>.

See “Mad Magazine, RIP” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/22029.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 740 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 740

Writing of Marco’s Way (novel)

Day 1..... 2159 words. Total words to date..... 2159
Day 2..... 1014 words. Total words to date..... 3173
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6770
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 190970
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 545481

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, July 8](#)

[July 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * If you’re a short story writer
- * Topic: Thinking About Intellectual Property (IP)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“I enjoy self-publishing and sending publishers rejection letters. They’re like, ‘Who is this guy?’ And I’m like, ‘the end of your industry.’” Ryan Lilly

If you’re a short story writer, I just received this from AuthorsPublish:

Announcing the release of our latest book: 182 Short Fiction Publishers.

The book guides you through the publishing process – and details dozens of publishers seeking short stories in a wide variety of genres.

Get Your Free Copy of the Book at <https://www.authorspublish.com/short-fiction-guide/>. (You’ll have to give them your email address.)

Topic: Thinking About Intellectual Property (IP)

Did you know once a traditional publisher accepts a manuscript and pays the author an advance, they might choose to not even publish the book?

Or they might put it on their calendar, publish it in a year or so, watch sales spike and then dwindle, and remainder the book. At which point they shrug and move on to the next author.

It doesn’t matter to them. They don’t really care either way about any of that.

I mean sure, lightning might strike for them too if they publish the book. It might become a million-seller. It might even last for a year or more.

If it does, they’ll make around 85% of the profit from the book. But if it doesn’t (yawn, stretch) they won’t care. They’ve already made millions on the deal.

Why? Because they own the IP. They bought all rights for the life of the copyright. In the US, that’s the author’s life plus 70 years.

And the moment they added that one piece of IP (formerly YOUR IP) to the assets column on their spreadsheet, the value of their company increased by millions of dollars.

Yes, millions.

Of course, in exchange for the IP (again, all rights for the life of the author plus 70 years), the publisher paid the author an advance against royalties.

Maybe they paid \$5,000. Maybe \$15,000. Maybe even \$100,000 though I doubt it. Many writers will sign a contract for much less.

Take a moment and ask yourself, what’s your going rate? Let’s say for one novel. Or even for a series.

Awhile back I posted that if lightning struck, I would sell all rights for the life of my copyright for a one-time payment. But I have a personal caveat: That payment would have to be in the mid-six figures. (That would literally be a life-changing amount for me.)

When I wrote that, several friends and acquaintances expressed concern. Really? I would really sell all rights?

Yes, I would, for that amount of money.

But let me tell you, every single day authorial platitudes regarding artistic ideals and “selling out” suddenly vanish when they collide with even a four- or five-figure paycheck.

Not mine. And I’m not talking from an ivory tower here. I’m talking from down in the trenches with a mud-streaked face, and I’m talking realistically.

I would gladly accept a check in the mid-six figures in exchange for all rights to one of my novels or maybe even to a series. (The contract would no-doubt contain a no-compete clause anyway, meaning I couldn’t do anything with the remaining novels in the series.)

But is my work that good?

Not necessarily, but neither does it matter. At all.

All that matters is whether the publisher (or its editorial board) sees value in the story. If they do, they’ll pay, and they’ll pay what you ask. If they don’t, they won’t. (But most writers don’t even know they can ask and aren’t prepared to walk away if the publisher says No.)

Here’s a news flash for you: Publishers don’t base the value of a manuscript on the number of books that might sell. That’s only one tiny, unimportant slice of the equation.

They figure the value of your IP on *possibilities*. Beyond the obvious print, ebook and audio rights most writers consider, there are many, many others. To name only a few, there are

- * translation rights
- * film rights
- * online gaming rights
- * merchandising rights (action figures, t-shirts, toys, images, etc.)
- * slot machines
- * pinball machines
- * and hundreds or even thousands of other licensable rights that most writers never consider

THAT’s the value of the IP of your one short story or novel or series. Millions of potential dollars.

See, to the publisher, the IP isn’t a collection of fifty or eighty or a hundred thousand words in a particular order. It isn’t (at all) about how many copies of a book they might sell.

To the publisher, the IP is Story and the world of the story and the *possibility* of all the rights they might sell.

The same rights You, the author, could sell if you knew what possibilities exist and how to go about realizing them.

You all know how important writing is to me. Not what I write, but that I write.

But this IP thing, this is big. This is important. Knowledge is the one thing you can attain that can never be taken from you.

Being a successful writer in today's world requires gaining knowledge on two fronts—writing and business—and there are no shortcuts, though you can shorten the learning curve on both by knowing where to look.

To learn to write well (beyond words and typing) you have to read and study the masters, and you have to practice. It isn't easy, but it's a ton of fun.

To learn the business side, you have to read, study, and make decisions. And the biggest thing to learn about the business of writing is the value of your IP and the possibilities that exist.

I'm a solid stage-three writer.

I can say that because I know (and employ) all of the basics and I know (and employ) most of the advanced writing techniques. I also know the "secret" to learning more advanced techniques (hint—it's all about controlling the reader's mind).

But I know squat about the business side. It goes far, far beyond advances and royalties.

I'll continue to learn and write and apply more advanced writing techniques, but now I'm going to carve out some time for learning business. Frankly, I'd be stupid not to.

The value of my IP and the possibilities for licensing that IP is first on my list. That's why I leapt at the chance to take DWS's licensing learn-along and his year-long licensing transition.

Don't worry. I'm not going to urge you to jump in while you still can. You either will or you won't. Completely up to you, and it makes no difference to my own bottom line.

The investment of money to take DWS's courses was not small (for me) but the decision to do so was easy, and that investment will pay dividends for years to come.

But only if I also invest the time to learn.

The investment of time will necessarily cut into my writing time, so I've made another decision: From now on, my weekends and my Thursdays will be dedicated to learning licensing and IP evaluation (and of course, more advanced writing techniques).

The learning will never end, but once I've gotten over the hump of the initial IP stuff, I'll start to work-in some marketing, etc. on those days too. Probably including writing more short stories and sending those off (first) to traditional publishers. (But I'll sign even those contracts only if they make sense and aren't rights grabs.)

That's the plan for the foreseeable future. And because it's almost impossible for me not to do so, I'll share some of what I learn. But it will be only a tiny percentage.

I'm so excited about this new world that I can't even begin to describe it. I hope you are too. Again, it's all about real possibilities, and those, my friends, are endless.

Weird morning. I rolled out at 2:30, got to the Hovel a little before 3, and almost got settled in before a horrible screeching started outside.

I grabbed my flashlight and went out. At this point, I'd had only a couple of sips of coffee. I hadn't lit my first cigar.

The screeching was coming from the travel trailer we use as an extra bedroom when family or guests are visiting.

Inside, I found it was coming from the refrigerator, which my son had turned off before he left.

Only he hadn't. The switch was turned to Off, but the compressor (as far as I could tell) was screaming for some reason.

After several minutes of trying to get the thing to shut off, I finally went outside and unplugged it. Sometime later today, I'll see whether I can figure out the problem.

Then I came back to the Hovel and wrote the stuff above (except this Diary section). By then it was almost 5 and I headed up to the house to let the babies out.

When I finally got settled again in the Hovel, I opened what I've written on Marco's Way and read it from the beginning to get back into the story. And frankly, it bored me. So I'll set it aside for awhile, if not forever.

Hey, you take the bad with the good, and it's all practice. No story is all that important, and there's no moss growing on me. (grin) If a story isn't working, I drop it and move on.

So for me, today will be a combination of screwing off (grin), taking care of a few things around the house and the Hovel, getting some labs for an upcoming doctor appointment, and maybe doing some more learning.

I'll get back to writing fiction again when it's time.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Writers Hate to Write” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/writers-hate-to-write/>.

See “First Page Critique: A Goan Holiday” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/first-page-critique-a-goan-holiday.html>.

See “Fine Tuning the Manuscript with SmartEdit” at <https://terryodell.com/fine-tuning-the-manuscript-with-smartedit/>. Disclaimer: I would never use this and I do not personally recommend it. That being said, we’re all at different levels and every writer is different. I list this here just in case you personally might find it useful.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1680 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1680

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 192650
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 547161

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, July 9](#)

[July 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Yesterday, Jenny D commented
- * Frankly, as I looked

- * If you're a short story writer
- * Topic: My Take on the Stages of a Fiction Writer
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Yesterday, Jenny D commented to thank me for explaining royalties. But I didn't really.

I was going to write a topic on it today, but I realized I'd already done so. However, when I found the link, it didn't work for some reason.

Fortunately, I save my Journal every day to a Word document. Tomorrow, I will edit and repost a topic on royalties, specifically comparing traditional publishing and indie publishing.

In the meantime, if you want to learn more about indie publishing, I also strongly recommend downloading the free

[A Fact Sheet Toward Efficiency in Epublishing](#)

[Quick Guide to Self-Publishing & FAQs](#)

[The Essentials of Digital Publishing](#)

These are a little dated. For example, the aggregator Pronoun no longer exists, and the aggregator Draft2Digital DOES exist now.

Frankly, as I looked around the internet for items for "Of Interest" today, I felt a little overwhelmed. (Oh, and I found nothing worth listing.)

I didn't feel overwhelmed professionally as a writer. Not with my current lack of writing fiction. I know that will come again, probably soon. It never stays away for long, even in my warp-speed world.

And not with the huge amount I still have to learn about writing and the business side. That's simply a time-consuming endeavor that will come too. I just have to put my head down and move through the learning process at the schedule I've established.

But as an instructor, I'm feeling overwhelmed by the flood of misinformation out there about writing and the nuances of writing. I'm hugely outnumbered by all the stage-one and stage-two writers who feel qualified to give advice on writing. It boggles my mind. The only explanation I have is that they don't yet realize what they don't know.

Let me put this as succinctly as I can: Any writer who's serious about improving her craft should seek advice and learn only from advanced stage-three writers and from stage-four writers. No

stage-one or stage-two writers can teach you anything beyond the same regurgitated myths you learned from your English Comp teacher.

Dean Wesley Smith came up with his theory of the [Stages of a Fiction Writer](#) probably twenty years ago when he was still going through stage two himself. I agree with him. Below is some of my take on it.

Topic: My Take on the Stages of a Fiction Writer

A stage-one writer is focused down on the individual words and sentences. She isn't a storyteller. She's a typist.

She might spend days going over and over the opening sentence of her WIP because she heard somewhere how important it is. But then, she might spend hours stuck on one word or any sentence in the entire WIP.

She depends heavily on others' critiques. She wouldn't dream of starting a novel without fully outlining it first.

She occasionally talks about terms used by English Comp teachers and critics, like characterization, dialogue, narrative, setting, plot, point of view and other deconstructed aspects of Story. (She doesn't even know pacing even exists.)

But she doesn't know those terms as actual in-depth techniques. She hasn't endeavored to learn them from other, more advanced writers. She knows only what non-writers have taught her. Still, she carefully weighs each of those bits and then consciously pieces them together.

The stage-one writer is certain her writing is garbage despite her writing word-by-carefully-placed word. She expects and even plans to revise and rewrite and polish, probably several times.

She gives no thought to grounding the reader and generally eschews description, trusting the reader to "see" the setting and character and scene in his own mind. She'll often write something silly like "Her eyes shot across the room" and will argue smugly, "Well, the reader will know what I mean."

When she finishes, she's certain the story is perfect and it's all-important. The finishing and release of a story is an Event. She has no or very few sales and can't understand why. Yet she feels qualified to hold forth, sharing her fear-based misinformation with the world.

Writers generally stay in stage one until they are able to begin setting aside the myths and realize that Story, not words and sentences, is what matters.

Stage two is a transition. The stage-two writer has begun to move away from the word-by-word stuff. She's more open to non-myth-based instruction on techniques. She's more attentive to description but still trusts the reader to fill in what she doesn't provide.

If she uses an outline, she refers to herself as a “plotter,” and she actually gives the plot some consideration. If she doesn’t use an outline, she might refer to herself as a “pantser” or an “organic writer,” but she often also talks about erecting “signposts” or “touchstones” that she can refer back to as the story progresses. Not reference points but little safety nets.

In her blog posts the stage-two plotter praises outlining, etc. The stage-two pantser or organic writer professes to trust her subconscious and her characters. But that’s true only up to a point. In the next sentence or paragraph of the same blog post she talks about “editing passes” to “tighten” (critical mind) various aspects of the story.

The thing is, she still isn’t aware of (or doesn’t trust in) her innate ability to tell a good story. She still doesn’t trust her subconscious. But she DOES trust in her ability to revise and rewrite and polish, although she now calls them “passes.”
In other words, she trusts her conscious, critical mind.

She hasn’t quite broken away from the fear-based myths. You’ll seldom hear her talk about pacing, mostly because she is still only vaguely aware (if at all) that pacing exists.

When she finishes a story, she’s certain it is NOT perfect but she’ll often say it’s “as good as I can make it.” She still cares about others’ opinions of what she’s written just as she still relies on her own critical voice.

She makes some sales and, if she’s lucky, might even make it onto a bestseller list. The one drawback to early success is that it might make the stage-two writer certain she’s found “what works for me” and that she has little or nothing left to learn.

She often won’t even entertain the ideas presented in blogs like this one. And yes, she feels qualified to hold forth as an instructor, where mostly she passes on the same myths and clichéd advice.

The early stage-three writer has left most of the myths behind and really begun to understand Story. She’s vaguely aware of the eventual reader of her story.

Words are no longer important. They’re only tools. She’s keenly aware of the importance of using the POV character’s five physical senses to ground the reader in the setting (and in the story), plus his opinions of that setting to bring it to life.

She still consciously wants everyone to think her story is good, though. She might check reviews occasionally, and might even respond to the better or worse ones.

The more advanced stage-three writer is aware of the reader and begins to understand her job is to manipulate him.

She’s aware of pacing and is beginning to understand that the characters, settings, scenes and overall story are paced differently. She believes in her ability as a storyteller and mostly (or fully) trusts in her characters to tell their own story.

She understands the story itself is not important, that it's only a moment's passing pleasure. She wants every reader to experience exactly the same story that's in her head. To that end, she leaves very little to the reader's imagination.

She's made herself aware (with her conscious mind) of most or all of the aspects and techniques of fiction writing. But she quiets her conscious, critical mind and employs those aspects and techniques with her subconscious as she writes.

She sells well (especially if she's also kept apace learning the business end) and might have more than one book on a bestseller list. She couldn't care less about reviews because she understands each one is only that person's opinion.

There's only one drawback to being an advanced stage-three writer: If she feels she finally knows all there is to know about writing, she'll stop learning and eventually disappear.

But if she continues to learn from other advanced stage-three and stage-four writers and apply new (to her) techniques, she will eventually advance to stage four.

The stage-four writer exerts complete control over what the reader sees, hears, smells, tastes and feels as he reads the story. She's a mind-control expert. She leaves no room for reader imagination. (Imagining the story is the writer's job, not the reader's.)

She couldn't care less about reviews or, for that matter, sales. She knows her stories are good and won't argue the point or even give it much thought. She's at the top of her game, yet is still hungry for more knowledge about the writing craft. She continues to study the works of more advanced stage-four writers.

So there you go. We all go through all of these stages as long as we keep writing. No one is immune. You are where you are, but if you keep learning, you will advance as you grow in craft.

If you're a stage-one, stage-two or early stage-three writer, open your mind. Chances are, even I can teach you something.

If you're an advanced stage-three writer we can exchange information and learn from each other. If you're a stage-four writer, well, you aren't reading this. You're too busy writing your next bestseller.

All of that being said, sometimes I wish stringently I'd taken DWS's advice and kept my own process to myself. For a great deal more on these stages, I strongly recommend you buy Dean's book and/or take his classic workshop on the topic.

Rolled out at 3, wrote the stuff above. Not sure what the day will hold other than the labs for my upcoming doctor appointment. (I didn't go yesterday.)

Probably I'll work on other stuff around the house and the Hovel. There are changes I want to make to the interior of my office that I can't make until I clear some room in the storage area next door.

And then I'll probably spend the afternoon in the house learning new things, probably re-reading a Jack Higgins novel.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Nothing today.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1730 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1730

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 194380
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 548891

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

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

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 10](#)

[July 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Two topics today
- * Topic: Add-On Software
- * Topic: Ebooks and Print Books—A Comparison (reprint)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

In a rare occurrence, we have two topics to cover today. The first is a little shorter, but important. The second is a little longer, but still important.

So get your favorite beverage and settle in. Here we go.

Topic: Add-On Software

Add-on software, to my mind, is just silly. Why would any writer want extra distractions?

A reader of this Journal directed me to Aeon Timeline, a company that makes Visual Timeline Software. Like most writing and organization “aids,” it looks and sounds great on the surface.

I don’t recommend it personally (for me), but [Here’s the Link](#) in case you want to check it out. If you decide you want to use it, that’s fine. I’m happy for you. But don’t tell me about it. Here’s why:

When I see any “new writing tool,” I put it through a simple test: Will it actually enhance my writing or my ability to write, or will it distract me from writing?

And understand, I would still be a writer and storyteller even if there were no computers. A computer is a tool and a luxury, not a necessity.

This particular software (like most of them) would distract me. It provides yet one more form I would have to fill in, and I would have to leave the novel and engage my conscious, critical mind to do it. So already it’s a non-starter.

And it would add nothing. I already keep track of the timeline of my novel in my reverse outline with zero critical mind involvement.

Now, every writer is different, and that’s fine. Some other writers whom I respect swear by special so-called writing tools, and there are dozens if not hundreds of them out there.

Some help “organize” your writing. Some profess to help you actually write. Others offer grammar and “style” or “voice” checkers, and so on. (Of those, Grammarly is absolutely the worst. Per their national TV commercial, they actually believe any sentence that contains a lot of words is a “run-on.” That alone is one of the most widespread and basic grammar myths, yet the company name is Grammarly for goodness’ sake!)

To each his or her own—as I said earlier, every writer is different—but I advise against the conscious-mind distraction of one more piece of software to learn and one more form to fill-in. I don't need any extra software to “help” me do what I can already do just as well on my own, and exercise my brain to boot.

At present, here's my process: I open Microsoft Word (or whatever tool is currently the tech-supported favorite—I absolutely loved Corel WordPerfect until it went off the rails back in the 90s and forced me to turn to Word). Then I Just Write what the characters give me.

I *do* create a reverse outline (no special software needed) as I go. That gives me what-happened-when in a quick reference. Of course, I had to learn to add time and date or day references to the reverse outline. Oh the horror! (grin)

It's also super easy, should I find the need, to “unplug” a scene from one place and plug it into another place. Colloquially, it's called Copy/Paste. It isn't difficult.

Re grammar, I don't even want my writing to be perfect grammatically, and if I did, I would depend on my own knowledge for that. Just another way to exercise my own mind. (And if you don't know the basics of grammar, syntax, and punctuation, Learn Them. You're a writer for god's sake.)

And how in the world can any third party “check” something as personal as my authorial “style” or “voice”? The very idea is self-defeating and ludicrous.

So thanks, dear reader. I know you meant well. But nah. I'll pass. I have stories to tell.

And here, as promised, is the topic I gleaned from my 2016 files on royalties. This first appeared on July 31, 2016.

Topic: Ebooks and Print Books—A Comparison (reprint)

Years ago when I was still teaching seminars in Tucson, I laid out for my class why I publish ebooks as well as print books.

At the time, two of my nonfiction books for writers and one long poetry collection had been published through a traditional publisher. (Today I have all rights back to those books and both are now published by StoneThread Publishing, my own publishing LLC.)

My royalty was very good at 10%. (At the time, the standard tradpub royalty was only 8%.) I didn't go through an agent, so I didn't have to let the agent keep 15% of my 10%.

When I spoke at conferences or traveled to do book signings, sign existing in-store stock, and so on, my sales jumped a bit.

Then indie publishing and ebooks came along. When I got my first royalty check from ebook sales, I became an immediate believer in epubublishing.

Back then, each time I sold a traditionally published print book (this one was/is Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction) for \$14.99, I pocketed \$1.49 (10%). Of course, out of that \$1.49 came my travel expenses: gas, hotels, etc.

But each time the same book sells in ebook format for \$9.99 at Smashwords, I pocket \$7.99 (80%). When it sells through Amazon for \$9.99, I pocket \$6.99 (70%). Still a lot of money by comparison.

Consider, if I sold 100 copies of the print book, my royalties were \$149 (minus expenses). But if I sold 100 copies of the ebook, my royalties were \$699 (Amazon) or \$799 (Smashwords) and no expenses. Can you hear me now? (grin)

This is the same seminar in which one of the attendees stood up and said she would *never* publish her books as ebooks. When I asked why, she crossed her arms and said, "I hate ebooks."

That's tantamount to owning a lucrative flooring business but refusing to stock hardwood because you personally prefer carpet. You get the idea.

Because my job in that moment was "instructor," I did point out that she was confusing her tastes as a reader with her business as a writer. But I don't think she got it.

Anyway, with ebooks I was selling for less and making a LOT more money. And there were NO expenses. Zero.

It truly is a new world.

Back then, I began indie publishing even my print books. Although frankly, I created print books not so much to sell them as so the readers could compare the price they would have to pay for a print book vs. an ebook with exactly the same cover and content. For that reason, I never paid much attention to print book sales or royalties.

In April of that year, for some reason I noticed one copy of my novel Confessions of a Professional Psychopath sold for \$15.99 through CreateSpace (now defunct and replaced by Amazon).

My royalty on that print book sale was \$2.90. That's an 18% royalty.

Where did the other \$13.09 go?

Well, CreateSpace took \$3.49 as their fee. That left \$9.60. And where that went, I have no idea.

I'm sure some went to Ingram, etc. Everybody up and down the line gets their slice of the pie from a print book.

But the same novel in ebook format sells (well) through Amazon for only \$5.99 and earns me \$4.19 (70%). And the same ebook sells through Smashwords for \$5.99 and earns \$4.79 (80%).

Again, if I sold 100 copies of the print book, I'd make \$299 before expenses. If I sold 100 copies of the ebook, I would earn \$479.

Let that sink in for a moment. That's what we in the indie publishing business call Good Math. (grin)

See why I prefer selling ebooks?

Rolled out at 3:30, came to the Hovel, found some things for "Of Interest."

I was going continue cleaning out the bay next door once the sun gets up so I can see in there. But the ugly truth is, I'm old. (grin) I'm still sore from my initial burst of effort a couple of days ago.

So instead, I'll spend the day on learning. The writing bug's been tugging at me again too, so I might return to my WIP or start something new.

I'm the kind who gets excited and wants everything to happen Right Now. But it doesn't. So I constantly have to temper that with "It will get done. Just keep coming back." (grin)

So that's the mode I'll be in for the next month or two with not only my writing but catching up on the learning, cleaning out the bay next door, and rearranging the Hovel.

That's all right. Hey, life happens. Thanks for hanging in with me.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "A Prolific Problem" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-prolific-problem/>. This one could as easily have been titled "A Great Problem to Have." (grin)

See "Adrian McKinty Had Given Up on Writing" at <https://crimereads.com/adrian-mckinty-had-given-up-on-writing-a-late-night-phone-call-changed-everything/>.

See "5 Networking Tips for the Authorial Hermit" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/5-networking-tips-for-the-authorial-hermit/>.

For fun, see "The Honest Epitaph" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/the-honest-epitaph.html>.

Kris Rusch posted another article on licensing to Patreon today, her 9th on the licensing expo. If you haven't signed up for her Patreon yet, you're missing a bet. You get all this content for only \$5 per month. You can sign up at <https://www.patreon.com/kristinekathrynrusch/>.

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, July 11](#)

[July 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Update
- * A major new resource
- * Topic: A Toast to New Beginnings
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance, it is the illusion of knowledge.” Daniel J. Boorstin

Yesterday, I moved the large monitor for my business computer back up to the house since that’s where we’ll be doing most of our learning. (See the topic below)

My new partner and I also started some preliminaries: setting up a new web-based email address for the business, etc. In the future, all royalty payments and payments for direct sales of books, etc. will go to that email address (and that PayPal account) instead of to my personal account.

Payments for any copyediting, tutoring or other stuff I do (besides writing) will continue to go to my own PayPal account. Though I seriously doubt I’ll be doing anymore copyediting. I won’t have time. (grin)

After that, I worked to bring the StoneThread Publishing website up to date. Swing by and take a look if you want. It’s much cleaner and more geared toward readers.

I found a major new resource. I urge you to check out Jane Friedman’s website, the expansive <https://www.janefriedman.com/>. Scroll down just a bit to see a slideshow of Latest Blog Posts.

Tons of advice here, and mostly (from my quick perusal) not biased against indie publishers. Still, you have a mind. Take it along when you visit. Take what you see as good advice and leave the rest.

For just one quick example, see “Start Here: How to Get Your Book Published” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/start-here-how-to-get-your-book-published/>. This includes a pictorial overview of major genres and subgenres.

Even in posts dedicated to publishing through a traditional publisher, you can glean gems that will help in your indie publishing business.

Topic: A Toast to New Beginnings

This is mostly personal. I share it here because I see all of you as friends. But more importantly, I share it in case you might glean an idea or two from it for yourself and your own writing business.

I’m hyper excited about reaching a new plateau. This one is marked by a new partnership and the first time my writing business will actually become a real business. (Finally. With over 100 long works and almost 200 short stories already out there.)

See, I didn’t have a clue about what I was doing in the business end. More often than not, I felt completely overwhelmed.

And usually when I feel overwhelmed, instead of plunging into learning more about business (frankly, a topic that puts me to sleep), I plunged into the next writing project. (grin)

As Charlie Brown put it a few decades ago, “There is no problem so big that it can’t be run away from.” (grin) That was basically my philosophy.

But as I was explaining to my wife a couple of days ago (grinning all the while), the stars have aligned in the past month or so.

First (or first and third), I supported a couple of Kickstarters, each of which reached several stretch goals. Meaning my tiny investment in those earned me (among many other Writing lectures and workshops) the Advanced Business Lecture Bundle and the Advanced Negotiations Lecture Bundle.

That was pretty much Bingo, though it hadn’t quite sunk in yet.

Second, Dean offered to let me learn-along as he and Kris explored the Licensing Expo. This wasn’t just business (as usual, yawn) but learning about new possibilities. And that excited me.

Between Dean and Kris, they have already posted around a hundred 5-8 minute videos about what they learned at the Expo.

I haven’t watched even one yet. I was holding off for some reason. (The reason is coming.)

Third, Dean offered to let me continue to learn along with him, Kris and WMG Publishing as they make the transition from publishing to licensing over the next year. So there’s at least a whole year of videos yet to come.

One major focus of the transition will be how to find and approach companies who might want to license MY stories, MY characters, MY settings, MY situations, etc.

And it finally hit me.

Wait—are you freaking kidding me? I have a publishing company too! And now I’m in on the ground floor of this transition stuff! Now I’m *really* excited!

But remember, even the word “business” practically puts me to sleep before the first syllable is out.

Then the final star fell into place. I asked my wife whether she might like to go into business with me.

Although she’s written and published a memoir ([A WonderFull Life](#)) and although she’s an avid reader, she isn’t interested in the slightest in writing fiction.

But she’s sharp as a tack at business.

Together, we can turn my pecking away at the laptop into a real, honest-to-goodness business, something I know for a fact I would never do on my own.

As Dean often says, when you reach a certain point with your writing, you have to ask for help. So I did. And a miracle happened. In short, I made a new business partner.

From today forward, my bride and new business partner, Mona Stanbrough, will run StoneThread Publishing.

Once she said yes, I bought her a paper copy of DWS's [Think Like a Publisher](#) to bring her up to date on the actual publishing end. (Yes, I recommend it.)

Handing over all control of what had always been “my” business wasn't a flippant decision, but it was an easy one to make. Mona can see things from a business standpoint that I would never see. Putting her completely in charge was one of the smartest decisions I ever made.

I'll spend a day or so bringing the publishing website up to date, spend about an hour teaching her a few shortcuts she'll need to do that in the future, and then I'll be what you call Hands Off. (grin, and Thank God)

With her natural mind for business, she will enhance what she already knows by learning along with me through all the Business and Negotiations and Licensing stuff I mentioned above. She's as excited as I am, if that's possible. (grin)

I'll listen to all the business stuff too, but it will make more sense to her from the gitgo. Therefore, as I said, she'll be completely in charge. I guess you could say she's the CEO and CFO and HMFIC and all those other initials. Me? I'm thrilled just to be in charge of the production department. (My wife named me the Director of Creative Operations.) (grin)

Despite our almost giddy excitement, we don't have any illusions about this. We know it will be a lot of work and we know it'll take us awhile to build our business. But we also know to make it happen, we only have to keep coming back.

This. Is. Huge. In fact, it's life-changing even on the writing end.

For starters, it will free me up to write more even as I'm learning about the business end.

As a side benefit, it will also free me from Heinlein's Rule 4 (“You must put it on the market”) regarding my short stories while simultaneously increasing my production.

At present when I finish a story, I have to stop, create a cover, write a sales blurb and a promo doc, then publish the thing. It interrupts my fun, and frankly, that just sucks.

Now when I finish a story, I can ignore Heinlein's Rule 4 (sort of) and ship it off to the Prez.

* She'll decide which genre it belongs in and submit it to the appropriate print magazines for publication.

* She'll set up a "reminder" thingy through some kind of calendar (shrug, I have no clue) to give them 3 to 6 months to accept the story, then send it to the next market on her list.

* She'll make sure the magazine pays pro rates, is the right "fit," and so on.

* She'll check to be sure the contract contains a snap-back rights-reversion clause.

All I'll have to do is sign the contract when she puts it in front of me and says "Sign this." (grin)

If the story isn't accepted for publication, she'll send it off to the next market and the next. When it's garnered a certain number of rejection slips (or when rights revert after it's published) And When She Says So, I'll slap a cover on it and we'll indie publish it.

But I said this would bolster my production too, didn't I? (grin)

In addition to continuing to write (and publish, *groan*) novels, I'm setting a new goal to write one short story per week. That will begin next week or the week after. (In the back of my mind, I'll probably be interested to see whether I can surpass my previous record of writing at least one short story per week for 70 weeks.)

And as I said earlier, when I finish a short story, I'll just send it to my business partner. (grin) Then I can move on to the next story.

Goals

Because it would be silly to post this and not talk just a little bit about goals.

My first personal goal (as a writer) is to have at least five more novels published by December 31 of this year. Yeah, given that I write a novel on average in 3 weeks, I'm fudging a little. (grin)

A second personal goal to have 25 more short stories written and out to market by December 31 of this year.

For the overall business, our goal is to have increased our annual income from writing (fiction and nonfiction) by at least 30% by June 30, 2020 (slightly less than one year from now).

That last one is a hybrid dream-goal. Dreams are desires that are outside your control. Goals are desires that are within your control.

We can't control who buys our books and stories or how many we sell, so that part is a dream. But we CAN control who we offer them to and how often and where and how we offer them, thereby greatly increasing our chances.

In the meantime, I'll continue to learn and practice as a writer, thereby holding up my end. (grin)

There you go.

See why I'm excited? At long last, StoneThread Publishing is gonna be all grown up.

I wish the same excitement for you.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: The Story (Rethinking The Writing Business Part Three)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/10/business-musings-the-story-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-three/>. Note: This is one you could have seen a week ago on Kris' Patreon site. Just sayin'. (grin)

See "OUT WIT IT!" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/out-wit-it/>.

See Penny Sansevieri's "A Short and Sweet Beginner's Guide to Securing Amazon Reviews" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/securing-amazon-reviews/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1750 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1750

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13470
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 197670
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 552181

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Penny Sansevieri](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [StoneThread Publishing](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, July 12](#)

[July 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * The second quote of the day
- * Update: My publisher and I
- * European ebook aggregators
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“PG says there is nothing like a collection of first-world complaints to make you realize that life in modern America is a totally hellish experience. Lovecraftian to the max.” The Passive Guy

“Left to myself, I'd be like you. I have a horror story and a gritty urban general fiction in me right now. BUT. I spent 15 years trying to be NY published, so I won't [write those].” Laura Drake in a comment on “Should Authors Break Free from the Brand?” (See “Of Interest” below.)

The second quote of the day is head-shakingly sad. How many books might Ms. Drake have written and published in those 15 years had she been working toward a goal instead of chasing a dream?

Well, admittedly, indie publishing has been around for only 8 or so of those 15 years. Still, how many millions of words of practice might she have written in those 8 years?

And even if she catches the dream of being “NY published” today, she'll soon find it's actually a nightmare. They'll take her copyright for life in exchange for a pittance. Consider, even if the advance is \$100,000 (and it won't be) that figures out to only \$12,500 for each of those 8 years. Not to mention the other 7 of the 15 total.

A final note on her opening statement: “Left to herself,” I'm betting she would *not* be like the writer of the post. She would still be mired in the myths and chasing dreams that, either way, will never come true.

But no, I didn't comment. It would do no good.

My new publisher and I watch and listen to the learn-along videos together. It's easy to hit the Pause button and discuss what strikes us as interesting or bounce notes or newly spurred ideas off each other.

We spent only around three hours listening to the videos yesterday. Not bad for our first day out the gate. I took avid notes. (One of those was about “European ebook aggregators,” a notion I later researched. See below.)

As sometimes happens with any new venture, we will modify our approach when we return to the videos. Three hours straight was too much, and it was all we got.

We’re used to watching movies that last 1.5 to 2 hours, then taking a break from sitting. So on the next full day we have available for learning, we’ll take that approach. I predict we’ll get through (a lot) more videos and spend more time learning overall, though in shorter sets of time. (Keep Coming Back)

And right now, “getting through the videos” is what matters. (We can return to them in the future if we want to.) We’re playing catch-up, noting and investigating highlights while looking forward to all there is to learn.

On a side note, Dean (like everyone else who teaches online workshops) tends to add a little “filler” to his online workshop videos. (This is not a complaint; the value is still there.) But I say that only to say this: there is no filler in the Licensing Learn-Along.

Dean’s excitement is palpable, and he forges ahead through these like a wide-eyed 4-year old explaining his first adventure to someone who wasn’t there. Great stuff. There might still be time to sign up if you haven’t. I honestly don’t know.

On a second side note, I’m deferring my personal short story challenge until after my new publisher is up to speed on all the stuff she has to learn and absorb. No reason to add more to her plate before she’s had a chance to settle into the job. (grin)

In my very brief search for European ebook aggregators, Google handed me “2019 eBook Distribution Round-up” at <https://www.davidwogahn.com/ebook-distribution-round-up/>. Excellent resource.

A chart in that article lists several aggregators. I immediately dismissed any that required an up-front fee or that wouldn’t appreciably expand my current distribution.

In the end, I chose to research two new aggregators more deeply: StreetLib and at PublishDrive.

After viewing their sites, FAQs (on one site) and “community help” pages, I emailed them both the same question:

Can I upload an .epub created by another aggregator for distribution and sale to select markets through your company?

A day later, I received two responses.

An actual person (Lucia Zitelli, Head of Publishing), at StreetLib emailed me to say yes, I could do that as long as the .epub “passes the EpubCheck validation.” Well, any .epub put out by D2D or Smashwords (if your Word doc is formatted correctly) passes validation, so that’s a non-issue.

PublishDrive’s email response was automated (though personalized) and informed me they had received my question and “will reply as soon as possible.”

So I’ll definitely be adding 180 or so new markets/stores to my distribution with StreetLib.

When PublishDrive gets back to me, and IF their response is affirmative, I’ll return to their website to determine whether they distribute to any markets not covered by D2D, Smashwords and StreetLib.

If they do, I’ll determine whether learning their interface is worth placement in any additional markets they offer.

Rolled out late at 3:45. Wrote all of the stuff above and below and took a break at around 6.

I was entertaining writing some fiction today. Then I started a stuff avalanche.

I was going to do one simple task to update my Hovel (it’s hot here; I need AC), but to do that I had to do another task, which led to another, etc. in the bay next door.

When it was all over a few hours later and the dust had literally cleared, I still hadn’t made enough headway to accomplish the first task I’d set out to do. And by the time I sat down again, I was in no mood to have a good time. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “2019 eBook Distribution Round-up” at <https://www.davidwogahn.com/ebook-distribution-round-up/>. If you’re an indie publisher, this is a must-read.

To complement this, see “The Complete Guide to Ebook Distribution” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/ebook-distribution/>. I especially recommend you scroll down and look over their “optimized distribution setup infographic” and farther to their “Comparative table of royalties by publishing platform and retailer,” not so much for royalties but to see which territories and stores are covered by which aggregator.

See “StreetLib” at <https://www.streetlib.com/>. By the way, I found out you can upload the .epub you get from D2D or Smashwords to StreetLib.

See The Passive Guy’s take on “Amazon Ruined Online Shopping” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/amazon-ruined-online-shopping/>.

See “Two New Lectures and New Pop-Up” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/two-new-lectures-and-new-pop-up/>.

Via the Passive Guy, see “Should Authors Break Free from the Brand?” at <https://writersinthestormblog.com/2019/07/can-authors-break-free-from-the-brand/>. I think the author of the article confuses “brand” with “genre.” You should write what you want to write. But even if you write in different genres, you still should brand your books.

See “Control Freakery: Book Covers” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/control-freakery-book-covers/>.

See “ICE ... It’s Cool and We Need It!” at <https://www.leelofland.com/ice-its-cool-and-we-need-it/>. If you ever wondered about how ice was made back in the day, here you have it.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1160 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1160

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 14630
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 198830
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 5533411

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [Ebook Aggregatprs](#), [Indie Publishing](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [PublishDrive.com](#), [Reedsy](#), [Smashwords](#), [StreetLib.com](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, July 13](#)

[July 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * More on Licensing
- * According to Reedsy
- * Ebook aggregator PublishDrive
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“From my close observation of writers... they fall into two groups: 1) those who bleed copiously and visibly at any bad review, and 2) those who bleed copiously and secretly at any bad review.
Isaac Asimov

Which is why I generally don't read reviews at all and recommend against it. What a reader thinks of your book is none of your business.

Kris Rusch has just posted a new article on her Patreon account. Without giving away anything, she mentioned “licensing software” in passing as one way to manage your inventory.

Because I will probably eventually need it (not sure whether I need it now), I looked up the term. Most entries that popped up were for “how to license software.” Not at all what I wanted.

As it turned out, I should have searched for “license management software.”

Eventually, I did, and I found three really great resources. Click the Writer Resources tab on the Journal website, then click Licensing.

Bear in mind that if you currently have a small inventory of IP (along with their possibly licensable characters, unique items [items you imagined], settings and situations) you can probably manage your inventory with a series of spreadsheets. That's what I intend to do first, and I have around 300 bits of IP.

While you're on the Writer Resources page, you might want to browse the other resources. I add to them constantly.

According to Reedsy, the average cost of copyediting an 80,000 word novel is \$1360. That's 1.7 cents per word. Huh. News to me.

When I take on a copy edit, I most often charge 1 cent per word (so \$800 for an 80,000 word novel) or less. And I provide a free sample edit to let the writer see up front what I can do for her. As an added bonus, I actually know what I'm doing.

Just saying, be careful out there.

Reedsy also mentions “developmental editing.”

Uh, no. Don’t let anyone that deep into your work. Just don’t. How can anyone else “develop” a story that’s in your head?

Ebook aggregator PublishDrive finally got back to me in regard (but not in response) to the question I asked. Only they answered an entirely different question.

They said yes, I could distribute through them as well as other aggregators, which of course is not what I asked at all. Sigh.

Rolled out at 2:30, came to the Hovel and wrote most of the stuff above.

Today will be another learning day for me and my new publisher, though one adjusted with more breaks and more learning sessions.

As I thought about our upcoming (as I write this) second day of study, a realization settled over me: it might be awhile before I write fiction again.

For those new to the Journal, even a week of not writing is a long time for me. My “breaks” usually consist of a day or two at the most. Yet today will be the 10th day in a row that I haven’t written any fiction.

I guess we’ll see, but faced with doing so much catching-up, I find it difficult to switch back and forth from the conscious learning mind to the creative writing mind.

On the up-side for you, I’ll be sharing much of what I learn here, although without getting into anything that is proprietary to Dean or Kris. So what I share here in the short term will not be an adequate replacement for you jumping into the learning yourself. I just wanted to be clear about that.

Apparently even the Learn Along is still open for new signups. To jump in, visit <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/> and click the Learn Along Licensing tab.

Up to the house at 6.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Story, Reading, and Writers” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/story-reading-and-writers/>.

See “Trademark Book” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/trademark-book/>.

See “The Graveyard of Stories” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/the-graveyard-of-stories.html>. Take along a salt shaker.

See “Death of a Novel” at <https://www.johnclarkson.com/post/death-of-a-novel>. Interesting that this traditionally published author is “recasting” the whole novel instead of rewriting.

Also see the “Readers + Writers” category at <https://www.johnclarkson.com/blog/categories/readers-writers>. I’ve added this to Helpful Pro-Writer Websites on my Writer Resources page.

As just one example, see “How to Write Great Fight Scenes” at <https://www.johnclarkson.com/post/how-to-write-great-fight-scenes>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 700 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 700

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 199530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 554041

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [HarveyStanbrough.com](#), [John Clarkson](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Michaele Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Writers' Resources](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, July 14](#)

[July 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * According to my friend Phillip McCollum
- * The Journal is on a diet
- * Update: We've learned tons
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“If it weren't for received ideas, the publishing industry wouldn't have any ideas at all.” Donald E. Westlake

“The most frightening monsters are the ones who do not look like monsters at all, not until it is too late.” Kali Wallace

According to my friend Phillip McCollum, it's now possible to use Apple's proprietary publishing program Vellum on a PC. If you're interested, read “How To Use Vellum On A PC” at <https://paulteague.com/how-to-use-vellum-on-a-pc/>.

The Journal is on a diet today and is therefore woefully thin. I suspect this diet will last about as long as most diets last.

Update

We've learned tons of stuff since Thursday through the Licensing Learn Along. Almost overwhelming amounts of stuff. And all of it useful, not because it answers questions but because it gives rise to more questions. It's more of a new mindset—a vastly expanded new way of thinking—than anything else.

I couldn't begin to explain in any satisfactory way even if I wanted to. Suffice to say that “My sense of excitement was well-founded” is a huge understatement.

And I was wrong about my earlier estimates of my IP too. I estimated that I have around 300 individual bits of IP. That's true, if I count only fiction and only what I've written in the past five years.

But there are also

- * poetry collections and poems
- * nonfiction books
- * humorous and serious essays
- * and (OMG!) blog posts, even if I count as “important” only those that touch on a specific topic.

All of those are individual intellectual properties (IP). Oh man.

Nonfiction can be licensed far beyond the books I've published and the audio lectures I've recorded, for example to other instructors and institutions.

Poems or bits of poems (or things my characters have said) can be licensed to greeting-card companies, t-shirt and ball-cap manufacturers, etc. ad nauseam. Likewise with excerpts from essays.

Fictional characters, worlds, settings and situations can be licensed to an almost unlimited number of products (books, yes, in ebook, paper and audio, but also to online and board games, slot machines, pinball games, toys, etc.

And so on.

Our first task is to inventory everything. (Fortunately, I have a decent start on that because I've kept fairly meticulous records over the past five years. I'll now pass that task off to Mona, who welcomes it.)

Another first (simultaneous, intertwined) task is to brainstorm new and different (to us) ways to license that inventory.

Yet another first task is to create (notice I didn't say "write") more stories, more IP.

Our second task, once the inventory is as complete as we can get it, is to decide which characters, worlds, settings and situations to focus on. And study and learn trademark.

Our third task is to prepare marketing and licensing materials (often the same thing) for those items on which we decide to focus.

There are other ways to go about all this. This is our way, one that suits how we think and how we do things.

I'm glad Mona's along for the ride. We both are blessed with extremely good but different organizational skills that should enable us to complement each other.

Now all we have to do is divide the workload, and that's progressing nicely thus far as well, though we both know we have a long way to go.

An interesting note—If you're locked into traditional publishing, none of this will be useful to you in that world unless you managed to retain at least some rights to your work. The only upside is that traditional publishing won't make any money off licensing either unless you're an extremely well-known author. (Trad Pubs don't have a clue as to the true value of all the IP they have locked up.)

If you're in that boat, I strongly recommend you begin creating content that does NOT go to traditional publishing, that you control completely, so you can use it. However, as always, feel free to do what you like.

Rolled out way early at 1:40 this morning. My little girl cat was sleeping with her tiny head on my left forearm, which made it more difficult to get up. (grin) But I was wide awake, so I managed it.

This morning while it's cool I'll finish cleaning out the bay next door to the Hovel. Later today (I hope) I'll begin moving larger storage items from the Hovel to the bay and rearrange the Hovel a bit.

Still later there will be a little more learning from DWS on the Learn Along before we switch into the Licensing Transition class. Plus some discussions with Mona about some organization stuff I sent her this morning.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Welcome to The Wonderful World of Self-Publishing Part 1 (of 4)" at <https://www.johnclarkson.com/post/welcome-to-the-wonderful-world-of-self-publishing-part-1-of-4-1>.

See "The Weird, Wild, Inimitable Noir of Donald E. Westlake" at <https://crimereads.com/the-weird-wild-inimitable-noir-of-donald-e-westlake/>.

See "What Are We Missing?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/22007.html>.

See "What Fiction Teaches Us About The Allure of Cults" at <https://crimereads.com/what-fiction-teaches-us-about-the-allure-of-cults/>.

See "Oh the Horror of It" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/oh-the-horror-of-it/>.

For something precious, see "The Silence" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-silence/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 860

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month.....	3173
Total fiction words for the year.....	354511
Total nonfiction words for the month...	16190
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	200390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	554901
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Indie Publishing](#), [John Clarkson](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Licensing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Update](#), [Vellum](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, July 15](#)

[July 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: 12 Ways to Make a Critique Group Work
- * Update
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“I don't think in terms of genres. I think in terms of story.” David Gerrold

Topic: 12 Ways to Make a Critique Group Work

Versions of this article have been posted on my writer site in August 2013 and September 2017.

Everyone here knows I don't participate in critique groups. Nor do I recommend doing so. After all, I constantly battle to keep my own conscious, critical mind out of my writing. So why in the world would I invite other critical voices in? Duh.

Criticism (or critique) by definition is a function of the conscious, critical mind. It's wonderful for “deconstruction,” but worthless for creation.

However, I also know every writer is different. And this Journal exists to serve all writers.

So if you want to form or join a critique group, here are some ways to at least minimize the harm your critique group might otherwise inflict on your writing.

First, if you want to join an established critique group,

* pick one that has not degenerated into a mutual-admiration society, and

* pick one that has safeguards in place against a piece of work eventually being written by committee. You will see those safeguards below.

If you want to form or participate in a critique group that stands at least a chance of actually being beneficial, here's what the group needs:

1. A conscientious facilitator who will steer the participants to honesty in their critiques.

A critique group without a facilitator usually will degrade quickly into a mutual-admiration society, a group in which flattery is trump. A "be nice to me and I'll be nice to you" atmosphere causes the participants to feel good about themselves, but it also leaves them wondering about the quality of their writing.

2. Limit the size of the group according to the length of time you are able to meet.

In my own distant past, there were ten participants in my critique group. We met for two hours every other week. Each participant had time to read her work (if she wanted to) and receive the critiques of the other participants.

3. Remember that only one person at a time is the writer in the group.

If you aren't reading your work to the others at the time, you're a reader/listener, not a writer. Don't endeavor to change the person's writing to fit your style. Rather, point out places where, for you as a reader/listener, the story stumbles or stalls, where you feel you don't know enough about a character or a scene, where confusion creeps in, and so on. (In other words, function as a first reader. See below.)

4. Don't require everyone to read every time.

Take off your control-freak boots, flex your tired toes and chill. Everyone can be an active, valuable participant without reading at every meeting. Some people will want to read every time, and others won't.

5. However, the members all should be serious about the craft of writing.

To maintain membership in the group, I suggest that everyone should be encouraged to submit something for critique at least every other meeting if you meet monthly or every third meeting if you meet more often. Again, though, notice I said “encouraged,” not forced.

However, non-participation (say one member very seldom reads her own work and very seldom comments constructively as a reader/listener) should be grounds for dismissal from the group, especially if there’s a waiting list of folks who are serious about the craft of writing and would like to join.

6. Be honest in your critiques.

This is the most important feature of a good critique group. Honesty, even brutal honesty, is critical.

After the first few sessions, any hurt feelings will subside and those who prefer the mutual-admiration society will have dropped out. The participants who remain will begin to trust each other and appreciate the honest feedback. Besides, “honest” is not synonymous with “hurtful,” “hateful,” “spiteful” or “mean.”

7. Always provide positive critiques.

But didn’t I just say you should be honest? That’s right, so when you point out what you believe is a flaw in someone’s writing, make it a positive critique by offering a recommendation for improvement. Remember, though, that you’re trying to help the writer improve HER work, not make it your own. Besides, you should point out the bright spots as well as the flaws.

8. Bring your “first draft” to your group.

I recommend that your second draft should be a run-through with a spell checker. And a third draft should be your original manuscript to which you’ve applied whatever changes your first reader has recommended IF YOU AGREE with those recommendations.

But if you’re in a critique group, you probably don’t have a first reader and probably still believe you have to write numerous drafts to turn out quality work (you don’t).

So at least give the members of your group your most original effort (your “first draft”).

9. Perform “blind” readings.

If honest critique is the most important feature of a good critique group (and it is), performing blind readings is a close second. Although this advice goes against the common practice of most critique groups, I advise against the author providing copies of her work for the other participants.

Instead of trying to read along with the reader, during a blind reading the other participants should be able to listen attentively, noting on a pad any passages that confuse them, stop them

cold, or impress them. They might also note passages that either bog the story down or move it along too quickly.

Once the author is finished reading, each participant then offers his or her critique. Blind reading and note-taking lessens the chance of participants “parroting” each other and leads to a more honest, constructive critique. It also forces the reader to read his or her work aloud, and that is always a good thing.

10. The facilitator should avoid influencing the other participants’ opinions. To do so, the facilitator should offer his or her critique last.

11. Don’t argue with critiques as they’re offered.

Arguing is a non-productive waste of valuable time. Besides, you should respect the opinions of the participants as listeners/readers; that is, don’t expect more from them than they can give. If they were experts, they probably wouldn’t be in the group.

12. Consider every participant’s critique.

Don’t automatically accept or reject any critique. What one listener (reader) likes, another will dislike; what one finds believable, another will find ridiculous.

Carry the critiques home with you, calm down, then use or discard the criticisms one at a time at your leisure. As a rule of thumb, though, if you hear the same critique from more than one participant (after a blind reading), you probably should consider it more seriously.

Note: There are also online critique groups. They don’t meet in person, but exchange manuscripts or bits of manuscripts online. For one example of this, see today’s “Of Interest.”

Okay, but if I don’t recommend critique groups generally, what do I recommend?

- * Learn from blog posts, lectures and workshops by writers who are much farther along the road than you are. Preferably long-term professional fiction writers.
- * Read voraciously for pleasure in your genre(s) (again, by those long-term professionals). Then, if a book blows you away, go back and re-read that segment with an eye to studying what the writer did to blow you away.
- * Trust Yourself. Trust your characters. Write the story. Then
- * send it to a first reader (whose task is only to be a reader, not a critiquer),
- * apply the changes recommended by the first reader if you agree with them,
- * submit or publish the story, and

* write the next story.

I hope this helps.

Update

As I expected, I finished clearing the bay next door to the Hovel yesterday morning. (Mona pitched in to help for awhile.) It took a little longer than I expected it to take—four and a half hours—which at my current age and level of health is a full physical work day. (grin) When I finished, I was all but exhausted.

Next will come the less-arduous task of moving several stored items from the Hovel to the bay. Then stage three: arranging my office. It will all happen in due time.

After we both showered and relaxed a bit, Mona and I returned to finish viewing the vids for the Learn Along. Much of what we saw was a recap, but we still learned more. Excellent stuff.

Oddly (maybe) it fired me up about writing even more than usual. I didn't think it was possible to be even more excited about writing new stories, but there it is.

We're also both signed up (separately) for Kris' Patreon page so we can each view her posts on the Licensing Expo as we have a spare half-hour. I scrolled back and read the first one late yesterday.

Again, incredible stuff, and she says things in a different way from Dean, which means I learned even more. I will probably copy her posts there and moving them to a Word doc (obviously, only for my own use) so I can review them in order in the future.

Late yesterday afternoon, my wife and I talked about Dean's upcoming Master Business Class (October) where a lot more on licensing will be presented. We won't attend that one, but we might invest and attend the one in 2020.

Of course, we already invested in the year-long Licensing Transition and we'll both be learning from Kris as well. So we're already thinking of attending the Licensing Expo in 2020 ourselves to learn more and make our first formal appearance as licensors.

What a great new world it is!

Rolled out way late this morning at 5. This new world and all the learning I have to do has me thinking of revising my workday to a more "normal" time. My current day runs from around 2 or 3 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. Now I'm thinking of getting up later in the day and going to bed later at night.

If I do, when my wife gets home from work (and after we eat supper) we can spend an hour or so together on the Licensing Transition and other learning, and then still spend a couple of “unwind” hours on a movie or something before going off to bed. We’ll see how that works out.

I have a routine doctor appointment this afternoon at 1. Not sure how I’ll fill the morning.

I won’t work on the physical bay/moving thing. Probably I’ll devote the day to learning some things on the writing side. Probably I won’t write fiction today. If I do, I’ll report those numbers tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See “D2D Ask Us Anything – Marketing Edition!” at https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4BKuQoYeSEawsY_uEao9pg. I strongly recommend this.

Via Linda Mae Adams, see “David Gerrold Interview” at <http://www.betterstorytelling.net/blog/david-gerrold-interview/>.

See “How to Start Your Next Story” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/how-to-start-your-next-story/>.

See “How To Write [a] Nonfiction Book Proposal” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/how-to-write-nonfiction-book-proposal.html>. Even if you believe in yourself and indie publish, this can be a great checklist for what you should include in your nonfiction book or whether you should even write and publish it.

See “Licensing Transition and August Workshops” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/licensing-transition-and-august-workshops/>.

For another take on critique groups, see “The Value of Critique Partners – Part 1” at <https://terryodell.com/the-value-of-critique-partners-part-1/>. I share this only for those of you who are interested in critique groups/partners. I did not comment. I no longer offer opposing viewpoints on other writers’ websites.

Look Over

“David Gerrold” at <https://www.gerrold.com/>.

“Better Storytelling” at <http://www.betterstorytelling.net/>. Explore the tabs. Take what works for you, ignore the rest. But there’s a TON of information there.

There are also several more interviews on the site at <http://www.betterstorytelling.net/blog/category/6-interviews/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1890 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1890

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 3173
Total fiction words for the year..... 354511
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18080
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 202280
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 556791

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [David Gerrold](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#),
[Licensing](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sean Monaghan](#), [Sue
Coletta](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, July 16](#)

[July 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Update
- * Topic: A Tale of Two Businesses
- * Don't miss
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Update

Light day yesterday. I watched/listened to one of the Pop-Ups I received through a Kickstarter reward (writing stuff).

I also decided to invest in a second set of speakers for my computers. I'll keep one set in the Hovel for those times when I'm studying writers' stuff and one in the house for when my wife and I are listening to publishing and marketing and licensing stuff.

Topic: A Tale of Two Businesses

First and foremost, I find writing a great deal of fun, so there's that. But some time ago I decided to also go into business, selling licenses to others for the use of my creations.

I sell those licenses at three levels:

* I license directly to the reader—This is done through StoneThread Publishing at a discount. The reader pays less and I retain 100% of the net purchase price.

* I license directly to retail—I license Amazon to list my books on their site for readers to find and license. The reader pays whatever price Amazon sets and I get 70% of the purchase price. (You can also license direct to other retailers, but for various reasons, I choose not to.)

* I license to an aggregator—The aggregator takes my raw document, converts it to the appropriate formats, then distributes it to retail stores, libraries, and other aggregators for broad distribution around the world. I earn the purchase price minus 10% to the aggregator(s) plus whatever royalty split the store takes.

If I want to make a living from my writing in the long term, licensing to aggregators has to be an important part of my business plan.

In any given month, there's a better chance I'll sell 1 copy of a book in each of 400 stores than 400 copies of the same book in 1 store. That's why I use aggregators.

I currently use Smashwords and Draft2Digital. Through them I reach around 200 stores and 400 libraries. I was looking to expand.

StreetLib and PublishDrive are ebook aggregators whose reach would vastly extend my own. I'll definitely be expanding into StreetLib and thereby adding another 180 stores that don't currently list my books.

I hope to do the same with PublishDrive, but we're off to a rocky start.

In business—at least in my business—time and information are important.

On July 11, I emailed both StreetLib and PublishDrive with the same question: Can I upload an .epub file created by another aggregator for distribution and sale to select markets through [your business]?

StreetLib got back to me the following day, July 12, with a definitive answer. Yes, I could do that.

PublishDrive also emailed me on July 12 and referred me to an item in their Help section. Unfortunately, the item had nothing to do with my question. (Yes, it said, I could use them as well as another aggregator.)

I wrote PublishDrive again, still on July 12. I told the rep she hadn't answered my question.

She emailed me again on July 13 to say she would check with a colleague for an answer to my original question.

Finally, this morning, on July 16, PublishDrive emailed to say yes, I could upload a file created by another aggregator. Five days after I asked the original question.

Fine. Good. But I'm not overly confident in PublishDrive.

Remember that old saw about only getting one chance to make a first impression?

I asked a simple yes or no question that had the potential of increasing the aggregators' revenue.

The contact at StreetLib conducted whatever research was required (or knew her business going in) and responded quickly. If there was any doubt or confusion on her end, I wasn't allowed to see it. That's good business.

The contact at PublishDrive showcased her own ineptitude and was slow to respond. That telegraphed to me that any future dealings with that aggregator probably will be as rocky as the first.

This is business, so I'll still take advantage of PublishDrive as an aggregator IF they can deliver my books into a significant number of stores that StreetLib doesn't reach.

But if this turns out to be strictly an either-or proposition—if the two aggregators have the same reach, say plus or minus ten stores—StreetLib would win the contract. Hands down.

Don't miss tomorrow's post. Tomorrow I will rebut, point by point, a post that claims to be in support of writing into the dark but is actually chock full of harmful misinformation.

Rolled out at 2:15. Wrote the stuff above, was somewhat ambushed by a site whose blog posts I had subscribed to, and wrote another topic for tomorrow.

Went to the store for those speakers and some other items. Back at the Hovel I listened to a Pop Up lecture on setting up and running my own online bookstore. I have a lot of that in place already, but I got some new ideas.

I'll spend the balance of the day today setting up a StreetLib account and bulk-uploading my backlist. If there's time, and if I decide to go with PublishDrive, I'll do the same with them.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “If I Can Make It” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/if-i-can-make-it/>. I encourage you to leave a comment on his site.

See “Heinlein’s Rule #1” at <https://tonydwritespulp.com/2019/07/16/heinleins-rule-1/>.

See “On Fan Mail And Diving Down Into The Research Rabbit Hole” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/on-fan-mail-and-diving-downinto-the-research-rabbit-hole.html>.

See “A Writer’s Guide to Fair Use and Permissions + Sample Permissions Letter” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/sample-permission-letter/>.

See “22 Literary Journals that Accept Reprints” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/22-literary-journals-that-accept-reprints/>.

See “What’s Age Got To Do With It?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/whats-age-got-to-do-with-it/>. Especially if you’re new to this Journal, please see my comment too.

See “Free Fiction Monday: The Wedding Ring” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/15/free-fiction-monday-the-wedding-ring/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1000 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1000

Writing of ()

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

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anthony DeCastro](#), [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 17

[July 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Update
- * Topic: Be Very Careful...
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“If I write a novel in 15 or 20 days, how does that directly affect the guy who is on his fifth rewrite seven years into one novel?”

“Writing is no different than any other religion. To those who spend all their time trying to convince ‘fast’ writers we’re doing it wrong: We understand that you’re going to heaven and we aren’t ‘cause you’re doing it ‘right’ and we aren’t.”

“The ting is, we’re cool with that. Good for you. Safe trip.” Harvey Stanbrough, responding to a derogatory comment on a post by Dean Wesley Smith a few years ago

Update

I’m still feeling overwhelmed by things I feel I need to do but that I really don’t. That’s mostly a holdover from having to do everything myself (writing and publishing) over the past five years.

But the publishing end is Mona’s now to learn and invent, so I’m going to mostly let go of that.

Of course, I’ll try to tidy up the business end so I can hand it over as cleanly as possible. But mostly from here on out, I’ll write fiction. Otherwise, I’ll answer any questions she might have as they arise.

In a related note, for the time being I’ve decided to hold off on uploading my books to aggregators other than Smashwords and D2D. The additional markets will provide only nominal income, except possibly in China where, allegedly, the citizens are hungry for English-language fiction.

That makes the time I have to spend on the learning curve less attractive at the moment. If I (we) decide to upload to those in the future, I'll report here.

Yesterday I listened to Dean's excellent PopUp lectures on building your own online bookstore. I recommend it. Hint: it has to do with establishing a presence on Ebay, ABE, Etsy as well as on your own website (and maybe YouTube, Patreon, Kickstarter) and so on.

If you have several novels out (or a half-ton of short stories and the attendant collections, or both) this is something you might want to consider. If not, I wouldn't worry about it.

I've written a few thousand words of fiction over the past few days but I haven't reported it. I'll start reporting again when I get into a project that wants to run.

Topic: Be Very Careful Where You Get Your Writing Advice

As you all know, I use a technique called writing into the dark. I learned it from Dean Wesley Smith. He didn't invent it. As he studied the old pulp writers, he came to see the wisdom of writing one clean draft.

Why? Because we're paid only for the words we write. Duh.

We're paid for the new words we put on the page. We aren't paid extra for any hours we spend revising or rewriting, and we who are proponents of WITD see absolutely no reason to polish our own original voice off the work.

We who write into the dark also don't outline. The characters reveal the story as we write, and that's a Good Thing. It's what makes WITD so much fun, and it's what keeps writing from becoming boring and dull.

The characters are the ones who are living the story. So why shouldn't we let them tell it? Besides, we like to be surprised and entertained.

I bring this up because yesterday, a writer whom I thought was also a proponent of WITD referenced an article in her blog.

I read the article.

I wish I hadn't. Frankly, it angered me. And I mean chewing-wheels and spitting-nails angry.

Not because the author spoke against WITD—in fact, he spoke in favor of it—but he made his case with terribly misleading misinformation.

I did a quick Amazon search for the author of the offensive article and found he has published exactly one novel. Yet he considers himself a “book mechanic.”

I won't mention the name of the blogger here and I won't mention the name of the author of the offensive piece. Every writer is different, and we're all entitled to our opinion.

But misleading misinformation can be harmful regardless of intent. So I will rebut some of the ridiculous statements he made in the article.

Before I do, let me say this: Although I am a firm disciple for both Heinlein's Rules and writing into the dark, I don't care how you write. All of that's up to you.

Writing into the dark is all about trust.

* You have to trust your subconscious to do what it's known how to do—tell stories—since before you were even aware there was an alphabet; that negates the need for an outline.

* You have to trust your characters to tell the story that they (not you) are living; that negates the need to engage your conscious, critical mind while writing.

* And you have to trust in your own ability to write your story cleanly the first time through. (You've long known how to write a sentence, where to put a period, etc.)

If you aren't yet able to trust yourself to that degree—if you don't have that level of confidence in yourself—then you can't write into the dark. And that's perfectly fine.

You can choose to write some other way, or to not write at all. Find something fun to do instead.

But please don't claim you understand the technique and then spread a bunch of bovine excrement about it.

Here are some examples of bovine excrement, in quotation marks, followed by my rebuttal:

“As writers we're supposed to struggle.”

Well, this is just assinine. I hope he meant this statement to convey irony, but just in case: If you really believe writing is a “struggle,” for God's sake don't do it.

Writing isn't some pretentious, elevated calling. It isn't something you “have” to do. It's an elective process. Life is far too short to spend it struggling with something as vexing and labor-intensive as Writing A Bunch of Sentences in a Row.

“We like to equate effort with quality, but it's not always the case.”

Actually, yes, effort DOES equate with quality. But the effort comes in being dedicated to the craft and learning all you can learn, not in poring over each word as you write. And it comes in PRACTICING instead of hovering over one work for months or years.

“[Dean Wesley Smith is] an author who can write 17 books a year (yep, 17).”

How wrong can one guy be? Even the most cursory research would tell him DWS can write a 60,000 word novel in 7 days. He's written four novels in a month on at least one occasion that I know of.

Hell, even I can write 17 novels in a year, and I'm a slug compared to Dean. He could easily write at least 26 novels in a year. I'm just surprised he hasn't challenged himself yet to write 50 novels in a year.

“[When writing into the dark we] push the creative side of our brain harder....”

Uh, no. Those of us who do this don't "push" anything. We step back and allow our creative subconscious to flow past as the characters tell their story. We get our critical mind out of the way so the creative mind and the original story can flow.

“Not everything we write will work, but we'll write so much the flops won't matter.”

Ugh. This completely misses the point. We who write into the dark are not simply slinging stories against a wall and hoping some will stick. There are no "flops." Or alternatively, everything is a "flop."

What works for one reader won't work for another. The point is to trust yourself to write the best story you can at your current level of craft, then submit or publish it and let the readers decide whether they like it.

“Dean writes ... anticipating the story — getting excited about what will happen to the characters.”

Again, no. Practitioners of WITD "anticipate" nothing. We just write the next sentence, then the next sentence and the next until the characters carry us through to the end of the story. We're entertained as we go.

“[Dean] goes back and re-reads what he just wrote, tweaking the story as he goes. Yes, he does re-write and edit as he works through the novel....”

This couldn't be further from the truth. Practitioners of WITD do cycle back, always in creative mind. As Dean himself has plainly stated numerous times, he rewrites and edits nothing, either during or after the process of WITD.

Rewriting and editing is a function of the critical mind. It's an absolutely certain way to destroy a story. (For much more on the critical mind, see my [Quiet the Critical Voice \(and Write Fiction\)](#)).

“To keep from writing bad endings....”

Nope. If the characters create the ending, a "bad" ending isn't possible. When Dean "loops back" (cycles), he's still in the creative subconscious, allowing the characters, not his conscious, critical mind, to tweak what's on the page.

“Don’t go nuts and attempt a novel on your first go.”

To this one I can only say why not? Writing into the dark—trusting yourself and your creative subconscious to do what it knows how to do—is not limited by length. Let your characters tell their story, however long or short it may be.

Over the past five years, I’ve written in the vicinity of 4,000,000 (four million) words of published fiction in short stories, novellas and novels. Every word of it was written into the dark. In every case the story unfolded as the characters told it.

If you trust the characters, they will carry you through to the end. Your only role is that of Recorder, to put your fingers on the keyboard and write what you’re given to write. Write the next sentence, then the next and the next. You will be amazed at what happens.

Okay, that’s more than enough.

Folks, writing into the dark isn’t a matter of sacrificing quality or writing “fast” or any of that. It’s simply a way to keep us from revising, rewriting, and polishing our own original voice off the work.

Publishers want to see something “original,” right? That’s what they all say. Think about that.

I’ll talk tomorrow about a related topic: the myth that “fast” writing equals “bad” writing.

Rolled out at 1:30 and vastly revised the topic above. Yes, revised. But it’s nonfiction. Honestly, I usually write my topics into the dark too, but this time I made an exception, mostly to temper the anger I felt as I wrote the first draft.

Today I’ll try to finish tidying up everything so I can hand it off to Mona and get back to doing what I do well: writing fiction.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “National Shooting Sports Month” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/national-shooting-sports-month.html>.

See “Wow, What A Bad Ending” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/wow-what-a-bad-ending/>.

See “The Rhythm of Words” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-rhythm-of-words/>.

See “Amazon Publishing: What is it Like to Get Signed By Them?” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/amazon-publishing/>. Note: Presented for instructional purposes only. This is not a recommendation for Amazon Publishing.

See “Comparing the 5 Most Popular eBook Distribution Companies” at <https://www.bookworks.com/2019/03/comparing-5-popular-ebook-distribution/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1850 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1850

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20930
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 205130
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 563867

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Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [BookWorks.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, July 18](#)

[July 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Update
- * Topic: Be Very Careful...
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Update

I got most of what I wanted to transfer to Mona done yesterday (files, URLs, etc.). I say “most” because I’m sure other things will crop up later.

This is a major mind-shift for me too, just because I won’t have to think as much about things I used to have to think about. Like pricing, genre placement, and distribution. Like classes on business and negotiations.

I’ll keep my hand in the publishing side only as the prep guy. I’ll continue to be the eformatter, cover designer and promo-doc preparer.

The manuscript is pre-eformatted as I write anyway, and I’ve invested a lot of time in learning cover design. Plus I know how to write sales copy and prep the promo doc. No need to reinvent the wheel.

In a way I’m going back to the beginning, when all I had to worry about were learning more about the writing craft and telling stories.

I’m a lucky guy. I have the best job in the world. (grin)

Topic: On Writing “Fast”

Yesterday I talked about writing into the dark. Because most writers who write into the dark (DWS, Stephen King and Lee Child, just to drop a few “big” names) also turn out a lot of work, WITD has become equated in many minds with writing “fast.”

And writing “fast” has become equated with “bad writing.” And that’s just silly.

First of all, writing “fast” doesn’t exist unless you’re a stenographer. It certainly doesn’t exist in fiction.

Productivity and being prolific—whether or not it’s related to writing into the dark—is a simple matter of math.

First, neither WITD nor writing “fast” has anything to do with slopping words onto the page or throwing stories against the wall and hoping some of them will stick.

Writing “fast” has to do with spending time in the chair, period.

Think about it.

I write laboriously slow at a rate of about 17 words per minute.

If you write only 17 lousy words per minute (and seriously, how can you NOT come up with at least 17 words in a minute?) and do that for 60 minutes in a row, that’s 1000 words per hour.

If you do that and spend four hours in the chair per day, you’ll write 4000 words per day.

And if you do that even only 5 days per week (take weekends off), that's still 20,000 words per week and 80,000 words per month.

If you don't take weekends off, you'll write upward of 120,000 words per month.

But maybe you have a day job and kids. Okay. Even if you write only one hour per day and five days per week, that's still 20,000 words per month and a novel in 3 or 4 months.

Write one hour per day and you'll be considered prolific. (And you can break that hour into 4 15-minute sessions.)

Admittedly, I don't rewrite. Which means the stories I put out are in my original voice. They aren't polished to look like everything else in the slushpile.

Consider, it will take an average professional writer 80 hours to write the 80,000 word novel I mentioned above. (Sure, the writer can also choose to spend a lot more hours revising, rewriting, etc, but that isn't writing. Writing is putting new words on the page.)

If I spend those 80 hours in the chair in one month, I'm considered a "fast" writer.

If that happens, a bunch of people who probably have never experienced an original thought will claim that what I've written is dreck. Of course, they won't bother to read what I've written first. They'll simply make a blanket assumption.

And the same people will have the same reaction if I write only one hour per day and spread those 80 hours over 80 days. Writing a novel in less than three months? It can't possibly be any good, right?

But if I spend say 15 minutes in the chair per day, and I do that only 5 days per week and take weekends off— Oh, well THEN it will probably be a decent novel since it took me a year or a little longer to write it.

Or maybe I could write only 5 minutes per day. Then it would take me three years (960 5-minute sessions) to write my novel. I guess that would make it a masterpiece.

Does anyone out there NOT see how utterly ridiculous this is?

And frankly, I feel like a complete lagabout because we're almost through the 7th month of the year and I've written only 7 novels and a novella this year thus far.

Writing "fast" isn't a matter of being in a hurry. It's a matter of spending time in the chair.

And writing into the dark is a matter of trusting in your own ability and of trusting your characters to tell the story that they (not you) are actually living.

I understand that most writers will never “get” this. That’s because most of them won’t even try it, at least not honestly.

It’s far easier to succumb to the fear and fall back to the safety net of routine and excuses.

In fact, if even ten out of a thousand DO try it, most of those won’t trust it. Which of course means they didn’t really try it because the whole thing hinges on that trust. Soon they’ll fall back to the safety net too.

So I understand about those writers, but it makes me sad for them because I’ve been where they are. I know first-hand how much fun they could be having.

But when they cross their arms and refuse to try or when they try half-heartedly and fall back to the net, all I can do is watch.

Rolled out at a far more reasonable hour this morning. (grin)

This morning I’ll begin moving storage items over to the bay next door and rearranging my Hovel.

Later, I and my publisher will start on the Licensing Transition videos. Sometime today we’ll go to the store.

As these business-transition things settle out, I look forward to getting back to writing fiction every day. Being patient is not an easy thing for me. (grin)

Plus my youngest son’s coming down from Flagstaff tomorrow to spend the weekend, so we’re looking forward to his visit.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Want a challenge? Try this: “He’s Writing 365 Children’s Books in 365 Days, While Holding Down a Day Job” at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/11/books/matt-zurbo-cielo.html>. (You might have to sign up for a free account.)

To see the Cielo site, visit <https://cielo365stories.com/>.

See “Ghostwriting: How Much Money?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/ghostwriting-how-much-money/>.

See “Robert Fulghum” at <http://www.robertleefulghum.com/>. Check out his Downloads page. And read what he says there about his American publisher. Sigh.

See “RWIM: The Value of Critique Partners – Part 2” at <https://terryodell.com/rwim-the-value-of-critique-partners-part-2/>. As I cycle, my characters fill in anything I left out. My first reader fullfills the “reader opinion” aspect. What you do is up to you.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1190 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1190

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 206320
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 565057

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Robert Fulghum](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Friday, July 19

[July 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Ridiculous Quote of the Day
- * Update
- * Topic:
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Ridiculous Quote of the Day

Via the Kill Zone blog, “Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist or understand.” – George Orwell

LOL. Poor guy. Did nobody ever tell him writing is an elective process? He should’ve found something fun to do. (grin)

Update

First, today’s “Of Interest” is a self-publishing (not vanity publishing) crash course. I suggest you take notes, and take the time to visit the in-post links.

Yesterday we got most of the storage (all the major items) moved from the Hovel to the bay. We also began straightening up/rearranging the Hovel.

The front part of the Hovel (about a 20’ x 10’ space) looks a lot more like a writer’s garret now than a chunk carved out of a storage room.

That took up most of the morning. Then we drove into Benson for a Mexican food lunch, then to shop briefly for groceries, then home.

We had planned to watch and listen to Dean’s first few License Transitioning videos. But frankly, we were both too exhausted from the morning’s efforts to do that. First time we’ve missed our schedule, but we’ll get back to it tomorrow, situation willing.

Yesterday Mona also printed out several StoneThread Publishing URL stickers to place inside some of my remaining print books. She plans to distribute those to libraries, indie bookstores and used bookstores in the area. Great advertising. We’ll also probably offer some for sale on ebay (rare signed print editions still in the persona’s name).

Rolled out a little late this morning at 4. Today I’ll straighten out and clean the Hovel. (We swept it yesterday. Took out shovels full of dirt, and everything’s covered with dust.) Then maybe I’ll write a little.

Nah, no writing fiction today. I worked on spreadsheets to figure out my inventory: novels and novellas, short stories, short story collections, poetry collections and nonfiction books. I also noted where and when each of those has been licensed up to this point.

It’ll be a little harder to find all the essays and other publications. I probably won’t ever find them all.

Later I’ll also catalogue all the individual poems and where they were published, at least those I can find. I have a lot more IP than I thought I had.

Well, my son should be here soon, so I’ll post this.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See the comments on “Wow, What A Bad Ending” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/wow-what-a-bad-ending/#comments>.

See “Photographer’s Copyright Claim Against Officer of Company over Photos on Website Moves Forward” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/photographers-copyright-claim-against-officer-of-company-over-photos-on-website-moves-forward/>. I list this because of PG’s take, which has a great deal to do with writing.

See “Amazon Self-Publishing Royalties and Costs: Here’s What You Need to Know” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/amazon-self-publishing-royalties/>.

See “The 13 BEST Self-Publishing Companies of 2019” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/best-self-publishing-companies/>.

See “What is the Best Service for Print on Demand Books?” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/print-on-demand-books/>.

See “Attempting To Explain What WITD/WITU Means to Me” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/attempting-to-explain-what-witd-witu-means-to-me/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 530 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 530

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22650
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 206850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 565587

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Intellectual Property](#), [IP](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Daily Journal, Saturday, July 20

[July 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: My Typical Early Morning
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest (a lot today)
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“The subjective opinions of a certain group of people at a certain moment in time say nothing about the value of your work.” JA Konrath

“My advice to authors is to do a POD print book directly with Amazon for Amazon and directly with Ingram Spark for bookstores.” Lee Foster (This agrees with advice from Reedsy in yesterday's “Of Interest.”)

“Caroline [Todd] practically leapt out of her chair and slapped her hand on the table with great force, near-shouting: ‘You stop thinking about writing a novel. You stop telling people you’re writing a novel. You stop dreaming of writing a novel. And you write!’

“My hair was blown back. Seriously. I went home from that conference and didn't write my next review. I didn't read my next book. I sat down and wrote my first novel. In a week. Seven days. 75,000 words. Twenty years of failure gone, poof, just like that. Because I stopped not just thinking that I couldn't do it... I stopped thinking about it at all. I concentrated on doing it.” Hugh Howey (See more in “Of Interest.”)

Topic: My Typical Early Morning

In case you ever wonder, which I doubt, I thought I'd share my typical early morning. This is pretty much every morning.

First of all, my typical day is about as long as anyone else's, though I begin and end it earlier than most people do. I usually rise between 2 and 4 a.m. (usually around 3) and go to bed around 7 or 8 p.m.

Four to six hours of sleep work well for me. Seven hours is better. If I sleep eight hours or longer, I feel as if I've lost part of my life that I'll never get back. (Grin, but seriously, life is short enough. I hate that I have to sleep at all.)

After I get up, get coffee, and move to the Hovel, I open the boilerplate for the Daily Journal, a Notepad (.txt) doc with all the details cut out. Then I start making my rounds.

Every morning, I check

- * DeanWesleySmith.com
- * killzoneblog.com
- * jakonrath.blogspot.com
- * <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/>
- * blog.reedsy.com
- * thebookdesigner.com

If there's a new post and if the title interests me, I read (or begin to read) each of those each morning. If I don't stop reading, I usually add a link to the post to "Of Interest" so you can see it too if you want to.

I'm also subscribed to receive blog posts by email from Kris Rusch (both KrisWrites.com and Patreon), Jane Friedman, Anne R. Allen, The Passive Voice, CrimeReads and a few others.

Actually, my writing this topic turned out to be potentially beneficial to you. It caused me to find a few new resources to check each morning or to subscribe to. You'll see some of those in "Of Interest" today.

For example, The Book Designer (Joel Friedlander), Victoria Strauss, and David Gaughran (all of whom I "discovered" or rediscovered in a guest post on Anne R. Allen's blog).

When I receive those and read something juicy, it goes in the current or the next day's "Of Interest" section, depending on when I receive it.

Following (or sometimes during) that I write the Update and/or Topic, Quote of the Day etc. Everything but the Diary. I usually save the Diary entry for just before I post the Journal.

That generally takes up the first few hours of the morning and delivers me to a major break at around 6 or 7.

Then the full day begins at around 8:30. As you already know, that's when I begin writing fiction and/or do necessary things around Stanbrough West. (grin).

How about you? Most of us settle into a routine. What's yours?

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning, mostly uncertain what the day will hold beyond this Journal entry. There will be visiting, and maybe a trip to an orchard to pick peaches. Maybe (probably) some fiction writing, maybe not.

Because of the uncertainty of how the day will unfold, I'll post this early. If I write fiction today, I'll report those numbers tomorrow.

Talk with you again then. Have a great weekend, and happy 50th to the Apollo space program.

Of Interest

See "In Defense of the Passive Voice" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/in-defense-of-the-passive-voice/>.

See "Six Things Writers Need To Stop Worrying About" at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/07/five-things-writers-need-to-stop.html>.

See "Every Writer's Dream" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/every-writers-dream.html>.

See "Amazon Ranking and Bestseller Lists – What's the Deal?" at <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2018/01/amazon-ranking-and-bestseller-lists.html>.

See "Traditional Publishing vs Self-Publishing: A 2020 Vision" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/06/traditional-publishing-vs-self-publishing-a-2020-vision/>.

See "How to Waste Money When Self-Publishing a Book" at <https://annerallen.com/2019/07/self-publishing-money-wasters/>.

See "From Writer Beware's Files: The Seven Most Prolific Vanity Publishers (Plus Two Honorable Mentions)" at <http://www.victoriastrauss.com/2019/07/12/from-writer-bewares-files-the-seven-most-prolific-vanity-publishers-plus-two-honorable-mentions-2/>.

See "The Tao of Writing a Novel" at <http://www.hughhowey.com/the-tao-of-writing-a-novel/>.
Wow. Just wow. Don't miss this.

For fun, see Michael J. Sullivan's "Plotholes" at <http://riyria.blogspot.com/p/plotholes.html>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 830 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 830

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month.....	7399
Total fiction words for the year.....	358737
Total nonfiction words for the month...	23480
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	207680
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	566417
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags ['Hugh Howey](#), [Anne R. Allen](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [JA Konrath](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Foster](#), [Michael J. Sullivan](#), [Michaele Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Victoria Strauss](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, July 21](#)

[July 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: How to Learn to Write
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“A lot of novelists start late—Conrad, Pirandello, even Mark Twain. When you're young, chess is all right, and music and poetry. But novel-writing is something else. It has to be learned, but it can't be taught. This bunkum and stinkum of college creative writing courses! The academics don't know that the only thing you can do for someone who wants to write is to buy him a typewriter.” (Thanks to Bob Beckley for reminding me of this quote.)

“You either talk about writing, or you stay home and write.” David Sedaris

“[W]hen all is said and done, it's about the story, not the writing.” Terry Odell

Topic: How to Learn to Write

In a recent blog post, surprisingly, Dean Wesley Smith touted the MA/MFA program at Western Colorado University as an “[Amazing Learning Chance](#).”

Out of curiosity, I went looking for the program. (If you’re interested, [Here’s the URL](#).)

At first glance, it seemed that Dean was right. The program appears to be an amazing learning opportunity. Mostly because the Publishing segment (one year) is taught by Kevin J. Anderson. And according to Dean’s post, the MFA writing program is taught by faculty who are “real writers.”

One of those is Candace Nadon, Ph.D. In a bio she presumably wrote, she listed only one “highlight” of her career: “...a recent publication in a magazine edited by my dissertation advisor....” Well, all right then.

Still, in light of Dean’s recommendation, I thought maybe it was an old bio, so I conducted a quick Amazon search. Nothing by Candace.

The other two faculty members listed were Fran Wilde, MFA and Richard Wilber, Ed.D.

Fran Wilde won a Nebula award for her debut novel, *Updraft*, in 2015. According to my Amazon search, she’s also written seven other novels since then.

Dr. Wilber’s “career highlights include noting with pride that a number of my students have found success in fiction or nonfiction writing.” He does also have 6 novels listed on Amazon under the name “Rick Wilber.”

So of a faculty of three in the MFA program, two are actually published novelists, albeit with only 14 novels between them.

The cost for the MFA (33 credit hours x \$700) is \$23,100. I couldn’t find the exact cost of the Publishing year, but a conservative approximation would be an additional \$7700.

So an MFA with the Publishing addition would run just under \$31,000.00.

Well, that’s considerably steep for my pocketbook. If I had 33 grand lying around, I’d make a down payment on a new pickup. Besides, frankly, I’m not sure I could learn very much from a faculty that’s written and published so little.

Of course, a writer should never stop learning or seeking out valid sources of information that will improve his craft. Which is why I continually tout my own two chosen writing craft (and writing business) instructors, Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch.

Between them, Dean and Kris have written and published *hundreds* of novels and *thousands* of short stories. Both are bestsellers in more than one genre. And both have served as the editors of several magazines. They’ve lived on both sides of the mean streets.

Additionally, Kris is one of the most decorated names of all time in science fiction as both a writer and an editor.

So I'm just saying, on balance I'd rather not spend over \$30k to MAYBE learn something from two writers who are not as far along the road as I am and (for all I know) might not yet have shaken off the myths that plague most writers.

Of course, I won't get to add MFA after my name. Shrug.

But I CAN take online workshops from two proven, trusted sources, workshops that are focused tightly down on specific craft or business topics.

I can even apply to attend the WMG Publishing Masters Class in Las Vegas (\$750 plus hotel).

I can read the works of truly masterful stage-four writers whose work I admire, and on and on.

And most importantly, I can engage in the ultimate learning process: practice.

In other words, I can follow the same advice I give every one who wants to be a writer and asks me how to do that:

Stay home and write.

Rolled out late at 4 this morning. No fiction writing yesterday and no learning, hence no update.

Today will be filled with visits and otherwise Doing Nothing (probably). If I accomplish anything professional, I'll provide an update tomorrow.

I inadvertently got an excellent story title from a humorous church newsletter excerpt that a correspondent sent me via email: Electric Girdles (the original writer meant "electric griddles"). As titles cannot be copyrighted, feel free to run with it if it appeals to you. (grin)

Talk with you tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Great Challenges" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-challenges/>.

See "On Producing My Own Audiobook" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/on-producing-my-own-audiobook.html>.

See "In Which Winnie The Pooh Helped My Writing" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/in-which-winnie-the-pooh-helped-my-writing/>. I agree strongly with the final sentence of her post.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 790 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 790

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 24270
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 208470
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 567207

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Learning](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Monday, July 22

[July 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Some Thoughts on Me Writing Fiction
- * Topic: As You Consider Publishing Audio Books
- * Patronage
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“You must write.” Robert A. Heinlein in Business Habits for Writers

Some Thoughts on Me Writing Fiction

I almost named this section “Life Rolls” or “Placing the Blame” or something dramatic like that. I can’t even call it “Why I’m Not Writing Fiction” because that wouldn’t be accurate either. And I can’t bring myself to call it whining, though that’s probably all it is. (grin)

The truth is, I’m not writing fiction recently because I haven’t felt like writing fiction. Well, I have but I haven’t.

Oh, I’ve started a few things, but each time, I set them aside at a few hundred or thousand words in. My mind is drawn to some other situations that are going on right now: things that are external to my life as a fictionist.

But they aren’t really life rolls or even life swells. They’re only a series of disjointed situations that draw my attention away from having fun with my characters.

So I probably won’t write today. I don’t have any other commitments, but I have all these things on my mind. For example...

Overall, I have some anxiety about being so far behind the learning curve when it comes to reinventing StoneThread Publishing AND learning licensing (AND copyright AND trademark).

It’s all necessary and timely, but knowing that doesn’t keep me from feeling a little overwhelmed. Like if I stood on a beach and watched a tsunami come in, I might feel a little moisture.

On top of that (and also as part of it) I’m turning over the reins of what has been “my” business for the past two decades. I know myself well enough to believe relinquishing that control creates some anxiety too.

And then there are normal life things.

Tomorrow I’ll get lower-spine xrays. See? This is nothing earth-shattering, but it’s something I can’t shake out of my head at present.

The xrays will inform a consultation with a surgeon on August 2nd. I’ll get the doctor’s input, which I hope will be a frank risk-benefit assessment.

Then Mona and I will have to make a decision regarding a medical procedure. The decision will be to do it now (accept the risk now) while my ticker’s acting like it’s supposed to, or hold off until later when it might not be minding its manners—which of course might cause the surgeon to decline.

And then weaving through all of that is a personal situation one of my sons is going through. You never stop worrying about your children.

And then there are a few other situations. I’m looking to buy a new (to me) pickup and doing some other things.

So the thing is, I'm free and clear to write today, and there will be many other days between now and the return of clear skies when I'm free to write. But my mind is scattered in too many directions.

So I think I need to make a command decision. I think I'll just flat set aside all attempts to write fiction until all this stuff clears up. I suspect all of it should be rectified (or rectified enough, or I will have settled into it enough) by maybe August 10th or so.

Then maybe I can set some goals and forge ahead again. Of course, if any of this changes I'll report it here.

And the Journal will continue. I'm just that stubborn.

Topic: As You Consider Publishing Audio Books

This situation started awhile back. It's developed now to the point that it's crucial enough to warrant its own topic, versus being merely mentioned in "Of Interest."

It's difficult to imagine publishing anything in any format these days without considering selling through Amazon (as one retailer).

It's also becoming increasingly difficult to imagine publishing paper and ebooks without publishing an audio book as well. Audio, as everyone notes, is a rapidly growing market.

But via The Passive Voice, there's a brouhaha brewing between Amazon and some authors regarding Amazon's new "Audible Captions" program on audio books.

In a nutshell, Audible (an Amazon company) wants to "use machine learning to transcribe an audio recording for listeners, allowing them to read along with the narrator."

I strongly recommend you read "[Amazon's Upcoming Audible Captions Feature = Unhappy Publishers](#)" and the comments. This will both illuminate the problem and give you The Passive Guy's take, which, thus far, is that it's no big deal.

Then for an opposing argument (and lot of useful links) read "[Someone Disagrees with PG – Again.](#)"

As you'll read in the first article above, the big publishers are strongly against what they see as a rights grab. (So are a lot of us tiny publishers.)

The Passive Guy makes some (maybe) valid points in the other direction, that this is really no big deal. Again, you'll see that in the first article above.

On this rare occasion I agree with the big publishers and disagree with The Passive Guy.

Due to the binding nature of contracts (including terms of service), to me business is black and white.

If Audible wants to transcribe or “caption” an audio book, they should license both audio and transcription (or captioning or limited-print) rights to the work in question. They could easily do so by giving authors the opportunity to opt-in for a larger royalty share.

To my mind, allowing Audible to transcribe any non-public-domain audio book without having licensed the right to do so is at least a very slippery slope.

The bottom line, as always, is to be sure to read and understand the contract or terms of service (which is also a contract) before you sign or commit to anything.

Patronage

I offer many free resources for writers, including this Journal, the blog over at my author site, and many of the items on my [For Writers page](#). If you haven't visited in awhile, you're missing some things.

Those resources will remain free. However, I'm a professional writer. If you find value in any of these resources, please consider [Becoming A Patron](#). In the alternative, you can make a one-time or recurring contribution via the Donate (PayPal) button at the top left sidebar of either website.

You might also find added value on my Patronage page—my equivalent of Patreon—where I've recently added two new rewards. If you have time, [drop by and look it over](#).

Thank you for any support.

Rolled out at 3 this morning, wrote the stuff above, watered some plants, did some other early morning stuff.

Off to the business office now (the house) to check out StreetLib's and PublishDrive's upload requirements.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Why Self-Publishing Authors Should Consider Establishing Their Own Imprint” by David Wogahn at <https://www.janefriedman.com/why-self-publishing-authors-should-consider-establishing-their-own-imprint/>.

See “Writer's Block, Oh No!” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/writers-block-oh-no/>.

I encourage you to visit Four Knights Press at <https://fourknightspress.com/>. If you scroll down a bit, you'll find some writing tips from Dan Baldwin's weekly blogette. Browse. Enjoy.

In case it might help, see "42 Writers' 'Rules for Writing'" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/42-writers-rules-for-writing/>. I note with dismay the author failed to mention Heinlein's Rules. Probably she's never heard of them.

See "Got Attitude" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/got-attitude/>.

See "Colin Mobey's Leadership Coaching" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/colin-mobeys-leadership-coaching/>.

See "13 Ways to Use a Book Award for Marketing" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/07/13-ways-to-use-a-book-award-for-marketing/>.

Via Linda Mae Adams, see "27 Hard-Won Lessons about Writing from New York Times Bestselling Authors" at <https://smartblogger.com/writing-lessons/>.

For a great deal more, explore the Writing category of Smart Blogger at <https://smartblogger.com/category/writing/>. Note: Some of this you might find useful. Some you should ignore.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1270 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1270

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 25540
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 209740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 568477

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Four Knights Press](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [SmartBlogger.com](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, July 23

[July 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: A Review of Google Play Books
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.” Sylvia Plath

“Don't rewrite, except to editorial order. (And then only if you agree.)” Robert A. Heinlein (Harlan Ellison)

See? If you rewrite, it's because of self-doubt. The self-doubt instilled in you by nonwriters over years and years of so-called education.

“An English teacher teaching you how to write fiction is like a fish teaching you how to ride a bicycle.” Harvey Stanbrough

Topic: A Review of Google Play Books

Rationale

As an indie writer and publisher, I still have to wear several hats: writer, student of writing, student of business, cover designer, eformatter, prepper, uploader, etc.

Yes, even with my wife's help and her great business mind. It only makes sense. She still has a full-time job that takes up a lot of her time. And I've been doing the indie-publishing thing since 2011.

So I can't just hand everything over to her and sit on my hands while she's making her way through the learning curve.

So I've divided all those jobs up there in the first paragraph into two broad categories: writing and admin.

My personality makes it very difficult for me to sit and do nothing. I've been aware of the passage of time since I was around 10 years old. I've always had an overactive sense of urgency.

I'm not writing fiction at the moment (my mind is too muddled with Other Things), but I can still function on the admin side. Having to consciously think about what I'm doing on that side enables me to shove aside all the other concerns for a time. And if I'm drawn away to some of those concerns, I can come right back and plug into my admin duties.

So while I'm taking time off from writing fiction, I'm putting on my admin hat. I can help advance my business by investigating new opportunities, like uploading to StreetLib and/or PublishDrive.

Both of those (if I remember right) distribute to Google Play Books, a major player in today's ebook market.

BUT...

Yesterday, out of the blue, Google Play Books emailed me their new terms of service to review, which caused me to re-discover GPB.

So I grabbed a cup of coffee, carefully read the TOS (no rights grabs and a vastly improved royalty rate in the US, Canada and Australia) and accepted the terms.

History

From what I remember from years ago, GPB only took PDF format and authors had to jump through several ridiculous hoops. It took over a half-hour to upload a single title. Frankly, the time wasn't worth it.

That's why, although I've had an account with them since their inception, I'd never successfully uploaded even one book.

But I assumed the timing of their email had to mean something, arriving as it did in the midst of everything else that's going on both in my life and in this wonderful new world of indie publishing.

So I opened the site, held my breath, and uploaded a novel just to see what the process was like. For a test dummy, I used my SF novel, *The 13-Month Turn*.

As a result of that test, I decided I'll upload directly to GPB (70% royalty) instead of going to them through an aggregator.

The Process

Surprisingly, the process didn't suck. But just a caution: Go through the process carefully the first few times. Look at everything on every page. It's different than the D2D or Smashwords layout (and, I assume, different than PublishDrive and StreetLib).

Unlike several years ago, this time it took only about 5 minutes to upload my first book. After I'd uploaded a few others, I had trimmed the process down to about 3 minutes. (When you have around a hundred major publications, minutes matter.)

Google Play Books also accepts a variety of formats now. I uploaded the .epub I got from Draft2Digital.

Another caution: At first, since I uploaded a finished .epub and didn't see separate upload links for the document and the cover, I thought maybe I didn't have to upload the cover separately.

Turns out you have to click the single Upload A File link twice, once for the cover and once for the document. No biggie. That part of the process took no more than 10 or 15 seconds to upload both files.

The author can even elect to have GPB provide a separate stock number for the book (vs. an ISBN), similar to Amazon's ASIN.

There's a field for Page Count, but it isn't a required field. (If you're uploading an ebook, you can skip it.)

None of the fields are pre-populated, meaning, for example, you have to type (or copy/paste) the author name and author bio separately for each book. Still, copy/paste is wonderful, isn't it? So do your prep work.

Overall, the interface is a little clunkier than the D2D interface (isn't everything?), but it was considerably smoother than Smashwords.

I now have 11 titles on Google Play Books. I uploaded the last 10 (the Nick Spalding series and the Blackwell Ops series) this morning in about 45 minutes. (That included the time to open each promo doc, etc.)

I'll probably wait to upload more titles. My account is currently "Pending Review." GPB says this will take 5 to 7 days. Still, I'm confident in my formatting, etc. and it's nice to know I've already uploaded around a fifth of my novels and novellas.

I can only hope for more of the same from StreetLib and PublishDrive. Once I've played with those, maybe I'll write another topic like this one, or maybe even a comparison.

If you have any questions about Google Play Books, I'd be happy to answer them. Please visit the Journal website at <https://hestanbrough.com> and leave your question or comment in the Comments section.

Rolled out way early at 1 a.m.

I was in the Hovel by 1:30, and by 4 I'd written all of the above, uploaded the books to GPB, etc.

A game or two of spider solitaire to pass a little time, then to the house for a break.

After I visit with the xray tech, I'll spend the rest of the day investigating StreetLib and PublishDrive and possibly uploading some books to them.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Pulp Speed Back Once Again" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pulp-speed-back-again/>. Read this carefully. Read it a couple of times. Share it with writer friends who are stuck in the rewriting myth.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Remodeling" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/22/free-fiction-monday-remodeling/>.

See "Story Stakes and Free Book Giveaway Contest" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/story-stakes-and-free-book-giveaway-contest.html>.

See "P.E.P." at <http://prowriterswriting.com/p-e-p/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1130 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1130

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 26670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 210870
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 569607

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 24](#)

[July 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: Start An Inventory. Start It Now.
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“The more you reason the less you create.” Raymond Chandler

“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

“[R]eaders don’t really care who published a book, but mostly just care about the story....”
Laura Benedict

“I’m not a young man. I’m old, tired and full of no coffee.” — Raymond Chandler, Playback
(grin)

Topic: Start an Inventory. Start It Now.

This is straight from the Department of Stuff I Wish Someone Had Told Me Back In The Day:

Start An Inventory Of Your Intellectual Property. Start It Now.

Then get in the habit of adding to it every time you finish another work.

If you do it right, this can actually replace all the little promo docs I’ve preached about creating and keeping in the folder with the book and cover files.

And you’ll have all the information for all your books in one place. I can’t begin to tell you the number of times this would have come in handy.

Keep your inventory on a spreadsheet or two or five.

List at least the following headings for your columns. Note: Those headings preceded by an asterisk are optional. This is from my spreadsheet for my novels and novellas.

Title

* Subtitle

Author

* Author (if you collaborate)

* Pen Name (if you use one)

Sales Copy

Publisher/Imprint (name of your publishing company and/or or imprint)

Publish Date

Words (word count, ebook)

Ebook Price

BISAC Category 1

BISAC Category 2

* BISAC Category 3

Keywords

* Box Set (name of box set that includes this novel; for a short story spreadsheet, this heading would be Collection)

ISBN (ebook, D2D)

Universal Link (D2D)

ISBN (ebook, Smashwords)

Smashwords Link

Amazon Link (will contain ASIN)

* ISBN (ebook, other)

* Other Link (StreetLib, etc.)

* ISBN (ebook, other)

* Other Link

* Published By (Other) (if someone else published it)

* Publish Date (Other)

* ISBN (paper)

* Publish Date (paper)

* Price (paper)

* Pages (paper)

* ISBN (audio)

* Publish Date (audio)

* Price (audio book)

In your short stories spreadsheet, you might also want to include Sold To, Sold Date, Publish Date and Rights Revert Date columns unless you go straight to indie publishing with your stories. (I recommend using a separate Submissions spreadsheet if you want to keep track of external submissions, publishers, dates, etc.)

Assuming you write across the literary genres, I recommend keeping separate inventory spreadsheets, one for novels and novellas and one for short stories. If you write essays, poems/poetry collections, etc. I recommend keeping a separate spreadsheet for each of those as

well. If you publish short story collections regularly, you might want to keep a separate spreadsheet for that too.

If your work is optioned by Hollywood (or anyone, really) add at least three more columns to the appropriate spreadsheet(s): Optioned By, Option Start Date, and Option Stop Date. If they give you an advance etc., add another column.

The point is, your records can't be too detailed. And once your spreadsheet is set up, it will take only a few minutes to add all the appropriate info to it as you finish each work.

If you start now, you'll never look up from a digital pile of hundreds of works and want to down a fifth of whiskey. (grin)

I'm actually writing this topic yesterday (July 23) at 3 p.m. At around 8:30 a.m., I started filling in the blanks on my inventory. Six hours later (no breaks) I was through listing only 51 of my 300+ bits of IP. And that doesn't touch the poetry or essays.

So take it from a tired old guy: Start an inventory of your IP. Start It Now.

Rolled out at 2:30. Since I wrote most of the above yesterday, I'll fine tune it, then add the diary and the "Of Interest" today. Then I'm heading back to work on my inventory. Sigh.

Yeah, I know. But I did it to myself. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Don't Miss Your Deadlines: A Great Big Cautionary Tale" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/dont-miss-your-deadlines-a-great-big-cautionary-tale.html>.

See "Perfection is Just a State of Mind" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/perfections-just-a-state-of-mind/>.

See "Pulp Speed and the Indie Writer" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pulp-speed-and-the-indie-writer/>.

See "Raymond Chandler: The Art of Beginning a Crime Story" at <https://crimereads.com/raymond-chandler-the-art-of-beginning-a-crime-story/>. This is some good stuff. And yesterday was Chandler's birthday.

See "Someone Disagrees with PG – Again – The Sequel" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/someone-disagrees-with-pg-again-the-sequel/>. So... I reckon I won't be using Audible.

See “BookBaby Review: Read This First (Plus Promo Codes!)” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/bookbaby/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 780 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 780

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 27450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 211650
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 570387

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Inventory](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Raymond Chandler](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, July 25](#)

[July 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Correction
- * Topic: A Reminder of What It Takes...
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“[M]y creative voice is barely verbal. Maybe two [years old]. ... [S]he whined, ‘I don’t wanna spend the rest of my life doing stinky licensing.’” (grin) Kristine Kathryn Rusch

Correction

While putting together my novel and novella inventory, I found what I thought was an error. I seemed to be missing a novel.

But I added every new thing I wrote to my New Fiction spreadsheet as I finished it. I’ve been adding to that spreadsheet since April 2014.

So I went back today and double-checked it.

Oops. There was an error, but I hadn’t missed listing anything. The error was in my count.

I haven’t written 44 novels. I’ve written only 43. Crap. Um, I mean, mea culpa. It’s kind’a nice to have so many that I lose count, but still....

The figures below reflect the correction.

Topic: A Reminder of What It Takes to Write Into the Dark

I know, I know. Been here before. But this will be a different take.

Writing into the dark isn’t difficult and it requires no conscious thought. In fact, it requires only a letting-go, a refusal to invite or listen to any internal or external criticism. Period.

Put another, more positive way, writing into the dark requires trusting your subconscious (your characters) to tell the story. That’s the nutshell version.

If you write with the predetermined intention of inviting critique from yourself or others, or with the predetermined intention of revising, editing, rewriting, or any other conscious-mind activities later, you are not writing into the dark.

You may CALL what you’re doing “writing into the dark,” of course. It’s a free country. If you want to, you may also point at a raven and say, “Hey, look at that duck!” or refer to a massive fire truck as a “VW Bug.” But calling something by a certain name doesn’t make it so.

Writing into the dark is a particular technique in which your subconscious (your characters) tell the story, beginning to end. There is zero conscious-mind involvement. None at all. In fact, a person who is writing into the dark invokes the conscious mind only to tell the conscious mind to shut up and leave him alone.

Why am I so strigent about this?

Because if you write with the intention of performing any conscious-mind activities whatsoever, your creative subconscious “hears” that. It knows. And that unspoken intention tells your creative subconscious that you DON’T trust it. In turn, it will not give you its best effort. And why should it?

Put another way, Why should a three year old child tell a parent the truth if he knows the parent is only going to “correct” him every time he does? Soon, the child will begin telling the parent what she wants to hear. Or stop confiding in her at all.

So if that’s how you write, “expecting” to go back and rely on the conscious mind to “fix” anything, you might as well write from the conscious mind in the first place, laboring over each word, every sentence and paragraph.

But don’t expect to write an original story, and don’t expect to write in in your unique, original voice. You can’t do that from your conscious mind. Why? Because if you can “think” it, whether originally or in revision or rewrite, so can your readers. And they will.

The only way to write in your own unique, original voice is to trust in your ability to tell a story. Which means to trust in your creative subconscious and your characters to tell the story that they, not you, are living.

Until you are able to trust in your ability to tell a story, you won’t be able to trust your subconscious and your characters.

Now, in the fourth paragraph of this topic, I mentioned that you shouldn’t invite critiques, either internal or from others. How does that square with me sending my finished work off to a first reader?

Simple. My first readers know their job is to NOT critique. Their job is to point out spelling and wrong-word errors (waste for waist, etc.) and to point out inconsistencies that pop out at them while they’re reading.

That’s it. Nothing else.

They don’t go in “looking” for anything. They just read for pleasure.

Members of critique groups DO go in looking for “what’s wrong.” And they will find things.

The problem is, what’s “wrong” for one reader (or writer) will be right for another.

Don’t do that to yourself. Don’t do it to your creative subconscious and your characters. And don’t do it to your readers.

Take the leap. You are capable.

Trust yourself. Trust your characters. Set aside the conscious, critical mind and enjoy the true freedom of really writing into the dark.

Rolled out at 4 this morning. It's a day off for Mona. We have a trip planned to Sierra Vista. Afterward, we'll spend some time learning about licensing and other things.

I expect also to at least get a start on setting up the Short Story spreadsheet (for the inventory) so I can hand that whole thing over to her.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Triage (Rethinking The Writing Business Part Five)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/24/business-musings-triage-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-five/>. Again, for five bucks a month at her Patreon account you can get these posts and a whole lot more much sooner.

Catch the re-cast of the D2D "Ask Us Anything" at <https://draft2digital.com/blog/webinar-d2d-ask-us-anything-marketing-edition/>.

See "Bunch of Stuff" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/bunch-of-stuff/>.

See "Tales from the Script..." at <http://prowriterswriting.com/tales-from-the-script-more-ghostly-horror-stories-from-the-vault-of-error/>. Can you tell Dan used to be a copywriter? (grin)

See "A foolish consistency..." at <http://prowriterswriting.com/a-foolish-consistency-is-the-hobgoblin-of-little-minds-ralph-waldo-emerson/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 960 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 960

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 28410
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 212610
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 571347

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Draft2Digital](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Licensing](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, July 26](#)

[July 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Someone unsubscribed (not a bad thing)
- * Topic: A Proposed Inventory for Short Fiction
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“I like to hope that because stuff’s surprising me along the way, maybe it has the same surprise and spontaneity for readers. ... It’s all about following it wherever it may lead.” Tana French (Thanks to Phillip McCollum for pointing me to this quote)

“Is there a lesson here for self-pubbers? ... to be a success, you have to publish well and often.” Kristy Montee in [a comment on “Don’t Miss Your Deadlines....”](#)

Someone unsubscribed from my main blog post. This is not a bad thing. I mention it only because it caused me to go to MailChimp to see whether the person left a reason. (He or she didn’t.) But that further caused me to look at my “audience.” There were 700 contacts, only 382 of which were subscribers. Wow.

MailChimp has started a policy of counting even unsubscribed contacts against your total, so I took a little time to go through and delete those unsubscribed contacts permanently.

Then I moved over and looked at my other “audiences” and the accompanying stats.

For this Journal, we have 70 hearty souls subscribed. The stats are as follows:

- * 62% (43 subscribers) open frequently — Thank you. I assume you’re getting something of value from the blog or at least enjoying the daily chat. I’m glad.

* 3% (2 subscribers) open sometimes — Again, thank you. I kind’a sort’a think these are my weekly readers. (grin)

* 34% (24 subscribers) open rarely — That’s all right. If you’re one of those (and if you’re by chance even reading this), I hope you’ll pop in more often. I try to vary the topics and make them interesting and beneficial for you.

* 1% (1 subscriber) — shrug. Who knows? MailChimp didn’t even mention that one. I assume he or she has a rifle and is hunting me. Which is fine. There are days when I want to paint a target on both sides of my t-shirt and stand on my roof. (grin)

You who are in the 65%, if you do find something helpful in these Journal entries, please tell other writers.

Topic: A Proposed Inventory for Short Fiction

A couple of days ago, I outlined a spreadsheet by which you might keep an inventory of your novels.

Yesterday morning after I filed the Journal, I spent a few hours setting up a similar spreadsheet to keep track of my inventory of short stories.

This is just as important as keeping track of your novels, folks. Short stories have been made into movies. In fact, one of my own flash fiction stories (“At Confession”) was made into a short film on three separate occasions.

Of course, I knew absolutely nothing about IP or licensing back then. I graciously gave the producers my permission to make the film. I can only hope someone else approaches me to make yet another film. It will be a different story.

Anyway, I thought I’d share the headings for my short story spreadsheet:

Title

Series (even if your stories aren’t currently in series, that doesn’t mean you won’t write some in series later)

Author

Pen Name (I added this column because around half of my current short stories are available under a pen name)

Sales Copy

Pub (your publisher name and/or imprint)

Words (word count)

BISAC 1 (BISAC categories, such as SF, action-adventure, etc.)

BISAC 2

BISAC 3

Keywords

Sold To (this is filled in if you license your story to the TradPub magazines before indie publishing it. I put it in this position because in the future all of my short stories will be offered to TradPubMags first)

Sold Date

Pub Date

Rights Revert (date)

Indie Pub Date

EPrice

ISBN D2D

Universal Link

ISBN Smashwords

Smashwords Link

ISBN Amazon

Amazon Link (contains Amazon ASIN)

ISBN Other (PublishDrive, StreetLib, etc.)

Other Link

ISBN Other

Other Link

Collection (Name of collection/collections including this short story. One story might be in a 5-story collection/10-story collection)

Pub Date (for the collection/s)

Notes (if you want or need it. My Notes column currently only says “For specific collection pub details, see Collections spreadsheet.”

That’s it for now.

If you can think of other fields that I should add, please email me or (preferably) leave a comment. Thanks!

Rolled out at 3 this morning. I continued working to refine my inventory.

My current plan is to push through and have it whipped into some semblance of shape by the end of the month. Then I need to get back to writing. I’m really jonesing to write some fiction.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See the comments on “Pulp Speed Back Once Again” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/pulp-speed-back-once-again/#comments>.

See “A brand new course on Amazon algorithms” (free) at <https://blog.reedsy.com/learning/courses/marketing/amazon-algorithms/>.

See “Keeping a Writing Career On Track With Query Tracker” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/keeping-a-writing-career-on-track-with-query-tracker/>. If you’re looking for an agent....

See “Flame Tree Press: Now Seeking Manuscript Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/flame-tree-press-now-seeking-manuscript-submissions/>. The actual website for the publisher is <https://www.flametreepress.com/>.

See “Writing About Crossing The Line, et al.” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/writing-about-crossing-the-line-et-al>. Something to think about, let sink in, then use via your subconscious while writing.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 820 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 820

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month.....	7399
Total fiction words for the year.....	358737
Total nonfiction words for the month...	29330
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	213430
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	572167
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Inventory](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, July 27](#)

[July 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Because
- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: A Recommendation
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Because (according to MailChimp) so few of you click-through to items in “Of Interest,” I’m putting this early in the body of this post:

See “Day Job Thinking” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/day-job-thinking/>. This is a great, extremely important post. Please read it carefully, maybe a couple of times.

By the way, I’m not complaining about the click-throughs.

I like to believe you aren’t clicking through on “Of Interest” items because you’re already checking them on your own. But I hope you’ll still at least peruse them. Now and then I’ll toss you some fresh meat. (grin)

Quotes of the Day

“Structure should not form a prison, but allow the story to peer through and come free.”
Michael Lockhart

“Always begin as close to the moment your hero’s life changes as possible.” Jackson Dean Chase

Topic: A Recommendation

I can’t strongly enough recommend Writing Dynamite Story Hooks by Jackson Dean Chase. This is hands-down the best opening-textbook I’ve ever seen. (Including my own [Writing Great Beginnings](#).)

I bought my copy almost a year ago, but I hadn’t started reading it until yesterday. I wish I’d started much sooner.

As Mickey Spillane once wrote, “Your first line sells the book. Your last line sells the next book.”

That’s true enough.

Now consider, you should write a great opening hook *not only* at the beginning of your story or novel, but at the beginning of every major scene and every chapter. The hook/cliffhanger/hook combo is how you keep the reader turning pages.

If you’re serious about learning the craft of writing, buy this book. Not only is it a master-level course in writing openings, but it’s chock full of other gems as well.

You can visit Jackson Dean Chase’s website at <https://www.jacksondeanchase.com/>.

Rolled out at 4 this morning after being up late last night. I was working on a spreadsheet. (grin)

Today and tomorrow I’ll work on spreadsheets too (and other business-side things) and do some more learning. I hope to be finished-enough to start writing on Monday instead of waiting for the first day of the month.

For just one example, today I’ll finish reading my PDF copy of Writing Dynamite Story Hooks. Then I’ll read it again, more carefully.

If you follow my example, remember to read for pleasure (yes, even nonfiction), then read again consciously. You learn with the conscious mind.

But when you start writing, don’t think about it. What you need will seep through into the subconscious while you’re reading and studying. (Just like the placement of periods and question marks did back in the day.)

What you've learned from your reading will come out through your fingertips into the keyboard as you're writing.

See the second item in "Of Interest." If you're "thinking" anything about your writing, that's your conscious, critical mind horning in where it doesn't belong.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

For additional spreadsheet heading tips, see Topaz' comment on yesterday's Journal post at <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-friday-july-26/#comment-1255>.

If you're still having trouble quieting your critical voice, see Finn's comment on yesterday's Journal post (and my response) at <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-friday-july-26/#comment-1257>.

See "youBooks?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/youbooks.html>.

See "A Strange Thing Happened..." at <http://prowriterswriting.com/a-strange-thing-happened/>.

For some great photos of bookmobiles and book wagons, see The Passive Guy's posts at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/this-tiny-traveling-bookstore-wanders-the-french-countryside/>, <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/yes-bookmobiles-are-still-a-thing/>, and <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/mobile-libraries-part-2/>.

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

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 29750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 213950
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 572687

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Jackson Dean Chase](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Michaele Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, July 28](#)

[July 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Thanks
- * Quote of the Day
- * Another Recommendation
- * Topic: Why Google Play, Why All the Emphasis on Spreadsheets, and What About Length?
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Thanks for all the comments over the past couple of days. I appreciate knowing you're out there. Besides, you guys offer up some valuable advice! You can always share here through comments.

Quote of the Day

“If you capture the right beginning, you’ve written a small version of the whole.” Les Edgerton

Another Recommendation

In case you missed it in yesterday's comments, Bob Beckley recommends *Hooked* by Les Edgerton for advice on writing beginnings. You can “look inside” at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1582974578/>.

I found the paper edition a little pricey, BUT what's \$20+ if you learn something invaluable that stays with you for the rest of your writing life?

As with anything, if you buy this, take what works for you and leave what doesn't.

One additional note: LesEdgerton.com (mentioned in *Hooked*) is defunct. You can find Edgerton's blog at <http://lesedgertononwriting.blogspot.com/>.

Topic: Why Google Play, Why All the Emphasis on Spreadsheets, and What About Length?

Yup, today's topic is all over the place. But it all ties together, I promise.

First, you might wonder why I'm so happy to finally be uploading my books to Google Play. Or you might already know. Many, many people are way out ahead of me on this. (grin)

Like everyone else, most of my sales come through Amazon.

But of all the other 400+ current venues, over the years the consistent big sellers of my books have been Apple, then Kobo, then then now-all-but-defunct Barnes & Noble.

So let's talk about Apple for a moment.

As my wife patiently explained to me recently, most of those who download my books from Apple use their iPhone.

Pretty much everybody who has a cell phone uses either an iPhone operating system or the IOS's only major competitor: the Android operating system.

Uploading my books to Google Play will make those titles available where they've never been before: to the other half of a still-booming ebook market. (grin)

Which brings me to the spreadsheets.

One spreadsheet gives me the ability to see my entire fiction inventory all in one place. All_Fiction.xlsx contains a lot fewer headings than the other spreadsheets, but again, it's only a quick reference to my personal inventory. Kind of an I-love-me electronic bookshelf. (grin)

The more important spreadsheets both provide a backup for All_Fiction AND contain all the information I need to upload literally ANYwhere: D2D, Smashwords, Amazon, Google Play, StreetLib, PublishDrive, etc.

1. Finishing the Novels_Novellas_Only spreadsheet was my first priority so I could upload those titles to Google Play AND because I mostly write novels these days. With that spreadsheet done now, I can add new novels to it (and to All_Fiction) as I finish them.
2. Finishing filling-in the blanks in the Short_Fiction_Collections spreadsheet is now a priority so we can upload those titles to Google Play as well.
3. Finally, finishing filling-in the blanks in the Short_Fiction_Only spreadsheet is important because those stories are the major part of my IP inventory. Eventually we'll upload those to Google Play too.

However, the headings for Short_Fiction_Only are all set, so if I do write any new short fiction, I'll add it and its information to the spreadsheet as I go (and even as I'm continuing to fill-in the information for previous titles).

So is the All_Fiction spreadsheet redundant? Yes, it is. But I like having one where I can add my latest work quickly without having to worry about filling in all the upload info. (grin)

But what about length?

I know, I know. The short stories are much shorter than the novels. So why am I giving them equal importance?

Here's the thing: When you think about licensing, you think about Story. Period.

Not the length of the story. Just Story.

Because when it comes to IP, any story is as valuable as any other. Length doesn't enter into the equation.

In the Publishing mind set, we think ONLY in terms of length: novel series sell better than stand-alone novels, and short story collections (and short story series) sell better than individual or stand-alone short stories.

We let a story be whatever length it needs to be, but how it will sell is firmly rooted in the back of our minds. My sales expectations are much higher when I think of my novel series and novels than when I think of any of my individual short stories.

But in the Licensing mind set, all that matters is Story.

You might license any story (regardless of length) to Hollywood. You might license any character (from any story, regardless of length) to a toy manufacturer. You might license any setting (from any story, regardless of length) to a gaming company.

For that matter, you might license any fictional world that you've created (again, regardless of story length) in any number of ways. For just a couple of examples,

* How many writers out there might like to write in the world centered around the quiet little fishing village of Agua Perlado (which I am in the process of trademarking)?

* How many might want to write in the future-earth SF world following the Inter-Arab War (which I'm also in the process of trademarking)?

And the list goes on.

Business, eh? Who knew?

Rolled out late again this morning and with a full slate.

Today I'll finish uploading my novels to Google Play Books, then work to fill-in the spreadsheets for my short story collections and individual short stories.

I'll probably finish the one for the collections today. Then I hope my wife will upload those for me over the next week or so.

Filling-in the information in the individual short story spreadsheet will take awhile into the future. I'll add to it during "admin time" as I am able.

And then I hope for some reading (learning) time today. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See the great comments on "Day Job Thinking" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/day-job-thinking/#comments>.

See "How to Come Up With a Title" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/how-to-come-up-with-a-title.html>. Some good stuff here, but (shrug) my characters usually hand me the title. (grin)

See "WWYWTR – Story Length" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/wwywtr-story-length/>.

See "New Pop-Up on Thinking Big" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-pop-up-on-thinking-big/>.

See "We Asked 13 Novelists..." at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/26/books/lee-child-ruth-ware-my-favorite-murder.html>. Thanks to Karen for the tip. This is a great article with some real gems, and not all of them are about murdering characters.

See "Self-Publishing: The Carnival of the Indies Issue #106" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/07/self-publishing-the-carnival-of-the-indies-issue-106/>. Take along a salt shaker. Maybe somebody here will submit the Journal or a blog post from HarveyStanbrough.com. (grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1100 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1100

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month.....	7399
Total fiction words for the year.....	358737
Total nonfiction words for the month...	30850
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	215050
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	573787
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Bob Beckley](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Karen Riggs](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Les Edgerton](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, July 29](#)

[July 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Your eyes
- * Topic: How to Get More Sales
- * Topic: Writing and Publishing
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Your eyes do not deceive you. Today is a two-topic day. Both are essential. (Well, if I didn't think so, I wouldn't have written them. Duh)

So let's jump right in.

Topic: How to Get More Sales

I started to add "at Amazon" to the title of this topic, but it will help improve your sales in all venues.

I'm taking a free Reedsy lessons-by-email course on Amazon algorithms. Not that I'll try to "beat" them. My brain isn't wired that way.

But I thought I might pick up a few gems I could pass along. And I did.

The first two “lessons” were pretty much nothing. But in the third one, the instructor got down to some meat.

To improve your presentation (and the chance of Amazon algorithms promoting your book and readers buying it:

- * have a cover that matches genre expectations
- * write a great sales blurb (again, I recommend DWS’ [How to Write Fiction Sales Copy](#))
- * have 5+ reviews

For the first bullet point, see “Your 7-Step Guide to an Unforgettable Cover” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/book-cover-design/>.

For the second, [buy DWS’s book](#) and/or see “How to Write an Amazon Book Description That Sells” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/book-description/>.

For the last one, Reedsy recommends (and I agree) you add a clear message at the end of the book asking readers to review it.

You can even use a link that will take them directly to the review page:
https://www.amazon.com/review/create-review?asin=YOUR_ASIN.

Of course, replace “your ASIN” with the ASIN of your actual Amazon book. You can find the ASIN in the Product Details section of the book page or in the URL of the book page, right after “/dp/”.

Note: Using this specific link will require you to pre-publish the story with Amazon so you HAVE an ASIN to add to the document before you update it.

But if you don’t want to do that, you can still let readers know with a short sentence at the end that you would appreciate an honest review of your book.

Topic: Writing and Publishing

I’m a little grumpy this morning, so here’s a little finger-wagging for you. (grin)

At writers’ conferences, aside from presenting whatever sessions I was there to present, I used to try to bolster writers’ self-confidence.

The main way I did that was by attempting to remind them of their place in the pecking order. Where is that place?

At the top, though most writers don’t know it. And most publishers don’t think so, but that’s because too many writers kowtow to them.

The truth is, publishers need writers much more than writers need publishers. And it's always been that way. Always.

With the advent of indie publishing, that became far more evident than before. But it was true even back in the day.

This conversation was repeated at least several hundred times over the years:

Me: "You're looking at it all wrong. Publishers need you much more than you need them."

Writer frowns: "What do you mean?"

Me: "Think about it. What would you do if there were no publishers? Write the next story, right?"

Writer shrugs: "I guess."

Me: "Know what publishers would do if there were no writers? They'd flip burgers, that's what they'd do."

The point is, you're a writer. A storyteller.

So write. Tell stories.

If you're determined to chase agents or traditional publishers, finish your novel manuscript and send it out. Note the date, but then forget it.

Move on to writing the next story. You're a writer, so write.

If you're writing short stories, same thing. Submit them to traditional mags (that pay pro rates), note the date, then forget about them and write the next story. When your acceptance check shows up, it will be a happy surprise.

Every time a manuscript you sent out comes back rejected, pause just long enough to send it out to the next agent or publisher or traditional mag on your list.

Then go back to writing the next short story or novel. (Again, you're a writer, so write.)

But give the story or novel you sent out a time limit. If it hasn't been accepted in that period of time (a year, for example), publish it yourself.

Then go back to writing.

You're a writer.

So write.

Rolled out at 3:30 this morning, and did all the usual stuff.

I've gotten in the habit of writing this Journal during my early hours, then posting it early. I'll do that again today.

Today I will do a little more spreadsheet work and maybe upload my short story collections to Google Play. That way most of my short stories will be there, albeit in collections.

Today also I will finish reading some nonfiction, and I probably will write.

I don't know yet what I'll write, but I suspect it will happen. If it does, I'll report those fiction numbers tomorrow.

'Til then, keep writing. You're a writer, right? Or

You're a writer; write.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Mini-Masterclass – Tana French" at <https://phillipmccollum.com/mini-masterclass-tana-french/>.

See "Bawling Your Eyes Out" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/bawling-your-eyes-out/>.

See "How (and where) To Research Historical Crime" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/how-and-where-to-research-historical-crime.html>.

See "Tips for a Better Looking E-Book" at <https://terryodell.com/tips-for-a-better-looking-e-book/>. I don't agree with all Terry's choices, but the techniques she mentions here are sound. A good post.

See "Before Something Fun Tomorrow" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/before-something-fun-tomorrow/>.

For some topics that might interest you, see the blog directory at <https://novelconclusions.com/blog-directory/>. From what I can tell, Novel Conclusions is now defunct. The last post appeared a few years ago.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 940 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 940

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 31790
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 215990
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 574727

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Novel Conclusions](#), [Phillip McCollum](#),
[Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [Tara French](#), [Terry Odell](#), [the
writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, July 30](#)

[July 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I almost
- * Topic: A Good Problem to Have (and More on My Process)
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

I almost gave you another two-fer of topics today. At the last moment, I decided to save one for tomorrow. I think the recent surge of topics is a result of my having been away from fiction writing for so long.

I think my subconscious wants so much to play that it keeps coming up with topics, which I then write on the spot and post here. (grin)

So today, "A Good Problem to Have" and tomorrow, another post on aggregators and a personal faux pas.

Topic: A Good Problem to Have (and More on My Process)

I'm still jonesing to write. My current problem, frankly, is that my mind is swimming with ideas:

* Should I return to the “Danny Marco” (thriller) origin novel I started earlier this month? (That will become a series.)

* Should I start the fifth book in the Nick Spalding (romance action-adventure war) series? (I need an idea for a time-travel device.)

* Should I start the seventh in the Blackwell Ops (crime/thriller) series? (But I need a character, old or new, to stand up and raise his/her hand.)

* Ooh, but how I’d like to return to the Siberian Fields (future-Earth SF) world and write there!

* And the world I created for The Consensus (also future-Earth SF)! My then first-reader Kenneth Flowers was hungry for more in that world and with those creatures. And I’m hungry to write it.

* But Kenneth also wanted to another magic realism story from that place where reality folds into imagination on the horizon. Is the new king ready to tell the next part of his story?

* What about my Brooklyn wise guys (crime)? I haven’t visited with them for awhile.

* And what about Stern Talbot, my PI?

* Or what about writing something brand new?

And a bunch of others.

Sigh.

Okay, time for a brief but frank discussion.

For the past few weeks I’ve been mostly operating from my conscious mind. Learning and doing business stuff (putting together my IP inventory, creating spreadsheets, checking out aggregators, uploading, etc.).

The longer I’ve done that, the more strongly my subconscious has swelled and surged, trying to break through. It wants (I want) to write.

But I’ve been doing this for awhile, so I know me. I know my process. Yes, I’ve been at it for only five years and a couple of months, but in that time I’ve been prolific by any standard. So in that way, I’ve gained at least a decade (maybe two or three decades) of experience in those five years. So as I said, I know my process.

Sometimes when I finish a project, I leap smoothly right into the next one. That’s my favorite way to work. Even then, I have to cast about a bit, consider different projects.

But sometimes, like now, the intermission is a little (or a lot) longer and I have to ease into it. I hasten to add that this isn't something I want or enjoy. It's just the way my mind works for whatever reason.

I keep putting off writing for whatever reason. (I like to believe it's because not all the pieces are in place yet in my psyche to launch into another story. Kind of "the story will happen when it's supposed to happen.")

So today I'll go where I'm led, which is to study the writing of a couple of masters (Jack Higgins and Stephen King). I've been meaning to do that for awhile. I've already read the target books for pleasure and marked the passages I want to study.

Today too I'll scan some nonfiction I've already read (including some that I've written, like [Writing Great Beginnings](#) and [Writing the Character-Driven Story](#)).

And somewhere in all that, something will maybe turn a key in my mind.

When that happens, whether it's today, tomorrow or a week from now, I'll open a Word doc and begin writing again. And two or three weeks later, I'll have another new novel. (grin)

Rolled out at 2:30 and walked to the Hovel in a welcome light rain. One of life's little joys.

Today I'll do some reading, some learning, and maybe (finally) some writing.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Myths of Fiction Writing Lectures" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-myths-of-fiction-writing-lectures/>. Wow. If I still needed this one, I'd sign up in a heartbeat. At least look over the list.

In a related note, if you haven't yet, read Dean's "Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing" series of posts at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/killing-the-sacred-cows-of-publishing/>. It's all about the myths of publishing, and This. Is. Invaluable. (You can also buy the books. They aren't expensive.)

See "Squeezing Every Drop Out of a Premise" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/07/squeezing-last-drop-out-of-premise.html>.

See "Editors Needed?" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/editors-needed/>. Hey, it's posed as a question. Answer it for yourself. I'll keep my divergent opinion out of it. (grin)

See “Free Fiction Monday: Sales. Force.” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/29/free-fiction-monday-sales-force/>. This one felt uncharacteristically unfinished to me. Maybe she’ll turn it into a novel or a series.

In other news, traditional publishers continue to cannibalize themselves. See “After Tor Experiment, Macmillan Expands Embargo on Library E-Books” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/after-tor-experiment-macmillan-expands-embargo-on-library-e-books/>. Be sure to see TPG’s take.

Then see “ALA Statement on New Macmillan Library Lending Model” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/ala-statement-on-new-macmillan-library-lending-model/>. Again, see TPG’s and others’ comments.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 830 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 830

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 32620
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 216820
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 575557

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Process](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, July 31](#)

[July 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Wow
- * I might have mentioned
- * Topic: Update—Keep Abreast of Your IP
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Wow. Already July 31. How'd that happen?

We accomplished a lot at StoneThread Publishing in July with learning about licensing (and a ton of other things). Personally, as a fiction writer, not so much. I wrote upward of 40,000 words this month, but only around 7,000 of those were fiction. (A very far cry from my 110,000-word fiction months, eh?)

We at STPublishing also made huge strides on getting my IP inventory under control and uploaded roughly a ton of stuff to a new (to me) major venue—Google Play—with much more to come.

The thing is, with the inventory being mostly under control now, it will be an easy matter to keep it that way by adding to it as I write each book in the future.

We've also laid out a short-term, two-year plan (essential in business).

1. We've been through the Licensing Learn Along together. We'll continue to learn together through the Licensing Transition. Plus both of us have separate access to Kris Rusch's Patreon account for additional information.
2. We'll continue to bring our IP inventory under control now (around 300 IPs). At this point, we're only beginning to work through the short fiction. I can honestly say I'm glad I didn't have more IP when all of this hit.
3. We'll complete the actual transition of our publishing LLC (StoneThread Publishing) in concert with Dean and Kris doing the same at WMG. I can't think of anyone better to learn from and emulate. We'll both also be studying the Advanced Business Class lectures.
4. As the transition of our business should be close to complete just before the next Licensing Expo next year, we're planning to attend that together.
5. Then we'll attend the Master Business Class next year (2020). Mona's good with business, and I'm good with networking.

And of course more will crop up as we go. And during all of that, I'll be turning out new IP. (grin)

Is this a truly wonderful new world, or what?

I might have mentioned this a few days ago (too lazy to look). Two things you absolutely must have to start or increase sales are

* a good, genre-specific book cover (study a range of recent bestsellers in the genre on Amazon or in your favorite bookstore, and

* excellent sales copy (I recommend DWS's book [How to Write Fiction Sales Copy](#).)

Once you have that, if you don't know anything about marketing, I recommend an exciting new resource. See "Self-Publish Strong" at <http://selfpublishstrong.com/>. Pretty sure either I or my business manager will be taking a few of Andrea Pearson's courses.

Topic: Update—Keep Abreast of Your IP

A couple of days ago, I got a reprieve from an admin tasks. I found that I can't upload my short story collections to Google Play for a week or so.

While prepping my Short Story Collections spreadsheet, I remembered my wife had mentioned a couple of my collections were already on Google Play. (Unlike me, she actually uses her phone as more than just a phone.)

I seemed to remember uploading those titles to Google Play some years ago, but I couldn't remember much more about it. So I went in and looked at the listings.

There were two collections already there. And the PUBLISHER was listed as "XinXii". Weird.

Okay, that sounded an alarm. After all, I'm trying to build my StoneThread Publishing brand. So when did I give these other guys permission to call themselves my publisher?

It started coming back to me.

XinXii.com is yet another aggregator, based in Germany. I opened an account with them some years ago. I seemed to remember uploading a few titles (two?), but I soon lost interest in them because I couldn't get a feel for their payment policies and didn't feel good in general about them.

But apparently when I left them, I didn't close my account. Which led me to think maybe I should double-check the account. So I found my log-in information, brought up the site, and logged in.

Wow, was I surprised.

Apparently I opened the account back in early 2015. And I uploaded not two, but TWENTY-THREE books to them, including the two my wife had mentioned, some other collections, all of my (then) Wes Crowley series, and a couple of other novels.

Why the other 21 books weren't also already on Google Play, I have no idea. But I'm glad they weren't. I've already uploaded all of those novels to GP myself in the past few days, and I was on the verge of doing the same with the collections.

You can't sell the same title through two different publishers (two different ISBNs) in one store.

I didn't spend much time looking over XinXii's site this time around. I remembered that I didn't care much for them as an aggregator. That's why I left them and moved on.

I DID notice I've earned a whopping \$4.23 from sales through them over the past almost 5 years. Which still hasn't been paid.

I decided they can keep the \$4.23. It's an inexpensive price for a lesson.

Okay. At the moment I use D2D, Amazon and Smashwords. I'm also at a crossroads, looking over a few other aggregators to expand my reach. But these days I'm looking them over v-e-r-y carefully.

- * I'm reading the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.

- * I'm checking royalty rates and payment methods.

- * I'm looking actively for any red flags. Like them claiming (on Google Play) to be the publisher and thereby detracting from StoneThread Publishing.

So I moved methodically through my XinXii account and removed each title. Afterward, I closed the account.

Now I'll wait a week or so for those two XinXii titles to clear off of Google Play. Then I'll upload all of my short story collections to GP myself. Under the StoneThread Publishing banner.

Much later, after I've checked out StreetLib and PublishDrive, I'll take another look at XinXii too. I'll apply my checklist for aggregators:

- * What major new (to me) markets (stores, nations, etc.) do they reach that others don't?

- * What marketing tools or assistance do they offer?

- * How easy or difficult is their upload process?

- * What are their royalty rates, payment methods and payment schedule?

- * How easy (or difficult) are they to audit?

After all, it's been five years. Maybe XinXii has changed.

I certainly have.

Rolled out at 2. Not a lot to report today beyond the stuff above and below. Today I'll read some more, and as always, maybe write.

I take comfort in knowing the words and story will be there when the time is right.

I did spend about a half-hour babysitting my little girl and the other lady cat before the sun came up this morning. They were insistent about going "ow-si" so I got my flashlight, a cup of coffee, and went out with them.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

According to CrimeReads, yesterday, July 30, 1935 (a scant 84 years ago) the first paperback books were released by Allen Lane and his new publishing house, Penguin.

I happened across this old but still timely post from DWS (complete with a comment by our own Michael Lockhart). See "The New World of Publishing: The Real Price of Traditional Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-new-world-of-publishing-the-real-price-of-traditional-publishing/>.

For another older but still relevant post, see "Copyright Law Class Sing-Along!" at <https://writerinlaw.com/2014/01/09/copyright-law-class-sing-along/>. Bookmark it, and read the posts that follow it. The "course" runs through "Copyright Class 10 Infringement Part III."

See "Panic Attack" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/07/panic-attack.html>.

See "A slightly different look at reviews" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/a-slightly-different-look-at-reviews>.

Check out "The Fictorians" at <http://www.fictorians.com/>. Browse the site. You might find something helpful.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1090 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1090

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 7399
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737

Total nonfiction words for the month... 33870
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 218070
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 576807

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Fictorians](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, August 1](#)

[August 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Straight to it today
- * Topic: Every Story Needs an Editor....
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Straight to It Today

No lollygagging about. It's time for a little tough love.

Topic: Every Story Needs an Editor (and Other Stupid Blanket Statements)

I read a blog post yesterday by a writer who has stopped learning because she apparently believes she knows enough. She even wrote, point blank, if you believe your story doesn't need other eyes on it, you must believe your words are "precious." Ugh.

I really wish I hadn't read that. It caused me to unsubscribe from the blog. Dropped it like a bad habit. This particular writer is an endless fountain of clichéd, mindless myths.

I hate blanket statements and the ignorance from which they spring. From "All [insert any race, religion, nationality here] are lazy" to "All men are pigs (or all women are users)" to "All stories need an editor."

And yes, all of those chap my butt to an equal degree.

There's only one blanket statement I find true at all, and that is this: "All blanket statements are mindless and asinine, except possibly this one."

What follows is the comment I would have left on that blog post if I'd thought it would do the slightest bit of good.

Dear Blogger,

By definition, writers are supposed to be broad-minded dreamers. Okay, so use that lump above your shoulders to do more than separate your ears. Or for something more than filling out your face and providing a convenient hat rack.

If you feel you absolutely must use a blanket statement, at the very least temper it by replacing "all" or "every" with "many" or "some."

Because the truth is, until you've personally polled every reader of a given story (and read it yourself), You Don't Know What It Needs. You just don't.

And that's especially true of your own story. But then, you've at least read your own story, right? At least while you were writing it?

If you lack confidence in your own ability as a writer and storyteller, then go ahead: make your inane pronouncements. But focus them on your own work. Not on mine. Not on anybody else's. And certainly not on "all" writers or "all" stories.

And whatever you do, don't point a finger at another writer and say that if she doesn't bend to allowing other people into her work, it's because she feels her words are "precious."

Actually, the opposite is true.

*

Okay, end of imaginary comment. The rest of this is for those of you who are still learning or striving to learn. I know you don't all agree with every suggestion I make. But I also know you at least consider those suggestions, and that's all anyone can ask or expect.

Almost six years ago I reached my first turning point as a writer: I found (and trusted) Heinlein's Rules and Writing Into the Dark.

Then, some 40 novels back in my own journey as a professional fiction writer, I reached my first major plateau with the realization that I can't tell my characters' story better than they can. I also learned that second-guessing them eventually silences them.

Hand in hand with that realization came an understanding: that I don't know everything about writing. That there's a vast world of knowledge about the writing craft on levels still above me. Techniques that I want to learn and practice a bit at a time.

It took me 61 years of breathing to get to that plateau. It took me thousands of poems, hundreds of essays, a couple of dozen articles, several short stories, 4 novels and a novella to get there. A lot of other writers arrived there much sooner in their own timeline than I did.

But I did get there. And as a result, today I'm swamped with characters wanting to use my fingers to tell their story.

Know why I haven't written any fiction for a few weeks? The truth?

Because a little bit of my mind is busy thinking about the business side of being a writer: inventory, licensing, and so on.

And the rest is trying to filter through A Few Dozen story ideas.

I'm not writing fiction at the moment because I'm overwhelmed with story ideas from my characters. Because they have learned they can trust me not to second-guess them. See how that works?

The blogger I mentioned above talked about how priceless editors are. She also continually talks about the value of critique "partners" or groups.

Now I'll grant, especially if you aren't well-grounded in the rules of grammar and syntax and punctuation (you have to know the rules in order to break them intelligently), one editor—a good copyeditor—is priceless.

The others (development and content editors and so-called "book doctors"), not so much. In fact, they're downright harmful. Exactly like other writers who try to lump "all" stories in with their lack of confidence in their own.

Unfortunately, *finding* a good copyeditor (meaning one who is actually knowledgeable in the mechanics and nuances of the language) is an entirely different matter.

I am a [great copyeditor](#). But in today's bizarro world, I'm the exception, not the rule. I even teach as I go. Yet paradoxically, I charge so little that few people will hire me. Go figure. Instead of playing the "implied value" game, I provide a free sample edit so people can see up front what I can do for them.

But let's move on: Common (and erroneous) wisdom say if I don't want to pay some stranger ("content" or "development" editor) to make MY story THEIR version of "better," that somehow translates into me believing my words are "precious." Seriously?

Listen to me: In every case, actions speak louder than words.

Some writers begin by laboring over every single stinking word, sentence and paragraph as they write.

That's because they lack confidence in their ability to Just Tell A Story. These are stage-one and early stage-two writers.

They probably outline in advance, and they almost certainly at least plant "signposts" along the way. More than likely, they also claim to "sweat blood" or "open a vein" or "suffer for their art" or some other silly, stupid cliché.

Then they "comb through" the "finished" manuscript two or three (or more) times to make sure every paragraph, sentence and word is as "perfect" as they can make it.

And just as if that weren't already far too much, then they send it off to critique partners or critique groups (inviting-in external critical minds) and/or to a development or content editor for further "improvement."

Why? Because although they won't admit it in so many words (except to wag a finger at "all" other writers or "every" other story), that's what writers do when they believe their words are precious or their story is special. They require external input to give them assurances, and they arrogantly assume "all" other writers need the same assurances.

Well, we don't. Some of us are well aware of our own faults and of all that we still have to learn. We realize we're putting out a flawed product, and that to become a better storyteller, we have to practice, not hover. We don't judge our own work. That's the individual reader's job. We leave it to them.

But it's fine. By and large, most writers who can't bring themselves to believe in their own abilities are gone in a few years. Writing simply becomes too much work. No surprise there.

Me? I would never dream (nightmare?) of allowing another person into my work. No negative (critical) voices, even my own.

I don't second-guess my characters as they tell THEIR story because I don't want them to stop talking to me.

Instead, I finish a story, send it off to my first reader(s), "fix" what they recommend (that I and my characters agree with), then publish it and move on to the next story.

It works. Try it. I dare you.

Rolled out at 3. Here's a brief personal aside:

Yesterday my little girl cat did something I've never seen before. She never ceases to amaze me.

As she and I were sitting on the patio outside my back door, she alerted, then raced off around a corner.

I launched and followed her.

She pounced, then was coming toward me with something small and brown in her mouth.

I yelled, “No!” then turned around, passed by my chair, and closed the door to the house so she couldn’t take whatever it was inside.

Then I went back to see if I could talk her out of whatever she had.

Just as I got around the corner, she was coming toward me again. This time the back fence was a few feet behind her, and her mouth was empty.

I went to where she’d first pounced and found a few quail feathers. She’d caught a baby quail.

I looked all over the place and couldn’t find it. Finally I went to the back fence and looked through.

The baby quail was just disappearing into the brush.

When I yelled, then turned to run for the door, she’d gone to the fence (where she’d seen me release numerous creatures before) and let the little bird go.

Good girl. (grin)

Today I’ll read some more and maybe write. (That option is always open.) I’ll also begin to upload all of my collections to Google Play.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Random Signs” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/random-signs/>.

See “Business Musings: Art (Rethinking The Writing Business Part Six)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/07/31/business-musings-art-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-six/>.

See “Masterful Wordsmithing with Metaphor and Imagery by C. S. Lakin” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/metaphor-and-imagery/>.

See “Why Settle for Half the Fun?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/why-settle-for-half-the-fun/>.

See “The Book Designer : Embed Words in Your Photos for Discovery” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/08/embed-words-in-your-photos-for-discovery/>. I know at least one writer who will be interested in this.

See “Key Ways to Rediscover your Writing ‘Fun Mojo’” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/key-ways-to-rediscover-your-writing-fun-mojo.html>. I list this one just in case you might find something useful. But please ignore her second sentence. If writing is hard, go find something else to do. Seriously.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1530 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1530

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15300
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 219600
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 578337

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, August 2](#)

[August 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * I’m in the middle
- * A fellow writer
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

I’m in the middle of a messy whirlwind: writing fiction and this blog; continuing to get my inventory under control; reading for pleasure and to learn more about writing; learning about

copyright, trademark and licensing; learning where and how to obtain original cover art; and all the normal life and medical things that come with age.

Not that I'm complaining. Fun stuff, most of it.

A fellow writer sent me an interesting link. It might be one more way to connect with readers and even to monetize your writing.

Along with the licensing stuff I'm learning from Dean, I'm also learning to think differently about my IP.

In the old days, the be-all end-all of IP (for a writer) was a novel or short story. You wrote, you published, and that was pretty much the end of it.

Now, I think more in terms of Story (still for publication but also separate of publication) and just as importantly, what's *inside* the story.

Characters, settings, inventions, props, worlds and more within your stories are all licensable in their own right and separate of the story itself.

From what I've seen so far, a site called World Anvil might help considerably with some of that. I emphasize "might." I haven't thoroughly checked it out yet.

But the introductory video and otherwise poking around a little convinced me that more thoroughly investigating the program might be a worthwhile endeavor.

You can check it out yourself at <https://www.worldanvil.com/>. Of course, be sure to read the Terms of Service. And thanks to Phillip McCollum for the tip.

Rolled out before 1 a.m. to get the day started almost before the day started. (grin) Today I have a doc appointment (only a consultation).

I'll read more today, maybe study more too. Maybe write.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Power of a Streak" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-power-of-a-streak-3/>.

See "Writing & Horses — Thinking Or Doing?" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/writing-horses-thinking-or-doing/>.

See “6 Rules for Writing Realistic, Meaningful Gunfights” at <https://crimereads.com/6-rules-for-writing-realistic-meaningful-gunfights/>.

See “The Secrets of the Forensic Artist” at <https://crimereads.com/the-secrets-of-the-forensic-artist/>.

For an interesting newsletter email from James Scott Bell, see <http://hosted.verticalresponse.com/1155315/bc10c65c73/542808881/9b01affea6/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 370 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 370

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1900
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 219970
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 578707

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Robjert J. Sadler](#), [World Anvil](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, August 3](#)

[August 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Thought of the Day
- * Topic: The Art of Writing Flash Fiction
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Thought of the Day

“[S]cience fiction should be less about predicting the future than observing the present.” A purported belief of Ursula K. Le Guin in [New Documentary Focuses on Ursula K. Le Guin](#).

Topic: The Art of Writing Flash Fiction

Although you can find *The Art of Writing Flash Fiction* at both Amazon, Smashwords, and other major ebook outlets, today I thought I'd present it for you here free.

I've written flash fiction for years. It's a lot of fun, but it's also a great deal more than that.

Imagine for a moment the components of fiction—character(s), setting, conflict and resolution—are goldfish milling about in a clear container.

If the short story enables you to view the interaction of those components in a 5-gallon bucket, flash fiction enables the same opportunity in a 1-gallon jar. Interested? Read on.

Flash Fiction Defined

Proponents, contest administrators, and publishers of flash fiction place length restrictions variously up to 500 or even 1,000 words, but one of the largest markets restricts the form to 55 words (not including the title, which should not exceed five words).

Because writing with fewer words is much more difficult than writing with more words, and because you want to learn the craft (that's why you bought the book, right?) for our purposes, flash fiction is a complete story—one with a beginning, a middle, and an end—written in 99 words or fewer not including the title. You might call it “double-digit fiction.”

Before we get down to what flash fiction is, I want to be sure you understand that it's a genre in its own right. To achieve that, I'll first explain what flash fiction isn't.

Genres That Are Not Flash Fiction

Essay

No matter its purpose, every well-written essay has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In that way, it resembles fiction, but the essayist seldom establishes conflict except to make her point in the context of argument, and without conflict there can be no resolution.

Vignette (Slice of Life)

The vignette is an incomplete fictional account, a verbal snapshot. It will have a character or characters and a setting, of course, and it might very well have a conflict, but it never has a resolution.

Imagine you are walking along a sidewalk that abuts a large apartment building. As you near an open window, the voices of two people inside the apartment begin to come into range.

If you write what you overhear from that point until the voices fade out as you pass by the window and move farther away, you have written a vignette, a small, thin slice of the life of the people in that apartment.

Story Premise

Although you can use a flash fiction story as a basis from which to launch a longer story, it is much more than a story premise.

The premise contains none of the elements of fiction; it only hints at them.

Often, the story premise is framed in the form of a question that begins “What if?” For example, “What if a jealous husband suspects his wife of cheating on him—with a priest?” is a premise.

In this case, the premise provides the characters, but it only hints at the conflict and it omits the setting and the resolution. Building on that premise to include a conflict and a satisfactory resolution makes the premise a story.

The Elements of Flash Fiction

Any complete short story has four distinct elements: characters, setting, conflict, and resolution. Flash fiction has a fifth element that is more necessary than in other forms of creative writing: suggestion (implication). Let’s look at some definitions.

Characters aren’t limited to human beings. They might also be animal, vegetable, mineral, mechanical, or alien. Most flash fiction stories have only one or two characters.

Setting is the locale wherein the characters act out the scene(s) and the events or occurrences take place. Don’t worry about coming up with a setting. It’s impossible to begin a story without one.

Conflict is the source of tension that keeps the reader interested in the story. This is arguably the most important component of fiction: Conflict begs resolution. You can find many excellent ideas in Chapter 2 of *Writing Realistic Dialogue & Flash Fiction* for introducing conflict and building tension.

Resolution is the natural, satisfactory outcome of the conflict. “Satisfactory” is the key word. As with longer works of fiction, the flash-fiction writer must not save the protagonist or otherwise resolve the conflict through miraculous means. The writer must live within the rules she’s established for her fictional world.

Many flash fiction stories have a twist ending, but the reader must immediately recognize that the resolution fits, that it is not only a plausible outcome, but a likely one. The best resolution is one that makes the reader slap himself across the forehead and say “Why didn’t I think of that!”

Suggestion (or implication) is the fine art of letting the reader know what you’re talking about—or letting him think he knows what you’re talking about—without telling him directly.

When she uses suggestion, the writer hints at an emotion or an occurrence and lets the reader invent it himself rather than telling him about it outright. Misdirection is an important function of suggestion.

Notes

Change (the Character Arc)

In most short stories, novellas, and novels, the protagonist and/or the antagonist experience a change in her personality, her behavior, or her outlook on life.

In flash fiction, more often than not, change is more likely to occur not in the character, but in the reader’s perception of the character or even his perception of the world at large.

Action Verbs, Adjectives Adverbs, and Contractions

Flash fiction is an exercise in word economy. Action verbs are essential; adjectives and adverbs are anathema.

Contractions also are essential. After all, “haven’t” is only one word, whereas “have not” is two. And there’s no reason you can’t be inventive: “should not have” is three words; “shouldn’t have” is two; “shouldn’t’ve” is only one. Remember that when you’re truncating “have,” it’s “ve” not “of”: “should’ve” not “should of.”

Dialogue Versus Narrative

Dialogue generally is more economical for delivering suggestion and innuendo. Dialogue always immediately engages the reader and, when it’s written the way people speak, it’s composed in great part of sentence fragments.

If you’re aiming for a particular word length, say 55 words, it sometimes helps to write on a pad on which the lines are numbered (or number them yourself). Then write down the left side of the page, one word per line.

When you’ve reached the bottom of the page, begin at the top again, say in the center of the page. You can easily monitor your word count, and replacing individual words with better ones is easy.

Avoid trying to tell the reader everything. Use suggestion (implication) and innuendo instead and trust the reader to see the scene.

Experiment, experiment, experiment. Write, write, write!

An Example of Flash Fiction

My own first very successful flash fiction story, “At Confession,” has been published in several magazines and journals, and three separate times young filmmakers have approached me for permission to create a film short based on it.

Of course, I said yes. You might still be able to find a short film version online if you key “At Confession” into your favorite search engine.

At Confession

“Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.”

“How long since your last confession?”

“Two years.”

“What’s the trouble?”

“I have wished death on a man.”

“You haven’t acted on your wish?”

“Not yet.”

“Who is the man?”

“He is cheating with my wife.”

The priest paled. “I forgive you.”

I shot him through the screen.

In “At Confession,” the setting is a confessional. The characters are the first-person narrator and a priest. Notice, first, how you were immediately drawn into the story by the quiet, but tension-filled dialogue.

The conflict is complex: At first it takes place in the protagonist’s mind (2 years since confession, wishing death on a man), then is transferred to the priest just before the resolution, during which the priest is shot.

As an aside, the antagonist in this story is not the priest, but the protagonist's wife, a third character, although she enters the story only through implication.

Notice that implication is also at work coloring the reader's opinion of the priest. The suggestion that the priest is guilty doesn't necessarily justify the harsh resolution, but the priest's implied admission of guilt—first to the reader (“The priest paled”), then to the narrator (“I forgive you”)—does justify it. We probably would not have been satisfied with the story had we suspected the priest was innocent.

Notice too that the story seems larger than it actually is, seeming to begin before the narrator begins speaking and to continue after the final line.

This is a result of an actual plot in this particular story, with the implied first conflict (the wife's infidelity) leading to the second conflict (in the protagonist's mind) leading to the third conflict (the protagonist facing the priest and the priest's ensuing fear) leading to the resolution.

Finally, we feel satisfied with the ending; what happens to the narrator as a result of his action is of no consequence to us.

A Few Exercises to Get You Started—Write a story about a conflict or the relationship between

1. a man and a woman; two men; two women.
2. two beings from Jupiter, another solar system, another galaxy.
3. a man and a machine; a woman and a machine; two machines.
4. two inanimate objects (a cup and the desk or table; grass and dirt; your shoe and your sock).
5. (among) three people or beings (any gender or mix of genders or species).
6. seemingly complimentary professionals (a cop and a lawyer, a baker and a cook, a writer and an editor, a teacher and a principal).
7. a human character and his conscience or sense of morality.
8. two or more people in a photograph.
9. a father and son; mother and daughter.
10. a rodeo cowboy and a bull; two drivers on a race track.

Final Notes and a Few More Examples of Flash Fiction

The market for any kind of fiction changes constantly. To find markets for flash fiction, I suggest you key “flash fiction” into your favorite search engine and follow the links.

In addition to whatever markets you discover through your web search for “flash fiction,” remember that many flash fiction stories are precisely the right length to serve as fillers for magazines.

Another possible market is any fiction venue that does not specify a minimum word count in their guidelines. Finally, literary journals almost always are a good venue for flash fiction.

The Mysterious Case of Harlan the Hippie

The ancient Volkswagen Beetle flipped, landing upside down in a ditch. But being high has its advantages.

Harlan climbed out, surveyed the scene, then got behind the wheel again, thinking how cool it was to have the world on his back.

When the officers arrived, the earth was gone, toted off on the roof of Harlan’s car.

The Importance of Polish

He’s such a bastard!” Margo scrubbed her fingernails with the cotton ball. “Working late every night! Like money’s all that important!”

She squeezed the cotton ball, noticed a strong odor, and thought of his early morning habit of breathing through a warm washcloth. She smiled and squeezed again.

Acetone would work as well as ether.

Mary’s Recipe

I killed my third wife yesterday. Disposing of the body is the trick, and the third time’s a charm.

“She left me,” I said, and threw her a bon voyage party. “Better to get on with my life,” I said.

Everyone pitied me and cursed her for leaving. Nobody noticed the excellent stew.

Mary’s recipe.

I hope this little ebook has been helpful to you. If so, I hope you’ll take a look at some of [my other nonfiction titles](#).

Rolled out at 2 and did my usual browsing of the internet. Dean's offering in "Of Interest" re-sparked my interest in flash fiction and led to my posting the topic above. I still recommend his pop-up course on the topic.

The doc visit/consultation went well yesterday. There is a good chance that one of my physical problems will be rectified next week.

Not sure what today holds. Probably resting, reading, some time doing normal life things and maybe some fiction writing.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Beware the Tyranny of a Group" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/beware-the-tyranny-of-a-group>.

See "Copyright Class 1 – Originality" at <https://writerinlaw.com/2014/01/17/copyright-class-1-originality/>.

See "Writing Flash Fiction" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writing-flash-fiction/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 2150 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 2150

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 4050
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 222120
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 580857

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Craft of Writing](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Flash Fiction](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Ursula K. Le Guin](#), [WriterInLaw.com](#), [writing](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, August 4](#)

[August 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * If you want to read in graphic detail
- * Show of hands
- * Topic: On Critique (and Other) Groups and the Stages of Writing
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

If you want to read in graphic detail why the myths of writing don't work and why most writers who cling to those myths eventually fade away, see "When Writers Hit The Wall" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/when-writers-hit-the-wall.html>.

For my take, see my comment on that post. Now back to our regularly scheduled programming. (grin)

Show of Hands

How many of you are licensing photos from online royalty-free stock photo agencies for use in your ebook and/or print book covers?

I'm having some interesting email discussions with DWS and a writer/photographer friend regarding licensing photographs and other art for use in ebook-cover and book-cover designs (so "derivative works").

Those are different licenses, by the way. Both are non-exclusive, but the "standard" agreement allows for ebook covers and other "web" uses. For print (paper) covers and other print uses, you really need to acquire the extended (slightly more expensive) license.

More than likely, I'll be writing a full topic on these and related matters in the future. Interesting stuff.

Topic: On Critique (and Other) Groups and the Stages of Writing

Yesterday my friend Michael Lockhart posted an excellent article at PWW. The comment I was going to add there quickly ran long, so I decided to use it here as a topic instead.

When any critique group deteriorates into a mutual-admiration society, as I've observed many do, it isn't doing anybody any good. Feel-good pats on the back are perhaps valuable for a whole other reason, but as an aid to improvement in storytelling ability, not so much.

Likewise, local, regional and even national writer groups that begin over time to cannibalize themselves and become only social get-togethers and a venue for swapping and propagating the same tired old clichés and outright lies are no better. They're harmful at worst, and their members are marching in place at best.

Of course, there's the standard disclaimer that every writer is different, with different perceived needs. No general statement could be more true.

But notice I wrote "perceived" needs, not actual needs or simply "needs."

Writers who are young in the craft, especially those who haven't yet recognized and discarded the myths we were all taught by non-writers, have less confidence in themselves and their own abilities and knowledge.

Therefore they harbor and even perpetuate a need for external input. They create a self-fulfilling need that feeds their own insecurity. In doing so, they create a harmful, self-perpetuating cycle.

They see their work as less than adequate unless they allow input from others, so they continue to actively seek and accept that input—and thereby stunt their own growth as writers.

These writers (all stage one and stage two) believe they need to hover over their story and rely on others' input to make it better (read "perfect it").

Unfortunately, they also believe they know as much about writing as they'll ever need to know. And their unwavering reliance on the crutch of external input only adds to that fallacy.

Soon these writers stop seeking or listening to advice even from writers much farther along the craft-of-writing path than they are.

On the far end of the same scale are the self-actualized writers. These are all stage three and four writers. They range from writers who are on their way up to masters of the craft.

These writers continue to study and practice the craft. They understand there is always more to learn and they're hungry to learn it.

Finally, they recognize plainly that no single opinion (no critique, no review) is any more valid than any other. As a result they have long ago eschewed the need for any external input except as they might glean from reading and studying masterful works.

And of course there are multiple levels between the two.

But make no mistake, which level the individual writer is on depends solely on that writer's perception of his own ability and his own perceived need.

I urge you to assess yourself honestly from time to time to determine which level you're on as a writer. Knowing that level can be invaluable.

For example, I'm an advanced stage-three fiction writer. By that I mean my craft is at a high level, but I know I still have a ton to learn and am actively and eagerly engaged in learning it.

In the business of writing, though, I'm early (barely) stage-three. I've shed the myths about business, but I still have a lot more to learn about that than about the craft of writing itself.

How does knowing my level(s) help me?

As a fiction writer I seldom listen to advice even from other stage-three writers (the ones I listen to know who they are). And I never listen (other than politely) to advice from stage-one or stage-two writers. I'm also fortunate to have been born with an instructor gene, so I share what I know with those who will listen.

On the business side I seek out and heed the advice of pretty much any indie publisher who's enjoyed more than a modicum of success. That doesn't mean I leap through hoops to initiate their advice, but I do at least give it serious consideration.

And the more successful they are and the longer they maintain that level of success, the more seriously I consider their advice.

My advice to you (if you want it)? Avoid any critique group that doesn't include Stephen King and others at his level of mastery.

And in that writers' group you belong to? Go, socialize, enjoy. That's what it's there for.

But if you hear any writing clichés floating about, understand that socializing is the only real value of that group.

Rolled out a little after 2.

It's Sunday. I'll do a little more reading, but I feel like that's coming to an end. As for the rest of the day, I don't know.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Copyright Class 2 – Originality and Ideas" at <https://writerinlaw.com/2014/01/24/copyright-class-2-originality-and-ideas/>.

See "An Argument for the CASE Act" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/an-argument-for-the-case-act/>.

See "Self Publishing Helps Local Author..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/self-publishing-helps-local-author-leave-government-job-to-write-full-time/>.

See “‘Close’ Proximity, ‘End’ Result, and More...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/close-proximity-end-result-and-more-redundant-words-to-delete-from-your-writing/>.

See “Keep the story moving” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/keep-the-story-moving>.

As kind of a catch-all, see “This Week in the Blogs...” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/08/this-week-in-the-blogs-july-27-august-2-2019/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1080 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1080

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 5130
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 223200
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 581937

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [WriterInLaw.com](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, August 5](#)

[August 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Topic: Which Brass Ring to Grab?
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Topic: Which Brass Ring to Grab? An Allegory

When you decide to learn the craft of writing (or any other craft, really), it's like being set at the edge of a wilderness that's steeped in a forbidding haze.

To either side are a million other aspirants, all wanting the same thing, all eager to become Real Writers.

From either side, you hear a million advisers say to their charges, "The journey might take years. But if you want to excel at the craft of writing, you must do only two things: read extensively, and grab the right brass ring."

But you have your own trusted advisor, so you block out the other voices. You give your advisor your full attention.

He smiles and puts his hand on your shoulder. And says the same thing: "The journey might take years. But if you want to excel at the craft of writing, you must do only two things: read extensively, and grab the right brass ring."

Then he gestures vaguely (ominously?) toward the wilderness, just as all the other advisors do.

A tiny chorus of voices in your own head says, "If you want to write, just write. We'll help."

But you push it down. "Not now. I have too much to learn."

And along with the other million aspirants, you set off.

Early in the journey, the haze is not heavy. The air is clean, mostly clear, and in places seems almost perfumed.

Rings are visible virtually everywhere. There are so many that some overlap others. They're easy to spot. They all gleam with a patina, polished by the touch of millions upon millions of hands.

And friendly, disembodied voices come at you from every direction. At first you hear them as a welcoming murmur, then more loudly as you begin grabbing the beautiful, polished rings and tugging them open.

It isn't difficult at all. The trapdoors move on well-used hinges.

The voices all mimic each other, often coming in choruses. All of them offer time-honored advice, and none of it feels threatening. You listen, take notes, lower the trap door and move on to the next ring.

As time goes by, you stop taking notes. After all, nobody's saying anything new. You grin and wonder why the old guy who dropped you off seemed so worried. This is going to be easy.

And it is. It's so easy, so welcoming, that many have already found what they're looking for. Less than a month into the journey, almost all of the aspirants have joined those behind the brass rings.

You're startled to find there are only a thousand or so left.

But it can't be that easy. All of the advisors said it might take years. Your own advisor said it might take years.

So you continue. You listen closely. No, still no reason to take further notes, but you strive to follow the oft-repeated advice.

You learn you must outline. (Everyone says so.) You learn you must revise and rewrite, to make your work as perfect as you can. (Everyone does it.) And you never think to ask for credentials from the voices behind those highly polished brass rings.

Over months and then years you advance through the wilderness, and the haze only grows thicker and more dense. The air is less perfumed but still filled with the same voices that surrounded you at the beginning.

The ground is still littered with those highly polished rings, but there are fewer than before. You don't bother to open them because you know you'll only hear what you've heard countless times before.

You and your thousand fellow aspirants stagger on. Surely you've learned all you need to learn: outline, revise, rewrite, polish. So what's wrong?

And maybe, finally, a frown comes to your face. Shouldn't the haze be growing lighter?

You've learned your lessons well. Your work has been published in dozens of magazines and journals. At each, you were paid with "exposure," as all the voices said you would be. So why don't you feel like a writer yet?

You've even outlined five novels. They're in your head, waiting to be written. But there must be more to it than you've heard so far. There must be.

What you've learned was easy, a series of steps: outline, revise, rewrite, polish... and wait. Still, it's only a set of mechanics. The same list, over and over. You've been on the journey for years, and you've learned and applied everything on the list multiple times. So why don't you feel like a writer?

As you continue to stumble through the haze, made thicker by the voices all around (Are the voices *creating* the haze?), you finally notice one brass ring that doesn't look like the others. It gleams only dimly. It is not highly polished. It's been opened only a few times, and even fewer have stayed.

But at this point, what have you got to lose?

You look around, gesture to gather the other 1000 aspirants to share what you are about to discover. Then you grasp the ring and pull it open.

A thousand pens are poised over a thousand well-worn notebooks, all ready to jot down the same notes yet again.

But the voice is different. It bears a confidence born of success.

Calmly, it says, “If you want to be a writer, there is only one set of rules to follow: One, you must write. Two, you must finish what you write. Three, you must not rewrite. Professional writers are paid to write; professional cleaners are paid to polish. Four, you must publish what you write. Your opinion of your work doesn’t matter. Let the readers decide what is good or not good. And five, once it’s published, leave it there so readers can find it.”

For a moment you frown again. Could it really be that easy? You call through the trapdoor, “Can it really be that easy?”

Laughter emanates. “It is exactly that easy, and that difficult.”

To either side of you, the same frown covers a thousand other faces. Most of them scoff and flip their notebooks closed. They begin yelling, ardently defending all they’ve heard up to that point. Then they stomp off to continue the journey.

But you and a few others realize this is something new, something you hadn’t heard before. And something about it feels right. It feels like a challenge, something to test your mettle.

It isn’t comfortable. It isn’t usual.

And you remember your initial advisor’s final words: “...grab the *right* brass ring.”

As those words resonate in your mind, you look through the portal. “May I join you?”

And the old man there looks up and grins. “You don’t need me. Continue your journey, but remember the rules. I think you’ll find the haze has lifted.”

As the trapdoor eases shut, you look up and find a clean, clear, beautiful sky filled with possibilities and story ideas. There are still trapdoors occasionally, all with highly shined brass-ring handles, but you know, now, you don’t need them.

In your mind, a tiny chorus of voices say, “Welcome back. We’ve been waiting. Now that you’re ready, just write. We’ll help.”

And so you do.

Rolled out way late at almost 5 a.m. I needed the sleep I guess.

I found Sean Monaghan's post at PWW (see "Of Interest") and that keyed the short fiction that appears in today's topic. And a great deal more. Thanks, Sean.

I spent most of the day yesterday watching James Bond movies, one with Roger Moore and two with Sean Connery. Great fun, and the commercial breaks were even relatively short. I think I needed a break from Thinking (about business, a million little life concerns, everything).

Then I watched another two-hour episode of the Brit show Midsomer Murders on Netflix. Sometimes the show is great and sometimes it's obviously (to a writer anyway) not so great. I recommend it as a quick way to see what to do and what not to do in a story.

I thought I was going to write fiction today, but I won't. Still on my sabbatical I guess.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Unlearning" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/unlearning/>. Bravo.

See "Copyright Class 3 – Copyright Protection and Ideas" at <https://writerinlaw.com/2014/01/31/copyright-class-3-copyright-protection-and-ideas/>.

See "16 Themed Calls for Submissions" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/16-themed-calls-for-submissions-for-august-2019/>. A few of these pay pro rates.

See "The Problem with Avoiding Genre Formula" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/08/the-problem-with-avoiding-genre-formula.html>. I humbly submit the problem is not an attempt to avoid "genre formula." The problem is writers not educating themselves as to what readers expect from a particular genre (the genre "formula") in the first place.

See "It Is August..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/it-is-august/>. Some great opportunities here. If nothing else, if you have \$600 to spend and you KNOW you can write 52 short stories in 52 weeks or 6 novels in 12 months, sign up with Dean for one of his challenges. Basically you'll be buying one of his lifetime subscriptions (your choice) on Teachable for a pittance (\$600 instead of \$1000, \$1200 or \$3000 value).

See "Free Fiction Monday: Flower Fairies" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/05/free-fiction-monday-flower-fairies-2/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1460 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1460

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the year..... 358737

Total nonfiction words for the month... 6590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 224660

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 583397

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [copyright](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [WriterInLaw.com](#)

The Daily Journal, Tuesday, August 6

[August 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: I've Been Pushing an Idea Too Hard
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Topic: I've Been Pushing an Idea Too Hard

The idea is writing into the dark.

As everyone who's followed this Journal for longer than a few days knows, I write into the dark. All lengths. Believe it or not, long novels and series are the easiest, followed by novels, novellas, novelettes, and then short stories.

[Writing the shortest of all complete short story forms, flash fiction](#), is the most difficult (for me) to write into the dark. That's because of the word-count constraint. I am forced to invoke the conscious, critical mind to stay within that constraint.

Writing into the dark is fun for me, and that's why I do it. For me, WITD is the only legitimate way to tell a story in my own unique, original voice. But then I'm also a staunch advocate and adherent of Heinlein's Rules, which fit nicely with WITD.

Finally, I'm also a self-actualized writer. I'm confident in my abilities and I trust my voice and my creative subconscious. I don't need (or want or invite) anyone else's criticism of my writing.

For those who haven't been around awhile...

Basically, WITD means taking a deep breath, sitting down at the keyboard, and allowing my characters to tell the story that they, not I, are living, albeit through my fingertips.

I don't outline or otherwise plan in advance. I just write. Occasionally as a scene advances, I come to realize how it more than likely will end. But not always. And whether it does or doesn't, I just trust the process.

I do my best keep my conscious, critical mind at bay (meaning I immediately dismiss any negative thoughts). And I Just Write the Next Sentence.

If the next sentence is there but it feels a little bogged down, I trust the process and write it anyway, trusting my characters to lead me through. And they do. Every time.

If the next sentence just won't come, more than likely I've reached the end of a scene. So I read back a little. Chances are I'll find where the current scene resolved. If so, I skip ahead, write the first sentence of the next scene, and continue.

I'm writing, sure, but much more than that I'm the first person EVER being told that particular story. Because I'm writing into the dark, it's unfolding as I go.

But eventually the story ends and I publish it. Now the fact that I wrote into the dark becomes even more important.

Because I had no idea what was going to happen in the story before it happened, there is no possible way the eventual other readers of the story can guess where the story's going either. A surprised reader is a happy reader, and a happy reader returns to buy more books.

That's how writing into the dark works. That's how I write and why I write the way I do.

All of that being said, writing into the dark is not the only way to write fiction. Again, the key is to make the writing a fun escape so you'll keep doing it.

Now, a disclaimer: if you're avoiding letting go of the myths and writing into the dark because of some unreasonable fear, I urge you to at least try WITD.

But it's really all up to you. If you have fun with the process of outlining or planning ahead as you go or second-guessing your characters (if you *aren't* ruled by fear and you honestly really do enjoy it), by all means have at it.

Likewise, if you enjoy writing word by meticulously chosen word for a total of 50 or 150 "polished, perfect" words or sentences on a full day, do that. Seriously.

But please, don't for an instant believe your version of perfection will match the reader's version of perfection.

It won't.

And no, my characters' choices as I write into the dark won't match the reader's version of perfection either. But it will keep them on the edge of their seat, turning pages as they read. It's also in my unique, original voice, and it's fun.

And isn't that what it's all about?

Rolled out at 3 this morning with absolutely no idea what the day will hold. I suppose at this point I'm "living into the dark." (grin)

I listened to yet another workshop with DWS and enjoyed it. Nothing (in this case) I didn't know before. Also did some laundry and some other necessary things around the house. Finally, I interacted with a mentoring student for awhile.

I almost forgot to post the Journal today.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "The Past, A WIP, and WITD" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-past-a-wip-and-witd>.

See The Passive Guy's take on "What Writers Need to Know About Morality Clauses" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-writers-need-to-know-about-morality-clauses/>.

See "Copyright Class 4 – Superstars Special Edition" at <https://writerinlaw.com/2014/02/06/copyright-class-4-superstars-special-edition/>. Read the others from that link forward. You can skip "Copyright Class 5" though. (grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 810 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 810

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the year..... 358737

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7400

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 225470

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 584207

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [copyright](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [WriterInLaw.com](#)

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, August 7

[August 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Last Saturday
- * Topic: I Rescind My Topic Statement
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Last Saturday, August 3rd, I wrote about [flash fiction](#). A respondent from Japan and I have been exchanging [comments on that post](#).

In one of them he mentioned "100 Word Story" at <http://www.100wordstory.org/>. Interesting website.

That put me in mind of 55 Story, a book I bought a long time ago that started me writing flash fiction. You can [find the current edition here](#).

If you're interested in writing flash fiction, I recommend the following (though all of these are the 55-word form):

55 Fiction: Writing a short short story at <http://www.msuedtechsandbox.com/MAETVAULT/2010/12/55-fiction-writing-a-short-short-story/>

55 Fiction | New Times San Luis Obispo at <https://www.newtimeslo.com/sanluisobispo/55-fiction/Category?oid=2872608>

Corinne Rodrigues at <https://corinnerodrigues.com/2013/07/31/55-fiction/>

TinyFiction.com at <http://tiny-fiction.com/55WordStories.htm>

If you key “55-Fiction” into your search engine, you’ll find a lot more.

Definitions of flash fiction length vary depending on the source. For me, flash fiction is double-digit fiction, anything up to 99 words, including the title.

As you can see from the above, the 55-word form is very popular. Other proponents give you up to 500 words and some even up to 1,000.

To me, that seems silly. To me, anything from a few hundred words to 1199 is a “short-short,” a form nobody talks about anymore. But to each his own.

Topic: I Rescind My Topic Statement

I rescind my topic statement from yesterday. Actually, I *haven't been* pushing Writing Into the Dark too much or too hard. In a world as noisy as ours and one in which most of the noise consists of horrible advice, there is no such thing.

As far as I can tell, I’m one of only a handful of professional fiction writers who are even owning up to writing into the dark, much less pushing it.

The other most outspoken proponent is Dean Wesley Smith, from whom I learned both Heinlein’s Rules and writing into the dark. A few others are [Micheale Lockhart](#), [Dan Baldwin](#) and [Robert Sadler](#).

The incredibly prolific Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury have all at least strongly hinted that they did the same thing.

At one point, Harlan Ellison actually set up a typewriter on a table in a department store window and wrote short stories page by page as people gathered on the sidewalk to watch. As he finished each page, he posted it on the window for the viewers to read. He was truly writing in public.

We know the old pulp writers wrote into the dark too. They had to. They were writing on manual typewriters, and they understood in a very real way that they were paid to write, not to rewrite, so it was one clean draft or nothing.

So I rescind my topic statement. The topic itself, I'll let stand. Even the last few paragraphs, the section that begins with "But it's really all up to you."

Because it really IS all up to you.

But the truth is, outlining, writing word by meticulously chosen word, rewriting, etc. are all functions of the conscious, critical mind. And as such, they're all based on fear.

They just are. They're nothing more than a way to slow the process, to put off publishing as long as possible. The sooner you publish, the sooner you open yourself to ridicule.

The conscious mind exists to protect you. It would prefer you don't put yourself, your views, and your unique voice "out there" at all. But if you must, then you should do everything you can to ensure perfection and lessen the chance of that ridicule.

The problem is, the conscious, critical mind knows NOTHING about creating. So outlining (and sticking to your outline), revising, rewriting, and anything else you do from the conscious mind will harm your story. Let me say that again: any activity of the conscious, critical mind will harm your story.

With each rewriting or polishing pass, you'll polish off a little more of your original voice.

So your real choice is whether to publish your unique, original voice or to polish all the originality off of it.

Still, it remains your choice. If you feel you need the safety nets of critique groups (external critical voices), rewriting, polishing and so on, go for it.

Or, as Dean says, you can "Dare to be bad." You can publish your unique, original voice and dare to fail.

Chances are, with some readers you *will* fail. And so what? But with others, you'll succeed in a way that exceeds your wildest expectations.

And best of all, writing will stop being "work."

Writing was never fun for me until I found the freedom afforded by Heinlein's Rules, writing into the dark, and trusting in my own creative subconscious.

And of course, I wish for you the same freedom and the same fun.

Rolled out late at 4 and hurried through my various "usual" tasks.

Sometime in the next day or two I'll add all of my short fiction collections to GooglePlay. I'd been waiting for XinXii to take down the two they've uploaded there, but they haven't. (One

more reason I won't be using them in the future, or restricting sales by them only to their own store.)

Today also I'll write. I've been writing a lot actually, but only openings that I then throw out (and don't count). Maybe today I'll hit on one that works.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Myth Lectures" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/myth-lectures/>. I recommend these. If you can't afford them, you can also learn a lot about the myths by read Dean's series of post on "Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/killing-the-sacred-cows-of-publishing/>. And yes, I recommend buying the actual books.

See "Life" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/life/>. Alison Holt poses an interesting question. I invite you go go answer it.

For potential story ideas, see "Dogs Versus Robots..." at <https://fromearthtothestars.com/2019/08/07/dogs-versus-robots-dogs-win-and-not-just-because-theyre-cute/>.

See "The Creative Compulsions of OCD" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-creative-compulsions-of-ocd/>.

After serious consideration, I won't be posting many more (if anymore) links to [the Kill Zone blog](#). So if you want to follow Kill Zone, I recommend you bookmark it and check in each morning. I also recommend you carry your salt shaker with you.

Occasionally the writers there hit on something useful. However, always bear in mind that every writer there is mired in the myths and most bend their posts toward traditional publishing. Which is fine, but that just isn't what the Daily Journal is about.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1060 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1060

Writing of ()

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

Total fiction words for the month..... XXXX
Total fiction words for the year..... 358737
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8460
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 226530
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 585267

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	194
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Asimov's](#), [Dan Baldwin](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Micheale Lockhart](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Robert J. Sadler](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, August 8](#)

[August 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * As some of you look to me
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

As some of you look to me for writing advice, I owe you an explanation regarding my recent lack of focus on fiction writing.

I'm going through an unusual life roll at the moment. Or you could look at it as a series of small, overlapping life rolls.

This one is unusual because it consists of various events, some good and some less-than-good, that are converging at the moment.

Two are medical. Neither is life-threatening like the one last year was, but both will enhance what the doctors call "quality of life" and will take up some time for the next few weeks.

Another is my commitment to learning the business side of writing. That will take up the next 11 months or so, although thankfully, it's beginning to calm itself into routine.

And then as part of that business thing, of course, we're getting our StoneThread Publishing inventory under control, investigating additional aggregators and uploading to the ones we choose, etc. That will continue and has almost calmed itself into routine.

And the final one (I think) is that I'm buying a new (to me) vehicle from my deceased uncle's estate. That should resolve itself over the next couple of weeks.

So if you begin to question why you're listening to writing advice from a guy who isn't currently writing fiction, all I can say is check my numbers (below).

I'm not one to rest on my laurels, but every now and then, maybe, you have to. (grin)

Rolled out at 3:15. Came to the Hovel, followed my usual routine, then moved over to the novel at 5.

I'll be out much of the day today to tend (partially) to two of the life-roll bits I mentioned above.

Turns out I shouldn't have left quite so early yesterday. As it turned out, I started a new Blackwell Ops novel. This will be Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco.

So Day 1 below is from yesterday. Day 2 is what I was able to get done in the wee hours this morning before I had to depart for Sierra Vista.

I can't tell you how good it feels to be writing again. But then, I probably don't have to.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Trademark for Fiction Writers..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/trademark-for-fiction-writers/>.

Then see "Trademark for Fiction Writers... Chapter One" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/trademark-for-fiction-writers-chapter-one/>.

See "Nine Newly Discovered Proust Stories to Be Published" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/nine-newly-discovered-proust-stories-to-be-published/>.

See "Business Musings: Licensing Everywhere..." at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/07/business-musings-licensing-everywhere-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-seven/>.

See "The Myth of Author Multitasking" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/08/the-myth-of-author-multitasking/>.

See "The Nose Knows" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/the-nose-knows.html>. To see why I added this one, see my comment on the post.

See "Fat Chance" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/fat-chance>.

Fiction Words: 1170

Nonfiction Words: 470 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1640

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Total fiction words for the month..... 4392

Total fiction words for the year..... 363129

Total nonfiction words for the month... 8930

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 227000

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 590129

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, August 9](#)

[August 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I ran across an interview
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

I ran across an interview on Jane Friedman's site. I won't share the URL with you. I like you.

I also will not share any of the participants' names for the same reason.

But the following excerpt is so unbelievably ludicrous, I wanted to share at least that much with you just to illustrate how much silliness is out there.

The excerpt consists of one question from the interview between the author of the article, "a former acquiring editor of children's books at Little, Brown and Simon & Schuster, who runs her own editorial services company," and a pair of literary agents.

I copied and pasted only the first answer because the second, though a bit more tame, was pretty much the same:

Question: Writing a second book is notoriously challenging for almost any author. In your experience, is “second book syndrome” more common among writers trying to replicate the success of their first book, or those who consider their second book a second chance to prove themselves?

Answer: This is, sadly, not a myth. The second book is the hardest. (Though I’m not sure if any writer would say any book is easy!) Part of this is because a writer may have written Book 1 over the course of 10 years, spent another few months finding an agent, another year working on edits and trying to sell the book. Book 2, meanwhile, is on a deadline.

Folks, it is painfully obvious to me that this is precisely why people like me and Dean Smith and Lee Child and Kris Rusch and dozens of others are never asked to respond to interview questions by people like the author of the original article.

First, the question itself is flawed almost beyond my comprehension. Obviously, that writing any book is “notoriously challenging” is not a fact but a pretentious and erroneous assumption. And one made by (shock, shock) a non writer. Go figure.

To respond to the agent’s answer: No, it isn’t a myth. It’s a false assumption, and frankly, you should know better. (And I, just one of many, many, MANY professional fiction writers, will say blatantly that writing a novel is actually frighteningly easy.) Ten years? Seriously? The longest it took me to write a novel was six months, and I wrote several other novels in the interim. The longest it’s ever taken me to write a novel was 32 days, and that was a long one (around 100,000 words).

As for spending time “finding an agent,” that’s silly too. Why would I *want* an agent? An agent, if I was “fortunate” enough to find one, would place my work with a publisher and give him my copyright for the LIFE of that copyright. And she (the agent), would then own 15% of my copyright for the life of that copyright herself. That is insanity. (But please don’t feel bad. I don’t give the guy who mows my lawn 15% of the deed to my house either.)

Seriously, folks, seriously... if you’re even considering following that path, step back from the edge and reconsider.

Your work has value.

The only person you have to “prove yourself” to is the reader, and you do that one reader at a time, one book at a time.

Write the story, publish it, then write the next story.

If you’re still enticed toward traditional publishing, submit some of your work to publishers who do not require an agent.

If they offer you a large-enough, non-refundable, life-changing advance (for me it would be high-six-figures)—and if they put that in a contract that also does not contain a no-compete clause—then go ahead and give them your copyright for life (for one book).

Of course, the traditional publisher who would do that does not exist. Just sayin’.

Rolled out at 2. I’m trying, within my given number of hours per day, to refocus my schedule.

I want to continue to publish this Journal, do the publishing work I need to do, and write. You might notice a glitch here and there as I go through this process. Bear with me. If you like any of the stuff I toss out here, it will be worth your time and effort.

I pre-posted a couple of Journal entries for the next two days, when I’ll be on the road.

The novel’s going fine (too early not to) but with a two-day interruption fast approaching, I’m going to spend today putting together a few box sets and getting them published. I’ll also probably upload all of my collections to GooglePlay.

Talk with you again tomorrow, sort of. (grin)

Of Interest

See “Amazon Ranking and Bestseller Lists – What’s the Deal?” at <http://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2018/01/amazon-ranking-and-bestseller-lists.html>. For anyone who missed it before or even if you didn’t. A lot of good marketing advice.

Also see “Your Book Marketing Plan Won’t Work” at <https://jakonrath.blogspot.com/2019/06/your-marketing-plan-wont-work.html>.

See “Collage & Control – Or Keeping Track” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/collage-control-or-keeping-track>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 800 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 800

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 4392

Total fiction words for the year..... 363129

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9730

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 227800
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 590929

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [J. A. Konrath](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, August 10](#)

[August 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I'm on the road today
- * Topic: Just Write the Scene
- * Of Interest
- * The daily diary and the rest

I'm on the road today, and actually tomorrow, though I've pre-posted a topic for tomorrow to give you something to look at. (grin) The "live" Journal will return on Monday, August 12, in the usual format. For now, I hope you'll enjoy this blast from the past from my post archives at [HarveyStanbrough.com](#).

Topic: Just Write the Scene

Some time back, I posted that if you're writing and you get bogged down, you should just write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, and so on. Soon you'll be back in the flow of your story and you can forge ahead. There's one proviso—that "next sentence" should come directly from your subconscious (creative) mind. In other words, you shouldn't force it and think about it and make it read just so. You should literally JUST write the next logical sentence.

Well, sometimes when I get stuck, my fingers are poised on the keyboard, all ready to write the next sentence and—the next sentence doesn't come. *Oh crap! What now?*

Sometimes you aren't stuck. Sometimes you're in the wrong place. Sometimes you're trying to make something happen (conscious, critical mind) that isn't part of the story. Remember, the real story is coming out of your subconscious mind, your creative mind.

A few days ago (as I write this) I found myself in exactly that situation. I had written a long (over 1800 words) but very terse opening scene. At the end of that scene, I tried to write a transition and then another scene. (“Tried” is the operative word here. When you “try,” that’s your critical mind. Ugh.)

Nothing doing. There was no next sentence.

So I sat back for a moment, released all the conscious, critical mind “try” stuff that I was attempting to force on the story. Then I leaned forward, put my fingers on the keyboard, and wrote the first thing that came to mind.

The beginning of a new scene sprang onto the page. When I felt I might bog down again, I just wrote the next sentence, wrote the next sentence. This time it worked fine. I was back in sync, allowing my subconscious creative mind to tell the story it wanted to tell. My fingers barely stopped moving for another 1892 words. Then they slammed to a stop.

Can’t fool me twice, at least not in the same story. I got up, moved around, got a glass of water and came back to the story. I put my fingers on the keyboard, wrote the first thing that came to mind, and again a new scene opening flew across the page. Yep, just like that. This scene was only 581 words. This time I already knew what the next scene would be, so I added a section divider (for me that’s a series of three centered, spaced asterisks) and started the next scene: that one isn’t finished yet, and it’s just under 1,000 words.

I probably will finish this story a little later today (again, as I write this post, October 23, 2014). First historical western I’ve written since I was a kid. These days my primary interest is in writing psychological suspense (like horror, but no slash and gash). My secondary is science fiction. My third is magic realism. Historical westerns aren’t anywhere on my list of priorities, but this is the story that wanted to be written, so this is the story I’m writing. Cool, eh?

So here’s some advice: When you get stuck in your writing, Let Go and just write the next sentence. If it won’t come, write the next scene:

1. To begin a scene, write whatever comes.
2. To get through the scene, write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, then write the next sentence. Don’t think about where it’s all going or even about the second or third sentence. Just write the next sentence.
3. When you’re writing a scene, don’t worry about how it connects to other scenes. Just focus on that scene.
4. When the scene ends, write whatever comes for the next scene (or for another scene), then write the next sentence, etc.
5. Your character(s) will lead you to where you need to be.

Hope this helps.

The Daily Diary will return on Monday, August 12.

Of Interest

See “Trademark for Fiction Writers... Chapter Two” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/trademark-for-fiction-writers-chapter-two/>.

See “I Am Dyslexic” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/i-am-dyslexic/>. READ THIS. There’s a huge bonus at the end.

See “Our Brains Tell Stories so We Can Live” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/our-brains-tell-stories-so-we-can-live/>.

I don’t very often recommend writing craft books by traditionally published authors. But if you want to learn a unique way to write five or six novels per year, check out [The Tinkerbell Effect by Deborah LeBlanc](#). Deborah is a traditionally published author who has had remarkable success even as others fell by the wayside.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 720 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 720

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 4392
Total fiction words for the year..... 363129
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10450
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 227520
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 591649

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [On the road](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#), [Writing the Scene](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, August 11](#)

[August 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I'm on the road again today
- * Topic: A Few Guidelines for Fiction Writers
- * The daily diary and the rest

I'm on the road again today. The Journal will return tomorrow, Monday, August 12, in the usual format. For now, I hope you'll enjoy this blast from the past from my post archives at HarveyStanbrough.com.

Topic: A Few Guidelines for Fiction Writers

The guidelines below are truisms, facts, not opinions. They will work for hobby writers, part-time writers and professional writers. If you are not a writer or if you believe you have to "suffer" for your art or any of that, they won't work for you. Note: I'm all about intentions and facts, not perceptions. If you disagree with any or all of this post, please don't email me. I'll just smile, shrug and say, "Okay."

To the Important Stuff

A writer is a person who writes, who puts new words on the page. A writer is a person who loves to tell stories in written communication. There's nothing elevated about it, nothing special except that you get to spend your life making up stuff for a living.

If that definition fits you, or if you WANT that definition to fit you, here are a few guidelines that might help:

* ***Your conscious critical mind exists to protect you.*** Like the benevolent android in Jack Williamson's "With Folded Hands," it's sole function is to keep you from being harmed... even by rejection. That's why it's so much easier to spend all your time rewriting and polishing instead of moving forward and writing the next story. No risk of rejection as long as you're rewriting.

* ***Your subconscious creative mind is the source*** of all your inspiration, all your story ideas, and all your stories. If you get out of your own way and trust your subconscious, you will write in your own original voice. Then your only challenge is to NOT go back and rewrite and polish until you've erased your voice and made your story sound like everything else in the slush pile.

* ***Everything in life is a matter of priorities.*** My critical mind often will use that to attempt to "save me" from writing. When I'm about to write, suddenly doing something else (anything else) becomes a priority. And I shake my index finger at my critical mind. No! BAD critical mind! Get back in your corner and leave me alone! My creative mind has stories to write! I wanna run and play with my fictional friends now. You get the idea.

* ***Productivity is what I'm all about as a writer.*** The more work I put out there, the more I practice my writing, the better it becomes. Also the more books and stories I have to feed off of

each other and the more income I receive from my writing. Period. This is the same reason every time I get five new stories I slap them into a collection in both ebook and paper. When I get ten, I put them in another collection. That gives me three streams of passive revenue from every story I write. Can you say Ka-ching?

* ***Productivity can be reduced to mathematics***, and math is a concrete, finite thing. Here's the equation: $P = PW/h(H)$. Or Productivity equals Publishable Words you can write per hour times the number of Hours you spend in the chair putting new words on the page. If you want to increase your productivity, you have to increase one of those two factors.

* ***Words per hour... Truly, this is a biggie***. I write about 1000 publishable words per hour. Sounds like a lot, doesn't it? But if you're writing 1000 words per hour, that's only 17 words per minute. Think about that. Writing 1000 words per hour gives you a LOT of time for staring off into space. If you're getting less than 700 or 800 words per hour, you might want to check in with yourself and figure out what you're doing during that hour. You can safely bet it's linked to your critical mind. Seriously. Don't tell me or anyone else about it if you don't want to (it's nobody's business but your own anyway), but if you're serious about being a professional writer, Fix It. If you aren't, of course, no biggie.

A little more on that... a lot of us took typing in high school. My best rate was 60 mostly error-free words per minute. Extrapolated out, that's 3600 words per hour. Do I expect to be able to write 3600 words per hour? Of course not. But it kind'a makes that 1000 words per hour seem really do-able. You can look back and punch in your own figures.

* ***Oh, as an addendum***, N-E-V-E-R write "crap" intentionally. That you "should" write crap the first time through is just the dumbest advice ever. Do the best you can on the first time through, spell check it, then have a first reader check it for consistency and errors (no writing advice!), then publish it. Then write the next story. (Again, if you disagree, please don't email me. Just go ahead and do what you want.)

Okay, there y'go. Writing is fun. You just have to get out of your own way.

Hope this helps.

The Daily Diary and the rest will return in all its glory tomorrow, Monday, August 12.

Remember to check <https://deanwesleysmith.com> and the blog at <http://prowriterswriting.com>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 900

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 4392
Total fiction words for the year..... 363129
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11350
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 229420
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 592549

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#) [Leave a comment](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, August 12](#)

[August 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: Time and Priorities
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Topic: Time and Priorities

Karen Riggs posted in PWW on Sunday, August 11 (see "Of Interest"), about her process when her writing stalls. Especially if the stall is caused by interference from the conscious, critical voice.

She mentions that some writers go do something else for awhile to rob the critical voice of its power. Then they come back to the writing. She also mentions that she might have "a set window of time to write" on a given day and "there's a danger that if I leave, I won't make it back."

So she has a process she follows that enables her to get back into the story quickly. That's fine. We all have our own way. So much for the stall. We just deal with it in whatever way works for us.

f the stall is caused by the conscious, critical mind, that's nothing more than fear and self-doubt (which is a result of fear). In short, if you don't finish, you won't publish and people won't be able to criticize what you wrote.

If you really want to silence the critical voice, stop caring what anyone else thinks about your work. It isn't easy, but it's exactly that simple.

For one thing, what anyone else thinks of your work is outside of your control anyway. For another, what they think is frankly none of your business. The sooner you realize that, the sooner your critical mind will back off.

Or, as Emilio Esteves put it in his book *The Rhythm of Success*, "There are always going to be two forces at work: the internal and the external.... The external forces are much harder to control, so let's look first at you, the internal force. The place to begin is with self-assurance. Your belief in your great idea and your dreams has to be rock solid."

Okay, so with that being said, let's get to the bigger issue: Time and Priorities. Because when we talk about "getting to" or "getting back to" our writing, that's what we're talking about. And all too often, whether and when we get back to writing IS within our control.

If you have a day job (or when you had a day job), what would cause you to not go into work on a given regular workday (or not go back to work after lunch)?

Whatever it was, it should take that much or more to cause you to not get back to your writing.

As I wrote in a comment on Karen's post, we all have limited time in every day. For a sloppy analogy, every day is precisely as limited as our favorite kind of pie.

We begin with the whole thing, sort of. But an immediate chunk is carved out and consumed as sleep. Like it or not, we all have to sleep.

For those who still have a necessary day job (working for someone else), that's another large slice gone. If you work part time, maybe that slice is larger on some days and smaller on others.

Sleep time and work time are slices we can't do anything about. They're just gone. But either way, that leaves most of us with about 16 hours per day (or 1/2 of our pie).

So what matters is how we slice the rest of the pie. And that's completely up to us. Beyond sleeping and beyond a necessary day job, how we divide the rest of our time each day is a matter of priorities.

As Kris Rusch wrote recently, "Be your own writer. Be your own business owner. Be someone who tries, and eventually you will succeed. Stop making excuses." (I can't share the link just yet to this excellent post because it's on Patreon. But this one post alone is worth the \$5 it would cost you to subscribe.)

In my case, I write (or read or research or do silly stuff like write this blog) pretty much every minute that I'm not sleeping on most days because I don't have a day job. Or rather, writing IS my day job. (Ironically, today I'm not doing much at all for reasons that will become evident later.)

But my life is that way because that's how I've set my priorities. When there are no other pressing issues, writing is my Number One priority. When there ARE pressing issues (meaning activities that are more important at the time than writing), I shift my priorities.

A couple of times a week, I have to shift my Number One priority from writing to doing laundry. Twice a day, I shift my Number One priority to making my breakfast or preparing our supper. Every few months, I shift my Number One priority to "getting out of Dodge" for a couple of days to go camping. And so on.

But writing is my overall number one priority. How do I know? Because it's the one thing I always come back to. It's also the one thing that's on my mind even when I'm doing other things (laundry, cooking, camping, and so on).

I'm not recommending that you make writing your number one priority. What's right for one is not right for another. There are no right answers except what seems or feels right to you, both overall and in the moment.

If you want more time to write, re-set your priorities in that direction. If you want more time to go camping or whatever, re-set your priorities in that direction.

Just remember that you have only a limited number of slices each day. And of course, a limited number of pies. Think about what's important to you, then choose wisely.

Rolled out at 2 this morning to the sound of some moronic dog down the block barking, probably at nothing.

I bought a pickup from my cousin (2007 Chevy Colorado in excellent condition from a deceased uncle's estate). This past weekend we drove to Alamogordo NM to pick it up.

The trip was mostly uneventful. Saturday was 6 hours of driving one way (8 is pretty much my outer limit these days). Then we parked ourselves in a good motel and called my cousin to let her know we'd arrived.

We were both exhausted and didn't relish the thought of driving up into the Sacramento mountains in that condition, so I also asked my cousin whether she and her husband might drive down to meet us. They agreed.

After a few hours of waiting (TV, limited internet, etc.) my cousin's husband and their neighbor delivered the truck. We visited for a few minutes, and then he headed home with the neighbor. Then we ate a delivered pizza, watched more TV, then went to sleep.

The next morning, we got up, ate the free breakfast, and headed west. The return trip took maybe a little longer than the trip over, which was fine. As I said, uneventful.

Today, back to this but not quite back to writing other than this. Today my priority will be resting, along with laundry and fiddling with the new pickup a bit. ‘Cause, well, I’m a guy. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “Writers Are a Strange Breed” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/writers-are-a-strange-breed/>.

See “Covers” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/covers/>.

See “One Writer’s Strange Encounter with a Reader” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/one-writers-strange-encounter-with-a-reader.html>. I don’t really get her point. To me, a reader who cares only about the next book is the perfect reader. I want my readers to be so immersed in the story they don’t even realize there is a writer.

See “It was a dark and stormy night...” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/it-was-a-dark-and-stormy-night/>.

See “Hometown Book Marketing...” at <https://annerallen.com/2019/08/hometown-book-marketing/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1200 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1200

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 4392
Total fiction words for the year..... 363129
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12550
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 230620
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 593749

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anne R. Allen](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Priorities](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Time](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, August 13](#)

[August 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: More on (My) Priorities
- * More Mentoring Options Now Available
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Topic: More on (My) Priorities

Yesterday I talked about priorities. My own priorities lately are shifting.

I recently realized, for a few months now my number one priority has been this Journal. (If you don't believe that, look back over how many topics I've written in the past few months.)

Writing fiction slipped to being my second priority.

At about the same time, writing fiction also got tangled up with learning about licensing, and to a lesser degree, more about the writing craft.

Writing fiction also got tangled up with rebuilding and rebranding my publishing company, a process that's ongoing.

And finally, I'm applying what I'm learning as I go to turn StoneThread more from a publishing company to a licensing company.

Licensing is a much, MUCH larger world that includes publishing. After all, when you upload your book to Amazon (or whomever), you're licensing it, not selling it. And through Amazon (or whomever), you're licensing it to the end user (the reader).

That transition alone will continue for much of the next year. (I'll also continue to write. But see that "also"?)

I liken the transition to moving through a heavily populated minefield. I don't have a map, so I don't know where any of the mines are. I only know where I am now and my eventual destination.

But I also know that only a few of the mines are sink-your-battleship dangerous. And to defuse those, I only have to slow down and read the contract or the terms of service.

Finally, most of them aren't really mines at all, but exciting new possibilities that will spring up from the formerly fallow soil along the way. Because in licensing, unlike in traditional publishing, your partners are striving to actually Help you, for your and their mutual benefit.

Sometime during this next year, I'll realize that we've made the transition and I will have settled into the licensing mindset: Story (or IP) first, licensing possibilities second, and writing (or however I'm going to license the IP) third.

Of course, those will mingle to the point that they'll be more first, first, and first. (grin)

The Journal will be mixed in there somewhere too, most likely second. And it should continue to be interesting (if you find it interesting now) as I share what I learn while moving through the minefield.

Recently I talked with a couple of close friends about me possibly taking a hiatus from everything else—fiction writing, the Journal, etc.—and focusing solely on learning licensing and negotiating that minefield. They both gave me excellent advice.

Then I had two days away to think about it. And I settled on a few facts:

- 1. *I can only learn*** as fast as I can think (another diminished capacity). It comes as it comes. So I'll focus on learning but I'll try to be patient with both my mentor and my thought process.
- 2. *I want to continue to share*** what I learn with you. I enjoy teaching and at least some of you find this stuff valuable. So I'm not going away. I'll continue uninterrupted with the Journal, where I can share with you in at least a limited way.
- 3. *I'll work on licensing my own huge IP*** and my ongoing and future IP as I go. At times that will still mean writing and licensing the story in ebook form. At other times it will mean licensing Story, World, Character, Props etc. in other ways.

So that's my plan. How about you? Have you developed a plan yet? If not, maybe after you read the topic tomorrow, you will.

More Mentoring Options Now Available

As you know, I take on mentoring students. I don't do so specifically to make money, but to focus my knowledge-base on the student's process, work, overcoming difficulties, etc. That said,

I have to charge a fee or my offering would have no perceived value, and frankly, my students would have no skin in the game.

Naturally, if you're my mentoring student, I can share more with you because I can tailor what I know to suit your work. If learning the craft of writing and/or the business side is important to you, I urge you to sign up with a mentor, even if it isn't me. (And of course, I speak from experience. I've been fortunate enough to have three great writing mentors.)

As a direct result of all that I've learned recently, I've decided to open a few new levels of mentoring. So here are the levels:

Level A — This is completely focused on You and your writing. The mentoring consists of literally whatever You need to jump-start your writing overall.

Some possible areas include abstracts, like help overcoming the critical voice, prioritizing and/or scheduling your writing, or adjusting your attitude toward your own work. Other areas are more concrete: from writing sentences and scenes to pacing to publishing, cover design, blurb writing and so on. Whatever You need.

This also includes licensing (and convincing you it's worth your time and effort to do this Right Now). Both the instruction and brainstorming are tailored to your specific IP. We'll define what IP actually is with regard to licensing, what to include in your inventory, and possible ways to market it.

I have one student enrolled in this program at the moment. I could take on one more, and possibly two. Email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com if you're interested. The fee is \$150 per month, paid in advance on a month by month basis.

Level B1 — No abstracts, so you need to have cleared out most of the myths already, though we'll deal quickly with any dregs that pop up.

This is focused on one or more specific aspects of your process, especially as they go to structure and actual writing. For just a few examples, sentence (or fragment) structure and use, paragraph structure, scene (and/or chapter) structure, and pacing to suit the scene. To that end, I'll review your WIP if you have one. I can also give you specific assignments (and check them). Whatever you need.

This level includes licensing tailored to your IP (and convincing you it's worth your time and effort to do this Right Now). As before, both the instruction and brainstorming are tailored to your specific IP. We'll define what IP actually is with regard to licensing, what to include in your inventory, and possible ways to market it.

I could probably take on up to three students at this level. The fee is \$120 per month, paid in advance on a month by month basis. I expect this one and the next two to fill fairly quickly, so email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com if you're interested.

Level B2 — *Like B1, this is focused on a specific aspect of your process*, especially as it goes to structure and actual writing.

No abstracts, and we'll talk only peripherally about licensing. Our focus here is on you creating new IP. To that end, I'll review your WIP if you have one. I can also give you specific assignments. Whatever you need.

I could probably take on up to five students at this level. The fee is only \$75 per month, paid in advance on a month by month basis. Again, I expect this one to fill fairly quickly, so email me if you're interested.

Level C — *This is licensing-only*, tailored specifically to your IP. If you have a pretty good handle on your writing process, etc. this is a lower-cost alternative and the one you want.

We'll begin by working on your inventory, especially as to a definition of what IP actually is with regard to licensing and what to include.

Because the instruction and brainstorming are tailored to your specific IP, this will be much more in-depth than anything I can post in the Journal.

I think I can take on up to five students for this one, but it has to be first-come, first-served. The fee is only \$50 per month, paid in advance on a month by month basis. Again, email me if you're interested.

Of course, I have my own company to work on and my own writing to do. (grin) So I reserve the right to lower the number of available student slots per level if necessary.

Rolled out at 3:30.

I wrote the topic, then a topic for tomorrow, then took a long break for breakfast and a little business talk. Later in the day, I wrote.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Via The Passive Voice, see "Why, After 12 Books, I'm Self-Publishing" at <https://pjmedia.com/rogersimon/why-after-12-books-im-self-publishing-the-goat/>.

See "Mark Twain Before the House Judiciary Committee" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/mark-twain-before-the-house-judiciary-committee/>.

See "Discovering Family Secrets via DNA Testing" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/discovering-family-secrets-via-dna-testing/>.

See TPG's take on "Three Years of Misery Inside Google..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/three-years-of-misery-inside-google-the-happiest-company-in-tech/>.

See "Story Ideas" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/story-ideas/>.

See "Two New Guests at the Master Business Class" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/two-new-guests-at-the-master-business-class/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Scars" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/12/free-fiction-monday-scars-2/>.

See "Defeating the Bad Guy" at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2019/08/defeating-bad-guy.html>. This is from the Things That Shouldn't Really Have to Be Said department.

Fiction Words: 3191

Nonfiction Words: 1520 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 4711

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583

Total fiction words for the month..... 7583

Total fiction words for the year..... 366320

Total nonfiction words for the month... 14070

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 232140

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 598460

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 1

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 194

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Pro Writers](#)

[Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Daily Journal, Wednesday, August 14

[August 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * As it turns out
- * Change One to the Basic Plan
- * Topic: Licensing Intellectual Property
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

As it turns out, someone gave Ryan Pelton (The Prolific Writer) my name as someone he might want to interview as a prolific writer. Who knew? (grin)

In part, Ryan wrote, "I think your lessons on writing would be super helpful to our community. Would you be up for coming on the show some time?"

Of course, I said, "Sure." (grin) Kind of exciting.

So here are a few links about Ryan and his stuff:

The Prolific Writer Website: <https://theprolificwriter.net/>

The Prolific Writer Podcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-prolific-writer/id1185387038?mt=2>

On Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ryanjpelton>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/writerprolific/>

Change One to the Basic Plan

In yesterday's Journal I posted a segment titled "More Mentoring Options Now Available."

I priced two of the options wrong. The corrected pricing for all levels is as follows:

Level A is \$150 per month.

This includes abstracts (overcoming fears, scheduling, etc.), personalized instruction on specific writing techniques and manuscript review, plus IP inventory and personalized licensing instruction. Whatever you need.

Level B1 is \$90 per month.

No abstracts. This includes personalized instruction on specific writing techniques and manuscript review, plus IP inventory and personalized licensing instruction.

Level B2 is \$50 per month. No abstracts, no licensing instruction. This includes only personalized instruction on specific writing techniques and manuscript review.

Level C is \$50 per month. This includes only personalized help with your IP inventory and personalized licensing and marketing instruction.

I'll be posting this same offer to a broader audience on Tuesday, August 20. For any readers of this Journal who want to take advantage of these mentoring opportunities, I advise you to jump in soon.

Topic: Licensing Intellectual Property

Show of hands... how many of you have IP that you could license right now if you wanted to?

Wrong.

Every one of you do.

And I'm not talking about lightning striking as some Hollywood producer knocks on your door. I'm talking about things that are completely within your control.

Let me say that again. I'm talking about current licensing opportunities that are *completely within your control*.

And it isn't always the book comes first, then you wait to be overwhelmed by a stampede of licensees begging to sell your IP in other ways.

My apology to whomever dreamed up that ridiculous line, "Good things come to those who wait." But no, generally they don't. Good things come to those who are willing to get off their duff and go looking for good things.

It doesn't matter how many book sales you have. It doesn't matter even whether you've already written the book.

All that matters is that you have IP and you're willing to allow others to use it in all sorts of ways in exchange for a percentage of their sales.

If you've dreamed up one character, one interesting setting or one title, you have IP to license. Again, even if it isn't in a story yet. Even if the story hasn't been written or published yet.

If you have one unique prop that would lend itself to (or already is) a line of clothing (*Karen, I'm looking at you*), you have licensable IP. (*Personal note: TWC is a slap-your-forehead natural fit for this.*)

For that matter, I'm also seeing a really unique logo that would be a HUGE seller on t-shirts, sweat shirts, hoodies, etc. You could even license the TWP world to other writers who want to write in it. And that's only three ideas in about as many minutes. Email me.

If you have a larger-than life but affable character whom people like or WOULD like (*Gary V. and Robert S., I'm looking at you now*), you have licensable IP.

You can even license your own image or a caricature of it. Say you look good sitting in a sportscar, smiling at the camera, your elbow propped on the driver's side window well. The caption could read "There's a New Duke in town." Or just "The New Duke." (*You know who you are, right?*)

And yes, I could go on.

But the thing is, so can you.

Do you write "only" poetry? Or only haiku or senryu? Perfect for t-shirts or sweat shirts or calendars or stationery or various types of greeting cards. You could change the world, one person at a time. And make money doing it.

The possibilities really are endless, folks. The one thing those possibilities have in common is that 99% of them are within your control. Right. Now.

As ol' Wes Crowley might say, "Dreamin' is good. But if you want it, sooner or later you gotta saddle up and go after it."

*

I wrote the above topic in about ten minutes. Think of how many ideas you could come up with for your own IP in a half-hour. Give yourself that time. Then saddle up and go after it.

Rolled out way late at 4:30, which makes me kind'a glad I wrote the topic above yesterday. That being done will help get my day back on track.

I also modified a blog post for the big blog and came up with a few new ideas for topics for this one.

A thoroughly enjoyable writing day today. A lot of cycling and a lot of minuscule, in-the-POV-character's-head psychological stuff. Which was a great deal of fun because the POV character is an assassin.

I also wrote a short story (as part of the novel) titled "Empirita Sanchez de Uvalde." It's a love story, sort of. You'd have to be there.

When I transition HarveyStanbrough.com all the way over to being an author site, I'm thinking of reinstating the Free Short Story of the Week feature. Then every now and then I'll also post an

interview with a character, another event that happened in an important setting in one of my novels and so on.

I'd love to hear your thoughts on this. If you have an author site, what do you offer on it to keep readers returning? Please share. If you're a reader, and especially if you're a fan of my work, what would you like to see?

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Editor's Toolkit" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/editors-toolkit/>. This is not an endorsement of the product (I don't and won't use it personally) but I enjoyed PG's extensive take. I also don't use or recommend Grammarly as even their own national advertisement displays their lack of knowledge re... (wait for it) grammar.

See "Why do readers remember?" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/why-do-readers-remember/>.

Fiction Words: 1374

Nonfiction Words: 1080 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 2454

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... 8957

Total fiction words for the month..... 7583
Total fiction words for the year..... 366320
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15150
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 233220
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 600914

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ryan Pelton](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [The Prolific Writer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, August 15](#)

[August 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * A Note on Dreams and Goals
- * Topic: Writing Setting and Scene Descriptions
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“One advantage of being prolific is it reduces the importance of any one book.” Isaac Asimov

Invaluable, that. Write it, publish it, write the next one. It's all practice, and practice makes better.

“Quantity and quality aren't enemies.” Ryan J. Pelton

A Note on Dreams and Goals

Dreams are just that. Dreams. They're things you would like to achieve or attain that are completely out of your control.

Goals are similar, but they are completely WITHIN your control. Which goals you set and whether you reach them is completely up to you.

But those roads converge. Setting and pursuing the right goals can greatly enhance the chance of achieving or attaining your dreams.

Just food for thought. Much more on this in a topic tomorrow.

Other future topics include the basic tenets of cover design, how (and why) to set up your own publishing entity, and more. But for today...

Topic: Writing Setting and Scene Descriptions

A couple of days ago, I had an excellent comment and question on my blog over at the big site.

Diedre wrote in part, “I've been warned about being too descriptive. Your thoughts?”

Here's my updated and expanded response:

Each reader determines what is “too much” (or “too little”) description, though they don’t notice the latter. They just close the book. If they have a thought at all about why they stopped reading, they might utter that the story is “too thin.”

I’ve had readers say I add too much description. But they also say the action pulls them forward through the book anyway.

I’ve had many more readers not mention description specifically, but say they “feel like I’m right there with the character.” Which of course is a high compliment and goes to the POV character’s description of the setting and the events in the scene. That’s the only way to pull the reader into the scene with the POV character.

Here’s your rule of thumb, but really it’s more of a hard, fast rule:

If the description is coming from the writer, it’s too much. Period. Never describe a setting or scene yourself (even through the thinly veiled writer as a “narrator”).

Every Single Word of setting or scene description should be filtered through the POV character’s physical (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) and emotional (dread, fear, joy, etc.) senses.

If it is, then it CAN’T be too much because you’re only conveying what the POV character himself sees, hears, tastes, feels etc., and remember, he, not you, are the one who’s in the scene, living the story. Also, every description of setting or scene should contain the POV character’s OPINION of the setting.

For example, say the smell of pipe smoke lingers in a setting, say the library in a mansion.

If one POV character walks into that library, he might write, “I was practically overwhelmed by the stench of smoke.” (“Stench” is an opinion.) That POV character obviously doesn’t care for pipe smoke, or maybe any kind of tobacco smoke, and we can tell through his opinion. Maybe that’s the end of it, or maybe the “stench” also evoked a strong and unpleasant memory. [Take your time.](#) Go where the character leads you.

Another POV character who walks into the same library might write, “The faint aroma of cherry pipe smoke reminded me of my grandfather.” For that POV character, the smell obviously evoked a fond (or maybe not fond) memory.

Or to another POV character, “The scent of pipe smoke seemed to fill the air. I was surprised there weren’t clouds of the stuff.” This is more of a vague non-opinion. If it’s followed by something like, “I smiled. It made me think maybe my grandma was in the next room over baking cookies” maybe it’s a fond memory. Or maybe it’s followed by something like, “Wow. The smell alone cause me to taste the stink of alcohol and feel my father’s belt across my back.”

(As a side note, can you “taste” the “stink of alcohol”? Yes. Taste and smell are that closely related.)

BTW, any of those could have appeared in exactly the same story. Everything depends on the POV character and his/her opinions of the setting. And of course, those descriptions also tell the reader something about the POV character.

And there's more. Maybe the lights are dim (sight). (To one POV the room is "dark" or "eerie." To another, the lighting is "soft" or "gentle," both opinions.)

Maybe seeing (sight) a row of old LP record albums on one shelf provides a clue but also transports the reader to another place in time (sound). Be sure to focus down to important details; but the POV character will do that if you take your time and let him.

As a final note, I recommend working all five physical senses (again, through the POV character) into every major scene, preferably near the beginning.

How warm (or cold) is the library? What's the POV character's opinion of that? How well (or not well) lighted is it (and the opinion)? Are there any sounds (and opinion)? Smells and tastes (or memories of smells and tastes, and the opinion)? Emotional senses, as described above?

This is how you ground the reader in the scene and keep him grounded and "with the character" in the story.

Rolled out way early before 1 a.m. I'll get some writing done on the WIP this morning, then later in the day I get to register my new pickup. (grin)

Got the pickup registered, then decided to take the rest of the day to play.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Expect Success" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/14/business-musings-expect-success/>. Please Read This at least twice. This is excellent, and you need it.

See "5 Advantages for Being a Prolific Creator" at <https://medium.com/the-prolific-writer/5-advantages-for-being-a-prolific-creator-4c679919341b>.

See "Key Types of Conflict: Which One Best Fits Your Story?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/key-types-of-conflict-which-one-best-fits-your-story.html>.

See "Book Promotion: Do This, Not That – August 2019" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/08/book-promotion-do-this-not-that-august-2019/>.

See "Going A Bit Buggy" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/going-a-bit-buggy/>.

Fiction Words: 1952 (also the year I was born... sigh)
Nonfiction Words: 970 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 2922

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909

Total fiction words for the month..... 10909
Total fiction words for the year..... 369646
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 234190
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 603836

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Prolific Writer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, August 16](#)

[August 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Cows Pulling Pranks
- * Topic: On Dreams and Goals
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Cows Pulling Pranks

Where I live just outside St. David Arizona (north of Tombstone) we abut a rancher's land. The fence runs along the south (long) side of the Hovel, about a foot away.

Clumps of straw-colored grass and small, 10- to 15-foot mesquite trees populate the landscape under an almost-full moon. A few pre-teen to teenage clouds are scattered about in clumps as if waiting for something to happen.

Inside the Hovel, my desk faces a window. (I keep the window covered, but it's there.) The door is about six feet away on my right.

A little before 3 a.m., I was at my desk writing the Journal and checking online sources when I thought I heard quiet snickering.

Then, a loud, "Mooo!" A shuffled hoof, more quiet snickering.

I frowned, went back to my typing.

Again, louder, "Moooo0!"

I said, "Crap," annoyed at the interruption. I got up, went to the door, swung it open and stepped out.

And witnessed a small stampede as several cows, eyes wide, turned south and hustled away from the fence.

My only gratification came a moment later when one stumbled somewhere in the mesquite. She uttered a quiet, "Oof," then got up and resumed running.

At least they didn't leave a burning paper bag on my stoop.

Topic: On Dreams and Goals

There's an old truism: You can't win the lottery if you don't buy a ticket.

Of course, winning the lottery is a dream. It's something that is not within your control. It depends on chance or luck. Well, and perhaps preparation.

And that's where the truism comes in. All you can do to help the dream along is put yourself in the best possible position to win by setting goals, which means doing things that ARE within your control. In the case of the lottery, that means buying a ticket.

Writing is much the same.

Making it onto a bestseller list is a dream. Selling a million copies of your novel is also a dream. Even being "discovered" is a dream.

Goals are things you do help you prepare, to give yourself a sense of achievement and to help improve your chances of attaining your dreams.

The smart writer sets goals on three fronts:

- * Learning goals—to learn more about the craft of writing,
- * Production goals—writing more stories and novels, and
- * Learning goals again—this time about the business of writing.

Here's why:

- * The more you learn about the craft, the better your stories and novels become,
- * The more you write and release (publish), the more your name gets out there and enhances your shot at discoverability (your chance of being discovered by readers), and
- * The more you learn about the business of writing, the more you open yourself to possibilities you never knew existed (and the closer you come to being able to quit your day job and focus on your writing).

There's nothing wrong with having dreams. There's also nothing wrong with dreaming big.

But as my paternal grandmother used to say, "Praying is good, but you've got to put feet in your prayers."

In other words, you have to strive toward what you want. If you want the universe to take you seriously, you have to have skin in the game.

Lightning strikes in this business, but most of the time it doesn't strike all at once.

It flicks along here and there, always seeking the high points, the places that are easier to hit and illuminate. With every passing day, I expect success. With every passing day, I also work toward it.

If you want literary lightning to strike you, you have to make yourself available. If you want to win the lottery, y'gotta buy a ticket.

Rolled out a little before 2. The plan is to write early, then take my new pickup out for a spin. I can always call it research, right?

I also will read a poetry collection (for the third time) by a Formalist poet whom I'd thought of as a contemporary—a thought that was shattered when he sent his collection (and a request for a blurb) to "Mr. Stanbrough." Sigh. Sometimes I don't realize how really old I am. (grin)

But the guy's a good poet. I look forward to reading his work a final time and writing a blurb for him, something I very rarely do. I will withhold criticism.

I've re-discovered Steven Pressfield's site. I don't agree with much of his writing process (mired in the myths), but he still writes some excellent blog posts. I shared a few of them below.

You might want to sign up for Pressfield's Writer Wednesdays blog. Just don't be pulled into the myths.

Well, fiction just isn't going to happen for me today. No worries at all. Just got too busy with the truck. It's a guy thing. (grin)

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Write the Book You Can't Write" at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/05/write-the-book-you-cant-write/>.

See "Pulp Heroes" at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/06/pulp-heroes/>. Good, insightful stuff.

See "Write What You Don't Know" at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/05/write-what-you-dont-know/> and "Write What You Don't Know, Part Two" at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/05/write-what-you-dont-know-part-two/>.

See "George Carlin on the Danger of Visible Progress" at <https://theprolificwriter.net/blog-podcast/2019/george-carlin-on-the-danger-of-visible-progress>.

See "The One Lost – It's A Mystery" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/the-one-lost-its-a-mystery/>.

For fun, see "Mark Twain on Photographs" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/mark-twain-on-photographs/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 900 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 900

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583

Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957

Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909

Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 10909

Total fiction words for the year..... 369646

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17020

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 235090
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 604736

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Steven Pressfield](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [The Prolific Writer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, August 17](#)

[August 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * The boys are back in town
- * Topic: Lock Down Your (Possible) URLs
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

The boys are back in town, so tomorrow's post probably will be short. (Today I at least have a topic for you.)

My son and eldest grandson drove in late last night. I'll spend most of today visiting with them.

Then this afternoon, one of my friends will drop by. He'll spend the night too, and then he and I are going on a photographing (research) trip for about half the day on Sunday.

Topic: Lock Down Your (Possible) URLs

With all my talk recently about IP, I haven't said much (or anything) about URLs.

Note: You can purchase URLs from a number of different registrars. Just key "where can I buy a URL" into a search engine.

URLs are website addresses, like harveystanbrough.com (for example). I also own several other URLs, including hestanbrough.com for this Journal and hstanbrough.com because it's my name. Always a good idea to lock down the major (".com") URLs for your author name even if you don't have a website yet.

But it's also a good idea to lock down URLs for your major IPs, or what you believe might be major IPs. Meaning IP in which you see potential.

To that end, I also own wescrowley.com, blackwellops.com, cantinatales.com, gervasioarrancado.com and charlietask.com.

Why?

Because I see potential in each of those. I might never do anything with them, but just in case, I own them. They cost less than \$1 per month. To renew, they're slightly over \$1 per month. Not a lot to pay to potentially make millions.

And I urge you to buy any URLs that are important to you sooner rather than later.

For example, say a month or a year or five years from now I come up with a blockbuster idea for licensing a product tied to Blackwell Ops.

I don't want anyone else to own the URL for their own devious purposes, so say I wait and go looking for blackwellops.com at that point.

But I find that someone else already owns the URL. And it's for sale (the only reason they bought it). And if I want it, it will cost me a few thousand dollars (instead of \$9.06).

Better that I buy it now for \$9.06 for the first year and then renew it each year, don't you think?

Rolled out early at 1:30, mostly because I want to put some time in the novel before the normal day begins. I didn't write a lot, but I added some. I'll more than likely write a lot more tomorrow.

Talk with you again then.

Of Interest

See "From the Philippines, Not With Love..." at <https://www.victoriastrauss.com/2019/08/16/from-the-philippines-not-with-love-a-plague-of-publishing-and-marketing-scams-2/>. I could add a few more to her list.

See "Tread Lightly on Technology" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/tread-lightly-on-technology/>.

See "The Villain Wants the McGuffin" at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/05/the-villain-wants-the-mcguffin/>.

See "Roundup of Writing and Publishing Resources" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/writing-publishing-resources/>. I posted this mostly for the "Writing Genre Fiction" section.

Fiction Words: 1021

Nonfiction Words: 490 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1511

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583

Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957

Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909

Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930

Total fiction words for the month..... 11930

Total fiction words for the year..... 370667

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17510

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 235580

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 606247

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#),

[Topic](#), [Victoria Strauss](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, August 18](#)

[August 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Tomorrow I'll write
- * Topic: (Sigh) WITD One More Time
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Tomorrow I'll write again. Today I'll be off playing with my buddy for about half the day.

I planned to spend some time with my novel this morning, but I ran across a comment on the PWW blog from yesterday. Rather than respond in full to the comment there, I decided to give my response a fuller, maybe more attentive and receptive readership here. So....

Topic: (Sigh) WITD One More Time

In part, the commenter I mentioned above wrote, "I would never totally trust my characters, because then they're not going to know things I don't know."

This is a really moot point, as in, So what?

But there's also a bottom line here: The fact is, what you would never, you would never. So there you go.

The commenter and I are simply very different writers. I don't mind, except that I feel bad that so many other writers are clinging to and perpetuating the myths we were all taught by non-writers.

But here's another bottom line for everyone: If you believe your status quo works for you, by all means stick with it.

Change is often scary, and (in my opinion) always good.

A few related notes:

I don't care for generalizations. Even widespread "probablys," are almost always inaccurate.

The commenter wrote, in part, about a fictional character who happened to be named Harvey,

"If Harvey doesn't know how to do anything but make phone calls on his phone, then he's probably unaware (emphasis added) that most young people never use their phones to actually make phone calls. Does that mean his characters never text? Or does someone point out to Harvey (just using him as an example) that phones also take pictures and send texts?"

In actuality, Harvey (who indeed uses his phone only to make phone calls) is *very* aware that many young people (I won't say "most" because I haven't polled them all) use theirs for everything *but* making phone calls.

Harvey knows all about texting, the phone as camera, the flashlight app, and that he can access and interact with Facebook, email and about a hundred other apps on his phone. He doesn't use his phone for any of that only because he prefers approaching those functions via a laptop where the keyboard is easier to use.

That being said (to go to the specific example the commenter used earlier), Harvey probably would not go into a dark house to investigate something without carrying at least a penlight with

him so he could cover part of the beam with his finger and thereby maintain the secrecy of his visit.

He definitely would not risk the “clunk” that would result from opening the door of his microwave oven only to access a light source that’s limited and shines in only one direction.

And he would not use the light on his phone because it goes everywhere, is blindingly bright, and is difficult to partially mask. (A few times, in a pinch, Harvey has used the flashlight on his phone.)

That being said, Harvey very seldom sends text messages with his phone either. Actually, his characters occasionally do. But here’s the thing: Neither a writer nor a character has to know every aspect of how texting works for the writer to write,

John’s eyes went wide as he took in the scene. The small, smoldering body in the corner smelled of something more than the sweetly sick stench of charred human meat. He frowned. Sage? Thyme? He whipped out his phone. A moment later, he’d sent a text: *Darla, the chef killed the jockey. And cooked him! I’ll explain tonight over supper. J*

Nor would I personally go “techy” and “exact” (regardless of critique-group input) to make the text message appear “correct” by showing it thus:

D, OMG! IK FAF C K’d J. & cookd him! More L8r. (“Oh my god, I know for a fact the chef killed the jockey. And cooked him! More later.”)

Regardless of how you choose to write (or “compile”) a novel, the fact remains that if you (or any member of any critique group or anyone else) can “think up” (conscious mind) what your characters should do next, so can (and will) the reader.

When I’m reading a book and I think I can tell what’s going to happen next, I continue to read. But when what I THINK is going to happen next DOES happen next (two or three times), I close the book and find something else to read.

There are two types of novelists: I call them “gods” and “recorders.”

Gods see their books as “important.” They view the story’s characters and events from a control tower. From there, they dictate every situation that arises and every word that’s spoken. Of course, predetermination is the rule.

That’s fine. Doesn’t bother me at all, other than the wonderful fun those writers are missing. Which is why I bother to publish this and other topics in the Daily Journal at all. But to each his or her own.

The other kind of writer is the Recorder. That would be me. Once upon a time, I too donned my authorial robes and dictated from my own tower. But I climbed down (trembling but determined to try a new way) about 6 years ago.

Now I roll off the parapet into the trenches of my story and run through it WITH the characters. I try to keep up, trust that the characters know where they're going and what they're doing and saying in the story that they, not I, are living.

I record what they say and do as they encounter the various situations. The unknown is frightening, but it's also exhilarating. I don't have a clue, scene to scene, what the characters will come up with next or what twists the story might take.

But then, neither do my readers.

I understand completely that other writers might hear what I, a relative unknown, am saying and decide it might not be valid, especially when they're clinging to safety nets of how they believe things have always been done. That's fine. I don't expect them to trust me.

I only recommend (suggest, urge) that they try, really try, WITD for themselves.

I have never known a writer to give writing into the dark an honest try and then go back to outlining, writing by committee and rewriting. Not once.

That being said, most (as in 999 out of 1000) can't bring themselves to let go. But honestly, that's fine with me. After all, I have no vested interest in anyone else's stories or characters.

I simply share what I know. I offer up most of it free of charge and with no strings attached. There is no down side. The up side is the chance to advance in the craft.

But whether others choose to try has to be up to them.

Rolled out around 2:30, then allowed myself to get wrapped around the wheel above. As Ol' Wes says, "Things don't always work out the way you expect. That's why they make tomorrows." (grin)

Talk with you again when tomorrow rolls around.

Of Interest

See "Vanity Publishing" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/vanity-publishing/>. This is an important post.

See "A Powerhouse Secret for Point of View" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/a-powerhouse-secret-for-point-of-view.html>. *Note: Due to lack of time, I did not vet this post, but JS Bell often has good advice. Just beware any myths that might pop up. I'll read the article later.*

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 1240 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 1240

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 11930
Total fiction words for the year..... 370667
Total nonfiction words for the month... 18750
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 236820
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 607487

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Monday, August 19](#)

[August 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Slow start today
- * Topic: Some Basic Tenets of Cover Design
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Slow start today as I'm still worn out from the wonderful trek Dan and I had around southeast Arizona yesterday. Weird. We didn't do a lot. Mostly we were driving, stopping now and then to take photos. But I could easily spend today doing nothing at all.

I had hoped to find some new cover-pics, but no luck there. However, I did find a whole town full of cover-pic opportunities (Douglas, Arizona). I will revisit that town before too long, probably in a day trip. Or two. Or three.

I'll research the town online first (saves gasoline) to identify places I want to visit. Then, to both save weekdays for writing and to include Mona in the trip(s) south (if she wants to go) I'll plan my photo trips for the weekends.

Topic: Some Basic Tenets of Cover Design

I find cover design another entertaining creative outlet. It's fun, and designing a great cover isn't all that difficult. (See my own covers at HarveyStanbrough.com.)

But even if you know you will never design your own covers, this stuff is good to know. Not all alleged cover designers know it all either. And most of them don't know your story, gener, etc.

First and foremost, use a background (usually a cover photo is a good idea) that reflects the sense or tone or theme of the genre.

Covers for various genres change every few years, so my best advice re the background or "base" of your cover is to bring up a list of Amazon (or other) bestsellers and study the covers. Study the background (often a photo), the fonts and font sizes, and so on.

Are the colors of the covers dark in general? Bright in general? If they're dark, is there a light source (focal point to draw the eye, like the end of a tunnel, etc.) on most of them? Is the light source centered or slightly off-centered?

Are there people (or a person) on the covers or not?

If your cover features a human from a side or three-quarter view, it's better to have the human off-centered toward the spine of the book and facing the open side of the book. If the character is gesturing, it's a good idea to have the character gesturing toward the open side of the book. (A subliminal invitation to open the book.)

Are the covers "busy" with a lot of elements or not too busy? (Some more "cutesy" genres have busy covers. Most novels in most genres do not.)

You aren't studying the covers because they're bestsellers. You're studying them because they were enticing enough to cause enough readers to buy the books that they became bestsellers.

Study the fonts too.

Are the fonts “stressed” in any way? Italicized? Outlined (even very faintly to make them “pop” off the cover)? Serif or sans-serif? What is the color of the font in relation to the cover photo?

In general, the fonts should be plain and clear to read even in thumbnail size. Being clear to read goes to both a clean font and a large font size.

Tip 1: Most often, the font will reflect a color that’s found elsewhere in the cover.

Tip 2: If you decide to go ALL CAPS with your title or author name, it’s usually a good idea to put two spaces instead of one between the capitalized words. (If the resulting space appears too wide, decrease the font size of the spaces while leaving the font size of the letters the same. Yes, you can do that.)

Study the title compared with the author name. Usually (not always) the author name will be in a slightly smaller font but the outer edges will be aligned with the outer edges of the title (or vice versa).

It’s a good idea to make the title and author name the same font and the same font style (all caps, small caps, or regular capitalization).

While you’re there, study the book description and the cover blurbs. The better ones are active, written in present tense with strong action verbs. They hint at the theme of the book but divulge nothing. They offer one or no plot points. (This happened, then this happened, then this happened... plot points make for weak and boring blurbs.)

The first thing the prospective reader sees is your cover and the title. The second, most often, is the blurb or blurbs. If all of that is enticing, the third is the author name. Then they’ll “see inside” or, if it’s a physical book, crack it open and read a few paragraphs.

Writing the story to the best of your ability is the most important thing. But secondary to that, if you want your book to attract readers, you have to put a good cover on it.

Rolled out at 3 this morning. Today I have some catching up to do with “Of Interest.” I’m anxious to get back to writing my novel, but I’ll probably put that off until tomorrow. If I do write any fiction later today, I’ll include in in tomorrow’s count.

I know I can’t get everything done at once, so I’m consciously taking my time and prioritizing what I need to do today. By tomorrow, barring any unforeseen occurrences, I should be back to normal.

I started working my way through my to-do list, reading and then posting articles for “Of Interest.” Then I wrote the stuff above.

The rest of the day I’m going to work on my camera to get it up to speed for taking high-quality cover pics. I might also drive to the store, things like that.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

Need a story prompt? See “Found: A Stash of Mystical Charms and Amulets in Pompeii” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/found-pompeii-magic-treasure>.

See “Is a ‘Personal Relationship’ with Authors What Readers Want?” at <https://annerallen.com/2019/08/what-readers-want/>. What a great post! I’ve never believed in bombarding readers with anything but good stories.

See also “Marketing has changed...” at <https://www.thegeniusworks.com/2019/04/marketing-has-changed-no-more-spam-no-more-hassle-no-more-shame-seth-godin-explains-what-marketing-is-again/>.

See “How to Create Characters” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/how-to-create-characters/>.

See “How to Sell eBooks at Cons and Book Festivals” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2019/04/07/how-to-sell-ebooks-at-cons-and-book-festivals/>.

See “The Four Bios Every Author Needs” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2018/10/01/the-four-bios-every-author-needs/>.

See “Book Promotion as a Public Service” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/08/book-promotion-as-a-public-service/>.

From Karen Riggs, “14 Neil Gaiman Quotes for Writers and About Writing” at <https://www.writersdigest.com/online-editor/neil-gaiman-quotes-for-writers-and-about-writing>.

See “Why You Need to Make a ‘When I Die’ File—Before It’s Too Late” at <https://time.com/5640494/why-you-need-to-make-a-when-i-die-file-before-its-too-late/>. This was from Kris’s latest Patreon post, but I don’t think she’d mind me sharing it.

If you’re a creative nonfiction type, see “15 Paying Creative Nonfiction Markets Now Seeking Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/15-paying-creative-nonfiction-markets-now-seeking-submissions/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 1120 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1120

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583

Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 11930
Total fiction words for the year..... 370667
Total nonfiction words for the month... 19870
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 237940
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 608607

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Anne R. Allen](#), [Atlas Obscura](#), [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Tuesday, August 20](#)

[August 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Yesterday, I mentioned
- * Topic: Cover Design, Part II
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Yesterday, I mentioned that I'll be returning to Douglas, Arizona to take cover photos, meaning pro-level photos specifically intended for use as book covers (and other IP things) vs. snapshots.

I have hundreds of my own photos already, but most of them are snapshots. That was the intention at the time, and as a result few of them are appropriate for use as covers.

In a way I'm glad, because going through them would be a monumental task, and frankly I'm not going to do it. I'll organize the ones I take in the future into various folders so I can find them more easily.

Anyway, all of that started me thinking more about the requirements of good cover design. So I thought I'd talk about that in a topic today. Where to get what you need, things like that.

Topic: Cover Design, Part II

If you would never create your own covers, you can skip this post. But if you're the adventurous, learning type who wants full control over your work, keep reading.

To create your own covers, you need cover art. I use photos for most of my covers, and a lot of the time, I use cover art (photos) that I get from online royalty-free stock photo agencies.

My favorite at the moment is Unsplash at <https://unsplash.com/>. Their photos are not only royalty free, but free to use. They only request you credit the photographer, which of course is only right.

Other free sites are Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com/>), Pexels (<https://www.pexels.com/>), and StockSnap.io (<https://stocksnap.io/>), which is a subsidiary of Shutterstock (see below). Any Google search will reveal many others.

Of the several paid stock photo agencies (Dreamstime, CanStock, BigStock, Shutterstock, and many others) my favorite is Deposit Photo at <https://depositphotos.com/>. If you work it right, you can download cover art from the pay sites for as little as \$1 per photo. Deposit Photo currently has a deal to get 100 royalty-free photos for \$100 and you can download them as you need them any time over the next year.

Deposit Photo has a much larger range of photos than Unsplash. It's even larger than some of the other paid sites, at least in the main categories I searched (dark mystery, western silhouette, crime, and so on).

Stock photo sites can deliver excellent images on which to base your cover designs.

But there's a problem with royalty-free stock photos no matter where you get them: If you ever decide you want to put that cover on t-shirts or posters and sell it that way too, you can't do it. You either have to go back to the artist and obtain extended licensing, or you have to license the art for all commercial purposes (\$200-\$300 or more) so you can sell other products bearing the art legally.

In many cases, you can also approach the photographer and ask him or her to create original photos for your commercial use (again, \$200-\$300 is realistic). I might do that with some of my Blackwell Ops products in the future.

But to me, it's much less hassle and definitely less expensive to use my own photos for my cover art and other uses.

I have a pro-level Sony A65 DSLR that costs about as much as one piece of original art would cost if licensed from the artist or photographer, and I know how to use it.

My camera is set, too, to turn out high-resolution photos (2760 pixels wide x 4000 tall). (If you want pics only to upload to Facebook or some other thing, you can set a lower resolution and your camera or card will hold a lot more photos.)

With my high-resolution photo, using my Serif PagePlus suite, I can create a cover that's 6250 pixels wide by 9375 pixels tall. You can pretty much see it from a low orbit. (grin)

Then I resize the final cover to 2000×3000 pixels for upload to D2D, Smashwords, etc.

But the beauty of it is, the cover is my own. I also have the extended license for the fonts I use, so I can put the cover on anything I want, license it any way I want, and so on. I have complete control.

And that's why I spent much of yesterday getting my camera back up to speed. (grin)

Any questions or suggestions, please visit the site and leave a comment.

Caught up on my sleep last night and rolled out late this morning. I had a kind of episode. Nothing major, but I'm thinking I need more rest. I'll do that today after I file this.

Pretty much first thing this morning, I happened across a photo (by a dear friend) that has long intrigued me. Today it suggested a story title. I haven't written the story, but I have a feeling I might soon.

And I felt moved to create a cover for the story, should it come to pass. I thought I'd share the cover with you. If it inspires you to write a story, have at it. It would be different than the one I'll eventually write anyway. (grin)

I also inched along a bit on the novel but nothing of note to report. I'll get back to it full force soon.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Making Decisions" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/making-decisions/>.

See "The Bloody Benders: America's First Family of Serial Killers" at <https://crimereads.com/the-bloody-benders-americas-first-family-of-serial-killers/>.

See "Lincoln Child and Douglas Preston Are Keeping It Fresh" at <https://crimereads.com/lincoln-child-and-douglas-preston-are-keeping-it-fresh/>.

See "Free Fiction Monday: Standing Up For Grace" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/19/free-fiction-monday-standing-up-for-grace/>.

See "Racing The Clock" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/20/racing-the-clock/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX
Nonfiction Words: 940 (Journal)
Total words for the day: 940

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 11930
Total fiction words for the year..... 370667
Total nonfiction words for the month... 20810
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 238880
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 609547

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Wednesday, August 21](#)

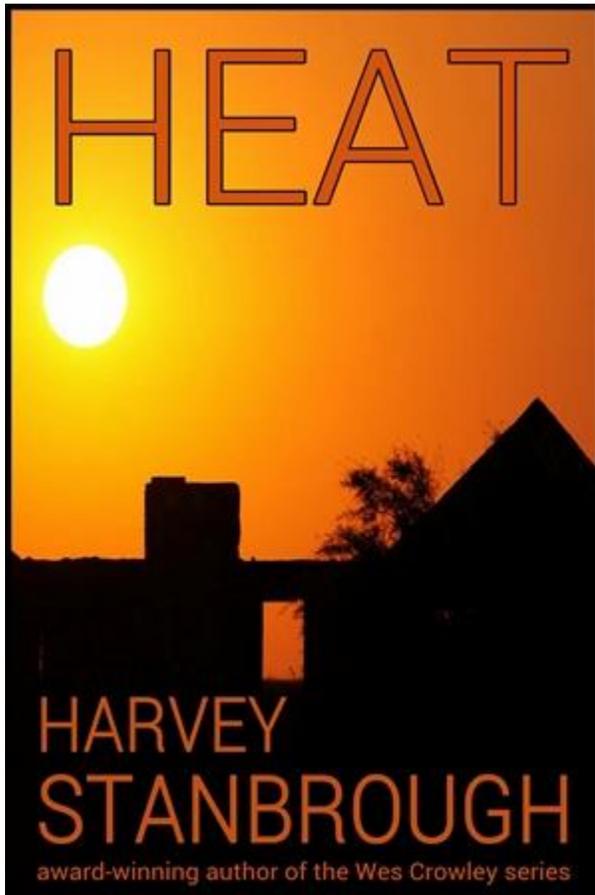
[August 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Not sure
- * Tooting my own horn
- * Topic: Helping Reedsy Out
- * Daily diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Not sure what today will hold. Tomorrow (Thursday) I'll be in Tucson all day for various medical appointments. Just stuff I have to check out. No biggie.

Yesterday, I mentioned a new cover and then forgot to insert it into the post. That's it on the right.



I've gotten into the habit of publishing the Journal early. So I don't forget to post the cover again, I'm going to publish early again today.

I also hope to write fiction today. I'll add the new fiction numbers in tomorrow.

Tooting my own horn a bit, but more about why I write description the way I do.

This morning I received an email from a reader:

“Wow... I really enjoyed Confessions of a Professional Psychopath. What a fantastic job you did weaving that child's story. I knew exactly when and how the rubber band that sent him on his trajectory snapped. The father.... I could smell that guy...

“I've since found and charged my Nook, then loaded it with The Odd Task and Blackwell Ops/Task. It really is a tapestry, one that in this world is hardly considered beyond the fallout media headlines. “Man Found in Rio Grande: Possible Homicide,” spurs little more

contemplation than the new menu at El Patio. Winding back time there was at some point two children who were on very different paths for very solid reasons.

“Thank you for the enjoyable journey!”

That’s why I write description the way I do, invoking all five senses from the POV character: To bring the reader into the scene, into the story. (grin)

As to marketing, I wrote in partial response, that Charlie Task “keeps popping up in my books. He’s in two Blackwell Ops books now (2 and 6) also appears briefly in my magic realism short story collection *Stories from the Cantina*, though in that one he shows only his milder, kinder side.” Then I attached a free copy of the collection as a way of saying thank you.

Topic: Helping Reedsy Out

In today’s “Of Interest” I link to a Reedsy post that contains an infographic. I was annoyed that whoever compiled the meme didn’t include indie (or self) publishing.

For anyone who’s still confused, vanity publishing is NOT the same as self (indie) publishing. Here are the items I would add to a third column in their meme:

VS. Indie Publishing

Advance = None.

Editorial = Writer’s (indie publisher’s) choice. Wise writers use a first-reader and (if needed) a paid copyeditor.

Design = The writer (indie publisher) controls the cover design and interior design of the ebook and paper book. He creates the design or hires someone, but retains control over the appearance of the finished product.

Release = The writer (indie publisher) distributes to over 400 stores and 1200 libraries worldwide, chooses whether to produce a trade paperback and how to distribute it.

Pricing = The writer (indie publisher) sets the price, period, and can change it as new information comes in. Complete autonomy.

Marketing & Publicity = The writer (indie publisher) does all the marketing and publicity. (And here the infographic is wrong. Even in traditional publishing, unless you’re a midlist author or higher, tradpubs won’t spend a dime on any marketing and publicity, launch or otherwise.)

Royalties = The writer (indie publisher) retains 100% of net royalties PLUS all rights for the life of the copyright. (I noticed on the infographic they didn’t mention tradpubs take all rights for the life of the copyright in exchange for whatever they offer the writer.)

Finally, a quote from the Reedsy article: “But with the traditional business model, publishers are incentivized to release quality books and foster long, healthy relationships with authors.”

Wrong. For one thing, traditional publishers take ALL RIGHTS for the life of your copyright in exchange for whatever they offer the author.

For another, once they own that intellectual property (IP) it becomes a valuable asset on their spreadsheet.

The IP valuation (how much the IP could POTENTIALLY earn during the life of the author plus 70 years) can be in the millions of dollars, enhancing the value of the tradpub company by that much.

And understand, that’s simply by virtue of them owning that IP. They don’t even have to publish the book. After all, they own it.

Think, folks. Be smart. Avoid traditional publishing. Avoid vanity publishing scams. Go indie.

Rolled out a little after 4 again. I think I’m working into a more traditional set of hours. I might shift back. At the moment I’m kind of “living into the dark,” letting things unfold as they will.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

To complement my last two topics, see “Evolution of a Cover: ISABELLA MOON” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/evolution-of-a-cover-isabella-moon.html>.

See “Polish or Publish” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/polish-or-publish/>.

Because it contains SOME good information, see “Authors Beware: Scams and Publishing Companies to Avoid” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/scams-and-publishing-companies-to-avoid/>.

See “The Myth Lecture Bundles” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-myth-lecture-bundles/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Nonfiction Words: 860 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 860

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583

Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 11930
Total fiction words for the year..... 370667
Total nonfiction words for the month... 21670
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 239740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 610407

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Thursday, August 22](#)

[August 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I kind of like
- * Daily Diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

I kind of like this new schedule, posting the Journal early and reporting fiction the following day. I don't know that I'll keep it, but I suspect I will.

For one thing it takes the pressure off. I can write fiction at any time of day or night, and I'm not limited by needing to get the Journal out at a particular time.

I had a fairly good day yesterday with a few thousand words (see below), especially after not writing fiction at all for 40 of the last 51 days. Ugh.

We'll see how it works as the days continue to unfold. I already know today will probably be a nonwriting day as I'll be in Tucson all day doing medical stuff.

I prepped much of this Journal entry yesterday. This morning I came out to find items of interest, then post it and get ready to go to Tucson.

I was typing along just fine yesterday at 2:19 when the gods decreed that the power should go out. Because my writing 'puter has practically no battery, I stopped and filled in the numbers below.

And this morning? This morning I rolled out at 3, thinking I might fool myself and get a little fiction writing done. Then I sidetracked myself listening to a few podcasts. So we'll see. If I write fiction today, numbers tomorrow.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: The Decision Tree (Rethinking The Writing Business Part Eight)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/08/21/business-musings-the-decision-tree-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-eight/>.

See "Two Questions for Better Writing Productivity" at <https://theprolificwriter.net/blog-podcast/2019/two-questions-for-better-writing-productivity>.

See "Random Thoughts On Ghostwriting" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/random-thoughts-on-ghostwriting/>.

See "Pulphouse Subscription Drive" at <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/403649867/pulphouse-subscription-drive>.

If you enjoy podcasts, listen to "TPW 105: J.P. Choquette on [Writing] Page Turning Thrillers" at <https://theprolificwriter.net/blog-podcast/2019/tpw-105-jp-choquette-on-page-turning-thrillers>. The interview begins at about 4:10.

Not about writing at all, but see "True Crime Thursday – Elder Fraud..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/true-crime-thursday-elder-fraud-and-a-book-giveaway.html>.

Fiction Words: 2733 (yesterday)

Nonfiction Words: 330 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 3063

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glen Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909

Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... 2733 words. Total words to date..... 14663

Total fiction words for the month..... 14663
Total fiction words for the year..... 373400
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22000
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 240070
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 613470

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Prolific Writer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Daily Journal, Friday, August 23](#)

[August 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Happy much-belated 90th birthday, and welcome
- * Topic: How Long It Takes to Write a Novel
- * Daily Diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

“I don't get writers' block— ...however, I do have lots of bad writing days. [But a] bad writing day is a million times better than a no-writing day.” Stephanie Feldman (short story writer and novelist)

“Taylor Swift says she will be rerecording her early work. If she does this the right way, she will probably destroy the market value of the Big Machine label. This is an artist who knows her power, and is willing to use it.” Kristine Kathryn Rusch on Patreon

Happy much-belated 90th birthday to one of my few literary heroes, Henry Patterson, better known as Jack Higgins. Jack authored at least 70 novels, and there has never been a better suspense/thriller writer. Ever. My go-to guy when I want to study how it's done.

Welcome to another old friend, Ralph R, who just joined us at the Journal. Welcome aboard, Ralph.

Topic: How Long It Takes to Write a Novel

Recently a friend and I chatted briefly about how long it takes to write a quality novel, and why.

There are two camps: those who believe taking a long time to write a novel results in a better novel and those who admit to understanding basic math.

It takes about 60 hours to write a 60,000 word novel. That's about an hour per 1000 words (17 words per minute). That includes time for spot research and for revision, especially if you do the latter in the creative voice as you go. (I call this cycling.)

On the other hand, in-depth researching, outlining, rewriting, critique workshopping and all the rest is nonwriting time, even if a writer enjoys that sort of process. This is a fact, not an opinion. "Writing" is derived from the action verb, "to write." It means moving forward, putting new words on the page.

So how is it that a woman my friend met at a writers conference told him it took her 10 years to write her novel?

How is it that a former English teacher I talked with a few years back told me she'd written 3 novels in "only 8 years"? (This is the same woman who said Heinlein's Rules, sight unseen, would never work for her because she doesn't write science fiction.)

For the answer, let's go back to basic math.

Even if those novels were 120,000 words long, that's still only 120 hours.

120 hours spread over 10 years averages out to the first woman writing 33 words per day. Meaning the woman wrote, on average, 2 minutes per day.

360 hours (three 120,000 word novels) spread over 8 years averages out to the second woman writing 124 words per day. Meaning the woman wrote, on average, almost 8 minutes per day.

But let's be realistic. Let's say a novelist writes a 120,000 word novel in only one year. Now the average output jumps to 328 words per day: that's about 20 minutes of writing per day.

Write two such novels in a year and you're considered prolific: that's an average of 660 words per day, or about 40 minutes of writing.

Even if you write six 120,000 word novels in a year, you're still averaging less than 2000 words per day. Or two hours of "work" per day.

But now let's slip even farther into reality.

The fact is, readers attended the same elementary, junior high, and high schools the rest of us attended. They also went on to the same colleges, sat through the same lectures by non fiction-writers about what it takes to write a fiction. They learned all the same myths, which first reared their ugly heads, by the way, in the '60s.

That's right. All the stuff about outlining, rewriting, critique workshops and time equaling quality is a strictly modern phenomenon. It has nothing to do with the reality of being a storyteller and writer.

Unfortunately, readers' perception still enters into the equation.

If readers hear that it took a writer 10 years to write a novel, the readers automatically assume the novel must be wonderful. After all, it took 10 years of seemingly endless, mind-numbing labor to write.

And it is exactly for that reason that so many perceptive professional writers tell readers they do X-amount of rewrites. It's for that reason that they tell readers writing is terrible drudgery, strictly a "higher calling" or a "labor" of love. It's why they say writing is simply a matter of sweating blood, or sitting down at a computer and opening a vein, or some other dramatic nonsense.

Others, in the old days, split their stories and novels among several pen names specifically so they could continue to write and put out work without flooding the market with one name.

Today, with the advent of indie publishing, things are a little improved. Readers are going more for quality stories and not delving so deeply into how long it took to produce those stories.

Still, Dean Wesley Smith, Lee Child and only a few other "names" share their process. Dean says he shares his because he's "bulletproof." I suspect the other big-name writers are in the same camp.

I share mine because I simply don't care. Readers either read my work or they don't. Either way, I get to experience the unbridled fun of telling a lot of stories.

Tell readers what you will. Writers tell lies for a living—or if you wish, they put the truth in its proper perspective. Surely doing the same with readers won't add too much to your list of sins.

The bottom line is this: I wish you the same unbridled fun.

As for those who really do take 10 years to write a novel (or 8 years to write 3 novels), they won't be around long. Who can stand that much drudgery?

Rolled out way late this morning at 5. Wow is the world ever different at that time of day.

I'm writing today. We'll see how much.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "First Stretch Goal in Less Than a Day!" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/first-stretch-goal-in-less-than-a-day/>. I post this mostly for his discussion of short story writing beginning in the fifth paragraph.

See "Universal Book Solutions: Anatomy of a Book-to-Screen Scam" at <http://www.victoriastrauss.com/2019/08/23/universal-book-solutions-anatomy-of-a-book-to-screen-scam/>.

See "Writing CONTEST #153: Woodstock" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/creative-writing-prompts/contests/4/>. Interesting.

See "50 Best Writing Websites of 2019" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/best-writing-websites-2019/>. I post this one tongue-in-cheek. I encourage you to browse their list, see how many of the websites merely regurgitate the same tired old myths. You might pay attention to the ones that don't.

See "Spooky Research Trip to State Lunatic Hospital" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/taunton-state-hospital-spooky-research-trip/>.

See "Bulletproof or Bullet-Resistant?..." at <https://www.leelofland.com/bulletproof-or-bullet-resistant-are-you-writing-it-correctly/>. Interesting science details.

For current Bizarro World events (and a bit of fun), see "San Francisco Has Lost Its Freakin' Mind..." at <https://www.leelofland.com/san-francisco-has-lost-its-freakin-mind-carl-the-butcher-jenkins-is-now-a-justice-involved-person/>.

Fiction Words: 0 (yesterday)

Nonfiction Words: 1180 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1180

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222

Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392

Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... 2733 words. Total words to date..... 14663
Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 14663
Total fiction words for the year..... 373400
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 241250
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 614650

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Victoria Strauss](#)

[The Daily Journal, Saturday, August 24](#)

[August 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Wow. It's monsoon season...
- * Daily Diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Wow. It's monsoon season out here in Arizona. For days and days, we've been surrounded by storms on all directions, but not a drop for us.

Then yesterday, at about 4 p.m., the rain started. Actually, it was the second-worst storm I've ever experienced (excepting typhoons in Okinawa). In two hours, we got just under three inches of rain, and at least three different sessions of hail. It was (ahem) interesting.

And interesting how I reacted. The rest of this is kind of a topic. How might your characters react to stressful situations, and why?

The worst storm I've ever experienced hit while Dan and I were camping up along the Gila. That one built quickly and hit pretty much out of blue. The rain/hail mix was relentless, and the wind shook, rocked and even lifted the pickup so strongly, more than once we thought we might go over the side of the cliff and down to the Gila 500 feet below.

And we loved it. It was great fun, and an exhilarating experience. We hope to be there on another such weekend.

But when the storm came yesterday, I watched it approach for an hour before it arrived. And when it hit, I got grumpy. Water started coming under the back door and leaking through the roof. My chihuahua was certain the world was ending, and my cats hid under the bed. And my mood grew increasingly darker.

Why?

The only reason I can think of is home and security.

During the storm along the Gila, I was in the storm's domain. It was an adventure and I was the intruder, though I can't imagine that I threatened it in any way.

But during the storm here, *it* was the intruder. It disrupted my routine (there's the biggie) and threatened my security in the form of the threat of water damage, loss of electricity, etc.

Aren't humans silly?

I've long said one of these days some moronic terrorist is going to kick the plug out of the wall and humans will go nuts.

I guess I'll be one of them.

*

Anyway, thanks to a tripped circuit breaker on the Hovel, my writing 'puter survived. However, my hardwire internet connection from the house to the Hovel wasn't so fortunate.

I suspect my ethernet switch is fried. So until I can get another one, it's back to transferring the Journal to a thumb drive, carrying it up to the house, and sending the Journal from there. Sigh.

Update: I tried plugging the ethernet cable directly into my 'puter, but that didn't work either. Which means either the cable itself is fried or the ethernet card in my computer is fried.

So I went to the house, brought my other 'puter to the Hovel, and plugged the e-net directly into it. Still nothing. So it's the ethernet cable. Well, all right.

Breathe, Harvey. Remember all you *must* have is food, water and shelter. Everything else is luxury. (grin)

Rolled out at 4. I did a little writing yesterday. I'm a little rattled from all the problems so I probably won't do any writing today.

We'll spend much of the day today in Sierra Vista where I'll pick up a "real" spare tire for my pickup (vs. the donut) and then do some shopping.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See "Stars in Your Eyes vs. Reality" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/stars-in-your-eyes-vs-reality/>.

Incredibly, nothing else of interest today. You might check <https://thepassivevoice.com> and browse a few articles just in case something there might grab your attention.

Fiction Words: 1253 (yesterday)

Nonfiction Words: 610 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 1863

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... 2733 words. Total words to date..... 14663
Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Total fiction words for the month..... 15916
Total fiction words for the year..... 374653
Total nonfiction words for the month... 23780
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 241860
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 616513

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Daily Journal, Sunday, August 25](#)

[August 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Miracle
- * Topic: The Short Story as a Marketing Tool
- * Daily Diary
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“You and I as artists inhabit one dimension of reality—the material dimension. ... Creativity has its origin in a different sphere—the plane of potentiality. Our job is to tune in to that sphere. And to trust it.” Steven Pressfield

Harvey's corollary: “Especially after we start writing the story.”

Well, in a very small way in my tiny world, a miracle happened.

When I came to the Hovel early this morning, the internet still wasn't connected. No problem. It's what I expected. I planned to do what little I could do in the Hovel, then head back up to the house to research “Of Interest,” write a topic and post the Journal.

I talked with my son yesterday (he's much more than a cable-guy) and asked him whether the line would work after it dried out, if indeed that was the problem.

He said probably not.

But maybe 10 minutes after I sat down in the Hovel this morning, the internet blinked on. Amazing.

We'll be replacing the line the next time he visits, but in the meantime it looks as if the current line is back in operation. (grin)

Topic: The Short Story as a Marketing Tool

I feel like brainstorming with you a little this morning. Bear with me. I think you'll be glad you did.

Kris Rusch often writes a short story to explore side roads she doesn't explore in her longer works. Sometimes those short stories lead to other novels or novellas.

(Full disclosure, I haven't done that intentionally, though it seems like a good idea and I'll be doing so in the future.)

For one thing, every title you publish, short or longer, adds to your discoverability. Discoverability is defined as your ability to be "discovered" by readers who are new to your work while they're simply browsing titles in a genre that interests them.

Obviously, the more works you have out there, the more impressive you appear to be on the surface and the greater the chance a reader will take a look at your works. (Ahem. Not to mention, the more you write, the more practice you get and the more your writing improves.)

Other than length, the biggest difference between the short story and longer forms (novella, novel) is that the short story is about One Event and how the characters react.

But the length thing is an important consideration too. Even if you're a neo-prolific novelist, writing and publishing say 6 to 12 novels per year, that's still only 6 to 12 new titles per year.

How many short stories could you realistically put out in a month, given that a short story (2000 to 7000 words) takes anywhere from 2 to 7 hours to write?

Even if you are young and have a normal young person's life (day job, children, etc.) you probably can turn out at least one short story per week, or 4 per month.

And if you don't have a day job to attend to, or children who need your constant attention, you might possibly turn out 15 to 30 short stories in that same month. What would that do for your annual publication numbers?

But shouldn't you be using that time to write novels?

Possibly. But here comes the brainstorming part.

Think of your short fiction in another way. Think of it not only as another story, another title that's out there, but as a marketing tool.

Imagine the possible boost to your novel sales if each of your new short stories is based on a character (or situation or both) from one of your novels.

Especially if on the front cover of the short story you add a blurb that reads something like "Further adventures of Character Name from Novel Name" [or "from the Series Name series"].

In my case, the blurb might read “Further adventures of Wes Crowley from the 11-novel Wes Crowley series” or “Further adventures of operative Charles Claymore Task from the Blackwell Ops series” or “Another glimpse of the watery aliens from The Consensus.”

Again, up to this point I’ve never written a short story specifically to help market a novel or series. I do have several short stories that are either derived from longer works or peripheral to characters and situations in my novels and series. Yet until this morning, I never thought to use a front cover blurb to also hawk the related novel or series.

So there you go. I can’t deliver an idea to you any fresher than that. (grin)

And what about characters for those short stories (or spin-off novellas or novels)? The main character in your short story doesn’t always have to be the main character from the larger work.

Do you have a minor character who seems to want a larger role? There you go. Or is there a situation that intrigued you in the novel but didn’t deserve more than a mention in that venue? You can explore it (and the lesser character) more deeply in a short story.

What do you think? Does this sound like a good idea? Is it something you’ll try?

Let me know your thoughts in the comments, or email me if you’d rather.

Rolled out at 3:15, happily followed my usual routine. It’s Sunday, so whether I write fiction will depend on other things that happen through the day.

Talk with you again tomorrow.

Of Interest

See “A ‘Save the Cat’ Moment” at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/04/a-save-the-cat-moment/>.

See “What’s Your Brand?” at <http://prowriterswriting.com/whats-your-brand>.

See “Is a Serial Killer Loose on the Highway of Tears?” at <http://dyingwords.net/is-a-serial-killer-loose-on-the-highway-of-tears/>. Wow.

See “Ten Free Online Image, Graphic, and Photo Manipulation Tools” at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2019/07/09/ten-free-online-image-graphic-and-photo-manipulation-tools/>.

Fiction Words: XXXX (yesterday)

Nonfiction Words: 990 (Journal)

Total words for the day: 990

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 1..... 3222 words. Total words to date..... 3222
Day 2..... 1170 words. Total words to date..... 4392
Day 3..... 3191 words. Total words to date..... 7583
Day 4..... 1374 words. Total words to date..... 8957
Day 5..... 1952 words. Total words to date..... 10909
Day 6..... 1021 words. Total words to date..... 11930
Day 7..... 2733 words. Total words to date..... 14663
Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 15916
Total fiction words for the year..... 374653
Total nonfiction words for the month... 24780
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 242850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 617503

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [DyingWords.net](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [StevenPressfield.com](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic Leave a comment](#)

NO JOURNAL ENTRY FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 27.....

The Journal, Wednesday, August 28

[August 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * On vacation
- * Topic: What Is "Sexual" Violence?
- * I'm not sure I added
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

After I sent the previous edition of the Journal, I realized I was exhausted. Yesterday for the first time in a few years, I didn't write anything at all. No Journal entry, no other nonfiction. I haven't even added anything to the novel (to speak of).

I told my wife (grinning), "Y'know, I think I'm gonna take a few vacation days."

She thought that was a good idea. So that's what I'm doing.

Yesterday I headed down (south) to Tombstone for the morning to wander around town like a derelict and snap a few photos. Today will be much the same, though in a different location. I'm also getting some things done around the house. It's a different world.

Anyway, I thought I'd drop in to visit. I'll be back again, though I can't say when. Probably after I settle in to writing fiction again.

In the meantime...

Topic: What Is "Sexual" Violence?

In today's "Of Interest" you'll also see a link to John Gilstrap's post at the Kill Zone blog. It prompted this topic.

John mentions he refuses to write "sexual" violence against women.

But his ban in his own writing raised a question in my mind regarding the definition of "sexual violence." If it means a rape scene, I agree. I won't write that either. No need, and in my mind, any such scene would be gratuitous.

That being said, I've written scenes in which a rape occurs off-stage (meaning the rape itself isn't described on the page for the reader to read) to serve as a catalyst for other events in the story. I've also written scenes in which agents and operators (good guys and bad, both male and female) were captured and tortured, sometimes slashed, because it was in the story.

(As a nod to Robert S., I now get the difference between "operative" and "operator." The "operative" is a person who may be sent to do a job. An "operator" is the same person while actually doing that job or having done that job.)

If the torturer employs methods that cause harm to the victim's front upper torso, is that simply "violence" against a male victim but "sexual violence" against a female victim?

These are things I haven't considered. For a graphic example, in my short story "Ice Scream," a woman is kidnapped and undergoes considerable violence. I didn't consider any of that "sexual" violence, maybe because of the perpetrator's intent, as evidenced by his attitude.

In short (other than rape scenes), I don't differentiate "sexual" violence from other kinds against any victim. And in any case, I write whatever scenes I write because that's what happens in the story.

Perhaps the best advice I've ever heard (probably because I agree wholeheartedly with it) is write what makes you "uneasy" or "squirm" or "what scares you" (Bradbury, King, et al). I seem to do that at least a little in every novel. But I don't differentiate among men, women and children.

But here's an admission: "Ice Scream" set out to be a novel. I couldn't handle it, so it became a short story. Just sayin'.

So how about you? Do you write things that make you uneasy? Do you push the boundaries of your own fears?

I'm not sure I added Lee Lofland to the list of URLs I gave you in my last Journal entry. It's especially useful for adding reality to your stories if there's a cop involved. Even if the story itself isn't about detectives or crime. One such entry and the URL is in "Of Interest" today.

If I think of any others, I'll mention them next time.

Until then, keep writing and keep having fun! If there's anything I can do to help, don't hesitate to email me.

Of Interest

See "The Language of Law Enforcement: Acronyms and Texting Codes" at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-language-of-law-enforcement-acronyms-and-texting-codes/>.

See "Violence Smells Bad" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/08/violence-smells-bad.html>.

See "Killing the Golden Goose" at <http://prowriterswriting.com/killing-the-golden-goose/>.

See "Holiday Pop-Up Special" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/holiday-pop-up-special/>. Good idea to check Dean's site every day.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Total fiction words for the month..... 15916
Total fiction words for the year..... 374653
Total nonfiction words for the month... 26330
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 244400
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 629053

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, August 30](#)

[August 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Remember in The Godfather....
- * Topic: Writing Fiction
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Remember in The Godfather when Michael Corleone was so frustrated? Just as he's finally almost legit, "...they pull be back in."

That's a little how I feel lately. No numbers today, no "Of Interest." Just this and a topic.

I'm corresponding with a young woman who wants to write. She's considering becoming a mentoring student.

I asked her to send me a story opening (character with a problem in a setting).

She did. It was interesting.

I asked whether the story wanted to keep going.

She said it did. So I said, "Then write it."

That was a week ago. Today I heard from her twice. That conversation is my topic for today.

Topic: Writing Fiction

As you know, you can write any way you want. But the fact remains, the conscious, critical mind doesn't do "creative." Not its role. Nor can you put together an outline from your creative voice. Again, not its role.

Even if you've managed to do the hard work necessary to force a book through your conscious, critical mind, and even it was published—through either a traditional or an independent publisher—how much better would the story have been if you had written one clean draft beginning to end and then left it alone?

Until you do it, you'll never know. And even then, you'll know only what YOU think. You can't pre-judge work for another reader. You can't decide what another reader will like, or not like. When your conscious, critical voice starts whispering you have “too much” of this or “not enough” of that, it's only trying to make you doubt your ability. It's trying to make you stop, or at least delay by entering into a cycle of rewrites.

Tell me, is it succeeding? Only you know.

One thing is for sure: You will never know how good a writer you really are until you learn to trust your creative voice, stop “correcting” it and second-guessing it, and allow it to shine through.

There are two kinds of fiction writers:

1. Those who ascend into their authorial ivory tower and—with their conscious mind (outline, “signposts,” critique (*hear that word?*) group input, rewrites, etc.—control every aspect of the story: situations, events, dialogue, who lives and who dies, and everything else.

These writers don't trust themselves and their own creative voice. They don't trust in their own ability to tell a story that ANYONE will like.

To them, the story is “special,” the book launch an “event.” The story must be as perfect as they can make it so nobody (or at least fewer people) will criticize them. All of this despite two hard, cold facts:

1. What is eventually “perfect” to the writer will not be “perfect” to anyone else. You have zero idea what any other reader might like. You can only write the story and let each reader enjoy it or not. You can't prejudge your work for even one other reader, much less for hundreds or thousands. And the more you polish it in that pursuit of perfection, the more boring and “same” it will become.

2. Earlier in the process, they actually INVITED AND WELCOMED criticism! So why are they worried other readers will be critical? Seriously? In fact, why don't they EXPECT other readers to be critical?

These writers are scared to death someone might not like what they wrote and might even leave a bad review. But yeah, I get it. If a critique group member criticizes something, they can still “fix” it. But they're fixing it for only that one reader. Every opinion is just that: the opinion of One Person. Nothing more.

Maybe worst of all, these writers see writing as work. They might see it as a labor of love, but a labor nonetheless. They actually take vacations to escape “having to write.”

2. And then there are those who are excited to approach the story each day. Like Bradbury, they roll out of bed each morning wanting to get back to the story. When they get to the computer, they slip off the parapet into the trenches of the story. There, they race along with the characters, enjoying the story as it unfolds.

These writers trust in their ability as storytellers. They realize the story isn’t special or important. It’s only a few minutes or hours of entertainment. That’s all. Nothing more. What’s important is not the story, but WRITING the story.

They trust and jealously guard their own voice. They refuse to do anything to polish that unique voice off of it, refuse to make it look “smooth” or “perfect” or “same” or “like [name anyone you want]”.

Okay, so after that lengthy intro, here’s my exchange with my prospective student. Well, she IS my student. She’s my prospective PAID student. Understand, nothing below is even approaching the craft of actual writing. It has nothing to do with licensing and all that. And forget any advanced writing techniques. This is still just trying to get her to overcome the damn fear:

Her email: Think I lost the story. No real suspense.

My response: (I’m always too long-winded)

When it feels like that to you, Just Write the Next Sentence. Ignore that negative voice (no real suspense; why am I writing this, this is boring, etc. ad nauseam). Whenever the voice is negative, it’s ALWAYS the critical voice.

Just yesterday I met with one of my current mentoring clients. She said, “Sometimes I want to stop. I feel like I’m just putting words on the page, but they don’t really mean anything.”

I told her exactly the same thing: Your critical voice exists only to protect you. In writing, it tries to protect you from embarrassment. If you finish a story, you might publish it. If you publish it, someone won’t like it. They might even give you a bad review. So your critical voice tries hard (always with negative thoughts) to stop you from writing. With things like “no real suspense.”

The only way you can beat it is to tell it (out loud, if you want to) “Shut up and leave me alone. I’m going to finish this, and that’s that.”

Then write the next sentence that comes to you, then the next, then the next.

Her reply: Exactly how I feel. OK, I will try.

My second probably unsuccessful attempt:

No, don't try. Do. The only way to overcome the critical voice is to Write, and when the negative critical voice crops up, tell it to shut up and leave you alone, then write the next sentence.

If it stops you once, it gains power and it will stop you again.

Don't make the story special. It isn't. It won't change the world. It's just a story. A little entertainment. Probably 80% of people who read it will like it if you let the characters tell the story (just keep writing the next sentence that occurs to you). The other 20% don't matter.

I realize I'm being harsh here, but I've been through it. Everyone has. It's a harsh truth, but if you don't shut down your critical voice—the voice that tells you you can't do it or you aren't good enough or you're just putting words on the page that nobody will care about, etc.—you will never be a long-term fiction writer.

Keep the writing fun. Just be the first person your characters tell their story to. Just listen and record what they say and do.

And seriously, if writing isn't fun, why bother? Do something you enjoy instead.

*

So what do you think? Too harsh? Yet it's what I tell everyone who asks these questions about writing.

This young woman wants me to teach her advanced techniques about fiction writing. But frankly, if she's going to write from the conscious mind, why should I bother taking her money and teaching her techniques that she won't be using in five or ten years? She'll be dollars ahead, and my conscience will be clear, if she keeps her money and I keep my advice.

Because like every fiction writer who writes from the conscious, critical mind, even if she enjoys some early success, she won't be around for the long haul.

She has already worried and fretted her way through a novelette. But on her fourth or fifth rewrite (of a novelette!), she wondered why she became so confused as she tried yet again to "fix" it.

She also complained she had more and more trouble coming up with ideas.

No wonder. Duh. She spends excessive amounts of time actually teaching her creative mind that she doesn't trust it, that she has to "fix" what it tells her, so why should it bother? If she constantly corrected me, I wouldn't talk to her either.

Another writer acquaintance wrote in a comment on another blog recently that she never trusts her characters completely.

Again, seriously? Folks, if you don't trust your characters to tell the story they're living (in your subconscious mind), you don't trust yourself. You don't trust in your own ability to Just Tell A Story. Think about that.

The thing is, I wouldn't tell my prospective student (or you) all this stuff if I didn't care whether she or you ever become successful. I do care. I don't know why. It isn't like I get a cut of your royalties. I have zero vested interest. Yet for some reason, I do care. I want you to be successful, and I want you to have a ton of fun every time you sit down to write.

But you never will unless you shed the angelic robes and drop out of the authorial ivory tower.

You never will unless you slip into your grubby jeans and a t-shirt and sneakers, slip down a mud slide into the trenches of the story and make some new friends.

But as I said at the outset, it's all your choice.

You can be the timid kid peering through your bedroom window at the other children as they play in the field across the road, or you can put on your jeans and sneakers and t-shirt, run outside and enjoy the fun.

When you do, you'll realize who wins or loses the game of tag or baseball or whatever doesn't matter. What matters is the playing.

As a writer, that's when you'll realize the story isn't important at all. What's important is WRITING the story. And when that happens for you, my friends, you will have the time of your life.

I'm gonna go write now. Not sure when I'll be back. Talk amongst yourselves.

The Journal, Saturday, August 31

[August 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: Some Rambling Thoughts
- * I planned to be gone...

Topic: Some Rambling Thoughts

I'm still on vacation, which I find a little odd and frankly a little unnerving. I've been writing very little nonfiction (all of it here) and very little to no fiction. I want to get back to the latter.

I'll get back to the former too with some regularity, but I probably won't post "items of interest" other than occasionally in the body of the post, as I have in this one.

I think for me getting back to writing fiction regularly will take ignoring whatever “mood” I’m in and just writing. In other words, discipline.

So in the last day(s) of my vacation, I’m considering a major shake-up of my process and maybe even my time. I firmly believe we only advance by trying new things.

This is due, in large part, to ideas I gleaned from listening to a podcast with Joe R. Lansdale (see below).

1. Write what you feel like writing. For example,

- * It’s okay to skip around to different genres. If a genre interests you, write it.
- * It’s okay to stop a novel in the middle and write an unrelated short story.
- * It’s okay (and even advisable) to write for only a more-or-less set amount of words or pages or scenes or hours per day and then spend the rest of the day doing other things.
- * It’s okay that there are occasionally days when you’re busy with things other than writing.
- * Just a reminder, take time to read.

2. Show up and do the work (play) by setting a daily goal. Write a set number of words (or pages or scenes or hours) per day. Your goal may vary from one day to the next depending on other things that are going on in your life.

(One “trick” for this: One of my mentoring students is currently writing to a set word-count goal per day—the goal varies with the day—and then exceeding it, writing a little more than the goal requires. As a result, her numbers are off the charts.)

3. Keep the writing fun. This is paramount. Even if you structure your goal (word-count, etc.) around other, necessary things in your life, instill within yourself the mindset that the writing time is a reward for having done those other, necessary things.

These are all things I’ll be doing in the near future, along with learning more about writing and licensing my IP.

I planned to be gone a bit longer, but a few days ago Phillip McCollum sent me a link to an interview with Joe R. Lansdale. I finally devoted some time to listen to it yesterday. I will listen to it again.

It’s on The Prolific Writer podcast, and it’s almost an hour and a half long, but it’s very worthwhile.

It helped me. I suspect it will help you too.

Get your favorite beverage, settle in and listen at <https://theprolificwriter.net/blog-podcast/2019/tpw-097-greatest-hits-episode-with-joe-r-lansdale>.

And thanks, Phillip, for sending the link.

Talk with you later.

PS: Dean's finally back with more on the Trademark book he's writing. [Check his post](#).

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Total fiction words for the month..... 15916
Total fiction words for the year..... 374653
Total nonfiction words for the month... 28640
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 246710
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 621363

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Joe R. Lansdale](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Prolific Writer](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, September 2](#)

[September 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: On Reader Taste
- * The numbers

Topic: On Reader Taste

Some of you will remember, awhile back I had a problem understanding "reader taste." One reader will be absorbed into a story whereas another won't care for it at all. He might not even finish reading it.

I've been on both sides of the experience as a reader, but still I didn't quite get it.

Slowly, I came to understand. I still say it's the writer's responsibility to do all the things necessary to pull the reader into the story. Otherwise, why bother studying and learning craft at all?

Still, there's reader taste to account for. And frankly, there's no accounting for it. You write the story you want to write and trust that roughly 80% of the readers will enjoy it.

Recently, James Scott Bell drove that lesson home for me in a post over on the Kill Zone blog. You can find that post at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/09/the-most-important-question-you-can-ask-about-a-scene.html>.

He wrote somewhat derogatorily about a short story by Ernest Hemingway, one that sold quickly and was widely loved by most of those who read it (I dare say 80%).

The title of the short story is "The Killers." You can download and/or read the story free at https://litenet.bg/publish24/e_hemingway/killers.htm.

What Mr. Bell apparently missed is that, although this is a complete short story, it's really more of a vignette, a slice of a larger story. It feels as if it begins before the first word and continues after the last word. The reader is left to fill in the blanks (just as the characters are doing) if he wants to.

To me, the story is practically a masterpiece. I could have disagreed with almost every statement Mr. Bell made, but I didn't bother.

Why? Because I realized I would be speaking (as Mr. Bell did) to reader taste. And as I wrote earlier, there's no accounting for that.

*

Still not writing fiction. I can't explain it, except to say it isn't time. And I'm a little worried about it, but on the other hand, not really.

I think the worry stems from the fact that I've written fiction almost every day for a very long time, so that's my "norm." My last publication was on July 1. So two months ago. Yet it feels as if it's been years. (grin)

But I'm not really worried because stories and ideas, including my WIP, continue to stew in my mind almost constantly. So I'm sure I'll get back to fiction writing when it's time.

Total fiction words for the month..... 15916
Total fiction words for the year..... 374653
Total nonfiction words for the month... 420
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 247130
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 621783

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Ernest Hemingway](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, September 4](#)

[September 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: A Perfect Storm
- * A couple of recommendations
- * The numbers

Topic: A Perfect Storm

Bear with me as I work my way through this. It has a point. I'm recording it here and publishing it only because some of you might find yourselves in a similar situation. The form of this post was predicated, in part, by Alison Holt's excellent post at [Pro Writers Writing](#).

First, it would be easy, in this moment, to say I've had a good run but that run is over.

I could easily lapse into full retirement, puttering around the house, meeting with my mentoring students a couple of times a month, and otherwise doing little or nothing at all.

I won't do that, but only because I'm fortunate enough to know that having lived a lot of years and being "old" are not necessarily synonymous. In my definition, being "old" is a state of mind; it's that place where a person finally stops trying.

Recently, I encountered a perfect storm, and it hit at a perfect time, just as I started a new major scene while writing a new novel. Frankly, had the novel stalled, I might well have assumed the run was over and retired. But the novel didn't stall. I just stopped writing it. (I remember thinking *What's the point?* In retrospect, that should have been a clue.)

Over the past few years, it's been fairly easy for me to schedule and balance the various aspects of my life: writing, learning, leisure time, medical situations, family emergencies, and so on.

Balance is important. It's what enables me to focus on writing when I'm writing, learning when I'm learning, camping when I'm camping, enduring what comes when I have to, etc. With balance, nothing is lost, and no one activity slaps against or overlaps or impedes any other. (Again, bear with me. I'll get there.)

Spreadsheets are wonderful tools. After I had a realization this morning, I looked back at my 2019 Annual Production spreadsheet. I found this:

Over the course of May and June, I wrote a 72,000 word novel, an 18,000 word novella, and a 24,000 word nonfiction book (in addition to over 72,000 words of nonfiction in the Journal). So just under 187,000 words, or an average for those two months of a little over 93,000 words per month.

In July, I started another novel. But without me realizing it, the outer bands of the storm began to hit early in the month, and during the whole month I wrote less than 8,000 words of fiction. Even as the high winds and heavy rains whipped around me I still managed almost 34,000 words of nonfiction. Still, that was quite a drop. And I didn't recognize it.

Then toward the end of August (the 26th, to be exact) the storm hit full force. In that whole month, I wrote only 16,000 words of fiction and 28,600 words of nonfiction.

September came, and this morning I finally realized I'm in the midst of that perfect storm I mentioned at the top of this post.

The bands of rain and wind are various situations, the strongest and most impactful of which (in no particular order) are

- * a medical concern and looking forward to a treatment that should alleviate it (but due to concerns about medication, not until October);
- * the almost overwhelming deluge of information I'm learning and new concerns that stem from what I'm learning;
- * the Need to Read for pleasure and then study;
- * the emotional drain of having recently acquired a windfall from a deceased relative;
- * a desire to re-set some priorities;
- * the strain of not writing fiction although I'm a fiction writer (Heinlein's Rule 1);
- * the evolution of this website and my author site; and
- * maybe most important, the fact that *The Novel Isn't Stalled*. I don't have writer's block, etc. I'm just not writing. That one factor was massively confusing to me. (If the novel were "stalled," I would immediately have identified the critical mind as the culprit.)

Those are the bands of wind and rain, and they're only intensifying as the center of the storm draws closer.

To add to my confusion, I know my writing didn't drag to a halt because of the bands of rain and wind. After all, we've all been through all of those situations before and either kept writing or returned to it fairly easily.

This morning I finally realized (recognized?) that my writing slowed and then stopped because my conscious, critical mind was lurking in the eye of the storm.

My critical mind wasn't driving the storm, but it took full advantage and crept in while I was concentrating on those bands and the confusion caused by all of them hitting at one time.

I've only just recognized the problem, so I don't have a magic "fix" to offer (yet). And even if I did, it would be a fix that's right for me but might not be right for you.

But now that I understand the problem, the fix (and returning to writing fiction) won't be far behind. Here's how it's playing out:

I will alleviate one of my situations tomorrow. My doctor will alleviate another one on October 3. Between now and then, I can schedule learning and reading time, work on revising my websites, and prioritize other concerns to leave more time for fiction writing.

And remember (again) to keep the conscious mind at bay, where it belongs.

So there it is. I hope some of this helps.

One of the more valuable lectures I've ever listened to is Dean's Advanced Business lecture on Estates for Writers. I highly recommend it. It will scare you straight.

He also recommended picking up a copy of [M.L. Buchman's Estate Planning for Authors](#). I also recommend that.

Talk with you again before too long.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 374653

Total nonfiction words for the month... 1380

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 248090

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 622743

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Friday, September 6](#)

[September 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Today I'm investing some time
- * Topic: Read the Terms of Service (TOS)
- * If you're an independent writer/publisher
- * The numbers

Today I'm investing some time reading or reviewing terms of service for various platforms I use personally. It sounds boring, but if your copyright matters to you at all, I recommend you do the same.

What prompted this post? [In a recent newsletter, Nate Hoffelder](#) (The Digital Reader) recommended using WordPress.com (not the same as WordPress.org).

Read on....

Topic: Read the Terms of Service (TOS)

First, everything you write, including blog posts, is automatically protected by copyright the instant it's "in fixed form." You don't have to register your copyright. It's there whether or not you choose to register it. In other words, the instant your short story, novel, novella, essay, memoir or blog post (or any other writing) is finished, it's protected by copyright.

If you use or are thinking about using the free (or paid) WordPress.com to host your website, [read the Terms of Service](#). Specifically, scroll down to "License" under and Section 7.a., 7.b. and 7.c.

Each section reads in part "you grant Automattic a world-wide, royalty-free, and non-exclusive license...." That's pretty common. In other words you're giving WordPress.com the rights they need to display what you put up. And of course, that's all right. It only makes sense.

The troublesome part comes later in each paragraph under License. Under 7.a., “You also give other WordPress.com users **permission to share your Content** on other WordPress.com websites and add their own Content to it (aka to “reblog” your Content)...” (emphasis added).

Under 7.b. “By submitting Content to Automattic for inclusion on your website, you grant Automattic a world-wide, royalty-free, and non-exclusive license to reproduce, **modify, adapt,** and publish the Content solely for the purpose of displaying, distributing, and promoting your website” (again, emphasis added).

And under 7.c. “You also grant us a worldwide, royalty-free, and non-exclusive license to copy and store your VaultPress Content, to the extent necessary to operate the VaultPress service. These Terms don’t give us any rights in your VaultPress Content, beyond those we need to operate VaultPress. You own your VaultPress Content.”

I find this frightening. Notice that the third set of Terms “don’t give us any rights in your VaultPress Content, beyond those we need to operate VaultPress.” That statement is missing from the first two instances of License.

I haven’t read all of the terms of service for all of the organizations that offer free website hosting, but I’d bet money they’re similar when it comes to right grabbing.

For just one example, should you choose to go with Blogger.com (a Google company), click <https://policies.google.com/terms> and scroll down to “Your Content in our Services.” Read carefully.

Be careful out there, folks.

As I have before, I will always recommend avoiding “free” hosting sites specifically because of their terms of service. There really is no free lunch.

Instead, invest in yourself and protect your work. Go with a paid hosting site, set up an account, and do a one-click installation of WordPress.ORG (not .com).

If you’re an independent writer/publisher and if you would be interested in posting for [Pro Writers Writing](#), either monthly, weekly, or as a guest blogger, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Talk with you again before too long.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 530

Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	374653
Total nonfiction words for the month...	1910
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	248620
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	623273
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Terms of Service](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, September 7](#)

[September 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Today, I thought
- * Topic: Switching Your Site from HTTP to HTTPS
- * If you haven't
- * The numbers

Today, I thought I'd pass along something useful I learned from the newsletter I mentioned in yesterday's Journal.

Nate Hoffelder mentioned that when you switch your URL from the unsecured http to a secured https, there's a final step that many writers don't realize.

Topic: Switching Your Site from HTTP to HTTPS

After you've bought a security certificate through your webhost and changed your URL (in Settings) from http to https, you still have some work to do.

You have to go through each page of your website and change all instances of http to https. Otherwise the website won't work properly.

Yesterday after I sent out the Journal, I spent the balance of the morning doing just that on [HarveyStanbrough.com](#), [HEStanbrough.com](#), and [StoneThreadPublishing.com](#). I even finally transitioned [ProWritersWriting](#) to https.

Goodness. Talk about time-consuming! I have 135 pages on HarveyStanbrough.com alone. There are only 32 pages on HESTanbrough.com (a smaller number on PWW), but there are 125 more on StoneThreadPublishing.com. Sigh.

Of course, you can go page by page, use the Find On This Page feature of your browser to find each instance of http: (be sure to include the colon) and then add an S between the P and the colon one instance at a time.

But I came up with a time-cutting method that works well, but is mind-numbingly repetitive. Here's what you do:

1. Open a blank Notepad (or similar text-only) document.
2. Open the page you want to edit. Make sure you select the Text tab.
3. Press Ctrl+A (or otherwise select everything on the page) then Ctrl+C (or otherwise copy the selection).
4. Go to the Notepad document and press Ctrl+V (or otherwise paste the contents into the Notepad document).
5. In the Edit menu of the Notepad document, select Replace. In Find What, type http:. In Replace With, type https:. Then click Replace All.
6. After Notepad does its magic, put your cursor somewhere in the Notepad document, then hit Ctrl+A again, then Ctrl+C to select all and copy what's there.
7. Go back to the page you wanted to edit. (Note: If you click on the blue frame at the top, the contents should already still be selected.) Then click Ctrl+V to paste the edited information into your web page.
8. Click Update.
9. Go to the next web page you want to edit and do the same thing.

In my case, for HarveyStanbrough.com alone, I did that 135 times. Still, using this process, the entire site was updated in about an hour.

Then I took a break, moved over to StoneThreadPublishing.com and did the same thing. I saved the Journal (HEStanbrough.com) and then ProWritersWriting for last.

It isn't that difficult to do, but as I said earlier, it's a bit mind-numbing. Just take your time. Once you're done, you shouldn't have to do it anymore.

If you haven't been keeping up with Dean's site, check out "New Fantastic Stretch Goal" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-fantastic-stretch-goal/>. Remember, everyone who backs the Kickstarter at even the \$5 level gets a lot of stretch goal rewards. Just sayin'.

Grudgingly, I'll also mention Reedsy's post "The Best Free Book Cover Makers..." at <https://blog.reedsy.com/book-cover-makers/>. It might help. While I'm in full-learning mode, I might try a couple of these myself.

Of course, I strongly recommend the current version of Serif PagePlus. I use Serif for all my cover designs. There's a slight learning curve, but it's mostly intuitive. Best of all, the cost is low (around \$30 or \$40 to install it on your computer, no subscription) and it does everything Adobe does.

Talk with you again before too long.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 580

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 374653

Total nonfiction words for the month... 2490

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 249200

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 623853

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, September 8](#)

[September 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * In this time
- * Topic: Some Sources Say
- * What has become (daily diary)
- * The numbers

In this time of weird events and self-absorption, I thought I'd share some info about a truly great organization: [Team Rubicon](#).

This outfit provides disaster relief without regard for politics, race, gender, nationality etc. Members are dispatched to trouble areas (mostly natural disasters) to help clean up, rebuild, comfort survivors and do whatever else is necessary.

Team Rubicon is composed mostly of former and retired military and first responders, but anyone who wants to help is welcome to apply.

If you'd like to get out of your own 10% and lend a helping hand or even just donate funds, drop by <https://teamrubiconUSA.org>. Just sayin'.

Topic: Some Sources Say

This morning I read a blog post that warns writers away from publishing author newsletters.

The blogger included a couple of quotes from writers who advocate not using an author newsletter. She even referenced Anne R. Allen's recent blog post about readers not wanting a "personal relationship" with authors. Finally she wrote "News flash: Not every reader is a groupie. As a matter of fact, most don't want their privacy violated. Most don't care about an author's personal life."

All of which left me shaking my head.

First of all, when an author shares details (real or fictional) about his or her personal life, how does that "violate" the reader's privacy?

Second, I have to wonder where the blogger came up with the statistic that "most" readers don't care about an author's personal life? Do you suppose she actually interviewed a significant number of readers (say, a million)? Or is it more likely she was just making an unsupported blanket statement?

So here's my own news flash: It isn't your job to pre-judge what readers want to read. Your job is to write. The reader's job is to decide what he or she likes.

Understand, I don't really care what readers want, other than to read my books. But I care a great deal that yet one more respected figure out there is slopping advice on a wall without bothering to think of the impact it might have.

As you probably know, I don't have an author newsletter, though I'm hoping the new manager of my publishing company, StoneThread Publishing, will start one soon specifically to announce and talk about my books. I'm pretty prolific, and books don't announce themselves.

That being said, you also know that for the past few years I've published this Journal almost every day.

Admittedly, the Journal is mostly for writers, but I often publish a “topic” on writing, and in each edition I publish my own numbers, occasional info on my own books, and tidbits about my personal life (vignettes, really).

Some subscribers are here for the writing tips. Some are here for motivation, to see what they can accomplish if they apply themselves and stick to it. Some are here for the personal insights. I suspect many are here for a combination of those.

My point is that blanket statements, by their very nature, are never valid.

The fact is that some readers are naturally curious and want to feel they “know” you better. (As an aside, that doesn’t make them “groupies.”) Other readers couldn’t care less about the personal stuff. And the old truism applies: You can’t please everyone.

So the secret, I think, to writing an author newsletter (or regular blog) is to please yourself and be consistent. And the key to consistency in blogging, as it is in fiction, is to write what you want to write and let the readers decide what they like or don’t like.

If you aren’t comfortable sharing personal information, don’t. If you are, do. My (almost) daily Journal, to me, is chatting over the back fence with friends, some of whom are readers and some of whom are other writers.

And I’m very glad you’re there, no matter the reason.

What has become my normal time for rising in the morning has adjusted recently. I’m more of a 4-5-ish riser now instead of a 2-3-ish riser. That’s odd to me.

I’ve also noticed that other than learning, I’m not getting as much done as I used to either. No particular physical reason. Just a bit of a metamorphosis maybe. So further adjustments are on the way.

I’m also currently striving to learn some things that are required of Team Rubicon applicants. Not sure at this point whether I’ll actually join the team as an on-the-ground member, but we’ll see.

The retired Marine part of me would like to, but in the past few years everything for me has boiled down to a time-investment–reward assessment. Is learning seemingly unuseful information (FEMA stuff) important just to achieve a particular goal? Or maybe I’ll come to realize that what appears to be less-than useful at the moment really is important. Also, maybe more on this later.

For more on getting and being comfortable in your own skin (from the topic above), see “The James Garner Secret” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/09/the-james-garner-secret.html>.

Today is Sunday, so more than likely I will do *poco o nada*.

Talk with you again before too long.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 880

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 374653

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3370

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 250080

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 624733

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Bloggers](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Readers](#), [Team Rubicon](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Monday, September 9

[September 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * From Kristine Kathryn Rusch
- * Daily diary
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

“I went for years not finishing anything. Because, of course, when you finish something you can be judged... I had poems which were re-written so many times I suspect it was just a way of avoiding sending them out.” Erica Jong

So how many times do you have to hear it? From how many “names”? Get over the fear, realize there are no bad consequences for writing and finishing a story or novel, and Just Do It.

From Kristine Kathryn Rusch:

“If you’ve been thinking of trying our online writer’s workshops and lectures, now’s your chance. We have hit (at this typing) 4 stretch goals [in a Kickstarter drive], which means that for as little as \$5, you can get an online writing lecture (your choice) or an online classic writing workshop (your choice). The lecture has a \$50 value and the workshop has a \$150 value. [There will be] more if we hit the fifth stretch goal which, as I type this Sunday afternoon, we’re on the way to doing. So [head on over and see if anything strikes your fancy.](#)”

I had planned to write fiction today, but I ended up doing a bunch of business stuff, primarily transferring some things over from Harvey Stanbrough to StoneThread Publishing. I’m beginning to see clear skies at the horizon though, way out beyond the business clouds. Amazing how much I’ve learned. Enough maybe to settle in a bit and stop being so frantic about it.

And I’ve decided, wisely, I think, to put my pending membership in TeamRubicon on the back burner until I get my IP, business and estate concerns in order and get back to writing fiction. So much to do, so little time.

Just in case you might need it, see “Monday: A Fresh Start” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/monday-a-fresh-start/>. Great way to look at it.

I mentioned this a few days ago, but it bears repeating. If you haven’t read it yet, I strongly recommend you purchase and read M.L. Buchman’s Estate Planning for Authors. You can find ebook and print copies at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B071JKPCLD> and probably at B&N, Kobo and other retailers.

Talk with you again before too long.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 370

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 374653

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3740

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 250450

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 625103

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kickstarter](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [M.L. Buchman](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, September 10](#)

[September 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Persistence pays off
- * Topic: I Do Rattle On
- * For something beautiful
- * The numbers

Persistence pays off in blog-watching. Neil Gaiman is back with “A Long Catch Up...” at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2019/09/a-long-catch-up-and-go-and-see-amanda.html>.

Also check out [Dean's site](#) for a great opportunity.

I also suggest checking out today's PWW post at <https://prowriterswriting.com/witd-a-new-question>. My advice re WITD or don't WITD? Don't get wrapped around the wheel. Just write. Try to do so in a way that the writing is fun.

Topic: I Do Rattle On

Over on PWW today, I ended a comment with an implied apology for rattling-on so much. But I do. I rattle on seemingly endlessly sometimes. In fact, I go on so much that frankly, more often than you probably think, I get tired of hearing my own voice.

I'm passionate about what I do (and how I do it) but passion really is no excuse, is it? When you're boring someone to tears with repeated admonitions, you're boring them to tears, passionate or not.

One person emailed me recently to thank me for advice I'd given him via email. In his response, he also said the best advice (I'd given him) was to “write the next sentence.”

The thing is, today I realized that advice is all but lost on many writers. Everything depends on the writer's process, how he writes or how he wants to write.

If you want to experience the unbridled joy of writing into the dark, the idea is to "write the next sentence," then the next and the next without thinking about it. Just write the next sentence that pops into your head. That's where my advice came from, and that was the spirit in which it was given.

But the unfortunate fact is, some writers "get" writing into the dark and some don't. Some writers eventually come to trust in their own subconscious ability to tell a story and some never quite do. Or another way to say it, some writers get to the place where they trust the characters to tell their own story and others can't quite relinquish their need to levy control over those same characters.

Still, "write the next sentence" is good advice in more ways than one.

For example, you can also write the next sentence that comes to you after you decide whether it will fit (or not) with your carefully plotted outline. Or after you've given that sentence very careful conscious thought in the context of what you want your characters to do next. Or in the context of how you want them to behave. Or how you want the situation to unfold.

Or you can write the next sentence to set up what you have decided will happen in the next scene or the next chapter. Or to lead to the predetermined (by you) end of the story. Or for any other carefully considered purpose.

In other words, you can "write the next sentence" strictly as a way to keep your fingers moving across the keyboard. And if that's you, hey, that's perfectly fine. (And I mean that in the best Shirley Jackson sense.)

Certainly writing the next sentence in any of those ways would address the letter of the law (guideline) to "write the next sentence." But it misses the spirit and intent by a b'jillion miles.

When I advise someone to "just write the next sentence, then the next and the next," the advice is meant as a way to help them learn to trust their subconscious and quiet their conscious, critical mind.

In other words, I say it as a way to help them practice writing into the dark. And I do so because I assume (often erroneously) they actually want to write into the dark.

Why do I recommend writing into the dark? Because doing so flushes all the "work" out of the writing process.

If I had to endure the sheer drudgery of writing word by consciously considered word and sentence by carefully constructed sentence, I simply wouldn't write. I'd find something fun to do instead.

I suppose for some people the drudgery IS fun. If that's the case, by all means please have at it.

But those folks shouldn't ask me for advice, because I'm like the broken record some of us remember: I'll keep saying the same things over and over again in the hopes that you'll get it, because some things are just true no matter what kind of spin you put on them:

1. WHAT you write is not important, ever; at best, any short story is nothing more than a few minutes' entertainment for the reader, a few minutes' escape from real life. And any novel is only a few hours' escape. Any "importance" is assigned by the individual reader, not the writer.

2. THAT you write is what matters, and even that matters only because you call yourself a writer. Whatever profession you choose, you should show up and do the job. Duh.

3. The ability to tell stories doesn't come from the conscious mind; it comes from the subconscious mind. After all, you were making up stories long before you even knew there was an alphabet.

4. Every conscious-mind effort you put into your stories — every editing pass, every rewrite, and every "correction" you make beyond spelling errors and homophone misuses (waste for waist, etc.) — WILL polish part of your unique, original voice off the work. And that's truly ironic, because most rewriting and polishing is done in an effort to "perfect" a manuscript specifically so it will stand out. Sigh.

Look, being a professional fiction writer is among the easiest of gigs. All you really have to do is follow Heinlein's Rules: You must write; you must finish what you write; you must not rewrite (trust yourself and your own voice); you must put what you write on the market; and you must leave it on the market so readers will continue to buy it. That's it.

In other words, all you have to do is learn to let go and have fun.

Fun? But so many writers say writing is "hard work."

Seriously, how "hard" is writing? I mean, it isn't like you're being shot at (emotionally hard) or digging a ditch with a shovel (physically hard) or participating in a council of world leaders trying to solve whatever real or imaginary problem the politicians have created this time (mentally hard).

No. Your sole purpose in life is to sit alone in a room and make shit up. That's it.

You make up a story, slap a cover on it, upload it to Draft2Digital and Amazon, then close the door to your room and make up another one.

That's how hard it is.

But then there's the problem that if something is easy, it lacks value. If that's how you feel, well, you can always MAKE it hard.

Maybe to lend your story a sense of value, you have to think of it as being “important.”

And to make sure it’s important, maybe you spend years writing one novel. Maybe you have to spend untold hours outlining and carefully plotting every twist and turn.

Maybe you have to carefully consider each word and every sentence and every single stinkin’ mark of punctuation. And when you’re finished with your “first draft,” maybe you have to workshop it with a critique group. Then maybe you have to rewrite it until you’ve made it “sound” just like [insert famous name here] whose work you’ve read and enjoyed.

But you enjoyed that work in the first place because it was written in Famous Author’s unique, original voice. Thing is, that writer wrote that way because he or she finally learned at some point to stop polishing that unique voice off the story.

But when you voice any of the objections that many of you are probably thinking right now, any professional fiction writer who knows what he or she is about will smile and say, “Well, every writer’s different.” Because they are.

How different? As different as night and day. As I wrote earlier, some get it and some just don’t.

When I emailed my friend Stefan Kanfer (Google him) about five years ago to tell him I finally learned to Just Tell a Story, he emailed back with a big grin and wrote, “So, you finally got it. Welcome to the big leagues.”

And now, it occurs to me (far too late, of course), that those who “get it” didn’t need any of this at all. And those who don’t get it? Well, they won’t be able to bring themselves to trust anything I’ve written here. (grin)

See? I told you I tend to rattle on.

For something truly beautiful, see “The Currency of Tears” at <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2019/09/09/the-currency-of-tears/>.

Talk with you again before too long.

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco (novel)

Day 8..... 1253 words. Total words to date..... 15916

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 1480

Total fiction words for the month..... 0

Total fiction words for the year..... 374653

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5220

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 251930
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 626583

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Stefan Kanfer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, September 11](#)

[September 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * First, a moment
- * Public Service Announcement of the Day
- * Topic: An Important Post for Writers
- * For yet another
- * I think everyone out there knows
- * The numbers

First, a moment to remember those who lost their lives in a selfish, shameful, cowardly act perpetrated by a few “unspeakable bastards” (as one columnist put it) 18 years ago today. I will personally never forget that day

Neither will I ever forget the brave men who lost their lives needlessly in Benghazi on the same date 11 years later.

Nor will I personally ever forgive those in our own federal government who abandoned those men for political gain. Shame on them. Shame on them.

Public Service Announcement of the Day

See “A Charitable Reminder” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/09/10/a-charitable-reminder/>.

While we're at it, let's advocate stopping ALL violence (not only “gender-based”) against women and ALL children (not only “girls”) worldwide. Just sayin'.

I wasn't planning to post a Journal entry today, but the following topic was too important to skip.

Topic: An Important Post for Writers

First, see Dean's "Dumbest New Myth In Writing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/dumbest-new-myth-in-writing/>.

After you've read it, here's my take, step by step:

Step one: I agree. Duh.

Step two: If you have a good grounding in the rules of grammar and syntax and if you have a good first reader, you can skip the copyeditor. Cost: Free.

Note: If you DO need a copyeditor, yes, about 1/2 cent per word. So going with Dean's example, \$250.

Step three: Vellum is only for Apple (Mac) operating systems. (If you don't have a Mac and you want to use Vellum, see How To Use Vellum On A PC <https://paulteague.com/how-to-use-vellum-on-a-pc/>.)

Also, it isn't difficult to format a Word doc so it will look good in ebook. To learn how, you can download a PDF copy of my free Essentials of Digital Publishing <https://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/DPubV2X.pdf>. Cost: Free.

Note: I don't do paper books, but I suspect Amazon Kindle Print offers extensive guidance. Cost: free.

Step four: Purchase Serif PagePlus X9 <https://store.serif.com/buy/pageplus/> and use it to design your covers. You buy the program outright (not a subscription). Cost: \$20.

Step five: I agree with Dean, but I have to add that there are also royalty-free FREE art sites. Unsplash.com is my favorite. There's also Pixabay and others. Cost: Free.

Step six: Upload the formatted version to D2D, Amazon et al. Cost: Free.

So if you skip Vellum, the total investment to self-publish forever (without copyediting) is Serif PagePlus X9 for only \$20.

With copyediting, you'll have an additional per-book investment of .5 to 1 cent per word. I suspect most readers of this blog do not need a copyeditor.

For yet another idea on publicity and licensing, see "Swell Swag" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/09/swell-swag.html>. I have to wonder whether John Gilstrap licensed his main character to the challenge coin company. (This is something I'm thinking about doing with Charles Claymore Task.) (grin)

I think everyone out there knows it takes me, on average, around 20 days to turn out a 50,000-word novel. So unless it makes a difference to anyone out there, I'm going to discontinue the daily accounting of my fiction on a per-title basis, at least for now.

As an incentive, I'll continue to include my fiction and non-fiction numbers, monthly and annual totals, etc. The current novel is fine. Not stuck or "blocked" or any of that. I'm just not writing fiction at the moment.

Talk with you again before too long.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	580
Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	374653
Total nonfiction words for the month...	5800
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	252510
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	627163
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Friday, September 13

[September 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I had this
- * A special bonus
- * Topic: On Word Choice and Distractions in Fiction
- * Related to today's topic
- * The numbers

I had this short post all set to go out yesterday, then got busy and forgot to post it. And shock of shocks, the world didn't end. (grin) I guess it's all right that I'm not hitting it every day after all.

As a special bonus for those who are hanging-in with the Journal, please be sure to check the comments on Dean's "Dumbest New Myth In Writing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/dumbest-new-myth-in-writing/#comments>. A ton of valuable free information there.

Kris Rusch has [a new Business Musings post](#). If you're a Patreon follower, it's a repeat from there.

Topic: On Word Choice and Distractions in Fiction

Recently much has been written over on [Pro Writers Writing](#) about word choice. I decided to add a few of my own thoughts here.

First, my own rule of thumb: When writing fiction, I try to never put anything on the page that will call attention to itself and thereby distract the reader from the story.

That includes unnecessary or misused punctuation, archaic or pretentious words, archaic constructions, and clichéd words or phrases. Distracting the reader from the story by using anything extraneous is self-defeating. You want readers to be immersed in your story, right? You don't want them to "notice" anything.

I've addressed [Punctuation for Writers](#) and [the use of cliché](#) in other writings. So today I'll talk about words.

I never "search for" a less-common or more-common word. I just write.

Now, that isn't to say that having an extensive vocabulary isn't a good thing — it *is* a good thing because having an extensive vocabulary gives the writer a larger toolbox — but words are still only tools to be used when necessary. While writing, Story is all that matters.

That being said, here are a couple of cases in point from my own experience:

1. Sometimes the specific "right" word I want eludes me.

For example, in the manuscript for my short story "[Keep Calm and Carry On](#)", I wrote GREEN STUFF (in all caps so it would be easy to find later) in a short story manuscript. In the moment, the word I wanted (which was part of my vocabulary) escaped me.

But I couldn't very well have a sniper in the heat of the hunt in a heavily wooded area spotting what might be a human shoulder next to "some green stuff on a rock," could I? So later, when the story was all but finished, I keyed "green stuff on a rock" into a search engine and "lichen" popped up. Yes!

2. At other times, I just get a little too full of myself.

One of my first readers (Thanks, Nan!) dinged me when I wrote in one of my [four Nick Spalding action-adventure novels](#) that a pair of people “secreted” themselves in a hedgerow. She said I might want to use “hid” instead because “secreted” put her in mind of something coming out of the south end of a north-bound snail. (grin)

And she was right. I had used “secreted” just because I like the sound of that word. But it was unnecessary and it jerked at least one reader out of the story. And honestly, it was pretentious for the setting and the situation.

It was also a blatant case of author intrusion. Neither of the protagonists would have used “secreted.”

Almost every time a writer uses a less-common word when a more-common word will do just as well, he comes across as doing so just to show off his vocabulary.

Again, though an extensive vocabulary is a good thing to have, vocabulary in and of itself doesn't matter. What matters is Story.

Here's a blast from the past, also in support of my argument:

In the famous “Dictionary Feud,” William Faulkner once said of Hemingway that the latter had “never been known to use a word that might send the reader to the dictionary.”

For the record, I thought that was a silly statement when I read it. Why would any fiction writer want to send a reader to a dictionary? My job as a fiction writer is to entertain, period, not to educate. Intentionally using a word that would send the reader to a dictionary would be self-defeating in that it would interrupt the reading of the work.

Hemingway responded with “Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use.”

The writer is the first (and worst) judge of his own work. The reader makes the final determination. As fictionists, we would do well to embrace the notion that we are entertainers, pure and simple.

Addendum: Another thought occurred to me some four-plus hours after I originally posted this edition. That thought is this:

In every case, a voice (and its attendant vocabulary) should change with the character and the story. After all, the voice in the novel is not the voice of the author but the voice of the POV character.

Above, I mentioned that neither of the protagonists in my Nick Spalding series would have used the word “secreted” when what they meant was “hid.” Nor would the professional military sniper during the hunt for another sniper have beheld lichen on a large rock and said or thought that it was “green stuff on a rock.”

Every word that goes on a manuscript page must be filtered through the POV character’s mind, and through his physical and emotional senses. So there you are.

As a final note, essays (like this one) are the proper venue for instruction. Fiction, not so much.

Related to today’s topic, I received the following tasty morsel for wordophiles from a friend via email:

Another lasting tribute to the Battle of Marathon is the word “panic,” which stems from the [messenger] Pheidippides [who] according to legend, met the God Pan on his way to or from Sparta where he had been sent to seek aid from the Spartans for the coming battle.

The Spartans refused to assist Athens, but the interaction between Pan and Pheidippides included Pan asking why Athens did not honor and pray to him.

Pheidippides promised the God that henceforth Athens would well remember Pan in their prayers and praise.

Pan, believing the brave runner was truthful, assisted at the Battle of Marathon by instilling fear in the Persian soldiers, a fear we now call “panic” in honor of the God’s name.

Who knew?

Talk with you again before too long.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	980
Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	374653
Total nonfiction words for the month...	6780
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	254390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	628143
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Words and Word Choice](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, September 14](#)

[September 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I decided yesterday
- * Topic: On "Intertextuality"
- * My son and grandson
- * The numbers

I decided yesterday to write a Journal post for today when I received Jane Friedman's "The People in Publishing I Learn From," which you can find at <https://www.janefriedman.com/people-in-publishing-i-learn-from/>. I strongly recommend it.

The fact that she listed Kris Rusch hooked me on checking out the other people and links she mentioned.

Also see Michael Lockhart's "No, But I Saw the Movie" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/no-but-i-saw-the-movie/>. And you might want to read my comment.

Topic: On "Intertextuality"

Yep. Intertextuality.

If it sounds like one of those words that are coined in a critic's lair or a college classroom, well, it is.

But it's useful to explain a connection, which it very nearly does almost by itself.

Before I get too deep into this, let me say up front, this probably won't help your writing even one iota.

Intertextuality is one of those concepts about which probably thousands of scholarly writers have written thousands of scholarly essays and never said anything significant at all. (grin)

That being said, it's an interesting concept to explore for those times when you want to let your mind wander around studying odd things.

Or maybe when you're one on one or two with writer friends and you want to explore a concept that isn't really ABOUT writing but one that RESULTS from writing.

Intertextuality simply means that one "text" is related to another, um, intertextually.

In the collegiate or critics' ivory towers where students and other deconstructionists regularly discuss this stuff, the original "text" is an initial actual event—say a sunrise or an explosion or a car wreck—as it is perceived (viewed, heard, smelled, tasted, or felt, physically or emotionally) by an observer.

What results from that observation (even if what results is only a dream or memory) is automatically a second "text."

After that, in the third "text" (if there is one), we get into what folks like you and I consider "texts."

For example, say a poet sees a sunrise (the original "text") and is inspired to write a poem. The resulting poem (the third text) is intertextually related to the original text (the actual sunrise) and the poet's thoughts about it or memory of it (the second text).

A fictionist happens across the poem and writes a short story based on it. Then another writer reads the poem or the short story and writes a novel based on it. So the short story and the novel are intertextually related to each other and to the poem and to the original text, the sunrise.

See what I mean about connections? Come to think of it, the concept of intertextuality is a way of saying everything is plagiarized. Huh.

(Of course, nothing about this is meant to forgive the intentional theft of words in a particular sequence for use by the thief in a "new" work.)

Maybe a better way to say it is "The concept of intertextuality is a way of saying everything is inspired by other, earlier texts."

Come to think of it, everything we write—every word we put on the page—is directly connected to something we've seen, heard, tasted, smelled or touched (or felt, emotionally) at some time in our past.

Or to something we imagined as a result of having had that initial contact.

I use those connections a lot. Which is to say, a lot of my work is intertextually related to other works, either my own or other's.

I was reminded of this whole concept when I was looking through some old files for items to include in upcoming issues of Stanbrough Monthly Reader.

In the now-defunct Candlelight Poetry Journal, I happened upon a poem by Robert Bowles titled “In Pamplona.” Great poem.

Alongside it was printed my “response poem,” titled “For Robert Bowles’ Pamplona Dream.” My response, of course, was intertextually related to Robert’s original poem and whatever event or thought gave rise to it (I never knew).

All of that happened back in the mid-to-late 1990s.

Flash forward to mid-2014. That’s when I wrote a short story called “Old Suits.” It was all about running with the bulls in Pamplona. Or rather, watching the running of the bulls in Pamplona and, of course, the effect that event (the watching) had on the characters.

What have you written that’s intertextually related to something else? I invite your comments, but even if you don’t comment you might want to explore the concept on your own a bit.

But don’t get a headache.

My son and grandson are visiting today and I’m taking a trip starting on Monday, so I’ll talk with you again when I can.

Keep writing!

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	780
Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	374653
Total nonfiction words for the month...	7560
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	254270
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	628923
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Intertextuality](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Sunday, September 15

September 15, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

- * Again, I just HAD to
- * Quote of the Day
- * For anyone out there
- * Yesterday
- * The numbers

Again, I just HAD to write a Journal entry. You'll see why.

Quote of the Day

“We have to dare to be ourselves, however frightening or strange that self may prove to be.”
May Sarton in *The Journal of a Solitude* (Thanks, Sam T!)

Not really about writing, but when I read it my thoughts went immediately to a character who might have that philosophy. Might even make a great intro to a story.

For anyone out there still looking to major traditional publishers for your salvation, check The Passive Guy's “Why Angry Librarians Are Going to War With Publishers Over E-Books” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-angry-librarians-are-going-to-war-with-publishers-over-e-books/>. My first thought? What the hell is WRONG with these (publishing) people?

If you love Hemingway, or if you want to learn more about writing, I encourage you to read “Last Words: Those Hemingway wrote, and those he didn't” at <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1998/11/09/last-words-6>. (Thanks, Gary V!)

If the page suddenly morphs into a strong-arm subscription portal (as it did for me), close it and click the link again. Then quickly Select All (Ctrl+A), Copy (Ctrl+C) and paste into a Word or other document (Ctrl+V). Then you can read it at your leisure.

Yesterday, with Mona and with my son and grandson here, we turned to fence repair and yard work. I put in (for me) a full day's physical labor, wielding in turn a shovel, a machete, post-hole diggers, etc. for about 5 hours. It was both more than enough and wonderful. I haven't been able to do that sort of thing for the past two years or so.

As a bonus, I wasn't nearly as sore this morning as I thought I'd be. Spiritually, it was an uplifting experience.

This morning we'll build a gate and hang it.

Talk with you again soon.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	320
Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	374653
Total nonfiction words for the month...	7880
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	254590
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	629243
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

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

[The Journal, Monday, September 16](#)

[September 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: I'm Finally Convinced
- * Yesterday
- * In my reading this morning
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

Via The Passive Voice, "There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that receives it." Edith Wharton

Which coined this thought in my mind: Most writers won't risk the benefit of light. They blow out the candle and huddle safely in the corner of the room, secure in doing the same worn-out things in the same worn-out ways, then wonder why they aren't successful.

Topic: I'm Finally Convinced

Writers either “get” Writing Into the Dark (WITD) or they don’t. Which means once they’re made aware of it, they will either set their fears aside and honestly try it or they won’t. So I’m no longer in the conversion business.

When I preach WITD, I say that I personally would no more force events or dialogue on my characters than I would try to force my neighbors to live their lives the way I want them to. So it is with trying to force other writers to write into the dark.

Not that I personally am abandoning WITD. Ain’t gonna happen. (grin) Unless you’re a masochist, WITD is the only way to write fiction AND enjoy every step of the process.

I don’t outline or otherwise figure out what’s going to happen in advance for the same reason I don’t read a novel for which I already know all the plot points or watch a film after someone’s told me the ending. Why would I? I’d be bored the whole time.

And if writing was boring — if it wasn’t fun and entertaining for me — I wouldn’t write. Even when I’m not writing, I get an adrenaline rush from anticipating what might happen when I sit down at the keyboard.

But I also know of writers who spend months outlining. Then they write word-by-specially-chosen-word and sentence-by-meticulously-crafted-sentence. Every word is perfect, every sentence exact. Their work is just that earth-shakingly “important,” or as one writer put it, their words are just that “precious.”

And then, having labored their way through two or three hundred words per day over those meticulously crafted sentences, they still rewrite several times because they’ve been told they “have to.”

Writing a short story takes those writers a week or two (or longer), and writing a novel can take from one to several years.

IF the work is ever finally finished and published (and that’s a huge IF), it’s STILL only a few minutes’ entertainment (short story) or hours’ (novel) entertainment for the reader, and the READER still decides what is “good” or not.

But maybe worst of all, if the writer can anticipate what’s coming next in a written work, so can the reader. Only by writing into the dark can the writer retain her unique, original voice and surprise the reader.

I know what I’m talking about here folks. I spent over forty years of my life in a fog that smelled like bovine excrement, writing and rewriting a few short stories and “planning” a novel. None of the stories were ever submitted, much less published. The novel was never written.

I finally got serious and became a real fiction writer after I found and adopted [Heinlein’s Rules](#). And once I found and tried WITD, the fog finally lifted and I started turning out fiction that has earned rave reviews from most of those who read it. Who can ask for more than that?

As a result of my belief in myself and my own unique voice (both of which I only discovered when I started writing into the dark five years ago in October), I've written and published almost 50 novels, 8 novellas, and almost 200 short stories.

It takes me 2 to 6 hours (one day) to write a short story in one clean draft. It takes me 40 to 80 hours to write a novel, again in one clean draft. The longest novel I've written took 32 days.

Yet I do all sorts of other "life" things. I do chores around the house, watch television, see movies, go shopping, go camping, etc.

But as I wrote at the outset, I'm no longer in the conversion business. Try it, don't try it, completely up to you.

After all, the initial decision to push aside the conscious, critical mind in favor of trusting your subconscious storyteller is not easy to do, and it's an ongoing process. To borrow an old truism, if WITD was easy, everybody would be doing it.

The thing is, once you actually learn to trust the worth of your own subconscious, WITD *IS* easy. Because it's natural.

But as I said, many writers will continue to take the easier, less-threatening path and write as their English teachers and other nonwriters taught them. And that's fine with me.

Every writer is different. Some writers are able to trust their characters (their own creative subconscious) or and some aren't. Shrug. To each his own.

If you're one of the fortunate few who really want to try WITD, I'd be happy to teach you. We can either do a formal, paid mentorship or I'll answer any questions (free) you'd care to toss my way.

Either way is fine. But you have to have skin in the game or it won't be important to you. Neither I nor anyone else can guarantee your success. That's up to you.

Yesterday my son and I got the gate built and hung. We had to dig yet another posthole and set a new post too, something we didn't anticipate. But the whole thing looks and works great now. (Thanks, Roy!)

I was scheduled to go camping for a few days starting today, but due to family concerns (and me being tired and sore) I postponed that. (Sorry, Dan.)

My vacation continues. When I come back to writing, I will probably start a new novel. Eventually I'll finish my current WIP, but that will happen sometime in the future. I think I want to write in a new world for awhile.

In my reading this morning I happened across “3 Critical Things You Won’t Learn in an MFA Program.” You can find it at <https://www.janefriedman.com/what-you-dont-learn-mfa-programs/> just in case you might get something from it.

What popped out at me is that tradpub editors read story openings “quickly but closely, alert for the sort of prose that signals a unique voice....”

Duh. For years tradpubs have said they’re looking for a unique voice, yet for years they’ve also advised workshopping, rewriting, etc. All of which polishes off that unique voice. Maybe their way of thinning the herd? After all, the more “same” submissions they get, the less time they have to spend reading them.

As a reader, I too look for a unique author’s voice. It’s easy for me to spot something that’s been polished until it reads like everything else in the genre. When I do, I give up on that author forever. In short, when I know an author doesn’t care enough about her story to trust her own unique voice, why should I bother reading her work?

Know how to retain your “unique voice”? There’s only one way: WITD.

Talk with you again soon.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1050
Total fiction words for the month.....	0
Total fiction words for the year.....	374653
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8930
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	255640
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	630293
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, September 17](#)

[September 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * I experienced a major epiphany
- * The numbers

Quote of the Day

Again via The Passive Voice, "No insect hangs its nest on threads as frail as those which will sustain the weight of human vanity." Edith Wharton

This is the sort of thought that strikes me every time I hear a fiction writer refer to what he does as "hard work." Such an appellation is nothing more than an attempt on two fronts to validate what the fiction writer does for a living.

On the first front, maybe saying writing is hard work keeps him from feeling guilty. After all, how can one feel guilty if one is doing "Hard Work"?

On the other front, I suppose it's a way of yelling to the world, "What I do is Important!"

How presumptuous, and how very silly.

Anyone who's ever wielded the working end of a shovel for even a few hours knows that writing fiction is not "hard work," or any kind of work for that matter.

And it's probably difficult for anyone who's served as a first responder or worked a shift in a hospital to consider creating something so trivial as a moment's entertainment "important."

A story is roughly as important as a song or a film or a sculpture or a still life in oil on canvas. In other words, it isn't.

I mention this only to free-up those of us who are fortunate enough to be fiction writers. We don't have to make every word perfect. We don't have to write polished, grammatically correct sentences.

We only have to convey the stories our characters give us, breathe, eat and sleep.

I experienced a major epiphany this morning.

I realized that many writers and ALL would-be writers hear what they want to hear, believe what they want to believe, and—most importantly—*flock to advice they're comfortable with.*

I was no exception, I'm sure, before I found Heinlein's Rules and Writing Into the Dark. Practicing those required a great leap of faith. And discovering for myself that they actually work made me hungry for knowledge.

Then came a transition period, during which I held my own feet to the fire publicly in this Journal. At the same time I began to seek out those who are much farther along the road than I. When I find them, I pay rapt attention to (and pass along) whatever they say. I also read their fiction and pay close attention to how they do what they do.

But until I made that leap of faith, I didn't do those things. Like most everyone else, I stuck with advice with which I was comfortable. Non-threatening advice. Advice to do the same old things in the same old way and hope someday they'd work.

Mostly that advice bounces back and forth at writers' conferences, in writers' groups and in critique groups, basically the blind leading the blind. Meaning they all tell each other the same things they initially learned from non-writers. It's a self-perpetuation machine. And again, I was no exception.

But once I found HR and WITD and learned that they actually work, I also learned the value of practice. My skills and knowledge quickly grew, and soon I became one of those writers from whom some others seek advice. How weird is that? And I gladly pay it forward in both mentoring and in free advice.

But it's also been bugging me that so many writers who are not as far along the road and who know me will actually still give me advice that I tried and discarded a lifetime ago. (grin) Historically, it's been difficult for me to smile, nod, and go on about my business.

Then my epiphany happened this morning and I figured it all out. I realized the epiphany is part and parcel of a new growth spurt. As is my recent slacking off on the Journal and my need to not write for awhile and my need to start separating myself from the end results of the advice I hand out. ("Some writers 'get' WITD and others just don't.") It's all one big package, and this morning it all came together when I heard (read) yet another Stage Two writer advising others to do something that flat doesn't work.

I'm glad for the epiphany, and I'm glad for all the stuff that led up to it. I wrote fiction today for the first time in a very long time (for me). I'm excited about writing again.

It hit me too that of the writers I admire (with the notable exception of DWS) either don't hand out advice at all or they do so only rarely. Probably because they're too busy writing.

Or maybe because they learned at some point, as I finally have, that most writers flock to advice they're comfortable with and treat sage advice from seasoned writers who've been there and done that like so much nonsensical verbiage. (grin)

Talk with you later. 'Til then, keep writing and learning.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	2245
Nonfiction words today.....	1030
Total fiction words for the month.....	2245
Total fiction words for the year.....	376898
Total nonfiction words for the month...	9680
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	256390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	633288
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

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

[The Journal, Wednesday, September 18](#)

[September 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I didn't plan
- * The numbers

I didn't plan to be back today with a Journal entry, but a comment on yesterday's post... well, it's as if I wrote "blue" and the commenter read "xvhbzrr."

It doesn't really matter except that it also vividly illustrates exactly the attitude I was talking about in yesterday's post.

You can read the comment that prompted my response at <https://hestanbrough.com/the-journal-tuesday-september-17/#comments>.

Here's my response:

First, every post I've ever written is aimed at writers who at least believe they want to be professional fiction writers. Hobbyists and those who write memoir only for their family are fine, but those aren't the writers I'm advising.

Second, OF COURSE writing into the dark “terrified” your outliner. Of course it did. It terrifies thousands of outliners, maybe millions. Because like everyone else alive today, your outliner was taught to second-guess every single stinking thing he writes. He was taught to not trust his subconscious storyteller. He was taught that a writer can’t possibly turn out a good story without input from critique groups and without rewrites. Just like all the rest of us were taught. By non-writers. Duh.

As for “...when the process goes awry and the story stops working. There is no advice for a pantser about how to troubleshoot this, other than ‘you have to outline.’”

You’re kidding, right? If you truly TRUST your subconscious mind, the “process” CAN’T “go awry.” That’s the whole point of WITD. And if a story “stops working” or grinds to a halt, here’s the advice (I’ve been saying this for five years, and DWS and others have been saying it much longer):

1. Trust your subconscious and write the next sentence.
2. If no next sentence comes, read back a bit and you’ll find where the scene ended.
3. Write the first sentence of the next scene and keep going. But TRUST in yourself is at the core.

All of that being said, it doesn’t bother me professionally if a writer chooses to spend a few months outlining and then a few years writing a novel, all because he can’t bring himself to trust in his own abilities. It does bother me personally. For example, I could never be friends with that writer because I can’t handle being around people who are scared of their own shadow.

But the point of my epiphany was how self-sabotaging so many writers are. They continually, literally take advice from non-writers on how to write fiction, and they IGNORE advice from actual long-term fiction writers who are successful in the field: writers like Heinlein and Asimov and King and Higgins and Child and DWS and Kris Rusch. It’s exactly like choosing to take legal advice from your plumber because the plumber says what you want to hear instead of getting advice from your brother who’s been a successful attorney for 20+ years. And that (and your comment) tells me I’m basically beating my head against the wall.

But I can even shake off my desire to care about and try to help those folks. If someone else’s decision doesn’t affect my income or my production, what do I care? (On a side note, DWS was SO right five years ago when he advised me against trying to teach WITD.)

I do get frustrated at second-stage (and even first-stage) writers who perpetuate the myths and hand out advice like candy. I get much more upset with them than with those writers who unwittingly accept that crappy advice.

BUT... I’ve got mine. I took a chance and was richly rewarded with the freedom that comes with writing into the dark. If others are too timid to try it, that’s their problem. I’ll still help the few who ask, but that’s the extent of my commitment.

To play with a Titanic analogy, I'm tired of trying to pull people into the lifeboat even as they fight me off. Those who are willing to scramble aboard are welcome. The others? Well, they'll continue to toss excuses back and forth while the ship sinks in the background and the flotsam they're clinging to becomes waterlogged. There's nothing I can do for them.

Folks, I'm more than happy to help anyone who wants to learn the freedom of quieting the critical voice and writing into the dark.

You can sign up for mentoring OR you can just send me questions via email. No problem.

Talk with you again when I have something useful to say. I'm headed back to my WIP. (grin)

Oh, in the meantime, if you aren't following DWS' blog, I recommend checking out "The Math" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-math/>. Apparently some traditionally published author is whining that he or she "didn't know" what would happen if s/he published traditionally. Sigh.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... XXXX (too early to report)
Nonfiction words today..... 800

Total fiction words for the month..... 2245
Total fiction words for the year..... 376898
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 257190
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 634088

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

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

[The Journal, Thursday, September 19](#)

[September 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Why I'm Here, Doing What I Do
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

I just saw this in a comment (by someone other than me) on one of Dean's posts. It was too good not to pass along in light of comments I've received here recently:

"It's not rocket science. Why don't people listen to you? What possible nefarious agenda could you have?" Cora

Exactly.

Topic: Why I'm Here, Doing What I Do

How other writers write doesn't matter to Dean Wesley Smith and it doesn't matter to me.

We both pass along what we know, which are often different things, but there is no nefarious intent.

I won't get rich if everyone who reads this begins writing into the dark. I won't lose money if nobody does.

With my warped sense of humor, I find it funny when people "disagree" with what I write here, especially about writing into the dark. I most often shake my head and laugh.

Because if you think about it, I'M the one who's disagreeing — I disagree with almost everything that passes for "common wisdom" among writers. Because that common wisdom is only a few decades old and was started by non-writers.

To me, it simply doesn't make sense to take direction on writing from a non-writer or from amateur or beginning or novice writers who are at your same level or on a level behind you.

I don't ask legal advice from my plumber or plumbing advice from my attorney. I don't ask carpentry advice from an automobile mechanic or vice versa. And I don't ask an English teacher (and I've BEEN an English teacher) how to write fiction, though I might well turn to her for advice on how to write a sentence or where to place a period or a question mark if I didn't already know those things.

But frankly, for advice on fiction writing, I wish (*wish WISH*) I'd stumbled across a blog exactly like this one 20 or 30 or 40 years ago.

I wish I'd found Heinlein's Rules back in the day. I wish I'd realized my creative subconscious has been taking in Story since before I could walk. I wish I'd understood that same creative

subconscious has been TELLING stories since before I knew there even was an alphabet. I wish I'd found someone who would continue to repeat those concepts until I got them.

But I didn't.

However, I DID find those things a very short 5 years ago. Fortunately, when I found them, I was smart enough to grab them, hold on tight, and not look back.

All I'm trying to do in this Journal is pass along to you what I didn't finally realize until 5 years ago. I get zero personal benefit from it, other than a good feeling from paying it forward.

But please understand, what you do with what you learn here and whether you do anything at all with it is completely up to you.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	3753
Total fiction words for the year.....	378406
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10980
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	257690
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	636096
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

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

[The Journal, Friday, September 20](#)

[September 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * A few words of advice
- * I recommend
- * The numbers

A few words of advice for those who are sticking to their guns re traditional publishing — I recommend you subscribe to the [Authors Publish Magazine](#) newsletter. It's free, and at least

once each week they do a write-up on markets that are open to submissions in various genres, both literary and commercial.

I had toyed with the idea of sending one of my novels the tradpub route. However, I have learned how to do everything myself; as a result I retain all net royalties plus ownership of my copyright. To me, personally, that's important.

So I'm no longer entertaining the notion of submitting work to even small tradpubs who accept unagented submissions.

In my case, I stall when I see their requirements: royalty share, the fact that they get my work into fewer sales venues than I can, and slickly worded language regarding ownership of my copyright.

But if you'd rather not learn to do everything yourself, this might be a viable alternative.

Just trying to cover all bases here.

I recommend reading the new comments on "The Math" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-math/#comments>.

Then read "The Math Post... Some Additions" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-math-post-some-additions/>.

I also recommend "How Do You Keep Track When WITD" and the comments at <https://prowriterswriting.com/how-do-you-keep-track-when-witd/>. Good stuff there, including at least three ways of creating what I call a "reverse outline."

For those of you who might find it useful, here's an offer from Steven Pressfield: <https://blackirishbooks.com/jabs>. (I'm not an affiliate and get nothing from this referral.)

If you're interested in writing SF, you might want to check out "Artificial Intelligence is Your Mentor" (a short video) at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/artificial-intelligence-is-your-mentor/>. Wow. I'll be watching this one a few times.

For more inspiration, see "The Universe in a Sentence: On Aphorisms" (and the comments) at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-universe-in-a-sentence-on-aphorisms/>.

That's all for today. Talk with you again later.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month..... 3753
Total fiction words for the year..... 378406
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11300

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 258010
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 636416

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, September 24](#)

[September 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Today's Journal is mostly
- * Topic: Have Faith
- * Still mostly on hiatus
- * The numbers

Quotes of the Day

Via The Passive Voice,

“It all began with Adam. He was the first man to tell a joke—or a lie. How lucky Adam was. He knew when he said a good thing, nobody had said it before. Adam was not alone in the Garden of Eden, however, and does not deserve all the credit; much is due to Eve, the first woman, and Satan, the first consultant.” Mark Twain

“The cure for anything is salt water — sweat, tears, or the sea.” Karen Blixen (This may well be my new favorite quote.)

Today's Journal is mostly a compilation of links I think you will find helpful.

Especially if you are not in Dean's Licensing Transition course, do yourself a favor and see “Playing with Numbers and Math” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/playing-with-numbers-and-math/>. If you have created ANY IP at all, this is important.

See “Questions for Indie Authors” (and the comments) at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/questions-for-indie-authors/>.

See “100,000 Faces Generated By Ai Free For Any Use” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/100000-faces-generated-by-ai-free-for-any-use/>. TPG mentioned that some of the faces have “artifacts that tell you this is not a real person.” Which started my mind spinning.

See “Don’t be Afraid to Go There in Your Writing” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/09/dont-be-afraid-to-go-there-in-your-writing.html> in which James Scott Bell alludes to Wilhelm’s Law.

Finally, you might check Nate Hoffelder’s “10 Tips for authors going to their first book fair” at <https://preview.mailerlite.com/h3j7r1/1250156267767338694/i6p7/>.

Topic: Have Faith

This was prompted by a conundrum a friend found himself in. Basically, he endured a technical glitch caused by a Windows update. It was frightening for him, and I understand why. He temporarily lost his WIP, and permanently lost part of it. You can read his post on PWW at <https://prowriterswriting.com/a-cautionary-tale/>.

Here’s my comment, amended a bit:

From a strictly philosophical standpoint, I believe things happen for a reason even when that reason is not readily apparent.

Especially when writing into the dark, when the book is finished, I believe the pure story exists as it was meant to exist, even if we have to recast the part of it that was lost due to a technical glitch, etc. And of course, recasting that part leads to a different “future” in the story, etc.

For one thing, what we perceive as a technical glitch might well be a “test” of sorts, administered by some extra-dimensional source. Do I believe in extra-dimensional sources? Not necessarily, but then again, who knows? The longer I live, the more I realize I don’t know. What’s left is what I believe.

I believe the only thing that will change a story from its original intended form is the author or others exerting undue external influence on it. (Yes, the finished story will still exist, but not in its original, unique vision.)

For just one example, my own WIP might not have been quite the same story had I continued writing it straight through instead of taking the hiatus from which I’m currently (and finally) emerging. That faith is one reason I haven’t been overly worried about not writing fiction for awhile.

The story definitely would not have been the same had I tried to consciously think my way through it when I came back to it. Then it would have been MY story, not my characters’ story.

But then, I've come to trust (have faith in) the process.

So when I returned to the story after basically two months' absence, I read the last few paragraphs of the previous chapter, then wrote the next sentence the characters gave me. The story is flowing nicely now (as it was before the hiatus) and around 6,000 words farther along.

Don't get too wrapped around the wheel of process, folks. I hope you know the unbridled joy of writing into the dark, but that's all up to you. The bottom line is Just Write and don't sweat the small stuff. Remember, what you write isn't important. Someone out there will love it, most will like it, and a few will hate it. What's important is THAT you write.

Still mostly on hiatus out here but slowly emerging. I return to the WIP off and on, writing a bit of fiction. I think I'm building my way back into writing fiction every day. Overriding everything is my unreasoning fear of the relatively minor medical procedure I'll have on October 3. It seems always in the back of my mind.

Publishing tasks, including putting together the Stanbrough Monthly Reader, has taken an even deeper back seat for the moment. I spend most of the day doing mundane but necessary tasks or nothing at all. But the current and next story are always in the back of my mind.

The upshot is, I suspect (and feel I "know") everything will come together again before too long, though I'm not sure what form "everything" will take when I emerge from this transition.

But I can say I know (have faith) it will include writing, publishing (and otherwise licensing) and marketing my fiction, probably at a higher rate than before. "Higher" meaning both faster and with an improved skillset.

You know how children (at least boys) tend to stop growing "up" and grow "out" for a little while just before a growth spurt? I think I'm in one of those, in a literary-career sense.

I'm sharing all of this in case you find yourself going through a similar stage someday so maybe you'll know it's "normal" or at least that it happened to someone else.

On a personal note, we had a great weekend. My son Roy visited on Saturday, and on Sunday Mona and I went to Sierra Vista (we've come to think of it as St. David West) to view the Downton Abbey movie. If you enjoyed the series, the movie was great. If you've never heard of the series, the movie was still great, and watching the film won't ruin the series for you.

Today is a cloudy, drizzly, smudged-sky kind of day as Lorena passes over. Of course, all the exciting hurricane stuff is gone. We're putting up with Tropical Depression Lorena, and I've never been adequately good with depressed women. (grin)

Talk with you again later.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	5578
Total fiction words for the year.....	380231
Total nonfiction words for the month...	12350
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	259060
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	639291
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, September 25](#)

[September 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * I haven't featured
- * Rambling
- * The numbers

I haven't featured Lee Lofland for awhile in this Journal despite regularly receiving his posts in my inbox.

Lee is a retired detective with about a million years' experience. I feel fortunate to have his inadvertent input for my crime and detective novels. His most recent offering, "Shooting Fish in a Barrel: Repeat Offenders," is worth a look. See <https://www.leelofland.com/shooting-fish-in-a-barrel-repeat-offenders/>.

Goodreads ticks me off. There, I said it. I've had an account with them for several years, but when I tried to log in today they said my login info was wrong and prompted me to log in with Amazon or Facebook. And frankly, it isn't worth the effort. Assbags.

Today I'll meet with a mentoring student for a couple of hours. The face to face is nice because with the immediacy we discuss little nuances that might not come up in email discussions.

I'm still taking on mentoring students, but not for long. If you want to come aboard, email me (harvestanbrough@gmail.com). If you're regional, we can meet from time to time to enhance email communications. If not, there's always the phone.

Be sure to see the comments at <https://www.deanwesleymath.com/playing-with-numbers-and-math/#comments>.

Then read "Licenses Are Not The Ends of Roads" at <https://www.deanwesleymath.com/licenses-are-not-the-ends-of-roads/>. The article is much better written than the title. (grin)

The novel continues to move along well, a little here, a little there. No new fiction numbers to report today because I'm posting this early.

Tomorrow I'll be interviewed (and recorded) for The Prolific Writer podcast. I look forward to it. The podcast itself will go "live" in a few weeks. In case you want to hear my cranky old voice, I'll let you know here when and where to listen when Ryan tells me.

Talk with you again later.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	5578
Total fiction words for the year.....	380231
Total nonfiction words for the month...	12680
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	259390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	639621
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

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

The Journal, Friday, September 27

[September 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: On Licensing
- * Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow
- * The numbers

Topic: On Licensing

Yesterday, I talked with my wife about separating our professional income from licensing my IP from our personal income from a variety of sources (my social security, my USMC retirement, her day job, and so on). In any business, this is necessary.

She mentioned that we currently have two registered LLCs: StoneThreadPublishing.com (hereafter referred to as STP) and HarveyStanbrough.com (hereafter referred to as HS.com). And she argued that income derived from STP is professional income, but income derived from HS.com (mentoring, teaching, etc.) is personal income.

As the situation currently stands, she's right. And wow, am I ever leaving a lot of money on the table, mostly in the form of taxes. And I'd never thought of it like that. In my mind, the STP and HS.com were not separate entities.

After all, each website basically mimics the other. At least I direct readers of my author website to my publisher website to buy books, but my IP (none of it) is "officially" licensed by contract to STP. And that too is necessary in business.

So I have to do that. I have to draw up a contract for each piece of my IP, then license that IP from Harvey Stanbrough the author to Harvey Stanbrough the CEO of STP.

Fortunately, all of my major works—novels, novellas, short story collections and poetry collections—are listed on the STP website. So at least that much is done.

However, my audio lectures (each is a separate IP) are listed only on my author website, as are my advice-to-writers blog (though those are not monetized) and my individual short stories. Gasp.

Eventually, I'll set up a full C corporation for StoneThread Publishing. But on my way to doing that, I have some major reorganization to do.

And more thinking to do. For example, if I write a short story, submit it to Asimov's and it's accepted, as things currently stand I'm personally licensing that short story to Asimov's. So any payment for that license would be personal income. Meaning that I, not STP, would have to pay taxes on it.

So in the midst of continuing my current WIP and all the other things I have to do, I'm also only beginning to wrap my mind around all I have to do with an eye toward being in business.

And frankly, I'm almost overwhelmed.

After all, I have probably around 1,000 bits of individual IP.

For example, I need to license not only The Wes Crowley Saga to STP, but also the 11 individual novels (that's 12) and the major characters' names (Western Z. Crowley and Coralín, to name only two) (that's 14). Then there's the Blackwell Ops series (plus its currently 7 novels and the 7 major character names), the Nick Spalding series (plus its currently 4 novels and 2 major character names), etc. etc. ad nauseam.

That's a lot of contracts to print and sign and file.

Plus my (currently 11 or 12) audio lectures, plus my 15 or so nonfiction books, plus my 30 short story collections, plus my almost 200 short stories, etc. Do you begin to see the problem? (grin)

I admit it's a nice problem to have. Then again, I mention this only because it's a problem I didn't have to have. And it's a problem you can avoid with just a little advanced thought.

If you currently have only a few pieces of IP, I urge you to start now. Give some thought to a unique publisher name, and begin thinking of it as a licensing entity.

When I set up STP as a full corporation (C, not LLC), it will be my licensing entity as well as a tax shelter. I'll license ALL of my IP to StoneThread Publishing, Inc.

But in the meantime, I need to clean up those areas where the two "me's" are overlapping. Wish me luck.

I took yesterday off mostly, other than the brief discussion that started the thought firestorm above.

I also talked for an hour or so with Ryan J. Pelton, the gracious host of The Prolific Writer podcast, and he recorded our conversation. It will be a few weeks before the podcast goes live. I'll pass along the link here when he sends it to me. (I can't believe how much New Mexico "twang" is still in my voice.)

Today I'll spend some time on the novel, then begin working to separate my author self from my publisher entity.

Tomorrow (or thereabouts) I'll be back with another topic about the podcast, the wisdom of appropriate preparation, and having confidence in your (my) own abilities and knowledge... or not.

But for now I want to get this out so I don't forget. (grin) I'll update fiction numbers tomorrow.

Talk with you again later.

Of Interest

See “Hallelujah and Eureka!” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/hallelujah-and-eureka/>, in which Robert Sadler lays out a new (to me) method for proofreading your work.

See “Edmund Gosse Explains Things So Well” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/edmund-gosse-explains-things-so-well/>.

See “10 Reasons Readers Unsubscribe From Newsletters” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/09/10-reasons-readers-unsubscribe-from-newsletters/>.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	5578
Total fiction words for the year.....	380231
Total nonfiction words for the month...	13450
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	260250
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	640481
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, September 28](#)

[September 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Nothing today
- * Topic: What I Missed
- * Oh, the rough night?
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

Nothing today other than the topic below and whatever’s in Of Interest. Had a rough night last night.

Topic: What I Missed

There are two key parts to this topic: preparation and confidence in one's self and one's abilities. Naturally, the former fuels the latter. If you are appropriately prepared, you have more confidence in what you do. More confidence that you will be successful.

Preparation is key. Anyone who's ever taken an exam in school understands that studying and learning, not cramming, constitutes true, valuable preparation.

I forgot that, apparently, with regard to my recent interview for The Prolific Writer podcast. And the interview (in my opinion) suffered as a result.

I got flustered. I rambled. A lot. I forgot things.

And I have no excuse. None. Ryan J. Pelton, the gracious host, sent me some questions a week or so in advance, ostensibly to help me prepare.

And I did, to some degree. I copied and pasted the questions from his email into a Notepad document, then wrote out my responses. One by one. In order.

So I thought I was prepared. I thought I'd studied.

But I didn't. I crammed.

When I called in to the show for the interview, Ryan first talked with me briefly as if to put me at ease.

No problem there, of course. As you all know, I'm an old hand at running my gums and I know the subject matter. It never dawned on me to ask him whether he would ask the questions in the same order as those he'd sent me via email.

And he didn't. Not only did he not ask the questions in the same order, but he even omitted a couple.

Oh-oh. I got flustered. I was rattled.

Ryan calmly asked his questions, but as a result of my frustration (that's a word now), I frantically searched through my list of questions and responses. So the interview, which I suspect (and hope) he will somehow repair during editing, is a rambling, loosely woven series of responses that (I'm afraid) blatantly reflects my lack of preparation.

The only thing worse than not being prepared is having your readers (or in this case, listeners) recognize your lack of preparation.

Of course, if you listen to the podcast when it goes live in a few weeks, your mileage might vary. It does contain a few things that I haven't talked about before. Or at least I think it does. So you might actually find a gem or two among the weeds of blathering verbiage.

At least, that is my hope. But either way, the thing is out there now. I can't pull it back. When Ryan sends the link to the live podcast, I'll report it here and let you be the judge.

As to what I missed... Ryan didn't ask about where I write. If he had, I'd have talked a little about the Hovel and having a dedicated writing computer (no or only sporadic Internet, no games, etc.).

He DID ask about my current project and where readers could find my books. But I completely spaced the part about my current project (Book 7 of the Blackwell Ops series), but I went on seemingly forever about StoneThreadPublishing, discounted direct sales to readers, my other two websites, and the fact that I go wide with my publishing rather than going exclusive with any one store.

Which brings me to the second part of this topic—Confidence, or maybe Preparation Breeds Confidence—which will appear both here and over in PWW in the near future.

I didn't truly prepare for the podcast, and I suspect my lack of confidence is illustrated above. Thank goodness that isn't my norm as a writer.

Oh, the rough night? I was awakened by one of those dogs who barks at absolutely nothing. And he kept barking until I finally walked across the street, opened the neighbor's front door (the neighbor was home, by the way) and let the stupid dog in so he would shut the hell up.

Then, of course, I was awake (after a half-hour's sleep) and couldn't go back to sleep. So as I said, a rough night. Today I'll do nothing but attempt to not chew the head off anyone I talk to.

Talk with you again later.

Of Interest

See "Interesting Discussion (Strangely Enough, With a Book Agent) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/interesting-discussion/>. Wow. This is a great checklist if you want to get a literary agent.

I'll never need this list, but to each his own. If you want an agent, I strongly recommend this list, and remember that the agent works for YOU, not the other way around. You'll certainly be paying her enough to dictate terms.

If you'd care to see a truly ignorant post that you can read and then print out (so you can carry it out in the yard and burn it), see "How Long Does It Take To Write a Book?" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-long-does-it-take-to-write-a-book/>. I'd love to be able to say I've never seen such a crock of crap, but unfortunately I see it all the time.

Just one stupid quote from the article as an example: “But if you’re writing a typical novel (50,000 words or more) on a typical schedule (a few hours of writing per week), you’ll likely fall somewhere in that 6-to-12-month range.”

Seriously? (Yet isn’t it amazing that if you write two 50,000 word novels in a year you’re considered “prolific”?) Wow.

Finally, for a great “feel good” post, see “Help Wanted: Butler. References needed. Livery opt.” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/help-wanted-butler-references-needed-livery-opt/>.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	5578
Total fiction words for the year.....	380231
Total nonfiction words for the month...	14460
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	261170
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	641401
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, September 29](#)

[September 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * I was certain
- * Topic: Preparation (Learning) Breeds Confidence
- * Thanks for your concerns
- * On the personal writing front
- * Of Interest
- * The numbers

I was certain earlier this month that I’d be finished with the novel before the month was out. Looks like it’ll be October. Unless I can write another 30,000 words or so today and tomorrow. (grin)

Still, it's just not a big deal. It comes as it comes and I have a lot of other stuff I'm doing. (See the update in "On the personal writing front" below.)

Here's the continuation of yesterday's topic.

Topic: Preparation (Learning) Breeds Confidence

Anyone who's ever taken an exam in school understands that studying and learning, not cramming, constitutes true, valuable preparation.

When a successful fictionist is between stories, he will continue to improve (prepare) in the craft by focusing on learning a new (to him) writing technique. Then he will practice that new technique in the next story he writes. Practice helps set the technique in the writer's creative subconscious.

If you're skeptical, consider—when you're writing, do you have to think consciously of what constitutes a sentence? Do you have to think consciously of where to place a period or question mark? If you're writing longhand, do you have to think consciously of whether to dot a lower-case I?

Of course not. Because you learned those things and they became part of your subconscious. Just as writing techniques do when you learn them.

So the successful fictionist learns a new technique, then applies it in practice. And before the next story, he learns another new technique, then practices that one. And so his knowledge of craft builds. Lather, rinse, repeat.

Writers who don't want to explore and learn new techniques (including those who believe they've "got it," that they've learned all they need to know) may be successful too, for awhile. But chances are, they won't last for the long haul.

Nor will their new stories maintain even their former levels of craft. Their previously learned skills—and their writer's mind—atrophies. Flexibility of thought goes first ("that new technique can't possibly be right"). Then bit by bit, knowledge once gained hardens, falls away and goes to dust.

And their confidence in their work, if they ever had it, will falter.

Writers who do not regularly feed their creative subconscious with learning and practice can't be confident of their stories. Some of them say they are, but actions speak louder than words.

To do a take-off of Jeff Foxworthy's "You Might Be a Redneck" bit,

* If you continue to outline (safety net), you might not be confident in your subconscious storyteller.

* If you continue to workshop your stories to critique groups (share the blame by implication if something goes wrong, though in all fairness, nobody will admit that's what they're doing), you might not be confident in your own abilities.

* If you continue to rewrite (second-guessing yourself—as we were all taught by non-writers, that we can't possibly write something well the first time through), you might not be confident in your own abilities.

The amount of preparation (learning) and practice directly informs the confidence of the writer, or it should. Writers are living creatures. They should continue to grow.

If you learned something new after your previous story, and if you practice it in your current story, then you can be confident that you've written the story to the best of your current ability.

And that's all that's required. After that, you send your toddling little story out into the world and it's out of your hands.

Judgement now lies in the reader's perception of the story, where it belongs.

I can hear writers saying “What? If I know the story is bad, why would I possibly be insane enough to send it out?”

And that's my topic for next time.

Thanks for your concerns about the procedure I'll undergo on October 3. Really, seriously, it's probably nothing at all to be anxious about. Anyway, since I blathered on here about it, I'll give you the thumbs up that everything's fine afterwards.

And thanks to Bob Beckley for saying he'd rather listen to my nonsense than to a lot of other people's nonsense. (grin) If you're on Facebook, check out Bob's posts. Guy's a great joke writer. One of the few who can make you groan and laugh out loud at the same time.

I heard a great joke while watching Seinfeld's Netflix series, Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee last night.

Two famous guys (I can't remember who) were talking about the intelligence level of folks who listen to country music.

One said, “I never denigrate people who listen to country music. And for those who listen to country music, ‘denigrate’ means ‘put down.’” (grin)

On the personal writing front, what follows will be a second topic of sorts for some of you.

I'm beginning to think maybe I'm "trying" to write a novel with Blackwell Ops 7. By which I mean I went into my WIP assuming it would be a novel, but maybe it's actually a novella. I write into the dark, remember? So there shouldn't be any "trying" involved.

Just so you know, I do follow my own advice. When things slow, I "just write the next sentence." And when there is no next sentence, I back up a few lines and consciously look to see whether I've written past the end of a scene. (Rare for me, but it happens.)

As I've reported here before, the story is flowing. The problem is, it flows for a brief period, then stalls. So I back up, go at it again. And again the story flows, then stalls. I've done that several times on this one. Sigh.

So I'll be reading the whole thing from the get-go today (or tomorrow, since this is Sunday) as a reader to see whether maybe the whole story wrapped at some point while I wasn't paying attention. (grin)

If it did, I'll drop "Blackwell Ops 7" from the title, retitle the story, and publish it as "a novella in the Blackwell Ops world". (Not part of the novel series but in the same world.)

Again, it's the character's story, not mine. I'm only the recorder. This is me guarding against forcing myself on the story.

I'll find one of two things: either the story wrapped or it went off in a horribly wrong direction. Of course, I'll let you know what happens.

Talk with you again later.

Of Interest

Get your favorite sitting-awhile beverage and settle in to browse "Self-Publishing: The Carnival of the Indies Issue #108" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/09/self-publishing-the-carnival-of-the-indies-issue-108/>. There's a lot there. I did not read every post. Some are probably useful, some not. I recommend if a title grabs you, read a little and see where it goes.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	5578
Total fiction words for the year.....	380231
Total nonfiction words for the month...	15660
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	262370
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	642601
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, September 30](#)

[September 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Today, I hope
- * Unfortunately
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Today I hope to read my novel/novella and recognize what it is. I say “recognize” because this will be a subconscious reading and recognition (or not). Either way, I won't evoke the conscious mind to “decide” what to do next. Not my job.

If you don't understand the difference, email me and I'll try to explain further.

Awhile back I wrote and published (right here in a series of topics first) what I commonly call The Critical Voice Book: [Quiet the Critical Voice \(and Write Fiction\)](#).

This morning, because I'm subscribed to Kris Rush's Patreon account, I was blessed to read of her own recent struggles with the critical voice. I urge you to subscribe to her Patreon account, and if not, that you subscribe to her regular [Business Musings blog](#) on her website, where that same post will appear in a week or so. Oh, and Kris also wrote a Critical Voice book titled The Pursuit of Perfection.

Unfortunately, today I'm also on death watch for our older lady cat (not my little girl), Hannah, whom my wife rescued from a shelter several years ago. Hannah is only 12, but she's been going downhill for the past 3 weeks, even refusing to eat much of the time. She isn't in pain, so we haven't had to make that particular hard choice, but she's the priority at the moment.

I'll go check on her again now, then maybe get some reading done.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “One big change in book publishing...” at <https://www.idealogue.com/blog/one-big-change-in-book-publishing-is-that-it-does-not-require-you-to-have-much-of-an-organization-to-play-anymore/>.

See “Book Recommendation Services” at <http://mbyerly.blogspot.com/2017/01/book-recommendation-services.html>. Note: I have not vetted the links she lists here. I mention this link only in case it might be useful for you.

For short story writers or poets, see “21 Themed Calls for Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/21-themed-submissions-calls-for-october-2019/>.

See “8 Ways to Fool a Cop: WD-40 and Hidey-Holes” at <https://www.leelofland.com/8-ways-to-fool-a-cop-wd-40-and-hidey-holes/>.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	5578
Total fiction words for the year.....	380231
Total nonfiction words for the month...	15980
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	262690
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	642921
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Idealogue.com](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [M. Byerly](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Shatzkin Files](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 2](#)

[October 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Two days ago
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Well, two days ago I got through about half of my novel or novella without recognizing an ending. So yesterday I continued to read off and on as more pressing personal events permitted. I got a little farther. Today will be much the same, still dependent on those more pressing matters.

I'm posting today mostly to get the info in "Of Interest" out to you.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For something every writer needs to learn, see "Just Bloom" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/just-bloom/>.

See "Amazon is Shutting Down Kindle Matchbook, Its Print+eBook Bundling Program" at <https://the-digital-reader.com/2019/09/30/amazon-is-shutting-down-kindle-matchbook-its-printebook-bundling-program/>.

See "Sales Numbers" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/sales-numbers-2/>.

See PG's take on "One big change in book publishing..." (which I passed along yesterday) at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/one-big-change-in-book-publishing-is-that-it-does-not-require-you-to-have-much-of-an-organization-to-play-anymore/>.

And re the value of IP, see "Stan Lee's Daughter Sues to Reclaim His Intellectual Property" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/stan-lees-daughter-sues-to-reclaim-his-intellectual-property/>.

See "What influences Book Purchasing Decisions?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-influences-book-purchasing-decisions/>. Some interesting stats.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	170
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	262860
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	644429
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, October 3](#)

[October 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Yesterday
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Yesterday, our lady cat Hannah passed at around 9:30 a.m. Mona was at work. Hannah was her special girl, so I spent the balance of the day washing and putting away things, clearing the house of unnecessary reminders.

Later, when my little girl cat began to roam around the house looking for Hannah, I sat down with her and explained that Hannah wouldn't be around anymore.

I know, many believe all she heard is "blah, blah, blah." But I believe she understands every word I say. Thing is, if she *did* understand me, maybe I helped her feel a little better. If she didn't understand, well, no harm done. I owe her the attempt.

Today probably will be a non-writing, non-reading day. Mona's off today, and it's the first full day Hannah's not around.

Again this is going out early, mostly to get the "Of Interest" stuff to you.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Critical Voice Again" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/10/02/business-musings-critical-voice-again/>.

See "Have I Got a Book for You! Compelling Book Descriptions – Part 1" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/10/have-i-got-a-book-for-you-compelling-book-descriptions-part-1/>.

See "How to Convert Book Readers into Email Subscribers" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/convert-readers-to-email-subscribers/>.

See “Dolly Parton inks book deal with indie publisher” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/dolly-parton-inks-book-deal-with-indie-publisher/>. Note WHY she didn’t go with a major publisher.

See “Really Fun Project” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/really-fun-project/>.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	410
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	263100
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	644669
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, October 4](#)

[October 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Yesterday
- * Licensing Stuff
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“A story has no beginning or end: arbitrarily one chooses the moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead.” Graham Greene

Yesterday we just got out of the house for most of the day. We enjoyed lunch and shopping and then got the oil changed on my pickup over in Sierra Vista. It even got a bath in one of those car

wash places that grabs your tires and pushes you through. Almost like a very slow carnival ride, plus I got a clean truck. (grin)

There are a couple of great opportunities in today's "Of Interest," as well as some insight into the writing craft. I hope you'll take advantage of it.

Licensing Stuff

I got an email from Dean this morning to announce that there are 7 new videos up in the year-long Licensing Transition course. If you haven't signed up yet, you still can. To look it over, go to <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/courses/> and click Licensing Transition.

In only the first three months of this year-long journey, I've already learned things that are worth well over the price of admittance.

Those of us who are signed up truly are learning along with Dean and Kris. In these 7 videos, he promised "A few changes in things, some new ways of looking at getting IP." And wow, did he ever deliver! It's an exciting world, an exciting time to be a writer (and owner of IP).

Today, I listened to the most recent vids in the Licensing Transition. I read a little more on my novel, then spent a little time doing things on my truck. Later today I'll spend more time on the novel, and probably won't do much fiction stuff during the weekend.

Oh, and thanks to those who are concerned re my medical procedure, but if I forgot to mention it, the doc moved the procedure from Oct 3 to Oct 10. So still looking forward to that. I'll let you know how it goes.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "The 2019 NaNoWriMo Writing Tools Bundle" at <https://storybundle.com/nano>. (You don't have to do NaNoWriMo to learn from this bundle. The lecture alone is worth \$50.)

See "23 Physical Abnormalities of Serial Killers" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/23-physical-abnormalities-of-serial-killers/>.

See "Special Project" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/10/03/special-project/>.

The Numbers

Total fiction words for the month..... 1338
Total fiction words for the year..... 381569
Total nonfiction words for the month... 810

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 263500
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 645069

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 7](#)

[October 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * First
- * Topic: POV (Point Of View)
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day (a lesson I haven't learned well enough yet)



First, let me just say out loud that I strongly agree with Sean Monaghan's post "[There Are Lots of Ways to Write](#)" over on PWW today. That being said, I've tried and dismissed the advice that is most often batted back and forth in writing groups and conferences and (I've heard) on "boards," whatever those are. Personally, I can't follow that advice. I tried back in the day, and I just can't.

One, I would be bored to tears if I wrote an outline first, then tried to write the story (again) in narrative form.

Two, frankly I don't think enough of myself to feel comfortable playing God over others' lives, even if those others are "only" characters. As actor Ben Johnson once said, "Ain't my department."

That being said, I believe every writer should experiment and find what works (or doesn't) for him or her. My advice is to try everything, then toss out what doesn't work for you. Then again, if you'd rather not try new (to you) things, that's fine too. No skin off my paycheck.

To me it makes perfect sense that the stories I write are the characters' stories, so it makes sense to let them live and tell those stories. I'm important to the process only because I have only two things the characters don't have: physical fingers and a physical keyboard. Those are the only things that make me important to the process at all. Those things are why I'm The Writer.

I never don my robes and ascend into some authorial ivory tower. Instead, I slip on jeans and a t-shirt and roll off the parapet of the trench of the story. Then I run through the story along with the characters, just trying to keep up. And as the characters say and do things while they're experiencing the story, I write those things down. I record the story for them. That's all. I don't plan, I don't plot, and I don't outline. It's not my place.

What I do is called Writing Into the Dark. I write with no preconceived notions of where the story's going or what's going to happen when or to whom.

And because that's the method that works for me (and the method that made me successful), that's what I teach. It doesn't mean my way is the only way to do it or that any other way is intrinsically "bad." It only means that I've tried all those other ways, dismissed them, and finally found (and teach) what works for me.

As for the rest? You'll never see or hear me teach anything that I believe to be a hindrance to writing an authentic story. Now and then you might see me let down my guard and argue against those things instead of following the wisdom in the Quote of the Day above.

But so what? There certainly are plenty of other venues that do repeat those techniques, so it isn't like I'm leaving a vacuum. (grin)

And with that lengthy introduction, here's my personal take-it-or-leave-it take on Point of View (POV):

Topic: POV (Point Of View)

I get depressed a little when I think of all the talking I do and have done about writing over the years. Has it mattered? Sure, to a few writers here and there. But what I see as silliness and BS was around a long time before me and it will be around long after I'm gone.

Still, I talk about writing here and on my other blog. I've talked about writing in presentations at various conferences, to writer's groups and in seminars and workshops over the years. (As my mom used to say, "Until I'm blue in the face.") (grin)

And the biggest difference any of it has made, really, is moving a bit of air from one place to another.

The talking was (is) fun. Thinking I was making a positive difference was rewarding. But I really need to learn to smile, nod, and keep my thoughts to myself. However, as I wrote above, this is a lesson I have yet to fully take on board. Lucky you. (grin)

As evidence of that unfortunate fact, today I'll talk about Point of View, most often skipped-over by writers as POV, or by more cutting-edge, chique writers as the all-new "deep" POV. (I wrote a post on "Deep POV" back in 2016 [HERE](#) and later in 2019 [HERE](#).)

Just to be clear, some of those are successful writers, and I wish them well. Hey, whatever works. But some of them write dialogue without quotation marks because one guy did it one time in one novel successfully (if you measure success as that the next day around watercoolers all over the nation readers were discussing the technique instead of the story).

And some of them are the writers who won't publish their works in ebooks because they "hate" ebooks. (Seriously? Isn't that a little like selling only carpet in your flooring business because you "hate" hardwood?) Some of them are writers who won't even read, much less try, Heinlein's Rules because they aren't science fiction writers. And the list goes on.

But I digress. To begin my actual take on POV, first let's get over the dismissive, take-it-for-granted term "POV" itself. To do that, let's be sure we understand the term "point." Bear with me.

If you were asked to consider a particular "point of light," there would be no confusion once you knew which light Source you were supposed to focus on. Or if you were asked to actually BE a "point of light," you would be requested to serve as a Source of inspiration. So "Point" equals "Source."

So the writer provides a "point of view" so the reader can sense (see, hear, smell, taste, and feel both physically and emotionally) the setting, action, pacing and other integral parts of the story through a particular source. That source would be the POV character.

What does that mean?

It means that every word on the page—every aspect of every setting, every word of spoken or heard dialogue, every slow or fast action—should be filtered through that POV character’s physical senses and accompanied by the character’s opinions. If the POV character notices something he has an opinion of it, and both what he notices and his opinion of it go on the page.

Repeat after me: Nothing. Else. Matters.

Whether you decide the narrator is godlike and “omniscient” (sees and knows everything) doesn’t matter. The point (source) of view is still the character through which the reader is observing the scene of the moment.

It also doesn’t matter whether the writer “chooses” to write in first person (I), second person (you) or third person (he, she or they). (Second person use is a very elevated skill that appears in fiction only occasionally and almost always in concert with one of the other two. I won’t get into it here.)

Regardless of the writer’s choices, the story is still presented through one or more Point (Source) of View characters.

Okay, so then what about “omniscient” and “limited omniscient” and all of those other English-teacher, literature-professor, critique-group, literary-critic concepts?

Those indicate the power wielded by the god of the story, the creator: the writer. Within the story, they mean nothing at all. They are functions of the critical voice. They are important, maybe, to the writer’s *approach* to the story (but the writer does not actually *enter* the story—more on this later), and they are important to *deconstruction* (there’s a great word for you—think about it). But not to creation.

On the one hand, those concepts are valuable to some writers because they enable the writer to consider the overall world of the story from a safe distance. On the other, they are methods used to dissect and study philosophically the deconstructed parts of the whole. But they are not a way to put the individual story together in the first place. They do not exist in the writer’s toolbox, even if the writer thinks they do.

In all honesty, it took me awhile to “get” this, and like many writers, for a time I clung to those concepts as a kind of life jacket. But eventually the little light came on and those concepts too their rightful place among many other that Just Don’t Matter.

Again, all that matters is the source through which the story is being conveyed: the POV character at any given time, whether the character reveals his observations through first person or whether those observations are revealed through third person.

What exists in a beginning writer’s toolbox are Words from which the writer will create a POV character (even if he doesn’t realize it), through whom the writer will convey a story.

Well, that plus seven marks of punctuation that force the reader to pause for various lengths of time. Those are the long-pause period, question mark, exclamation point and colon; the medium-pause em dash and semicolon; and the short-pause comma. Those are joined by four marks of punctuation that do not create a pause of any length but are otherwise occasionally useful: parens, quotation marks, single quotes (and apostrophe), and the hyphen. You can learn a great deal more about all of these and their specific uses in [Punctuation for Writers](#).

As the writer learns and practices and develops his skill set, he might add various time- and reader-proven fiction techniques to his toolbox: Grounding the Reader, Pacing, Writing Action Scenes, Adding Suspense (Tension), Pulling the Reader to Depth, and others I've talked about here and elsewhere ad nauseam.

But even then, all that matters in a good story is that every words on the page is filtered through the POV character's physical senses and accompanied by his or her opinions of the settings, scenes, the other characters, and the action (or lack of action). As others have said, it's important that the writer be "in the character's head" during the writing process. Or as I put it, BE the character.

The result is that the reader will read the characters' story: the characters' words (as spoken or heard by the POV character), the POV character's descriptions, opinions, and decisions.

What is NOT included in a good story?

The writer. The writer's words. The writer's descriptions. The writer's opinions. The writer's decisions.

You aren't writing *your* story. That would be a memoir or an autobiography. You're writing a fiction. You're writing the characters' story, as experienced through the source (POV) character.

If the writer is in the story—the writer's descriptions, the writer's decisions, the writer's take on the fictional or real world—the reader won't be around very long.

Today I'll continue allowing Mr. Marco to tell his own story in what will eventually become either the novel Blackwell Ops 7: Glynn Marco or something other than a novel titled Marco's Way.

Of Interest

See "Shared Worlds" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/shared-worlds/>. What an unbelievably great opportunity, both to learn and to write! I signed up for this one.

See "Can Writers Lose Their Fingerprints?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/can-writers-lose-their-fingerprints.html>. Interesting.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 1890

Total fiction words for the month..... 1338
Total fiction words for the year..... 381569
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2700
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 265490
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 646959

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, October 8

[October 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Silly Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Stick to Your Guns
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Silly Quote of the Day

“No, you don't need to outline, but you really need to stop and ask yourself questions before you write one word.” PJ Parrish in “What's Your Point? Figuring Out What Goes Into Each Chapter” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/whats-your-point-figuring-outwhat-goes-into-each-chapter.html>.

Really? “You don't need to outline, but [you need to outline.]” Seriously? Committed much? (grin)

Topic: Stick to Your Guns

In my book *Punctuation for Writers*, there's a whole section on using the italic font to differentiate unspoken thought from straight narrative.

I included the section in a book on punctuation because, I reasoned, the italic attribute acts on readers the same way punctuation acts on readers: it subliminally directs the reading of the story.

I was wrong. Much later, I learned from readers that the italic attribute isn't as subliminal as I thought it was. To some readers, it's blatant. For them, it's distracting. And one rule of writing trumps all the others: A writer should never knowingly do anything that might pull the reader out of the story.

So I stuck to my guns, teaching what I knew to be true. But when what I knew changed, so did my stance. Today I would never advocate using italics to indicate unspoken thought.

The point is, we can only teach what we know to be true at our current level of experience. We can only teach the "best practices" that work for us.

There was a time, long before I wrote my first novel, when I advocated outlining and "figuring out" everything about a story before I wrote a single word, as Ms. Parrish recommends.

Today, I know better. Today, I am a staunch advocate against outlining.

I was reminded of this and my previous stance on italics when I read the quote in *Quote of the Day* above. To put it in context, here's the full paragraph from which I took the quote:

"I've found writers often struggle with this. It's as if they just start writing, trying to figure out what the heck is happening, then they just run out of gas. End of chapter. But that's not how it should go. No, you don't need to outline, but you really need to stop and ask yourself questions before you write one word: How do you divide up your story into chapters? Where do you break them? How long should each chapter be? How many chapters long should your book be? And maybe the hardest thing to figure out: What is the purpose of each chapter?"

As I read the part after "before you write one word," I could actually hear the author hyperventilating. I could almost smell the fear. And then came the kicker, waffling as it was:

Yeah. You don't need to outline, but [you need to outline].

Ms. Parrish (who is actually two people) completely misses the point of writing without an outline. She's obviously an advocate for outlining, so why waffle on the issue? Why not just say "You need to outline"?

The fact is, we who write into the dark don't "try to figure out" anything. We relax and trust the characters to tell the story that the characters are living.

We who have learned to trust their subconscious and write into the dark don't sweat the details, because the characters provide those details. In fact, we actively strive AGAINST trying to

figure out anything. The scenes and chapters open, develop, and close under direction of the characters if only we stay out of our own way and let the story unfold.

And again, why shouldn't it? The characters are actually living it.

Let's compare two analogies, one for writing into the dark, and one for outlining. Say the story is a film:

Writing Into the Dark

The characters are the actors. They're trusted and free to improvise as the situation dictates. They ply their trade. The POV character is both an actor and the director (it's his vision). The writer is only the person behind the camera, nothing more. S/he doesn't "decide" anything, but only records the story as it unfolds. This isn't work. It's fun, and the writer enjoys watching the actors blossom and the story unfold.

Outlining

The characters are the actors, but the writer is the producer (read *God*), director, AND the person behind the camera. He tells the actors where to stand, how to move, what to say, how to act and react. The characters, of course, are miffed. They do what they're told, but only grudgingly, and they offer nothing more. They are allowed to offer up nothing original, nothing unique, because the writer/producer/director has insisted that's not their place.

Okay, so which film would you rather watch?

Of course, as many have said (and continue to say), there is no wrong way. It might surprise you to learn that I agree. There is only what's Right For You at your current skill level and your current level of faith in your own abilities. All of that is strictly up to you.

If you have to outline, if you have to control every aspect of the story and turn writing into "work" so you feel it has some intrinsic value, go for it.

If you'd rather leap into the story and run through it with your characters, experiencing the story first-hand and making writing the fun that it can be, that's great too.

But if you're teaching others, for goodness' sake, stick to your guns. Don't waffle.

Today I'll be watching baseball and maybe write a little. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "How to Improve Your Amazon Book Descriptions" by Penny Sansevieri at <https://www.janefriedman.com/amazon-book-descriptions/>. Old topic, good advice.

See "Importance of Goals" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/importance-of-goals/>. I recommend reading the comments too.

See "Amazon Intellectual Property Accelerator" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/amazon-intellectual-property-accelerator/>.

A couple of notes on the last entry above:

One, remember that your IP is protected by copyright the moment it's in fixed form. You license Amazon or whomever to sell your stories or novels, but the IP remains yours.

Two, remember that you don't have to register trademarks to protect them. As DWS says, trademark law exists only to make money for lawyers. The truth is, first (and continued) use in business always wins in court whether or not the trademark is registered.

For example, I've been using StoneThread Publishing, a unique and therefore very strong trademark, for a couple of decades. I haven't registered it, but in any court setting, based on my first-and-continued use, I would win any disputes even if someone came along this year and tried to register StoneThread Publishing with the trademark office. Just sayin'.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1050
Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	3750
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	266440
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	648009
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, October 9

[October 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * I'm very excited
- * Topic: Pro, Hobbyist, or ...?
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

Finn (Thanks, Finn!), a reader of this Journal, wrote, "How do I get better if I don't allow myself to critique my own work?"

For writers, how's that for a quote of the day?

First, it's a really great question, one we all ask at least ourselves from time to time. My response was simple:

That question itself comes from the critical mind. If you're going back and critiquing (critical voice), you aren't putting new words on the page and the critical voice wins.

So how do you get better? Read the masters that you enjoy, take classes, learn new techniques, and practice (write).

Where you believe you are "struggling," another reader will love what you've written. Remember that yours is only one opinion.

Use Heinlein's Rules to push aside that critical voice. Write (no matter what your critical voice says), Finish what you write (no matter what your critical voice says), Don't rewrite (no matter what your critical voice says), Publish (no matter what your critical voice says) and you'll be golden. Then move on to the next story, again no matter what your critical voice says.

Some will love what you've written no matter what you think of it. Just as when you write something you think is perfect, some readers won't like it.

The key is to keep learning, keep writing (practicing) and keep having fun.

I'm very excited today, as DWS announced this morning (see below) that the Shared Worlds class is a go. Enough have signed up to make the class worthwhile.

If you are a professional fiction writer, I highly recommend taking both this Shared Worlds class and Dean's year-long Licensing Transition course. In the short term, it's a lot of money, but really it isn't so much a cost as an investment.

Again, IF you're a professional writer or if you seriously aspire to be a professional writer, I recommend it. If you're a hobby writer (nothing wrong with that), then you might not want to leap into either of these.

Topic: Pro, Hobbyist, or ...?

In an earlier post I talked a little bit about the stages of a fiction writer, a topic Dean Wesley Smith has covered thoroughly in his book on the topic and in a lecture and online workshop.

When we talk about the "stages" of a fiction writer, we're talking about professional fiction writers. As with any profession, pro fiction writers progress through various stages or levels as they hone their skills and become more confident in their abilities.

But this post isn't about that. This post is about the different *kinds* of fiction writers and their intentions as driven by passion.

If your intention is to write full time and eventually make a living with your fiction writing—and if you're serious enough and driven enough to invest yourself, your time and your money in that pursuit—then you're a professional fiction writer.

As an addendum, if you can't think of anything more fun than making up stories and writing them down, so much the better. (grin) At that point you're writing for the sheer joy of it, and even making money takes a back seat. Which generally is when it starts trickling (or pouring) in.

Note that for the purpose of this post, the above definition includes "aspirants," those whose intentions are on board and who are passionate about writing fiction but who don't quite consider themselves "there" yet. And of course, each writer's definition of "there" is different.

Okay, so there are professional fiction writers. (At the top of the stages are masters like Stephen King and Jack Higgins and Nora Roberts and Isabel Allende. The rest of us are moving through lower stages.)

But there are also hobby fiction writers. Again, nothing wrong with that at all.

Maybe you enjoy writing a short story or even a novel now and then. But it isn't necessarily a passion so much as an occasional itch that needs to be scratched. Or maybe writing is something you do for fun every now and then, maybe as a variant on other things you do for fun.

The key, maybe, is that it's as easy for you to walk away from the story for a day or week or month or two as it is to keep writing. It's easy to set writing aside to do some of those other fun things. And when you do leave the story, you don't suffer withdrawal symptoms. You're simply doing something else for awhile. (grin)

In my experience, I've noted there are three kinds of hobby writers:

- * those who write for no particular reason other than to tell a story (and eventually publish it),
- * those who write primarily to leave something for their family (published or not), and
- * those who write and publish a story or novel to mark it off a bucket list.

Again, there's nothing wrong with being a hobby writer of any kind. But it's important to know which kind of writer you are.

If you're a professional fiction writer, my recommendation is follow your passion and Go All In. Invest wisely, but invest your time and your money to improve your craft and expand your knowledge of the business end of writing.

How? For craft, take lectures and workshops and seminars that feature techniques that are new to you. Enter into a mentorship with a professional writer who's much farther along the road than you are.

For business, buy *The Copyright Handbook (NOLO)* and learn copyright. Learn about corporations (full C corporations). Inventory your intellectual property (IP), then begin considering all the ways you can license your IP other than in paper books, ebooks and audio.

And I say "invest" because if you're a pro, you should expect a reasonable return on the money you spend (say 10% over the long haul). You should also expect, as your writing craft improves and your business savvy gets better, to make money with your writing. Or *more* money.

And if you're a hobbyist? Well, you can still take classes and read blog posts that pique your interest. You can still learn and improve your craft. But should you go all-in? No. Of course not. Why would you?

If you're a hobbyist, you aren't considering a long-term career as a fiction writer. You probably aren't considering writing and publishing as a business. Again, why would you? And that's perfectly fine.

So that's my suggestion for the day. (grin)

Check in with yourself and determine which kind of writer you are or want to be. Then react accordingly. Either way, good luck.

Today, I gave myself a Marine Corps haircut (high and tight). For a brief time, I felt as if I was 30 again. (grin) I posted a couple of pictures [on Facebook](#).

I also did some chores around the house, watered the new garden my wife and I dug up over the weekend, etc. I'll continue with a fairly lax day, going to the PO and the store and later watching some baseball, fixing supper, and watching more baseball.

Tomorrow is my visit to the doc to get a shot in the spine. Should be a piece of cake, but I probably won't post tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Shared Worlds Update" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/shared-worlds-update/>. This is very exciting news!

See "MurderCon 2019 – A Wrap-up" at <https://preview.mailerlite.com/h1t4b8/1263106244349006957/n9g1/>. Part of this is the announcement of a new publishing company.

See "Time Flies When Your Having Fun" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/time-flies-when-your-having-fun/>.

See "How I Write About Anything...." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-i-write-about-anything-and-i-get-paid-for-it/>.

See "Let's Talk Shotguns" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/lets-talk-shotguns.html>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1290
Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	5040
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	267730
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	649299
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, October 10](#)

[October 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Nothing
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Nothing today other than the “Of Interest” section below. It’s the only reason I posted today. (grin)

I’ll be out much of the day, then watch the baseball game in the early evening.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Some Things Made Clear” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-things-made-clear/>.

See “Publishing Your Book Is Changing on IngramSpark” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/10/publishing-your-book-is-changing-on-ingramspark/>.

See “Favorite MS Word Keyboard Shortcuts” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/ms-word-keyboard-shortcuts/>.

See “Business Musings: Creating Content, Using Licenses, Making Something New (Rethinking The Writing Business Part 13)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/10/09/business-musings-creating-content-using-licenses-making-something-new-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-13/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 100

Total fiction words for the month..... 1338

Total fiction words for the year..... 381569

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5140

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 267830

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 649399

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, October 11](#)

[October 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Hard to believe
- * Since I've gone on
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Hard to believe a third of October is already in the books. Now that my latest procedure is done (successfully) I plan to finish my WIP this month. Should be a piece of cake.

For any long-time followers out there who might be wondering, this is the longest calendar time it's ever taken me to write a novel (or novella). (I started my WIP on June 2.) It's also the longest string of non-fiction-writing days I've had for the past six years.

I need to get this thing done and in the books so I can start something new. (grin)

Since I've gone on about my med procedure, I thought I should update you on it. I had it yesterday. Summed up, it was easy-peasy.

The doc was backed up by about an hour, so we waited. That wait was the only torture that ensued.

The procedure itself went fine. It was painless and quick. Though the doc warned me the effects would be progressive, I was free of back-pain for the first time in two-plus years from the moment I got off the table.

If anyone out there has a lower-spine ailment and would like more details, email me and I'll tell you what to expect during the procedure itself.

But that waiting room.

The waiting room was filled with folks whom I can best describe as polite if a little depressing. Most of them engaged (as is normal) in quiet, private conversations.

A few notables were annoying. To excess. I am not the frailest of flowers, but twice I had to get up and walk outside to avoid exercising the urge to put a them out of my misery. Carpe jugulum, I say. If only it weren't illegal.

One obnoxious young woman entered into a very loud, very personal conversation on her cell phone. On speakerphone. Her laugh would force a grizzly bear into hiding, and the conversation itself... well, let's just say her hobby, apparently, was collecting disbelieving stares from strangers.

While she was rattling on, a young guy came in, sneezed into his hands (both hands) a few times and then wiped his nose with his thumbs. Then, with the men's restroom and its sinks and soap a mere twenty feet away, he glibly pirouetted, took a seat, picked up a magazine and began flipping through it.

Meanwhile, partway through the girl's broadcast, a pair of middle-aged brothers came in and parked two feet from me. One did his best to overtalk the girl's phone conversation with a circuitous, seemingly endless story after tapping his brother on the leg:

"Oh, did I tell ya I seen me one'a them UFOs? It landed out there just t'other side'a the barn. 'Course I only noticed 'cause ol' Jinx—you a'member Jinx, don'cha? That blue-tick hound I got from Darcy last time I was in Arkansas? You know, Darcy with the wooden leg. Well, anyway, ol' Jinx, I'd just went out the screen door to do somethin'—I forget what—an' ol' Jinx, he'd just now settled on this side'a the barn to dump his daily load. An' I yelled at him, 'No, Jinx! Not there!' I mean, if I told that dog once't I told him a thousand times, don't be droppin' a log right where I gotta walk. It was right there on the path where I walk to the barn, you know, an' that ol' Jinx dog, he knows better, or he ought to. So anyhow, that's how come I seen that UFO thing in the first place, 'cause it come slidin' in easy-like an' settled just t'other side'a Jinx an' that ol' barn. Man, I can't believe ol' Jinx done that again. I mean, if I told that dang dog once't, I told him a thou—"

And mercifully the nurse called me back for the procedure. Yeah. Even without knowing what would ensue during the procedure—even knowing a person I'd never met was waiting to stab sharp objects into my spine—I practically ran to her.

When I came out, I called across the waiting room to my wife, "Let's go." I never did find out anymore about that UFO.

Okay, that's enough of this nonsense. Today I'll read more on the WIP, and write. The next time I post, I'll have a topic for you.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Even in the Gathering Darkness” at <http://www.glimmertrain.com/bulletins/essays/bfinaljohnston.php>.

See “What To Do About Imposter Syndrome” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/what-to-do-about-imposter-syndrome/>.

See “Explaining How an Author Terminated a Movie Studio’s Copyright to ‘Terminator’” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/explaining-how-an-author-terminated-a-movie-studios-copyright-to-terminator/>. This is very exciting. Very heartening.

See “Would You Write a Cookbook for Next to Nothing?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/would-you-write-a-cookbook-for-next-to-nothing/>. Very disheartening.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	800
Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	5940
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	268630
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	650199
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Glimmer Train](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, October 12](#)

[October 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Today is mostly
- * In other ridiculously stupid news
- * Topic: I Am Constantly Amazed (Amused?)

- * To give you at least something worthwhile
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Today is mostly an unbelievably ridicule-ous day. I hope you find the following as jaw dropping and have-to-laugh-to-keep-from-crying funny as I did.

First, my apology for recommending the Glimmer Train link in “Of Interest” yesterday. Had I read it first (I didn’t) instead of simply trusting my source, I wouldn’t have posted it.

There is more to the world than doom and gloom, and even if one is devoted to doom and gloom, there are other ways to present it than in a harsh, one-sided political light.

For example, Mr. Johnston might have lamented the self-imposed death of his magazine or even praised some of its contributors. Instead he chose an approach so melodramatic it would make Snidely Whiplash roll his eyes before muttering “I’m outta here.”

I personally suspect, if Glimmer Train had a soul of its own, it currently resides in magazine heaven somewhere and is relieved it’s finally been set free.

In other ridiculously stupid news, Reedsy recently republished a post titled “250+ Other Words For ‘Said’ To Supercharge Your Writing.” Don’t look. Instead, consider how many long-term professional writers have advised to use only “said” to carry your dialogue. This Reedsy article should have been titled “250+ Other Words For ‘Said’ To Jerk Readers From Your Story.”

In keeping with the combination butt-chewing, “my-eyes, my-eyes!” theme of this post, what follows is the topic I promised you yesterday, though I did tone it down (a lot) and make it less negative:

Topic: I Am Constantly Amazed (Amused?)

at the smug duality of some writers, namely those who see “writer” as some sort of elevated “calling.” I can spot them within the first few minutes of listening to them talk.

For those writers, let me just toss this out to address that duality:

1. Despite the self-doubt instilled in you by your English and writing teachers, you really can write a story on your own. You only have to believe in yourself and your storytelling ability.
2. Despite that you see yourself as a capital-W “Writer” (cue angelic chorus), what you think of your story doesn’t matter. If you believe in yourself enough to publish what you’ve written, your opinion will have no bearing on what a reader will think of your story.

Readers don't read critically. Readers read for pleasure. Sometimes they're jerked out of a story by typos or some other nonsense that has nothing to do with Story, but readers read for escape. Readers just want a good story.

As I've shared here before, I once forced myself to publish what was, in my opinion, the worst short story I'd ever written ("Old Suits"). A month or so later, a reader with whom I had never had any contact emailed me out of the blue with endless praise about that story. Since then, I've never looked back.

If I may, I recommend you don't confuse job descriptions.

In this wonderful new world of indie publishing, your only task is to write to the best of your ability and skill level at the time and then publish what you've written, regardless of your personal opinion of it.

That's it. That's the limit of your personal responsibility. If you do that, good. If you don't, that's fine too. No skin off my teeth.

But regardless, judging what you've written is the reader's job. I only recommend you respect your readers enough to let them decide what they like or don't like.

And I do practice what I preach. I see writing as a solitary endeavor. I'm confident in myself and my ability to tell a good story all by myself. And I'm humble enough not to pre-judge my work for other readers. They have a right to make up their own mind.

For serious fiction writers, Heinlein's Rules 1-4 constitute the most important advice ever uttered or written:

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you write.
3. You must not rewrite.
4. You must publish what you write.

This should be nothing short of common sense, and before "publish or perish" reared its ugly head among academes back in the '60s and college professors started teaching nonsense to make a name for themselves, it was.

Just follow Heinlein's Rules. If you fail in 1 or 2, you will never be a fiction writer. Period.

If you fail in 1, 2, or 4, you will never be a professional fiction writer. Again, period.

And if you fail in 3, nobody will ever see your truly unique, original voice because you're trying to make it something it isn't: someone else's vision.

I am a successful professional fiction writer for only these four reasons:

1. I follow Heinlein's Rules. Occasionally I fall off one or more of them. Then I climb right back on and keep going.

2. I understand that I don't know everything about fiction technique, and I'm hungry to know more. Therefore I continually strive to learn from those more advanced than I am. But that's the key: I seek out those more advanced. I see no value whatsoever in the blind leading the blind. If you do, again that's fine. But...

3. I'm also confident in my ability as a storyteller *because* I learn from those more advanced than I.

4. I pay forward what I do know, and paying it forward returns to me severalfold.

All of that being said, all writers are different. If you choose to remain frightened that you don't have what it takes and invite others into your work, that's fine. If you choose not to publish what you've written, that's even better. Less competition for me.

Next time, or soon, I'll talk here about those who feel a need to take slaps at "prolific" writers and what stimulates prolific writers to write at all.

To give you at least something worthwhile today, there are a couple of valid items in the "Of Interest" section, but I added a final bit of ridiculous nonsense at the end just to round out the theme of this post. Sorry.

Today I'll help my wife switch over from her old computer to a new one. That and baseball will consume my day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Agency Clauses" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/agency-clauses/> if you're even considering using a literary agent. If you aren't, you can skip this one.

See the guest post, "I wrote 100,000 words..." at <https://prowriterswriting.com/i-wrote-100000-words-in-a-month-here-are-6-things-i-did-to-make-it-happen>. Much as I appreciate Ben Wolf's post, I will note that one can easily write 100,000 clean, publishable words in a month without having done *any* preparation in advance other than sitting down and putting one's fingers on a keyboard.

For something truly ridiculous, see "The Final Cuts" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/the-final-cuts.html>. Then go buy Kris Rusch's book, [The Pursuit of Perfection: And How It Harms Writers](#).

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 1150

Total fiction words for the month..... 1338
Total fiction words for the year..... 381569
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7090
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 269780
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 651349

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Ridiculous Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 14](#)

[October 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Well, my mind
- * Topic: In Defense of Being a Prolific Writer
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Well, my mind is apparently going. (grin)

Spurred-on by a series of comments I read elsewhere, I wrote a really long essay a week or so ago. It was too long for a single topic, so I decided to break it into a few separate topics.

You saw the first one on October 7 ([“POV: Point of View”](#)) and the second on October 8 ([“Stick to Your Guns”](#)).

The third came on October 9 ([“Pro, Hobbyist, or ...?”](#)), and finally the fourth on October 12 with [“I Am Constantly Amazed \(Amused?\)”](#).

For today, I was all set to put up a topic titled “An Ugly, Two-Sided Coin.” Then I realized I’d posted much of the content of that one in [“I Am Constantly Amazed \(Amused?\)”](#).

So I'll save "An Ugly, Two-Sided Coin" for the big blog over at HarveyStanbrough.com. Today, instead, I'll draw the final topic from the essay and post it here.

Topic: In Defense of Being a Prolific Writer

I'm bone weary of people who take little sideways slaps at "prolific" writers who "turn out a book every two months." Such people often say they could never turn out a novel in only 2 months and "be happy" with what they'd written. Their writing is just that special, I guess. (shrug)

Well, to each his own, but what really matters is how happy READERS are with what you've written. Isn't it? Your story is nothing more than a few minutes' or hours' entertainment. That is the limit of its importance. However, I'll leave that for now.

For the record, the longest it's taken me personally to write a novel was 32 consecutive writing days, and the shortest time was 15 days, during which I wrote a 50,000 word novel. Most of the time I finish a novel in 21 to 28 days. If it runs much longer than that, I get bored.

As an aside, that's the same reason I don't outline or otherwise "direct" my characters. Why bother to write a story when I already know the plot, the twists and turns, and the ending?

Other, far more prolific writers than I have churned out a well-selling novel in only 7 days, or 14. The masterful genre writer Michael Moorcock has written a novel in as few as 3 days. It all comes down to dedication to craft and trust in one's own abilities.

But I should pause here to define "prolific." By today's standards, even if a writer turns out a novel every six months, that writer is considered prolific. Even in today's world in which there are no barriers between the writer and the reading public.

What really gets my goat is when these same detractors note that *they* write to sell *books*, not merely as an exercise in self-satisfaction. I talked a bit about this in "Pro, Hobbyist, or ...?" (see link above).

The point is, the one thing has nothing to do with the other. The writer's stimulus for writing has no bearing on how prolific he is (or is not). The difference is in what he does with what he's written.

The professional publishes what he writes, period. The amateur doesn't. But both can write for self-satisfaction.

A larger difference, and one more significant to my mind, between the professional and the amateur is that the former believes in his ability as a storyteller and the latter doesn't.

I freely admit that I write fiction because I very much enjoy writing fiction. I think it's an absolute hoot to be the first person in the history of the world to see a particular story told by

particular characters in a particular way. Therefore I write first and foremost for my own satisfaction.

But I also write for publication. I don't write for readers. I write for me. I publish for readers. I allow nobody else into my solitary process, and I publish what I write so readers can judge for themselves.

Detractors also often use blanket statements, such as "If no readers are reading your work, you're only a hobbyist." In other words, you've failed.

I have to agree with that. But the only way for any writer to guarantee no readers and no sales is to act as his own "gatekeeper" and not publish what he writes. At which point, of course, his writing is only a hobby no matter what he chooses to call it.

And at which point he's haughtily pre-judging his work, not only for himself but for all other potential readers everywhere. I know what I like, but I'm just not smart enough, I guess, to decide in advance what some other reader will or won't enjoy. Nor do I care to try.

I'm only a writer and publisher. My job is to tell entertaining stories and make them available to others. Period. It's up to those folks to determine what they like or don't like.

Anytime I hear a writer say that something he wrote isn't good enough to publish, I smile and say, "Y'know, you're probably right" instead of what I want to say, which is "How *dare* you pre-judge your work on behalf of dozens or hundreds or even thousands of readers?"

Readers are only consumers, folks. I'll never sell to ALL readers, and I'm okay with that. But a lack of a certain number of readers won't suddenly make my profession a hobby. For anything that is published, there will always be at least a certain and growing number of readers, and probably many more than the author expects.

Finally, my own writing certainly isn't a hobby simply because I can (and do) write a novel in two months or less. To intimate otherwise is nothing short of pretentious.

Today I'll work on my WIP. Though this one has lagged-on far too long at 105 calendar days, today will make only the 17th writing day. Go figure. I plan to finish (and publish) it before this weekend, when I will be happily camping somewhere along the Gila River. I'll start reporting daily fiction numbers again tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Self-Publishing is the Best Solution to Low Author Earnings" at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/solution-to-low-author-earnings/>.

See “How to Read a Book Contract – Somebody’s Gonna Die” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-read-a-book-contract-somebodys-gonna-die-2/>.

See “How to Read a Book Contract – Agency Coupled with an Interest” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-to-read-a-book-contract-agency-coupled-with-an-interest-2/>.

See “Get It Out There” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/get-it-out-there/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1070
Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8160
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	270850
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	652419
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [ALLI](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 15](#)

[October 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * I caught my breath
- * Yesterday
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

I caught my breath when “Intellectual Property: The Big Picture for Authors” popped into my inbox this morning. (First item in “Of Interest” below.)

Could this be a post about (gasp) licensing? And one that's not from Kris Rusch or Dean Smith?

It is. Not only that, it's posted on Jane Friedman's site and was written by literary agent Ethan Ellenberg. What?

Yeah, I could hardly believe it either. But it's a great overview, entry-level article. If you read nothing else today, read this article.

Afterward, I still advise you to sign up for Kris Rusch's Patreon page (as little as \$5 per month) and there's still probably time to jump into Dean's year-long Licensing Transition course.

But this post gives me hope that the traditional publishing pundits are beginning to understand there's more to life than acquiring all rights to an intellectual property, adding it to their assets spreadsheet, and letting it lie dormant.

Why am I hopeful? Because once tradpub becomes aware, maybe (just maybe) they'll begin treating authors with respect again.

They might even begin talking more about author's rights (gasp again) and licensing opportunities. And of course, if tradpub is saying it, everyone will finally listen.

Talk with you again soon.

Yesterday I ended up writing very little (like 4 words or something) but spent the day setting up a new computer, adding an external hard drive to it, etc. That and some yard work.

Later today I'll write. Or at least that's the plan. Honestly, I'm more than ready for this WIP to end so I can move on to something else.

Of Interest

See "Intellectual Property: The Big Picture for Authors by Ethan Ellenberg" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/intellectual-property-authors/>.

See "True Life Novels" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/true-life-novels/>.

See "Shared World Second Update" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/shared-world-second-update/>.

See "Preparing Your Manuscript for Publication – Part 1" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/10/preparing-your-manuscript-for-publication-part-1/>. Basically a long introduction followed by a sales pitch, but you might glean some tips.

See "Reaching Out to New Writers" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/reaching-out-to-new-writers.html>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	330
Total fiction words for the month.....	1338
Total fiction words for the year.....	381569
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8490
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	271180
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	652749
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 16](#)

[October 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Yesterday (for those interested)
- * For anyone enrolled
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Psychological and emotional challenges are always interesting.” Laura Benedict in “Afflicted” at the Kill Zone blog.

For those interested in my writing process, I thought I'd share something brand new, at least to me. This has never happened to me before.

I knew something didn't feel right about my WIP, but I couldn't quite put my finger on it. Frankly, it was driving me crazy. I thought it might just be the result of all the little life rolls (life ripples?) I've been going through for the past few months.

Yesterday, I skipped back to the place that my intuition said was giving me the problem. I'd already read over the manuscript three or four separate times, and each time the "problem" felt like it was in that area.

So yesterday, instead of reading through the whole thing again, I went to that specific area. And it finally hit me.

In a few sentences (weeks ago), I'd written the intro to an action scene. Only I hadn't recognized it as the intro to an action scene. As a result of not recognizing it, I'd continued the story from there, but omitted a scene that my character wanted included.

So yesterday I finally started writing in earnest again. But I'm out of practice. Instead of taking a break at the one-hour point, I wrote straight through for two hours and logged almost 1900 new words. And exhausted my brain.

I have to get back into practice. I hope to log at least three separate writing sessions today. We'll see.

Today this is coming to you late so I can write more before I post it. The "Fiction words today" below reflects my fiction from yesterday and today.

The story is flowing again. Now (at last) I can get back to following the characters as they run through the story.

For anyone enrolled in Dean's Shared Worlds class, I just listened to the first vids. Very interesting (no surprise there), but though the introductory video was normal volume, the next five were very quiet.

I've emailed Dean to remind him to set his mic to stereo (he sometimes forgets). So if the vids are almost too quiet to hear, bear with it. It'll get better. (grin)

Today I actually got a lot done. I wrote for only one session, but I also gleaned a second short story out of my WIP. So when I do finally finish this one, I will have at least three publications: the novel and two short stories. (grin)

Of Interest

See "Afflicted" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/afflicted.html>. Interesting.

See "What are the Seven Types of Conflict in Literature?" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/types-of-conflict-in-fiction/>. Useful as a conscious mind learning tool. I recommend reading the bolded

list of types of conflict (let those seep into the subconscious) and leaving the rest to those who want to write from the conscious mind.

See “The Importance of Using Alt Text with Photos” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/the-importance-of-using-alt-text-with-photos/>.

See “A Sacred Space” at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/10/a-sacred-space/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	1118
Nonfiction words today.....	510
Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	9000
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	271690
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	656276
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [Steven Pressfield](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Thursday, October 17

[October 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: On “IP Accelerators” and Other Ridiculous Notions
- * Chances are
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

First, some preparatory remarks.

Back on October 8, I came across an article titled “Amazon Intellectual Property Accelerator.” I listed it in the [“Of Interest” section that day](#).

When I mentioned the article to a knowledgeable friend, he shook his head. “Yup. Lawyers now making money off of baby writers. Go figure.”

His comment stuck with me, so I figured it was time to write a topic on the subject.

Topic: On “IP Accelerators” and Other Ridiculous Notions

As I wrote below the “Of Interest” section back on October 8,

One, remember that your IP is protected by copyright the moment it’s in fixed form. You license Amazon or whomever to sell your stories or novels, but the IP remains yours. [And if you’re smart, you license to Amazon *and* whomever else to sell your stories and novels and create multiple cash streams. And you don’t need a lawyer for any of that.]

Two, remember that you don’t have to register trademarks to protect them. Trademark law exists only to make money for lawyers. The truth is, first (and continued) use in business always wins in court whether or not the trademark is registered. [So again, no “IP accelerator” or lawyer is required.]

Then I offered up my own publishing company trademark as an example.

Even at the most basic, beginner level, those two things are all you need to know to protect your IP. If you cling to those two precepts from the beginning, you’ll be all right. By which I mean you’ll have time to learn more and make more-informed choices regarding your IP as you move through your career as a writer.

But difficult as it is to believe, many writers won’t.

That’s where the other ridiculous notions come in. Despite having been warned off by people like me *and by the actual documented actions of the bad actors themselves*, writers will continue to

* seek out agents to whom they will give 15% of their IP for the life of that IP (the writer’s life plus 70 years)

* seek out traditional publishers and sign away their IP (copyright), again for the life of that IP

* license their IP exclusively to one sales venue (Amazon KDP Select) thereby reducing their own cash streams from hundreds to one

* license their IP exclusively to only one mode of delivery, again limiting their own cash streams—like the lady who, in one of my classes, swore she would never publish to ebooks because she “hates” ebooks

* not give a thought to other ways for their IP to make them money (audio, video, t-shirts, stationery, greeting cards, gaming, television, films, and the list goes on)

* not give a thought to what I call “internal IP,” the worlds and characters and situations they’ve created inside their books and stories, and how those bits of internal IP can make them money.

And there are probably many more ridiculous notions that don’t come to mind at the moment as I’m writing this.

But writers will continue to stumble and fall into all of those ridiculous notions for only one basic reason:

Incredibly, writers continue to believe their work (IP) has little or no value.

Frankly, it’s difficult for me to wrap my mind around that kind of thinking.

Writers who would never share a percentage of their real property (their home, for example) or sign it over lock, stock, and barrel have absolutely no reservations about sharing a percentage of (or signing over) their intellectual property.

And the amazing truth is, your IP is often much more valuable than your RP (real property).

As an example, the total value of my real property probably comes in at somewhere south of two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000). The value of my IP, as close as I can figure it up to right now, is in the neighborhood of seventeen million dollars (\$17,000,000) and probably a lot more. Folks, I like that neighborhood.

But back to the warning about ridiculous notions.

There are two ways to make decisions: Listen to and believe what people (or businesses) say, or observe what they do. Which makes more sense to you? Only the second one (watching what they do) really matters. Only the second one safeguards you from bad actors.

This is exactly why many of the scam so-called “Christian” (and other) publishers advertise on television and offer a phone number to call, but have no website. They don’t want anything in writing.

The first writing you’ll see from them is a contract worded in legalese that, even if you read it and believe you understand it, won’t reveal its true intent. And with stars in your eyes, you’ll sign it and send it back, and your IP or a large percentage of it will be gone for the life of the copyright.

But is this ridiculous notion limited to only scam publishers?

Unfortunately, no.

Seemingly legitimate “indie” or “self” (subsidy) publishers like Wheatmark or Booklocker or a number of others with a web presence do exactly the same thing.

They offer “enticements,” then close the snare.

Those enticements are often a series of so-called “free” benefits you can set up just as easily yourself: Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, a website, getting your book into brick and mortar stores, etc.

And literary agents and traditional publishers also do exactly the same thing. From them, the enticements play on your ego. They play on you becoming a “real” (read “annointed”) “published author.”

After all, once you sign with an agent, you can say you actually *have* an agent—and it costs you only 15% of your IP for the life of the copyright.

And after you sign with a “big” publisher, you can say you were published *by a New York house*—and it costs you only 100% of your IP (15% of which goes to your agent) for the life of the copyright.

Yet unbelievably, those same folks will suspect people like me are trying to scam them out of doing something that’s good for their career. Like the woman who practically screamed at me that she would never read (not follow, just read) Heinlein’s Rules because she isn’t a science fiction writer.

Or like people who refuse to read or believe Dean Wesley Smith’s [“Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing” series](#) because what? They think he’s trying to scam them out of thinking for themselves? Seriously?

All I can say is this: Ask yourself, what do I or DWS get out of the deal? We aren’t asking you for thousands of your hard earned dollars (like the subsidy publishers) or a percentage of your IP (like the agents and traditional publishers). At the most, we ask for donations for value received or to buy our books.

Yet I get the sly grins, the sly sideways glances, as if writers are thinking, “Nope, I’m onto you, pal.” And all I can do is sigh and go about my business of writing and trying to pay it forward. Frankly, and maybe harshly, stupid is as stupid does.

Please, please don’t fall for any of this nonsense, folks. If you’re tempted to sign-on with one of those publishers who advertise only on television but have no web presence, or if you’re tempted to sign-on with any subsidy publisher (where you pay an up-front fee to be published), or if you’re tempted to sign-on with any literary agent or traditional publisher, please go lie down until the temptation passes.

Because if you sign with any of them, you *will* be scammed out of thousands and maybe even millions of dollars.

And if you sign-on with me or Dean or Kris Rusch or anyone else who offers straight-up, honest information? Well, you might just be “scammed” into keeping what’s yours.

Chances are good I won’t finish my WIP before I leave to go camping, but that’s all right. I’ll write a bit today, but otherwise I’ll be engaged in packing. I’ll catch up with posting how many fiction words I wrote after I get back.

My buddy and I moved up our departure from Monday to Friday, and honestly I’m really looking forward to the break. I just hope my cigars arrive in time. (grin)

It’ll be great to be able to actually move around while I’m out on the Gila this time without pain and without accidentally stumbling into a cactus. That said, I suspect there will be a lot of sitting around doing nada, at least on my part.

I’ll read a lot, probably, and I’ll forget the idiocy of politicians and the biased news channels and a bunch of other stuff.

I’m not going to bother with preposting for the 2 or 3 days while I’m gone. If you’ve missed any Journal entries lately, I recommend you scroll down and read a few of them. And I’ll talk with you again on Monday.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Three Kinds of Writers (Rethinking The Writing Business Part 14)” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/10/16/business-musings-three-kinds-of-writers-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-13/>. I’m SO excited I can finally share this one with you. It’s been on Patreon for a week.

See “Misc. Stuff To Talk About and Pictures” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/misc-stuff-to-talk-about-and-pictures/>.

See “How to Enhance your Writing by Layering Your Scenes & Plot” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/how-to-enhance-your-writing-by-layering-your-scenes-plot.html>.

See “‘Fuzzy-Profound’ Words Cause Mental Rot” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/fuzzy-profound-words-cause-mental-rot/>.

See “The First Amendment And Copyright Law: Can’t We All Just Get Along?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-first-amendment-and-copyright-law-cant-we-all-just-get-along/>.

See “Gedunk!” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/gedunk/>.

See “It’s Time to Do a Facebook Settings Checkup” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/10/its-time-to-do-a-facebook-settings-checkup/>. If you’re bugged, here’s how to debug.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1600
Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10600
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	273290
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	657876
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Monday, October 21](#)

[October 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Today I’m posting here mostly to pass along the stuff in “Of Interest.” After working on my email a little last night and a lot this morning, I finally got through what had accumulated while I was gone.

Dan and I had a great time escaping life in general, social media, Home Shopping Network and all the other mind-numbing stuff that washes over us all in everyday life. [I posted a few pics on Facebook](#). If I can figure out how to download it from my camera, I might upload a 360° video too. Maybe not. The still pics are pretty good.

For a radical change, we didn't talk writing much at all this time. Of course, we're both professional fiction writers, so I thought about writing a lot, as I assume Dan did.

I did figure out why I've had such trouble with my WIP, though. It came to me in a flash. Two different novels, one in a series and one stand-alone, have been clashing in my subconscious over the past few months. As I'm writing the second (which I insisted on writing), the first keeps intruding with "Why aren't you writing me?"

So now, with a simple one-click protagonist name change in the second (current) WIP, I'll be able to finish it soon. Then I'll move back to the first storyline and finish that one, or put it on the back burner and write something else entirely in a different genre.

I'd written the opening of the first storyline before attempting to "force" it into a series structure, hence the subconscious confusion.

Anyway, no writing today and very little else. I need to recuperate from my mini-vacation, and besides, I'm not in a good mood. Ever feel like you could chew wheels and spit nails? Yeah. Like that.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "How You Too Can Build a Literary Festival" at <https://writerunboxed.com/2019/10/14/how-you-too-can-build-a-literary-festival/>.

See "How to Use MailerLite (So You Can Dump MailChimp)" at <https://socialmediajustforwriters.com/how-to-use-mailerlite-so-you-can-dump-mailchimp/>. This is a very informative article that goes far beyond the topic. So even if you don't have a newsletter or want one, you might want to read this.

See "7 Non-Literary Ways for Writers to Get into the Flow" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/get-into-the-flow/>. Some very good advice.

See "Joyce Carol Oates Talks Crime Fiction, Character, and Cats" at <https://crimereads.com/joyce-carol-oates-talks-crime-fiction-character-and-cats/>.

See "Bringing Life to the Dead with CGI Technology" at <http://dyingwords.net/bringing-life-to-the-dead-with-cgi-technology/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 390

Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10990
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	273680
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	658266
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [the writing life](#), [Writer Unboxed](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 22](#)

[October 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Horrible Quote of the Day
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, and die gallantly. Specialization is for insects.” Robert A. Heinlein

Horrible Quote of the Day

“Books aren't written – they're rewritten. It is one of the hardest things to accept, especially after the seventh rewrite hasn't quite done it.” Michael Crichton

Oh. My. God. I would literally shoot myself before I'd rewrite a book once, much less seven times. See the topic below.

Topic: Question Everything (or Bad Advice is Bad Advice Despite the Source or Mode of Delivery)

If you've been reading this Journal for more than a day or two, you know I hate clichés. I also don't care for the people who create them, either as a distraction or in an attempt to hide their own inability or unwillingness to think things through. They have nothing useful to add so they spout a cliché, usually wrapped in a smug smile.

When I was a youngster in the USMC, every barracks had at least one "barracks lawyer." If you haven't heard the term, it's derogatory. It means someone who dispenses legal advice that sounds good on the surface, but is wrong, and often dangerously wrong.

Nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand, advice offered by barracks lawyers had been around forever and had become (you guessed it) a cliché. And if you followed it blindly, chances were good you'd find yourself in an altercation with a police officer, if not in jail awaiting your arraignment.

Fortunately, most of us knew better than to follow any advice from a barracks lawyer. Instead, we'd nod, say something like, "Hey, whatever works for you" (sound familiar?) and then either not get in trouble in the first place or consult an actual attorney if we did.

I wish I were still able to do that. The nod and smile thing, I mean.

But I'm not. Even when I don't argue directly with the person who offers cliché as truth (because I know it will do no good), I often turn it into a topic for the Journal.

Today, the worldwide writing community is saturated to the point of being soggy with the equivalent of barracks lawyers: writers who propagate bad advice, almost always in the form of a cliché.

And those writers who propagate that bad advice always do so for the same two reasons:

1. it sounds good (so it makes them sound wise), and
2. it's easier to pass along a cliché than it is to think through a technique or problem and offer something valuable.

Probably my least favorite cliché and the one that makes me groan the loudest is "Kill your darlings."

Seriously, what does that even mean? As is usual when clichés are involved, different people have different interpretations. Therefore it shouldn't be a cliché at all; the writer who considers muttering it should say what he means in the first place.

Another one is "Show, don't tell."

That one caused me to walk out of a seminar several years ago. The instructor was about 20 minutes into a 3-hour seminar when he advised us to “show, don’t tell.”

When I raised my hand and asked him to explain to us what that meant, he smiled smugly and actually had the chutzpah to say, “Well, it isn’t something that can be explained, but I know it when I see it.”

I said, “Ah,” stood up, gathered my stuff, and headed for the door.

He called after me, “There are no refunds.”

I looked back and grinned. “Hey, now *there’s* a surprise.”

I didn’t care. A hundred bucks was a small price to pay for such a valuable lesson.

To this day, that’s how I feel when I hear some writer spout a cliché. And that’s how I react. Prove to me you don’t know what you’re talking about, and I’m outta here.

Which leads me to the cliché that is the catalyst for today’s topic: “The time to stop revising is when you’re only making the story different, not better.”

Think about it. This is not only a cliché but a category mistake.

“Better” and “worse” are personal judgements. What’s better to one person will be worse to another. But “different” is a state of being. It simply means “not the same.”

I can’t help but wonder, how would a writer who actually believes that teach other writers to identify the line between “better” and “different”? Anyone?

Sadly, most writers who live in a world of clichéd advice probably are fated never to return. Instead they keep the myths going, batting them back and forth like kittens playing with a ball of yarn. And always as if they just came up with it.

Of course, the speaker often follows his or her mumbled cliché with “but do whatever you want” or “but whatever works for you.” Either of which alleviates the speaker from any responsibility for the lack of validity of the cliché.

So here’s the thing: with only one exception, passing along clichéd writing advice is just wrong.

Not that I believe those who utter clichés are harming other writers intentionally. I don’t. But even the most innocently offered advice can adversely affect the careers of far too many would-be writers.

Still, we’re all ultimately responsible for our own actions and our own career choices. Hence, responsibility resides with the person who listens to and heeds such advice. But seriously,

following clichéd advice makes about as much sense as doing something in a particular way “because that’s how everybody does it.”

When I hear that, I always want to say, “Really? Everybody? So you’ve talked with *everybody* and that’s what they *all* say? Or are you just repeating a cliché?”

My intent here is not to be smug or even to be a smart-aleck. My intent is to recommend that when you see or hear clichéd advice you think your way past it. The human mind is a truly wonderful thing. It’s even capable of original thought, but only when we use it.

Writers who make the effort to follow their own path are in a minority. Chances are, they will be successful.

Oh, but I mentioned one exception, didn’t I? In the world of writing, there is only one cliché that is valid and holds true: Question Everything.

I wish that for you.

Today I’ll probably write. I’ll also either walk or at least think about walking routes. I like to plan before I go out.

I hiked several miles while we were camping, so in that way at least I’m back. Walking, in concert with the low-carb diet I started awhile back, should enable me to lose some excess weight.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “New Videos in Shared Worlds Class” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-videos-in-shared-worlds-class/>.

Via The Passive Voice, see “The 30 Scariest Author Website Mistakes And How To Fix Them” at <https://badredheadmedia.com/2019/10/the-30-scariest-author-website-mistakes-and-how-to-fix-them-by-guest-paulinewiles/>.

Via CrimeReads, see “Learning to Write Mysteries the Mystic River Way” at <https://www.vulture.com/article/angie-kim-mystic-river-miracle-creek.html>.

If you enjoy poetry, see Ellaraine Lockie’s award-winning “Stepping Over Arizona” at <http://poetrysuperhighway.com/psh/2019/10/poetry-from-contest-winners-ellaraine-lockie-suzanne-oconnell-and-alicia-elkort>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 1250

Total fiction words for the month..... 3237
Total fiction words for the year..... 383468
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12240
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 274930
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 659516

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [PoetrySuperHighway.com](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, October 23](#)

[October 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Show of hands
- * Topic: Warning—Safeguard Your IP
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Jesus, where the hell is everybody when they first deliver the typing paper? Where are all the ‘helpers’ when those boxes full of silence come in? Blank. Both sides. No clue, no instructions enclosed on how to take just twenty-six letters and endlessly rearrange them so that they can turn them into a mirror of a part of our lives. Try it sometime.” Larry Gelbart

First, a show of hands—How many of you would be interested in listening to me on a podcast if I were to set one up?

It's an idea I've been toying with, but even as boring and wearing as my voice is, I'd rather not talk to empty air.

Visit the website and leave a comment, or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

On a related note, if you're interested in setting up your own podcast, see the first item in "Of Interest" today.

On a side note, I will not be participating in NaPodPoMo (National Podcast Post Month).

I also will not be signing up with BlogTalkRadio. For more on that, read on.

Topic: Warning—Safeguard Your IP

If you decide to use WordPress.com (or any other "free" website builder), READ THE TERMS OF SERVICE. Search for terms like "Content" and "Rights" and "Intellectual Property Rights." Read those passages carefully. Often they will assure you in one section or paragraph that your rights remain your own (or that you retain all rights) and then grab them from you in another section or paragraph.

(Note: WordPress.org is different in that it's a self-hosted site. You retain ownership to all content that you upload. But be sure to read the terms of service of your webhosting service too.)

The thing is, *When you click a box agreeing to the terms of service, you're effectively signing a contract.*

The same goes for anyplace else where you're uploading your content. Take time to read the terms of service. To safeguard your IP, you need to be absolutely certain you retain ownership of any content you upload to any site.

Nate Hoffelder (see "Of Interest") mentions that BlogTalkRadio has a "free tier."

But should you decide to use BlogTalkRadio to set up a podcast, under "Rights over UGC" [User Generated Content] their terms of service read as follows:

"By creating, delivering, submitting, posting or displaying UGC on or through BlogTalkRadio, the User grants a non-exclusive, royalty-free, worldwide, irrevocable, perpetual and with the right to sublicense license to the Owner without territorial limits, to use, copy, reproduce, process, adapt, modify, publish, transmit, display, and distribute such content in any media or via distribution methods currently available or developed later."

In other words, you're giving BTR the right to use your material in any way they see fit. For that reason, I won't be using them.

Be careful out there. Zealously guard your copyright. Just sayin'.

Today I get to meet with another writer for coffee. (Call it "Writers in Denny's Getting Coffee," with apologies to Jerry Seinfeld.)

And I have a short story to read first. I'm a lucky guy.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

If you've ever thought of starting a podcast, see "The Digital Writer" at <https://preview.mailerlite.com/m9i3p9/1272595667063149698/b6p5/>. (This is a newsletter. Hence the hinky-looking URL.)

See "Finding Story Ideas" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/finding-story-ideas/>.

See "The Value of Touching Details" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/the-value-of-touching-details/>.

See "Noir at the Bar" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/noir-at-the-bar.html>.

See "Upmarket Fiction" at <https://blog.reedsy.com/upmarket-fiction/>. Interesting history items and definitions. (Of course, what you believe or don't believe from the article is up to you. [grin])

See PG's take on "What the Heck Is Happening to Book Titles?!" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-the-heck-is-happening-to-book-titles/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 630

Total fiction words for the month..... 3237

Total fiction words for the year..... 383468

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12870

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 275560

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 660146

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal, Thursday, October 24

October 24, 2019 by Harvey

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Welp, I won't
- * Still a spot open
- * Microsoft Word for writers
- * Yesterday I was reminded
- * There's an article
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“If we listened to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair. We'd never have a friendship. We'd never go into business, because we'd be cynical. Well, that's nonsense. You've got to jump off cliffs all the time and build your wings on the way down.” Ray Bradbury

And what quality must you possess in order to jump off a cliff and build your wings on the way down? Keep learning and believe in yourself. Nothing else is necessary.

Welp, due to a thoroughly underwhelming response to yesterday's question, I won't be setting up a podcast. At least not here, and not yet.

Not only did nobody leave a comment or email me, older supportive emails actually started disappearing out of my inbox. I assume they were being rescinded. (grin)

Just a reminder for anyone who didn't know about it: I wrote a series of blog posts on Microsoft Word for Writers awhile back.

Topics include how to use the Find & Replace tool, how to use the Paragraph Formatting tool, How to Set Word Options and many others.

The series is free, it's extremely informative, and you don't have to listen to me talk. (grin) You can find the series at <https://harveystanbrough.com/microsoft-word-for-writers/>.

Yesterday I was reminded of how wonderful it is to be a teacher, to have knowledge and be able to pass it along to those who want to learn.

Which in turn causes me to let you know I still have one spot open for mentoring.

For those who have attended my live seminars, my mentoring is even more informative and more focused because it's one-on-one, specific to your own writing and what you want to learn. You will get a lot more than you pay for.

We'll work on whatever's important to you at the time: all aspects of writing (dialogue, narrative, pacing, etc.) as well as formatting, cover design, submitting and/or publishing, etc.

If you're regional, we can even meet face to face regularly. If you aren't, we'll do everything by email with occasional phone calls when necessary. I'll even serve as your first reader (free), and I'll give you a discount for copyediting if you want and need that.

I'm not sure how long I'll continue to offer this service, so if you want it, now would be a great time to let me know that and jump in. Email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

There's an article in today's "Of Interest" section on how to find and work with editors.

A few disclaimers—As an editor myself,

* I would never recommend so-called "developmental" editing (for the same reason I don't recommend critique groups). Nobody can know your work like you do.

* I would never recommend content editing (beyond the editor mentioning redundancies, etc.).

* I strongly recommend copyediting, during which a set of fresh, knowledgeable eyes (mine) look for inconsistency; redundancy; punctuation, spelling and wrong-word usage; pacing and flow; and anything else that might confuse or otherwise interrupt the reader.

* And the fees listed in the article are ridiculously high. After you read the article, check out my Copyediting page at <https://harveystanbrough.com/copyediting/>. Just sayin'.

Today will be partially filled with a trip to Sierra Vista to shop for groceries and browse treasures in second-hand stores. I'll spend the balance listening to more videos on the Licensing Transition.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: But I Can't Afford...(Rethinking The Writing Business Part 15)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/10/23/business-musings-but-i-cant-afford-rethinking-the-writing-business-part-15/>.

See “The Book Designer : Working with (Those Dreaded) Editors” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/10/working-with-those-dreaded-editors/>. Frankly, I was stunned by the prices they list for copyediting. I’m an excellent copyeditor and I work for a LOT less. Just sayin’.

See “Kill That Sagging Middle” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/kill-that-sagging-middle/>.

See the Passive Guy’s take on “Major Public Library System Will Boycott Macmillan E-books” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/major-public-library-system-will-boycott-macmillan-e-books/>.

See “I Will Not Tell You Where To Get Free Forms Online” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/i-will-not-tell-you-where-to-get-free-forms-online/>. And again, see PG’s take. Forewarned is forearmed.

See “16 Concrete Tips for Effectively Editing Your Own Fiction” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/16-concrete-tips-for-effectively-editing-your-own-fiction.html>. Disclaimer: My inclusion of this link in no way indicates my agreement with much of the article.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	690
Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	13560
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	276250
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	660836
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, October 25](#)

[October 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Humility and Epiphany
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“One of the widest gaps in human experience is the gap between what we say we want to be and our willingness to discipline ourselves to get there.” Harry Emerson Fosdick

Topic: Humility and Epiphany

In an email exchange, another writer wrote something that shocked me to my core.

The statement was nothing earth-shattering. It was one of those casual sentences-in-passing that carries almost no weight at all. It was about process, about something the writer was going to do.

But when I read it, I interpreted it as being about priorities. And I kid you not, a hard frown sprang across my face and the sizzling, electrified word *WHAT?* filled my mind.

My initial reaction was to write “Why in the world are you doing THAT [instead of this or instead of both]?” From there I might have launched into a tiresome lecture about priorities, dedication, rationalization, critical mind interference, etc.

But just in time, I realized that would have been wrong, and a massive overreaction.

So I didn't. Instead I realized the writer had just given me a little insight into myself.

I never would have written that casual sentence-in-passing. In fact, the thought expressed in that sentence never would have crossed my mind.

But that one simple sentence served to remind me that not everyone thinks of this writing stuff the same way I do, and that's perfectly all right. It's just a difference between me and everyone else. Not better or worse, just different.

When I go into an endeavor, I go whole-hog. Just who I am. I won't say that everything (and everyone) else in my life “suffers” from my single-mindedness. That would be a vast overstatement (I think).

I don't even consciously assign lesser priorities to other tasks or events or people in my life.

But I DO both consciously and subconsciously assign Number One priority to the new endeavor. And honestly, it's both a blessing and a curse.

So it was that soon after I started writing seriously, I set a daily word-count goal of 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day. To achieve that goal took 2 to 4 hours of my day, but again, I made that goal my number one priority. Period.

Now understand, WHAT I wrote during that time didn't matter at all. All that mattered was THAT I wrote. 3000 words of publishable fiction. Every. Single. Day.

That isn't to say that writing was an obsession for me. After all, I didn't write every minute of every day.

But I did attack my daily goal of 3000 words, rain or shine, no matter what else was going on.

Most days I met or exceeded that goal. On days when I didn't, I still got close. Maybe a short story or novel ended and I'd written only 2847 words that day. Close enough, and the goal reset to 0 the following morning. I didn't have any words to "make up," but I did have a new goal of 3,000 words to reach.

And for me it worked. I was so prolific specifically BECAUSE I stuck like glue to my daily goal of 3,000 words per day. But again, that was my priority. No matter what else was going on, the 3000 words came first. THEN came family, other people, and other tasks and situations.

Even the novels and short stories I wrote during that period were of secondary importance. Again, what mattered was THAT I wrote — that I got my 3000 words — not WHAT I wrote. (One true value of a daily word-count goal is that the focus is on writing, not on what is being written.)

So thanks to my friend, I'm reminded again that most other people don't think the way I do about writing. And that's okay. Truly, to each his or her own.

Of course, none of this means I'll be letting up on what I teach. I can only pass along my own experience. Even when I learn something new from Dean or whomever, I don't pass it along until I've tried it and made it my own.

But that email exchange also gave me an epiphany.

Earlier, I wrote that the thought my friend expressed in that sentence never would have crossed my mind. But apparently that isn't entirely true.

Everyone knows I've been slacking off a lot lately.

My slacking-off started at about the time I became involved in the Licensing Transition and now the Shared Worlds class. In effect, I let those things become my priority. That-I-write slipped away into the morass of things that are secondary in importance.

In other words, I'm using those extra tasks (learning) as an excuse not to write. For me personally, that's just silly. And my indulgence in that excuse comes at a horrible time.

At a time when I'm switching my thinking process from "me writing and publishing" to "my partner/wife and I running a licensing business," it's more important now than ever before to put out new work.

So again, I need to make writing (one more time, *that* I write, not *what* I write) my number one priority. If I do that, everything else will fall into place.

So a toast — Here's to a prolific 2020 (and the rest of 2019).

By the way, in case you're wondering whether I wish this semi-obsession on you — Sure, of course I do.

But only if it's right for you.

Today, I'll endeavor to work on my WIP. If it gives me any trouble, I'll set it aside for awhile and move on to something else. It's just another novel, another story. In and of itself, it doesn't matter.

I'll write fiction today, but I'll start reporting it again tomorrow.

I'll also walk a few miles, something else I'm able to do again that is necessary and that I enjoy but that I've been putting off.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "The Art of Writing About Organized Crime..." at <https://crimereads.com/the-art-of-writing-about-organized-crime-and-the-rise-and-fall-of-the-new-york-mafia/>.

See "Never Start With a Blank Page" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/never-start-with-a-blank-page/>.

Appropriately enough, see "Beginnings" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/beginnings/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1020
Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	14580
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	277270
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	661856

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, October 26](#)

[October 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Yesterday
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Always believe in courage, virtue and honor, that good always triumphs over evil, that true love never dies — because those are things worth believing in.” Hub in the film, *Secondhand Lions*

Yesterday, despite my best intentions, I didn't even return to my WIP to figure out what to do with it. I let too many other things get in the way.

I did take a good 2-mile hike, so there's that.

Today and for the next couple of days, I'm going to consider my future as a writer, publisher, and IP licensor. I know more or less where I want to be when, but I'm not sure how to get there.

Here, almost at the end of what amounts to a long hiatus, it seems the perfect time to take a page out of DWS' and Kris Rusch's book, do some research and formulate a few plans. When I emerge from that process, I can begin implementing them.

Just thinking out loud here in case it might be helpful for your own planning process...

For my immediate, personal future as a writer, I need to figure out two things:

- * how to climb back on Heinlein's Rules, and
- * how to restructure and make the most of my personal time.

Part of the former, I'm sure, will be a return to my tried-and-true daily word-count goal. That goal will be my number one priority, and it will propel me forward again.

As part of the latter, I'll consider (for one thing) whether writing this Journal almost every day is the best use of my time. From what I can tell, I have only a few dedicated readers, and one of those is a mentoring student. So maybe a weekly or monthly Journal would do just as well.

For another, I might rethink my writing, socializing with family and friends, and sleeping schedule again. The early-morning thing worked well while it did. Recently, not so much.

On a larger, longer-range scale for the future of our business, we'll make plans for one, two, five and ten years out. Those will include *setting deadlines* for writing and publishing new works, *setting goals* for attending certain events and for licensing old and new works, and *setting milestones* for developing the business overall.

- * The publishing deadlines will include specific and realistic goals for a number of short stories, collections, novels and series.

- * The licensing goals will include specific things we can do Now with my IP and what I call my "inner IP" (characters, settings, and worlds from previous stories), as well as things we can plan for and set up in the future. Like attending Dean's Master Business Class in 2020 and attending the Licensing Expo as a licensor in 2021 or 2022.

- * As one example of a milestone for the business overall, I want to "need" to set up a full "C" corporation for the licensing business (StoneThread Publishing) within 5 years.

Note that all of these are goals, things that are within our power to achieve, not dreams.

Over the next few months, I'll also be setting up a shared world for others to write in. (I already have a great idea for that, and it has nothing to do with Wes Crowley or, for that matter, with Dean's Shared Worlds Class, which I'm enrolled in for the next 9 months or so.) I hope to have the "bible" set up for it by January 1.

So that's a quick overview of the plans and goals we'll be setting up over the next few days. Plus whatever we come up with as we're planning the stuff above.

How about you?

Glad I typed most of this yesterday BEFORE I did something stupid. A knife slipped and left a deep gash across the fist knuckle of the index finger of my left hand.

So I'm enjoying all sorts of new adventures (grin), including typing with one finger. So I'll definitely be away for about a week while my hand heals. Good timing on all the planning stuff, I guess.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Without This Blog Streak..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/once-again-the-power-of-a-streak/>. Very good post.

See "Moving Around" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/moving-around>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 710

Total fiction words for the month..... 3237
Total fiction words for the year..... 383468
Total nonfiction words for the month... 15290
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 277980
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 662566

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 195
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Planning](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Shared Worlds](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal, Monday, October 28

[October 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * I wasn't going to
- * Topic: In My Personal Restructuring...
- * Today

- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day-in and day-out.” Robert Collier

I wasn't going to post today. Need to give my left hand a few more days of healing time. But today's "Of Interest" is important.

Topic: In My Personal Restructuring... yesterday I figured out a few things:

1. How to Climb Back on Heinlein's Rules

Daily word count goal = 2500 wpd (on average). This is attainable but a slight stretch. It will give me two to two and a half scenes and will result in 912,500 words of publishable fiction per year.

2. Publishing Goals, November 2019 Forward

A. One short story written and published per week on deadline. Submission of those stories to short-story markets first when applicable.

B. One novel written and published per month. (I might adjust this one to 2 novels every 3 months, depending on how much the short stories drain me.)

C. Five 10-story collections of short fiction written and published per year.

3. How to Restructure and Make the Most of My Personal Time

A. I have Internet access on my writing 'puter (for spot research) but I'm disciplined with it so I'll keep it. Facebook has been creeping in, but I can get away from that again.

B. My current structure is fine. I just need to actually write while I'm in the Hovel.

C. As part of restructuring my time, I have to also reconsider my approach to The Journal. It currently consumes 2 to 3 hours of every day.

Beginning in November, I will move posting the Daily Journal to the end of the day. That will make it less important in my own mind (secondary to my own fiction writing) and make the time I spend on it dependent on the time I have left in the day.

Beyond that, I'm considering a couple of options:

1). I'll keep the Journal itself free, but put the writing topics behind a pay wall on the Journal site and on the main site. If I do this, I'll also restructure the tiers on my [Patronage page](#). (My efforts are either of value to my subscribers or they aren't. Shrug.)

(By the way, to me what's important isn't how much my donors send every month. What's important is that they find my advice valuable enough to invest something in their own learning process.)

a. I'm also considering using Patreon, but I see no reason to go off-site and give Patreon a cut of what subscribers donate for my advice. I also don't care for Patreon's rights-grabbing terms of service.

b. Or, as I wrote in an earlier post, maybe a weekly or monthly Journal would serve just as well.

4. Near-Term Licensing Goals

A. I've identified five specific things (beyond writing and publishing more stories and novels) that I can do now or within the next several months with my IP and my "inner IP" (characters, settings, situations and worlds I've already created).

I'm not ready to reveal those yet (grin), but I'm excited about them and you'll be seeing some of them soon.

5. On a Larger, Longer-Range Scale for the Future of Our Business

A. Under "2. Publishing Goals, November 2019 Forward" above, each of those works will be licensed to StoneThread Publishing (STP), under a legal contract, for publishing and distribution. I'll consult an attorney who's versed in copyright and IP to draw up a boilerplate contract for this purpose. This is in preparation for...

B. At some point (when income and taxes get big enough), we'll establish STP as a full C corporation. (Again, with the advice of an attorney.)

C. We more than likely will attend Dean's Master Business Class in 2020 (a year from now), and we will attend the Licensing Expo as licensors in Las Vegas in 2021 or 2022.

I hope my revealing this process helps with your own process in some way.

Today I'll do little or nothing beyond posting this. Thanks for the well-wishes. My hand/knuckle is getting better day by day. Another few days should do it.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Why Would I Call Myself A Professional Writer...” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/why-would-i-call-myself-a-professional-writer/>. And please share. This should go viral.

See “Time Traveler” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/time-traveler/>. This is not about science fiction.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	730
Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	16020
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	278710
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	663296
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Tuesday, October 29](#)

[October 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Learning Revisited
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Everything that happens is destined for the past tense, and the way we render it into human comprehensibility is storytelling.” John M. Williams

I've never read a better or more concise definition.

Topic: Learning Revisited

Everyone learns in different ways and at a different pace. Remember the stages of a fiction writer? If not, check out my take in the topic at <https://hestanbrough.com/the-daily-journal-tuesday-july-/>. I recommend you read it before continuing to read this topic.

(You can also buy Dean's book on the stages at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B016VBNPRG>.)

Basically, Stage 1 and Stage 2 writers are limited as to what they can learn. Even if they read Stage 4 and 5 writers, they won't get as much from it as they would if they studied them later. Stage 1 writers are still focused on individual words and sentences and fully mired in the myths of writing. Stage 2 writers have begun — but just begun — to move past that.

I roughly equate Stage 1 to infancy and toddler-hood, when everything about writing is wondrous and new. Stage 2 is more like the pre-teen and teenage years, a time of exploration and discovery.

Advanced Stage 2 is a critical time, as it is for humans in their early 20s: they either decide they know enough or they realize they know practically nothing and hunger for more knowledge. Those who are convinced they've learned enough never make it to Stage 3.

(When I hear a writer say he "isn't ready yet" to learn something — licensing, for a recent example — I cringe. But to each his own. I'm speaking here only for myself. If you glean something useful from it, so much the better.)

We all go through these stages, again at our own pace. Often, the speed of our progress depends on whatever natural abilities accompanied us when we were born.

I've always had a penchant-for and an innate sense-of the nuances of the English language. I'm forever grateful for that gift. For example, I never had to study sentence structure, the rhythm of the language, etc. It came to me naturally. I'm one of those oddballs who can both diagram a sentence and trust my own creative subconscious voice enough to let it tell the stories.

Still, as an advanced Stage 3 writer, I love to learn. The only thing more exciting to me than learning is subconsciously applying what I learn in my writing.

But there are fewer people from whom I can learn anything of value about writing. For awhile, I thought they were all advanced Stage 4 writers, as described by Dean.

But that thought and a few comparisons led me to realize Dean's book doesn't go quite far enough. There are also Stage 5 writers, those who are absolutely at the top of the game. And frankly, that's a pretty short list.

I wrote awhile back that I felt I was approaching a cusp in my writing career. (Or as a friend wrote, I've been in a chrysalis for the past few months. Thanks, Nan!) That event horizon, that emergence, is coming up fast.

My advanced Stage 4 mentors are Dean Wesley Smith, Gabriel García Márquez, Joe Konrath and John Gilstrap. Also Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who for me is on the verge of becoming a Stage 5 writer. (I even have two notebooks she wrote about her process as she was writing her huge novel *The Renegat!*)

Unfortunately, with the exception of Dean and Kris, those writers don't share a lot. Still, I've already learned a ton from all of them in various ways. They got me to where I am today. Without Dean, I'd still be flailing at words and tilting at sentences.

So for now I'm focusing more on Stage 5 writers. Writers whose work I literally can't put down. Writers who never commit a writing sin so atrocious that it forces me out of the story.

Jack Higgins is one. And there's Hemingway, of course, and Lawrence Sanders and JRR Tolkien. Also Stephen King, Isabel Allende, Asimov, Heinlein, Bradbury, and — if I was interested in writing pure romance, which I'm not — Nora Roberts. (If you write romance and you aren't reading and studying Roberts, you're missing a sure bet.)

So taken as a whole, that's five Stage 4 writers (just on my personal list) and ten Stage 5 writers.

So only fifteen writers out of millions of writers whose work is available. Still, fifteen writers are a lot. So then it boils down to genre.

For thriller/suspense and psychological suspense, I read and study Higgins, King and Gilstrap. For SF I read and study Asimov, Heinlein, Bradbury, Rusch, and Smith.

For magic realism and fantasy, I read and study Allende, Tolkien and Márquez. For action-adventure and war, I read and study Hemingway.

How do I learn from the Stage 5 writers? I read their work for pleasure first, then go back and study the passages that blew me away. From those passages I learn advanced scene structure, description and depth, pacing, etc.

I'm in that process today and for the next few days with Jack Higgins. That alone will radically improve my game in both productivity and storytelling.

So whom/what do you study? Whom that I omitted would you add to your own list of writers from whom you learn (Stages 3 – 5 only, and aside from me if you're reading this)?

As I wrote above, today and for the next few days I'll be immersed in Higgins' work and continuing to fine-tune my schedule and decide on some of the things I wrote yesterday.

At the end of that few days, I hope to emerge finally from my chrysalis and soar on into my career.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “19 Themed Calls for Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/19-themed-submissions-calls-for-november-2019/>. Some of these pay pro rates. A few look really good to me. Just sayin’.

See “Sneak Peek into Audiobook Narration” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/10/sneak-peek-into-audiobook-narration.html>. Invaluable if you’re thinking of having your books narrated into audio.

Via Linda Mae Adams, see “Crime Scene Tape: The Back Story” at <https://www.aetv.com/real-crime/crime-scene-tape-the-back-story>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1000
Total fiction words for the month.....	3237
Total fiction words for the year.....	383468
Total nonfiction words for the month...	17020
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	279710
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	664296
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, October 31](#)

[October 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Genres and Audiences
- * I'm writing again!
- * Yesterday
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“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

For a great series of descriptions of the commercial genres and appropriate audiences by age, download my free Genres and Audiences at <https://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Genres-and-Audiences.pdf>. Note: this was derived from “Genre: A Novel's Flavor” ©2019 Modupeh Duncan for AuthorsPublish.com

I'm writing again! This morning I started a short story set (apparently) in the Blackwell Ops world.

Funny how this stuff works if you only have faith.

I've been through enough hiatuses that this time I wasn't worried that the words had left me. But of course, it still bothered me that I wasn't writing fiction regularly. Especially given my seeming motto:

What you write isn't important. THAT you write is important.

And as you know, I've also been reconsidering the name of the protagonist in the novel I started awhile back. Now I know he will assume the name of the protagonist in this short story. Who knows? The short story might also become a chapter or two or three in the novel.

I don't really care, and it isn't something I'm giving much conscious thought. It just feels *so* good to be running through a story with a cast of characters again.

I have a routine how-you-doin' appointment with one of my heart guys this morning at 11, so the short story probably will take me all day to write in starts and fits, off and on.

Still, doing something in this chair besides warming the cushion or writing this nonfiction stuff makes me feel a little more worthwhile.

Yesterday I wrote a topic titled “A Tense Situation” but decided to post it to ProWritersWriting.com instead of here. It will go live on Saturday, November 16. I have another

post scheduled there for November 2, and there's something good there almost every day from different professional fiction writers.

So if you aren't yet subscribed to the free PWW, I recommend it. You can subscribe by clicking <http://eepurl.com/gjwnWT>. Did I mention it's free?

Anyway, the leap in nonfiction words below includes this post and that one.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "The Pros and Cons of Present Tense" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/pros-and-cons-of-present-tense/>.

See "How to Optimize Your Website for Newsletter Sign-Ups" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/10/how-to-optimize-your-website-for-newsletter-sign-ups/>.

See "Business Musings: Public Speaking" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/10/30/business-musings-public-speaking/>.

See "Back to Normal" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/back-to-normal/>.

See "Some Workshop Stuff" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-workshop-stuff/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	507
Nonfiction words today.....	440
Total fiction words for the month.....	4862
Total fiction words for the year.....	385093
Total nonfiction words for the month...	18390
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	281080
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	666173
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	2
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	195
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal, Friday, November 1](#)

[November 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Finished
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“The more you reason the less you create.”

Raymond Chandler (wise words from another Stage 5 master)

Finished the short story. I'll call it “Seven Minutes in Belfast.” It's a fast-paced story in the Blackwell Ops world.

I wrote only a little over 500 words (the opening) yesterday, then had my doctor appointment and basically lost interest for the rest of the day. I can't remember the last time a short story spilled over from one day to the next.

This morning, the first day of my new 2500 WPPFD (words of publishable fiction per day) goal, I wrote 1000 words in the first session, another 1200 in the second, and a little over 1000 in the third to finish it by 10 a.m.

I won't lie. It feels really good. I can barely wait to see what the next one will be.

I'll start a new one later today if the mood hits, but I also have chores to do. Anyway, the first day of my new goals was a success, so I'm happy either way.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “2020 Master Business Class... Last One...” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/2020-master-business-class-last-one/>. Note: I almost didn't share this. I hope to attend this one, but I can't pay for it at the moment. Every spot that's taken lessens my chance of being able to attend. But if I didn't pass this along, I wouldn't be a very good friend, now would I?

See “Renaissance Nun’s ‘Last Supper’ Painting...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/renaissance-nuns-last-supper-painting-makes-public-debut-after-450-years-in-hiding/>.

See “The Fear of Being Buried Alive...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-fear-of-being-buried-alive-and-how-to-prevent-it/>. Maybe a great writing prompt.

See “Konnie Huq and 90 MPs call for end to ‘reading tax’ in UK” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/konnie-huq-and-90-mps-call-for-end-to-reading-tax-in-uk/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	3218
Nonfiction words today.....	290
Total fiction words for the month.....	3218
Total fiction words for the year.....	388311
Total nonfiction words for the month...	290
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	281370
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	669681
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 3	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	196
Short story collections.....	31

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

[The Journal, Saturday, November 2](#)

[November 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * After slacking off
- * Topic: A Few Thoughts on Publishing
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“When in doubt, have a man come through the door with a gun in his hand.” Raymond Chandler

After slacking off for a couple of hours yesterday, I decided to go ahead and publish “Seven Minutes in Belfast.”

This is a fast-paced thriller in a tight package. If you want to study tight pacing and how to delve deep into your protagonist’s psyche all in a small package, I’m at the top of my game in this one.

The first reviewer of this story (a patron) wrote, “I just finished [‘Seven Minutes in Belfast’]. Wow. Details. Now, I have to go back and look at my WIP. Good lesson.” (Thanks, SET!)

Here’s the description/teaser:

Blackwell Ops operative Henry Gordon has one day left on R&R in Belfast. Then his VaporStream device goes off. Who will the target be this time? Death is certain, but how? And for whom?

The search tags I used for this one are crime, murder, psychological suspense, thriller, assassin, short story, and Blackwell Ops.

“Seven Minutes in Belfast” is available now at [Amazon](#) and via the Draft2Digital (Books2Read) [universal link](#). Of course, I also sent the story free to my patrons.

If you’ve considered becoming a patron, now is a good time to start. Becoming a patron ensures that you will always get all the topics I write on writing and publishing.

I reconstructed the patronage tiers. I deleted the top tier and moved the rewards to the first three tiers, to include patron-only topics on writing, which are included in all three tiers. [Take a look.](#)

This is an extremely low-cost way to get a personal mentorship at a fraction of the cost. When I post a topic and it stimulates questions, you have only to email me and ask.

Topic: A Few Thoughts on Publishing

As I was adding “Seven Minutes in Belfast” to my inventory, I realized I didn’t publish anything at all during August, September and October. That’s the longest I’ve gone without publishing something for the past 5+ years. (grin)

Yet I finished two other short stories (derived from my novel) and I should have also finished a novel during that time. The point is, that’s at least three more publications that should be available to readers (and earning me money). But they aren’t because I fell off Heinlein’s Rule 4.

Not publishing in a while also means I'm also out of practice. It took me almost two hours to find the art and design the cover, and another hour to upload it to D2D, Amazon and Bundle Rabbit.

If that seems fast to you, it isn't. The entire process usually takes me less than an hour. If it takes you longer than that now, your speed will improve with practice.

And those two unpublished short stories that I derived from my current Blackwell Ops novel? I hope to get covers designed for those and get them published in the next week or so. Of course, my patrons will get those as well.

Note that I didn't mention publishing my short story to Smashwords for distribution. I still publish my longer works (novels, novellas and collections) there, but I generally don't publish individual short stories to Smashwords. Too much work for too little return.

In addition to the clunky user interface and the time that costs just to publish there, you also have to take additional time to add a Smashwords ISBN. Then you have to go to the Channel Manager and check Do Not Distribute to all the places the story will be distributed by D2D. (You can't have more than one distributor distributing to the same stores.)

So the upshot for you is this:

1. Write and finish.
2. Learn cover design (or have it done) and publish.
3. Repeat.

I recommend you set a goal to publish at least one new publication every month. But of course, to publish them, you have to write them. (grin)

To get myself fully back up on Heinlein's Rules, from now on I won't call a story "finished" until it's published and distributed.

I'm heartened that Robert Heinlein himself admitted to falling off his own rules. The trick isn't to stay on. The trick is to get back on when you fall off.

Today (I'm writing this early) I'll write another short story and/or write more on one of two novels I have going. Or I'll start a new one.

I spent the first few hours of the day doing some admin stuff and writing much of what appears above. Around 5 a.m. I started what feels like it will be a new science fiction novel. There seems to be a lot of world-building involved. (grin) Anyway, I wrote 1100 words in the first session.

Another 700 words in the second session (interrupted by various emails that I had to pay attention to). I hope to come back at least one more time today.

Oh, and I remembered to write about One Event so I can get a short story out of this first, then maybe a novel. (grin)

Well, I worked a little more on the story (“The Rain Cart”), but didn’t quite reach my daily word count goal. That’s all right. Tomorrow is another day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Some Questions About Master Class” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/some-questions-about-master-class/>. I know for a fact that one slot is gone. (grin)

See “Clearing Out the Spirits” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/clearing-out-the-spirits.html>. A macabre but neat post.

See “What’s Your Emotional Intelligence Quotient (E-IQ) Score?” at <http://dyingwords.net/whats-your-emotional-intelligence-quotient-e-iq-score/>. Very interesting.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	2125
Nonfiction words today.....	950
Total fiction words for the month.....	5343
Total fiction words for the year.....	390436
Total nonfiction words for the month...	1240
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	282320
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	672756
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	3
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	196
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: It’s All About Learning](#)

[November 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Notice the new format
- * Quote of the Day
- * Lee Child
- * Topic: Investing in Your Own Future
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Notice the new format. The date of each post is already automatically added to the post (duh). So from now on I'll endeavor to give each new edition of the Journal a title that indicates what you'll find inside. Enjoy!

Quote of the Day

“Yeah. Importance is the worst thing you can put on any kind of creativity. As soon as you think it's important, you're dead.” Jerry Seinfeld during an episode of *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*

This was Seinfeld's response to another comedian who commented on the early mistake of lending a comedic bit too much importance.

Last night I watched a few episodes of Jerry Seinfeld's Netflix show *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*. He made the comment to either Larry David or Lewis Black.

I almost fell out of my chair. Here was Jerry Seinfeld, an extremely successful comedian and writer, verifying exactly what I've been telling other writers for years. **THAT** you write is important; **WHAT** you write is not.

Lending any level of importance to a short story or novel or series (or comedic bit) is a sure way to invoke the conscious, critical mind and shut down your creative subconscious.

Write only for your own entertainment, publish what you write so others can enjoy it, and move on to the next story. It's called practice.

If you don't believe me, believe Jerry Seinfeld, Dean Smith, Kris Rusch, Stephen King, Lee Child, Jack Higgins, Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov....

Lee Child has a new nonfiction book available for pre-order. This Stage 5 writer has written *The Hero*, a nonfiction look at the importance of heroes in storytelling.

The hardcover book will be released on November 26 and is currently available for the pre-order price of \$12.40 (including tax). That's a very inexpensive addition to a writer's education. You can read about the book at <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0008355789/>.

Topic: Investing in Your Own Future

Soon after I started writing seriously (April 2014) I decided I more than likely wouldn't make much money at it.

That was all right. All that mattered to me was writing. *That* I wrote, not *what* I wrote. Over time, I've invested a few thousand dollars in little leaps forward in my knowledge of the craft.

Each time I bought a new lecture or a new workshop and invested the time and Practice to make it my own, my storytelling improved dramatically.

But always I clung to the notion that, although it's fun seeing money trickle into my bank account from so many sources from my writing, probably my heirs would reap the real monetary benefits. And that was fine.

Like most indie writers/publishers, I learned (on my own) to design covers and format my ebooks and set up my own publishing company (StoneThread Publishing).

Like most indie writers/publishers, I knew nothing about licensing beyond going to ebooks and print with my stories.

Then I started to learn more. Then my wife (she of the sharp business mind) got excited about possibilities. Which in turn got me excited about possibilities.

I enrolled in Dean's year-long Licensing Transition course so we could follow along as he and Kris transition WMG from strictly a publishing business to a licensing platform.

And I got more excited. More possibilities are opening up and more money is trickling in.

Recently, for the first time, I realized there's a real possibility that Mona and I can benefit from our business instead of simply doing all the prep work and then passing it along to my heirs.

So yesterday we talked about the Master Business Class upcoming in Las Vegas in October 2020. We finally decided the \$750 tuition would be an excellent, worthwhile and necessary investment in the future of our business.

So we made the leap. Mona and I will both attend the Master Business Class on writing, publishing and licensing in October 2020. I reserved our spot and received confirmation from Dean this morning.

We expect this will give our publishing and licensing business (StoneThread Publishing) a massive leap forward.

By the way, I had to buy only one tuition. Spouses/significant others attend free.

Oh, and FYI — If you think I'll now be assigning any level of importance whatsoever to what I write, you'd be wrong. I'm still in it for the sheer, unbridled joy of being the first person to hear the stories my characters tell.

And somehow, although even the word "business" pretty much puts me in a coma, business stuff is fun for Mona. Go figure. I don't understand it, but I'm smart enough to know I'm a very lucky guy.

And that, my friends, is investing in your own future. Keep learning, and have fun.

This morning I added only around 350 words to the short story "The Rain Carts." It's done except for cycling back over it, which I will do later today or tomorrow.

Then I'll either continue on the longer version (novella or novel) or begin something new.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Stretch Your Style" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/stretch-your-style.html>. Note: Style/authorial voice is what happens when you write. It's personal to each writer and evolves over time as you learn, absorb and apply new techniques that work for you. Like anything else in writing, style isn't something that can or should be consciously manipulated.

And one proviso: A "run-on" sentence is not simply a sentence that is long. You can write a page-long sentence that is not a run-on sentence. I'm amazed James Bell doesn't know this.

If any of you know of any valid writing-advice websites I'm missing, please point them out to me. By "valid" I mean places that don't simply regurgitate the same old myths.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	352
Nonfiction words today.....	970
Total fiction words for the month.....	5695
Total fiction words for the year.....	390788
Total nonfiction words for the month...	2210
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	283290
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	674078
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	3
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	196
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: On Efficiency and Establishing Habits

[November 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: On Efficiency and Establishing Habits (and a Bit on Today)
- * Yesterday I picked up
- * Toward the end of the day
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“I’m not a young man. I’m old, tired and full of no coffee.” Raymond Chandler, in Playback

I can totally relate. (grin)

Topic: On Efficiency and Establishing Habits (and a Bit on Today)

Yesterday, Mona noted that the recurrent theme in my personal notes over the years has been scheduling. She’s right, and that was an epiphany for me, something I hadn’t realized in so many words.

Another part of my personal psyche is to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. And of course, scheduling informs that and makes it possible. And it makes my life more efficient.

That isn’t to say I can’t waste time and do nothing. I’m adept at that too, but I don’t like it. (This is why I don’t like to sleep. We have only so much time, and I like to spend it doing things.)

Ever since I read about an efficiency expert (John Galbraith, I believe) as a teenager, I very seldom leave a room empty handed.

There seems always to be something I can carry along with me to my destination or that I can deposit along the way. It only makes sense because doing so saves me an extra trip later or saves someone else from having to remove the object him- or herself.

That desire for efficiency soon translated into the two driving forces that define my life as a writer: setting goals and creating schedules.

In my personal long-run, I get more done when I set goals, and I get it done more efficiently when I create a schedule.

Though I do begrudge the time I have to “waste” setting up a schedule in the first place.

As you know, everything (for me) boils down to priorities. But sometimes I let my priorities inadvertently slip.

For example, recently, what had been my number 1 priority for years (writing fiction) slipped and was replaced by writing this Journal or doing other things. I’m working my way out of that quagmire now.

And I experienced a second, lesser epiphany yesterday as well.

I often create “to-do” lists on Notepad documents but then forget to open the document later. That one’s easy to overcome, though I’ll have to spend a little time on it.

So today I’ll dig out an old white board and the appropriate markers.

I’ll find a good location for the white board in the Hovel (a place where I can’t help but see it) and mount it. Then I’ll open those “to-do” lists and transfer the items on them to the white board.

After I’ve done that, partly because writing fiction is my first priority and partly to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the new, looming white board, I’ll escape back into the short story I wrote over the past two days and cycle through the whole thing. My inner child feels there’s something missing, so I’ll add that and be done with it.

Then, with the white board to remind me of other, non-writing goals, I’ll move on into my new schedule. That will begin tomorrow morning:

On writing days (I anticipate having 7 of those per week), I’ll write first. But I can spend only so many hours through the day writing.

Interspersed with those hours, I’ll spend the necessary amount of time doing whatever household chores I have to do. Those never go away.

Then — and this is the key point — I’ll turn to the white board and begin working on one or more of those items.

This should result in a more efficient use of my time. It will enable me not only to spend more time writing (and to Keep Coming Back), but I’ll finally be able to discipline myself to devote the necessary time to some of the licensing goals I’ve brainstormed over the past month or so.

Wish me luck. (grin)

Yesterday I picked up a new patron, so I spent part of the day sending him my recently finished short story (“[Seven Minutes in Belfast](#)”) as well as two nonfiction books ([Writing the Character Driven Story](#) and [The Professional Fiction Writer: A Year in the Life](#)) and the entire audio course, [Writing Off Into the Dark](#). The value of those items is over \$50. Not a bad deal for an \$11 donation. (grin)

If you haven’t looked over the new patronage tiers, you can find them at <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

Toward the end of the day, I cycled through “The Rain Cart” and added 786 more words. I reached the end. The story came in at just over 2600 words, with an additional 648 words that will be used in the novel later.

Tomorrow I’ll find cover art, publish it and get it out to my patrons.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Said” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/said/>.

See “Anthology Workshop Starts Writing...” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/anthology-workshop-starts-writing/>.

See “TPW 109: Rob Eagar on Wildfire Marketing” at <https://theprolificwriter.net/blog-podcast/2019/tpw-109-rob-eagar-on-wildfire-marketing> (podcast)

See “A Game Plan for How to Nail Your Next Reading” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/nail-your-next-reading/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 786

Nonfiction words today..... 850

Total fiction words for the month..... 6481

Total fiction words for the year..... 391574

Total nonfiction words for the month... 3080

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 284140

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 675714

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Patronage](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Prolific Writer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Rethinking, Rethinking](#)

[November 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Rethinking ways to rethink the future
- * I'm also rethinking
- * Some days are downers
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Part of the creative person's ongoing task is to experiment, plan, rethink, and adjust.

Regrettably, I'm rethinking a couple of things today. The first is rethinking ways to rethink the future of our business.

Only yesterday, I was certain I wanted to attend the Master Business Class in Vegas next October. Today, not so much.

It would be an invaluable investment in our business. What we could learn there — if the instructors and students stay on track — would probably give us a huge leap forward.

It could shave months or even years off our learning curve. Hence my willingness to pay around a thousand dollars (tuition plus travel and our room) for the opportunity.

But a recent post by KK Rusch on Patreon reminded me, dramatically, of her politics and her biases and her willingness to share them. (That's the regrettable part.)

And of course, she's a principal (along with Dean Wesley Smith) at the Master Business Class.

Her post also reminded me, again, regrettably, that I'm in the minority among writers in general. I realized most of the other writers at the MBC will probably be of Rusch's political bent.

Which is perfectly fine. I'm not making a political statement or even a value judgement here. I'm merely pointing out that those who are of Rusch's political bent would probably be completely comfortable at the MBC no matter what happens. Certainly they won't hear anything that annoys, taunts or upsets them.

But the thing is, the class would be of value to me personally only IF the instructors and students stay on track, meaning if the focus remains strictly on the business of writing, publishing and licensing.

But that is not the probable reality. If I attend the class, more than likely I'll be trying to learn more about business in what amounts (for me) to a hostile environment. And frankly, I don't need the hassle.

To avoid any arguments, I would feel compelled to leave the room, meaning my money would have been wasted.

I still have time to decide, but at the moment I'm thinking we probably won't attend after all.

Then again, I'm still enrolled in both the year-long Licensing Transition course and in the 9-month Shared Worlds course. I trust the instructor, and I'm the only student, so....

And I've also already bought Dean's Advanced Business Lectures, so that will help too. And the licensing? That will come from the course and from my own imagination.

I'm also rethinking my personal time.

Daily word count goals (as in every day) worked for me a few years ago when I started writing fiction seriously. All I thought about was productivity and telling stories.

I hadn't yet heard-of, much less considered, licensing opportunities apart from publishing. I didn't have paid mentoring students. I didn't have a "to-do" white board on my wall with 9 items under "Writing and Publishing" and another several items under "Licensing."

I was a writer, but not yet a business owner, at least not really.

But today all of those things and more are true. So I'm adjusting my goals a bit to reflect my new reality.

* My goal is still to write at least 2500 publishable words of fiction per day on my writing days (not every day). I just don't have 7 days in my production week anymore. Probably 3 or 4, tops.

On writing days, I can write fiction AND do physical non-writing chores during breaks. What I can't do is mix fiction with nonfiction writing. Never have been able to. Hence my requirement for writing days and non-writing days.

* My goal is still to write at least one short story per week (that really is an invaluable exercise) and one novel per month (or two novels every three months, depending on how the short stories go).

* My goal still is to design covers for and publish all of those as they are finished.

* And to continue the Journal, of course, and posts for PWW and HarveyStanbrough.com.

Some days are just real downers.

The Patreon page post hit me so hard that I literally wrote and rewrote the first section of this Journal entry several times over a six-hour period from 3:30 to 9:30 a.m. Not kidding.

I'm still too annoyed to invoke the conscious-mind activities of searching for cover art, etc. so I'll leave that for later today or tomorrow. I need to escape into some fiction, but I don't know that I'll even do that.

I also have laundry and a couple of other chores to do, and I'd like very much to start at least one of the things on the white board.

Turns out I just don't want to do anything today. I'll post this a little early and talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See PG's take on "Is Publishing Too Top-Heavy?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/is-publishing-too-top-heavy/>.

Via Alexander Teut (aka Rikki Mongoose) see "AUSTRALIAN PULP FICTION" at http://www.mysteryfile.com/Australian/Pulp_Fiction.html. I'm always interested in reading about prolific authors.

See "6 Tips for Securing Speaking Engagements as a Self-Published Author" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/get-speaking-engagements-selfpub-author/>.

See "On Writing Fears, Blue Titles, And Why 6-Figure Advances Are Bad For Your Health" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/on-writing-fears-blue-titlesand-why-6-figure-advancesare-bad-for-your-health.html>. I included this one just in case you might get something from it.

See "Human Soup: The Perfect Murder?" at <https://www.leelofland.com/human-soup-the-perfect-murder/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 900

Total fiction words for the month..... 6481
Total fiction words for the year..... 391574
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3960
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 285040
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 676614

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [MysteryFile.com](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal: Update: Game On

[November 6, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Update: Game On
- * Topic: Inventory
- * More and more patrons
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Update: Game On

I reached out to a writer who has attended the Master Business Class and asked him whether anyone there talked politics during the sessions.

His answer was a resounding No.

He wrote “at the beginning of both Vegas workshops I attended, they announced that there was to be absolutely NO discussion of politics or religion inside or outside of the classroom. They said they have sent people home for doing so.”

Good enough. I am relieved. Thanks, PM.

Topic: Inventory

Note: This is a follow-up to the first post in “Of Interest” below, so I recommend you read that first.

Not surprisingly, I concur with Dean.

My own inventory is mostly complete. Fortunately, I started keeping it from the very beginning, but almost by accident.

Many people have an “I love me” wall or shelf, a place where they keep any their plaques or trophies or other marks of achievement.

My inventory spreadsheet was originally that, a kind of “I love me” wall. I could see what I’d written at a glance, which motivated me to write even more.

Over the years, I’ve written thousands of poems. Some were award-winning, some were later set to music by others, and most are included in one collection or another. The collections (though not the individual poems) are included on my inventory spreadsheet.

I’ve written 40-some novels, 8 novellas, and almost 200 short stories. All are on the spreadsheet.

I’ve also written a dozen or so flash-fiction stories (complete stories of 100 words or less) that are NOT yet listed in my inventory, despite the fact one has been made into a short film at least twice by different producers. (That one went out free both times because I was flattered and because I didn’t know anything about licensing.)

Many of those FF stories are included as examples in my nonfiction book, *The Art of Writing Flash Fiction*. Of course, that book and all my other nonfiction books are already in my inventory. We’ll be finding and adding the individual flash fiction stories as well.

Now we’re in the process of organizing the inventory I’ve kept all these years, separating it into novels/novellas, short stories of all lengths (and collections), poetry (and collections) and audio lectures.

Oh, and we’re also in the process of digging through old magazines to find articles and essays I wrote in the past. As we find them, we’ll add them to the inventory as well. It’s all IP. The magazines include *The Writer*, *Writer’s Digest*, *The Candlelight Poetry Journal* and other publications.)

And wow, is Dean right (as usual). Once it’s done, an inventory is a massive time saver.

What goes into a spreadsheet? Dean’s post describes his.

My overall master spreadsheet (the one we're separating) includes the fiction or nonfiction or collection title, the author name (for when I use pen names), the word count, date finished and date published, the D2D universal link, the eprice and paper price (where applicable), the ISBNs (ebook and paper) and then other distributor and purchase links. When I begin publishing short stories through traditional mags, I'll include that information too, how much I earned on the license, etc.

Sounds like a lot, doesn't it? Yet it takes only a minute or so to hop over to my inventory and add another piece of IP to the spreadsheet when I finish it.

Finally, it's also a good idea to glance over your inventory from time to time. The title of a poem or other work might lead to another new short story or novel. That has happened to me several times.

So even if at the moment you see yourself as a hobby writer, I suggest you create and keep up an inventory spreadsheet. You never know.

More and more patrons are signing up at various levels. Thanks everyone!

If you haven't yet looked over the patronage levels, take a look at <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>. I'm gearing up to begin sending out the patron-only blog posts.

I've already written several. I just need to figure out the best way to organize their distribution.

Today I'll meet with a mentoring student and then do some other stuff. (grin)

I don't mean to be vague. I have a feeling I'll write (or start) another story. But I have three covers to create and three stories to send out to the world, so I might focus on knocking that out of the way instead.

I'm gonna go ahead and publish this now so I don't forget later.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "The Power of Having Inventory" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-power-of-having-inventory/>. This is an invaluable post for any writer.

From the Old Dogs Learning New Tricks department, see "Three Hours A Day" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/three-hours-a-day.html>.

See “The Problem Confronting Memoirists: Overabundance of Material” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/memoir-overabundance-material/>. I list this because there’s some great writing in it. Worth your time even if you aren’t a memoirist.

See “Always Improving as a Writer” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/always-improving-as-a-writer/>.

See “It’s complicated...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/its-complicated-and-sometimes-you-have-to-break-the-rules/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	850
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	4810
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	285890
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	677464
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Good Fortune Strikes](#)

[November 7, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Good Fortune Strikes
- * Yesterday
- * A Very Special Project
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Good Fortune Strikes (for you)

Yesterday, Kris Rusch added a new post to her Patreon page. And this morning, I found she'd also shared it on her *Business Musings* blog, which means I'm free to share it with you.

I'm not exaggerating when I say this is one of the most eye-opening posts she's shared.

If you read nothing else today, please read [Paradigm Shift \(Rethinking The Writing Business Part 16\)](#). You might want to read it two or three times. And let it sink in.

Yesterday, I had a very productive meeting with a mentoring student. We meet for two hours every other week, and we usually fill up the two hours. Yesterday was no exception.

We talked at some length about a story she started, one that she initially thought would be a short story but will turn into at least a novella if not a full-blown novel. And maybe, based on the strength of her protagonist, a whole series of novels.

In whatever final form it takes, I'm certain it will be a hit. In my 40 years of editing and writing, it's one of the best, most well-written stories I've ever read. Even at this stage, when it isn't finished. I'm very excited for her.

We also discussed various intricacies and nuances of that story and of writing in general, including word and punctuation use, syntax, personal style, tense shifts and so on. It was a fun meeting.

A Very Special Project

My student and I also talked a little about a very special project I have coming up: a shared world that will have plenty of room for any number of writers.

When I signed on for Dean's 9-month Shared Worlds class — even before he'd posted the first video — I realized that a particular world I'd created in a novel a few years ago would be perfect for a shared-world project.

Immediately after completing the original novel, I felt overwhelmed at the number of genres and stories (both short and long) that could be based on that world.

Those of you who've been with me awhile probably remember that. To write all the stories and novels myself that could result from that world, I would have to live to be at least 150. (grin)

I told my student about it early because, based on the strength of her writing, I definitely want her included. (I already have a few of other writers in mind too.)

So when I got back to the Hovel, I realized I'd better get myself in gear. I spent the balance of the afternoon working on the bible for that project.

I hope to announce the project formally on or before January 1, 2020. I'll announce it to my patrons first, then here, then over on the big blog on my author site.

I hope this project will interest you. Before you even consider it, though, be sure to read Kris Rusch's post above. Realize that you have all the power. You are the owner of your own story (your own IP).

Went to the grocery early this morning to get that chore out of the way. Later (during a break) I'll water Mona's new iris bed and a few shrubs and vines.

And the balance of today will more than likely be a nonwriting day. I'll work on covers for my three unpublished short stories so I can publish them and get them out to patrons.

If I have time left, I'll either write or spend some more time developing the bible for the shared world.

As that is how the day will unfold, I'll post this now and talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Some great comments on "The Power of Having Inventory" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-power-of-having-inventory/#comments>.

See also "How I Count Years..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/how-i-count-years/>. A good post with a lot to glean.

See "A Writer in Italy" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/a-writer-in-italy.html>. If you follow the links to her pics, you might find one or more that inspires a story.

See "How to End a Story..." at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-end-a-story/>. As always, bring a shaker of salt. Take what resonates with you and leave the rest.

See "The Third Reich of Dreams" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-third-reich-of-dreams/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 720

Total fiction words for the month..... 6481

Total fiction words for the year..... 391574

Total nonfiction words for the month... 5530
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 286610
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 678184

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: Catching Up, Pricing Your Book, and More](#)

[November 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Yesterday
- * Pricing your book
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Just let the writing be a fun place to go, to escape to. Don't make it special. If you do, it gets wrapped into all the life drama. Just leave the writing as an escape to go play.” Dean Wesley Smith

Yesterday I got the three covers done and the three short stories published, so I'm caught up for now in that regard. But there was zero extra time for writing or for working on the shared-world bible.

The first cover took what seemed like forever. The dimensions just didn't work out right the first time (or the next few times), so I went over it and over it, breaking it and putting it back together. Which is weird, because I use a self-created template (on Serif PagePlus) to create covers. I'm all about efficiency. I hate touching work twice, much less several times.

Anyway, that one finally worked, and the next two covers literally took only a few minutes each. Then I created promo docs and published everything. When I finally looked up, it was after 4 p.m.

Very early this morning I added those three stories to my inventory spreadsheet and then added four to the short story page on my website. Then I spent a half-hour or so writing my first patron-only topic, an essay on organization, both pre- and post-publication.

Three of the new stories I added this morning are in the world of my Blackwell Ops novel series: [Seven Minutes in Belfast](#), [The Death of Federico Parizzi](#), and [Empirita Sanchez de Uvalde](#) (though that story is also included in the second story).

And one is science fiction, set on an arid planet: [The Rain Cart](#).

All four are tense, fast-paced stories and chock full of psychological suspense as I “live” in the protagonist’s mind.

Each ebook is priced at \$2.99. Or you can [sign on as a patron](#) for as little as \$3 per month and get all four plus a bunch of other stuff. (grin) Just sayin’.

Pricing Your Book

In “Of Interest” today there’s an article on pricing your book. It’s a little helpful in a things-to-consider kind of way, but the author doesn’t really get into actual pricing.

If you’d like a copy of the current pricing guidelines I use for paper and ebooks, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and I’ll send it to you.

Today will probably be another nonwriting day (other than all of this and the topic I sent the patrons).

I’ve been meaning for awhile to shift all my novels, novellas, short stories, short story collections, poetry collections and audio lectures over to my publisher site at StoneThread Publishing. It’s declutter time.

Fortunately, I’ve kept STP up pretty well, so mainly that will mean redirecting the appropriate menu items and links on my author site to StoneThread, then deleting the pages from my author site. Shouldn’t take more than a few hours.

Then I’ll move into a copyedit I’ve put off too long and maybe doing more on the bible I’m creating for the shared world I hope to launch on January 1.

Today or tomorrow, I’ll also format and publish a new collection of short fiction, Mobster Tales 3.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “I Can Get It for You Wholesale — Pricing Your Book” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/11/i-can-get-it-for-you-wholesale-pricing-your-book/>.
One addendum: You can price your book at the break-even point or slightly over if, like me, you go to paper primarily to drive readers to buy your ebooks, which are far less expensive by comparison.

See the extremely interesting “An Oxford Murder” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/an-oxford-murder/>.

See “Paralysis by Analysis” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/paralysis-by-analysis-one-writers-opinions/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 1590 (620,Journal) (970, patron topic)

Total fiction words for the month..... 6481
Total fiction words for the year..... 391574
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 288200
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 679774

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pricing Your Work](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: Yesterday and Ghosting and Veterans’ Day](#)

[November 9, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Yesterday
- * Ghosting
- * My son and grandson
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Exactly like riding a rollercoaster... That’s writing a novel into the dark. Buckle in and believe you will end back up in the station, breathing hard and laughing.” Dean Wesley Smith

Exactly. And this is why I cringe when I hear a writer talk about how “hard” it is to write a short story or novel.

Yesterday I spent a few hours rearranging my author website at HarveyStanbrough.com to make it more user friendly. During that time I also revised my publisher website at StoneThreadPublishing.com.

I hope you’ll drop by and take a look, even if only to get some ideas for your own website(s).

Sometime in the next couple of months we’ll start a newsletter over at StoneThread Publishing to help with marketing.

I suppose I should start a newsletter on my author site too, but I’m not sure yet. I already share pretty much everything through this Journal, so....

I’ll have to think about it some more. If I have an author newsletter, I don’t want it and the publisher’s newsletter to mimic each other, and I don’t want it to mimic my blog.

If any of you have any thoughts on this, I’d appreciate hearing from you.

Ghosting

This was prompted by the last two items in today’s “Of Interest” section. I posted them more for fun than for any other reason, because I found the first one outrageously ironic and funny. I mean, a website devoted to advising writers? And it’s advising them on how to find someone to write *for* them? Isn’t that like advising them *not* to be writers? Or am I just going too Seinfeld?

That being said, I’m not a ghostwriter, though I have been. And for the right fee, I could be again. Yes, I can be bought. And I’m not as expensive as you might think.

Here’s the thing (well, a few things):

1. “Write” is an action verb. It follows that “writer” is one who actually writes. (“Author,” on the other hand, is one who is credited with having written. There’s a difference.)

2. It also follows that the primary requirement to be a ghostwriter is being a writer. Preferably a good one.

3. I am a writer, and a *very* good one. And I know it.

So if you have an idea for a story or novel and just don’t have time to write it or know you never will because you’re petrified with fear, I’m here.

Likewise, if you have an idea but believe you don’t have the practical knowledge or experience to write it (e.g., it’s a war novel but you’re a stay-at-home mom or a college professor), I’m here.

Whatever the case, send me your idea (fiction) and I’ll let you know my level of interest and what I can do with your idea.

If you like what I tell you, you and I will sign a contract, you’ll send me the first payment, and I’ll get started. (I don’t do royalty splits.)

And within a few days (short story) or a month or so (novel), you’ll be able to hold your idea in your hand with your name on the cover.

My fellow writer and friend Dan Baldwin and I have considered opening a storefront. We’d call it *Novels While You Wait*.

Just so you know, I’m not kidding. Probably. Depending on the money.

You have my email address.

My son and grandson are visiting today so I’ll post this early. I’ll try to report tomorrow on what I got accomplished today.

Either way, I’ll talk with you again soon.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable (and thoughtful) Veterans’ Day weekend.

Of Interest

See “Have Fun!” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/have-fun/>.

See “New Thrills” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/new-thrills.html>.

See “Writer or Storyteller?” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/writer-or-storyteller/>.

See “Upheavals” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/upheavals/>.

See “How AI is reshaping the publishing industry” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-ai-is-reshaping-the-publishing-industry/>.

With a nod to my buddy Dan Baldwin, see “How to Hire a Ghostwriter You Trust in 9 Super-Simple Steps” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/choosing-ghostwriter-step-by-step/>.

You might also want to look at “How Much Does a Ghostwriter Cost...” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/hire-ghostwriter-andrew-crofts/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	700 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	7820
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	288000
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	680474
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: A Reminiscence](#)

[November 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Happy Veterans' Day
- * If you'll allow me a reminiscence...
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Happy Veterans' Day, or as Marines call it, Recovery Day. (grin)

We often joked that if an enemy of the United States ever wanted to attack this nation, they should do so on November 11 while the Marine Corps was nursing a collective hangover.

Yesterday I spent the day with my wife, my youngest son and eldest grandson and with my friends (many in memoriam) from the Corps. For the first time since I joined, I didn't toast my fellow Marines with a shot of whiskey. But we did enjoy some birthday cake.

If you'll allow me a personal reminiscence, tomorrow I'll get back to business as usual.

Hard to believe it's been 49 year since I took the oath of enlistment and stood on those yellow footprints at the recruit depot at San Diego, a scared kid wondering how I'd wandered into a nightmare.

Then I blinked. And suddenly it was 21 years later and I was back in the civilian world.

That was 28 short years ago, and my time in the Corps remains the most cherished time of my life.

And really, that time wasn't about the nation or the civilians we left behind. It was all about the guy on our right or left, the other Marines, male or female, and the Corpsmen who served with us.

It was about the shared values, shared knowledge and shared experiences.

To be clear, it was not the absence of higher ideals. We had the ideals all right, but we were actually serious about them. It was about our collective willingness to be unselfish enough to set those ideals aside as necessary for the greater good. To this day, I can't imagine anyone longing for world peace more than a US Marine.

Now and then various people thank me for my "service." I feel a little cheesy when they do. I usually respond by telling them the truth: Everyone has to be doing something (shrug), and frankly, it was my pleasure.

Those folks can never understand that my time in the Corps was not service, and it didn't bear even a passing resemblance to a sacrifice. On the contrary, it was a very fortunate circumstance for which I will forever be grateful.

Being a Marine is an experience that can never be adequately explained to anyone who hasn't lived it. And those who have lived it wouldn't trade it for anything. It was a time that I will treasure as long as I draw breath.

Today I'm only a novelist, and a writer of short fiction and nonfiction. I'm good at it, it's fun, and I enjoy both writing and having written.

But I would trade it in a heartbeat for another go at the Marine Corps.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Finding and Using Competing Book Titles in Your Book Marketing” (by Penny Sansevieri) at <https://annerallen.com/2019/11/finding-using-competing-book-titles/>.

See “A Writer’s Contract With The Reader” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/a-writers-contract-with-the-reader/>.

See “The Johnson Vandyke Grigsbys of the World are Never Free” at <https://www.leelofland.com/the-johnson-vandyke-grigsbys-of-the-world-are-never-free/>. Maybe a story idea or twelve.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	510 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	8330
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	289410
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	680984
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AnneRAllen.com](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: Sorry to have been away](#)

[November 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Sorry to have been away
- * Update on the Master Business Class
- * Today

- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Sorry to have been away for a couple of days. Honestly, there just wasn't much to report, even in "Of Interest."

I've been working mostly on a lengthy copyedit and doing some things for my mentoring student, as well as working on the bible for the shared world I'll reveal around the first of the year.

Update on the Master Business Class

Kris Rusch let slip in her most recent Patreon post (I'll link to the whole thing in a week or so) that the final MBC is 3/4 full at this point, so if you want in, you need to act fairly soon.

After careful consideration, I've decided we won't attend that one. So that frees up one more slot.

The thing is

- * I'm already up to here deep in studying along with Dean and Kris as they transition their own business from publishing to licensing, and
- * I'm also deeply involved with both the 9-month Shared Worlds class AND with developing my own shared world before we've even really gotten into the class, and
- * I already own several of Dean's advanced business lectures that I haven't even looked at yet, and
- * Beginning in January, I'll be able to set aside a lot of the business end of this thing when my wife and partner is able to pick up those aspects she's interested in, and finally
- * More than anything, I just want to get back to writing. For the sheer fun of it. Without "business" seeping into my head at every turn.

So today I emailed Dean and asked him to take me off the list.

Soon we'll receive a small windfall, a refund from an education retirement fund I was paying into about a million years ago when I was a college and GED and ESL and New Citizens Project instructor.

We've already decided to invest that windfall in the business. But we believe, in our case, there might be better investments than spending roughly a third of it on the upcoming Master Business Class.

Of course, we might be wrong.

But if I've learned one huge thing about (the publishing and licensing) business, it's that every decision is just another round of gambling. And at the moment, for us, this seems like a good bet.

Today I'll press ahead with the copyedit that's consumed the previous few days. The story is so good, so compelling, that I wish it was already copyedited and I was reading the clean version.

Which is why I don't mind missing my own writing at the moment.

Oh, as a test and to save time, I'm not hyperlinking the articles below. Just copy-paste any that interest you into the search bar at the top of your browser (in a new tab) and it will redirect you to the appropriate article. Let me know how this works.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Interesting Summary" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/interesting-summary/>.

See "Exposition Should Serve the Scene, Not the Other Way Around" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/exposition-should-serve-scene/>.

See "A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/20-books-vegas-conference/>. Good time to subscribe to PWW if you haven't.

See "How to Read like a Published Author" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/how-to-read-like-a-published-author/>. Better than it sounds.

See "2020 Writers' Police Academy/MurderCon" at <https://www.leelofland.com/2020-writers-police-academy-murdercon-mark-your-calendars/>.

See "What Makes Readers Give an Unknown Author a Chance?" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/give-unknown-author-chance/>. I'm posting this just in case you get something out of it. Frankly, my overall take was "Well, duh."

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 590 (Journal)

Total fiction words for the month..... 6481
Total fiction words for the year..... 391574
Total nonfiction words for the month... 8920
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 290000
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 681574

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),

[The Journal: From our friend](#)

[November 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * From our friend
- * In the second item
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Oh that tricky critical mind. My biggest challenge. The only cure is writing anyway.” Karen Riggs, novelist

From our friend Bob B re the 20BooksTo50K writers' conference in Vegas this week,

They're already starting to post videos from this year's conference at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTrqmZBt-FWUWnxWD2x5Ucg/videos>.

Their Facebook Group is here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/20Booksto50k/>.

Take advantage of this, folks. Tidbits like this don't come along every day.

In the second item in “Of Interest,” the author mentions difficulties he encountered with formatting his Word document for upload to Smashwords.

Apparently he hasn't found my book, The Essentials of Digital Publishing, which is available, ironically, at Smashwords for only \$10.

Of course, it's also available as a free PDF download (the preferred format) by clicking <https://harveystanbrough.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/DPubV2X.pdf>.

Frankly, I don't know why every writer doesn't have a copy of this ebook. It's free, informative, and entertaining to boot.

While you're at it, look over all the other free stuff listed at <https://harveystanbrough.com/downloads/>.

Today should be the penultimate day of the copyedit, coupled with some domestic tasks: picking up some meds, dropping off some used magazines, etc. I know. The uber-exciting life of a professional fiction writer, eh? (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Why We Decided Next Year's Business Master Class Will Be The Last" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/11/13/business-musings-the-reason-why-we-decided-next-years-business-master-class-will-be-the-last/>. Glad Kris went ahead and released this.

See "Publishing Your Ebook Is Changing on Smashwords" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/11/publishing-your-ebook-is-changing-on-smashwords/>.

See the comments on "Interesting Summary" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/interesting-summary/#comments>. Don't miss this, folks.

See "Old Advice" (and my comment) at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/old-advice/>.

See "Mistakes Many Writers Make" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/mistakes-many-writers-make.html>. I could add several to her list.

See "How and Why to Build a Twitter Following..." at <https://www.janefriedman.com/twitter-for-unpublished-writers/>. For what it's worth.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 310 (Journal)

Total fiction words for the month..... 6481
Total fiction words for the year..... 391574
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9230
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 290310
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 681884

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: Finished an Edit and the Critical Voice](#)

[November 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Finished an edit
- * Topic: WITD, Cycling and the Critical Voice
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Well, I finished the copyedit I was working on, and Oh Wow was it ever a great read. The thing was so fast-paced I kept wishing it had already been copyedited so I could 'just read' it.

I don't usually announce new releases of any work but my own here, but I think I'll announce this one when it's published. It's just that good.

Topic: WITD, Cycling and the Critical Voice

A writer wrote to ask me a question. I don't think he would mind if I shared his email (in part) and my response.

He wrote

I took your advice and got into a new WIP, which I expect to be the first novel I actually finish. I won't listen to my critical voice anymore, just focus on the fun. At least while I write. After the writing my critical mind still bothers me.

I have the feeling that what I wrote so far is a very enjoyable read (at least for me), because I let my subconscious play. Still I am not very fast, I write about 600 words per hour. Do you think there is still critical mind involved? Or will the word count grow the more I practice?

Second thing I have a question about: You and Dean are talking about cycling where you jump back and add stuff in. Well, I have the tendency to jump out completely out of the timeline, right into no-man's-land so to speak.

For example, I write a scene, and in the middle of that scene my mind is jumping right into a new setting with new characters. Absolutely no clue why that is. So my WIP tends to be a mess, with a whole load of fragments. There seems to be no connection at all! Can I trust this? Or should I force my mind to write in a linear way, so that everything is fitting right from the start?

Here's my brief response to him. Because I expanded it and turned it into a topic, it isn't inset:

As you wrote, my advice is "Just focus on the fun." Just let the characters tell you their story. What could be more fun than that? And if you enjoy being a little afraid, what could be more fun than not having a clue where the story is going as you write it?

"... what I wrote so far is a very enjoyable read (at least for me)" Perfect. You're the very first person ever to "hear" the story.

If it pleases you, it will also please about 80% of those who eventually read it. And because you trusted your subconscious and didn't let your critical mind in, the story will be in your own unique, original voice.

"Cycling" just means after you take a break, read back over what you've written (not critically, but just as a reader). As you do, if your subconscious wants to add something, let it. If not, no worries.

This takes practice. Remind yourself constantly to trust your subconscious voice. It will become easier as it learns that you actually trust it and will not allow your critical, conscious mind to second-guess it.

Cycling also refers to being free to move in the timeline. Readers read from A to Z. But writers don't have to write that way. The writer is unstuck in the timeline of the story. The writer can pop in and out at will.

So if something happens unexpectedly in Chapter 28 (say Aunt Marge pulls a pistol from the pocket of her robe), you can "cycle" back to an earlier time in the story to plant some foreshadowing (show Aunt Marge slipping the pistol into her pocket) for that event.

So that's cycling too, and when the reader reads from A to Z, it will make the novel seem tightly plotted and controlled, whereas actually you're writing into the dark and pre-planning nothing.

The first review of the first novel I ever wrote said it was among the most tightly plotted novels he'd ever read. Yet I wrote that novel in only 20-some days and didn't plot a word of it. (grin)

Some writers (Kris Rusch is one) write only scenes. They write them when they occur, then go back later and put them in the proper order. If that's how you write, it's how you write, and more power to you.

My scenes tend to run linearly most of the time, meaning one leads to the next all the way through.

So write how you write and don't worry about it. Just follow your subconscious (you can ALWAYS trust it) and don't "think." When you start thinking about structure or anything else about the story, that's always the conscious, critical mind intruding, and it's always with a negative voice.

If you're writing only 600 words per hour, why? Are you searching for just the right word, worrying about sentence structure and all that, or are you just writing the next sentence?

If the former, then yes, probably your critical mind is intruding, making you doubt. (Remember, its job is to make your writing grind to a halt.) If not, if you're writing the next sentence, then the next and the next (shrug), no worries.

Addendum: My correspondent wrote back again to update me: "Just now I wrote over 1600 words without noticing it! Felt like 100 words. All because I let my subconscious have fun. What a blast!"

Yes, my friend. Yes it is.

Not sure what else I'll get done today. I have a few chores to do, but otherwise no clue. I have a major life-roll coming up too, so I'm keeping an eye on that.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Reader Friday: First Lines" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/reader-friday-first-lines.html>. Comment with your own choices. I did. (grin)

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	970 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10200
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	291280
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	682854
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Critical Voice Book](#), [Cycling](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Very Short Post Today

[November 16, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Welcome and Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“If you get discouraged, think of Emily Dickinson, her life, and her words. There is no frigate like a book. You can build it at and on a desk and it can take you and your audience to places that they never would have imagined but for you.” (emphasis added) Joe Hartlaub

Welcome to new subscriber Nancy. I hope you get something out of these posts.

Thanks to Bob B for stopping by and leaving his own favorite first lines at Kill Zone blog yesterday. I recommended it because you can get great story ideas from some of those lines.

I hope everyone else here will stop by and list their own favorite lines. I've linked to it again in today's "Of Interest" section. Or if you want, leave a comment on the Journal website (<https://hestanbrough.com>) listing your favorite first line that you've written. I'd love to see them.

Today will be a mishmash for me. I'm going to send this out (mostly to get "Of Interest" out there), then write for awhile. I'll show my word count tomorrow. Much of today will be absorbed with a trip to Sierra Vista (about an hour away).

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "My Talk At 20To50 Conference" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/my-talk-at-20to50-conference/>.

Some great comments on “First Lines” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/reader-friday-first-lines.html#comments>. Reading some of them might get the creative juices flowing. Still time to chime in with yours.

See “There is no frigate like a book...” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/there-is-no-frigate-like-a-book.html>.

See “How to Format a Book (the Free and Easy Way)” at <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-format-a-book/>.

See “The USPTO wants to know...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-uspto-wants-to-know-if-artificial-intelligence-can-own-the-content-it-creates/>.

See “A Tense Situation” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/a-tense-situation>. (grin)

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	280 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	10480
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	291560
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	683134
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Reedsy](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: Getting Organized, Rights Grabs, and Learning](#)

[November 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Preparation Saves Time and Prevents Typos
- * Topic: Another Rights Grab
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Thomas’s poetry is so narrow — just a straight conduit between birth & death, I suppose—with not much space for living along the way.” Poet Elizabeth Bishop in a letter to a friend after hearing of Dylan Thomas’s death

Can you get a story or title idea from this quote?

As a side note, my own favorite Dylan Thomas poem is “The Force That Through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower.”<https://poets.org/poem/force-through-green-fuse-drives-flower> I’ve often wondered whether that poem was the catalyst for the explanation of The Force in the Star Wars franchise.

As another aside, when I was a recruiter stationed in Salt Lake City, a friend who was a rabbi confided in me that he was annoyed at George Lucas. Why? Because Lucas had described so well in a film what my rabbi friend had not been able to fully describe in 14 volumes on Jewish mysticism: the Force. (Disclaimer: I’m not Jewish.)

Topic: Preparation Saves Time and Prevents Typos

Note: My patrons received this topic 9 or 10 days ago. I thought I’d also share it here (it’s a slow day). That won’t always be the case. To consider becoming a patron for as little as \$3 per month, see <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

In a recent edition of the Journal I took off on one of Dean’s posts and talked about creating an inventory spreadsheet. It’s no exaggeration to say that’s essential for a long-term writer. It’s a great way to get (and stay) organized for the long haul.

And as I think I mentioned in that topic, it’s a good idea to have one overall or “master” spreadsheet that contains everything you write (short and long fiction, nonfiction, poetry, whatever). Later, it’s also a good idea to break out the different literary genres (short stories, novels, etc.) into their own spreadsheets.

It really isn’t much work once you get it set up. It takes only a minute or two to add to the spreadsheet(s) when you finish a new work.

But what about the other side of organization? Do you currently reinvent the wheel each time you upload a new work to a different store or distributor?

I currently only upload to Draft2Digital, Amazon, Smashwords and BundleRabbit. So only four places. And that's only for longer works (novellas, novels, collections). For individual short stories, I omit Smashwords.

But even uploading to only a few places, I find having a folder for each new title a huge time saver. Instead of retyping everything for each vendor or distributor, I simply copy-paste from my promo file.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Here's what I do for each title, often before it's even finished.

Create a new file folder. The name of the folder is the same as the title of the work. (Not even a shortened version. This saves time later when you have a few hundred titles.)

In that folder, I put the original Word document. Again, the Word file is named the same as the title of the work. (The document also is already formatted and has front and back matter already included.)

As an aside, the front matter consists of the title followed by my name or pen name, then a space, then "a novel (short story, whatever) from StoneThread Publishing. After that comes this statement: "To give the reader more of a sample, the front matter appears at the end." (This doesn't always work but it lets the reader know you're trying to circumvent the sampling process at different vendors.)

If I'm uploading the file to Smashwords, I have a second Word document in the folder too (this one in .doc format, not .docx) with "the Smashwords edition of" on one line just below the title and my name. This one is titled the same as the first one but with "smash" appended to the end.

So one filename is "Title of Book.docx" and the other is "Title of Book smash.doc".

Also in the folder is the original photo I used for the cover. It's titled Title of Book base.jpg. Then comes the finished cover itself in four sizes for longer works and three sizes for short stories. Those would be named Title of Book.jpg (the original huge file at 6250x,9375 pixels), Title of Book 2000.jpg (2000x3000, this is the one I upload to vendors and distributors), Title of Book 300.jpg (300x450, the one that will go on the individual book page on my site and my publisher site), and Title of Book 180.jpg (180x270, the "thumbnail" that will go on the genre page on my site and the publisher site).

Next comes the promo doc.

For me, the promo doc is a text document (I'm a PC guy so I use Notepad). It contains the title of the work, my publisher name, the book/story description (you need a long and short description if you upload to Smashwords).

Below that are seven Internet search terms (for my Blackwell Ops series, those are usually crime, mystery, murder, thriller, psychological suspense, assassin, and novel series).

To round out the promo doc, below the search terms I add the universal book link from Books2Read (through Draft2Digital), the Amazon buy link and the Smashwords buy link (if applicable).

I think it would also be useful to add the word count somewhere in the promo doc, but I haven't gotten into that habit yet. (grin)

See what I mean about organizing on the pre-pub side of things?

Now when I'm ready to publish the work, all I have to do is open the promo doc and copy-paste everything from it to the appropriate spaces on the platform.

I upload to Draft2Digital first, and from there I download the .mobi and .epub files. Those go into the book's individual folder too.

Then when it comes time to send a .mobi or .epub file to a reader for a direct sale, I simply open the folder, drag the appropriate file to an email, and hit Send.

And when you upload to BundleRabbit (I really recommend BR if you aren't using it yet), you have to upload either an .epub file or a zipped Vellum file. I use .epub. Again, I can open the folder, upload the .epub I downloaded from D2D and I'm done.

My individual book folders are what make it possible for me to publish a new work to D2D and BundleRabbit in about 2 minutes each, to Amazon in about 3, and to Smashwords (for long works only) in about 10.

Not only do I not have the hassle of rewriting everything at each vendor or distributor platform, but I lessen the chance of typos in what I'm uploading.

Try it, you'll like it. (grin)

I hope this helps. Any questions on any of this, just email me.

Topic: Another Rights Grab

Not really a full second topic, and I wouldn't usually post two topics in one day, but I need (desperately) to be sure you're aware of rights grabs.

First, see "Contest Caution: The Sunday Times Audible Short Story Award" at <https://accrispin.blogspot.com/2019/11/contest-caution-sunday-times-audible.html>. Please read it.

If you're crunched for time, skip down and read the paragraph that begins with "To summarize this dense paragraph...."

Rights grabs are real, folks. ALWAYS read the terms and conditions, and if any thing doesn't feel right, Don't Enter That Contest or Submit To That Publisher!

For a great deal more on this topic, read my post, "Beware of Rights Grabbers" at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/beware-of-rights-grabbers/>.

Today will mostly be a learning day. I'll attend to a few chores, study some business lectures with my wife and partner, and maybe write a little fiction.

But I'll begin the day by watching Dean's presentation on Attitude at the 20Kto50Books conference in Vegas. If you can invest 45 minutes in your writing career (otherwise free) see "If You Want To Watch My Talk" at <https://www.deanweslevsmith.com/if-you-want-to-watch-my-talk/>. It's short, and it includes instructions.

And another absolute must-read (and click the links in his article) is James Scott Bell's "Delete Naiveté From Your Writing Life" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/delete-naivete-from-your-writing-life.html>.

Following those links (and learning) will round out my day. So why did I say I might write fiction? Because if a story idea comes, it will take precedence. (grin)

I'll talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Wow. See "The Story Behind Dylan Thomas's 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night'" at <https://getpocket.com/explore/item/the-story-behind-dylan-thomas-s-do-not-go-gentle-into-that-good-night-and-the-poet-s-own-stirring>.

See "Historic Crime: Stepping Back in Time" at <https://www.suecoletta.com/historic-crime-stepping-back-in-time/>.

See "Did Lizzie Borden Really Ax-Murder Her Parents?" at <http://dyingwords.net/did-lizzie-borden-really-ax-murder-her-parents/>.

See "Making a Good First Impression: Preserving Footprints In Snow and Mud" at <https://www.leelofland.com/making-a-good-first-impression-preserving-footprints-in-snow-and-mud/>.

See "How to Start Your Book" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/how-to-start-your-book>.

Finally, see "Neutrinos Lead to Unexpected Discovery in Basic Math" at <https://www.quantamagazine.org/neutrinos-lead-to-unexpected-discovery-in-basic-math-20191113/>. (More learning, and maybe a story idea.)

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1460 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	11940
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	293020
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	684594
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Quanta Magazine](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Victoria Strauss](#), [Writers Beware](#)

[The Journal: A Great Quote and a Lot in “Of Interest”](#)

[November 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“I’m not much of a fan of starting a novel off with unanchored dialogue. It’s hard to start investing before we know where we are, who the characters are, and how we should be contextualizing the conversation.” Nathan Branford, former literary agent

Yes. In the opening of every chapter and every major scene, remember to ground your reader (pull him into the setting)

Today will be similar to Saturday for me, with a necessary trip to Sierra Vista and much learning.

I should be back in the writing saddle tomorrow, and then fiction and an intriguing meeting with a mentoring student on Wednesday.

As always, if you're interested in possibilities of what you can accomplish as a writer, see the "Numbers" section below. Amazing how they grow.

And my keeping track of numbers has another special side benefit for me. Because I've written, finished and published "only" 7 novels, 1 novella and a few short stories this year, I feel like I've "failed." (grin)

Yet how many writers do you know who have accomplished the same or better? That's what keeps me calm and keeps me writing.

I'll talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

For anyone who did not follow the links in [James Scott Bell's post yesterday](#), see "Book Contract Basics" at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/book-contract-outlined-2799862>. (Pay particular attention to "Grant of Rights: Territories" and "Out of Print." Note that with today's ebook publishing, a title never goes "out of print." Um, so rights are never reverted.)

See "Writing that Final Chapter..." at <https://annerallen.com/2019/11/writing-final-chapter/>. More learning. But remember that all advice is not good advice. Use what applies to You and Your Story.

For a great compendium of posts on self-publishing (indie publishing), see "Your Publishing Options: Traditional, Self-Publishing, Print, Ebook And Audiobooks" at <https://www.thecreativepenn.com/publishing/>.

Some great comments on "Delete Naiveté From Your Writing Life" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/delete-naivete-from-your-writing-life.html#comments>.

See "You Want to Steer Clear of Reviews" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/you-want-to-steer-clear-of-reviews/>.

See the Passive Guy's take on "Contest Caution..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/contest-caution-the-sunday-times-audible-short-story-award/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	340 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574

Total nonfiction words for the month... 12280
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 293360
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 684934

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AnneRAllen.com](#), [James Scott Bell](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [TheBalanceCareers.com](#),
[TheCreativePenn.com](#)

[The Journal: Writing Boards and Other Silliness](#)

[November 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Writing Boards and Other Silliness
- * From the Wow, That Didn't Take Long Department
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Does anyone else feel imposter syndrome because they’ve had happy and stable childhoods and relationships?” Anonymous writer on a reddit writing board.

For the record, I’ve never met any professional fiction writer, many more advanced than I, who does not succumb regularly to a sense of “impostor syndrome.” That’s just one more silliness the critical mind throws at us to keep us from writing. (It does that to protect us. If we don’t write, our writing can’t be criticized.)

The difference is, pro writers realize what’s going on, laugh it off, and write the next story. It’s what writers do. We don’t get wrapped around the wheel of thinking. We tell stories. We sit alone at a keyboard and make stuff up.

Topic: Writing Boards and Other Silliness

I got “this” close to getting sucked deep into a writer’s board this morning. I avoid them because I don’t enjoy pointless argument.

But I have talkwalker alerts <https://www.talkwalker.com/> set to email me anytime my name is mentioned online.

A young writer (the one who left the comment that became the quote above) complained that “my writing feels really shallow.” She said her critique group TOLD her that her writing is shallow. They didn’t offer an explanation, of course. They couldn’t because they haven’t learned for themselves what constitutes shallow writing.

For them, still steeped in the myths, “shallow writing” is just another cliché to be batted back and forth as if they have a clue what they’re talking about. It’s one of those things they can’t explain but they “know it when they see it.”

Ridiculous. But the young writer believed them and bought into the problem.

Some kind soul recommended she read a couple of Dean’s books and my own *Quiet The Critical Voice (And Write Fiction)*.

I’m grateful for the mention, but I’d much rather the respondent would have referred her to me directly, or at least to the Journal.

One of my great frustrations as a writer who is willing to pay his success forward is that so many have questions and so few ask them, at least of me or other more advanced writers.

Instead, they turn to writing boards, peer critique groups, and others who are on their same level of storytelling skill. Which has never made sense to me. Why attempt to advance your craft by “learning” from peers who are making the same general mistakes you’re making?

And why ask someone for advice when all they can do is spout “truisms” they’ve heard but are unable to offer positive suggestions? The whole thing reminds me of the “writing instructor” who said in a class several years ago that we should “show, don’t tell.”

When questioned, he said he couldn’t really explain it or provide examples, but that he knew it when he saw it.

Right. That was an invaluable lesson for me. I got up, left the class and never looked back.

But that’s a (fruitless) battle for another time. For this time, I joined the reddit community specifically so I could reach out to this one writer.

I left this comment:

“Good to meet you, [UserID]. Someone referred you to my book, *Quiet The Critical Voice (And Write Fiction)*. But honestly, that might or might not help. If you have problems with depth in

your writing, feel free to email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and/or subscribe to my free Daily Journal at <https://hestanbrough.com> where I pay forward what I've learned over three decades in writing and publishing. I have written over 50 novels and novellas and almost 200 short stories. I'd be happy to help in any way I can."

Later I went back and left the comment I added below the Quote of the Day above.

I'll let you know if that writer emails me. But don't hold your breath in anticipation. I certainly won't. Chances are good I'll never hear from her. And that's fine. We all have our own road to walk.

It saddens me a little to know how huge a crowd is walking along with that young writer and how very few get past the myths and are walking along with me.

Anyway, that, I suspect, will be the extent of my involvement with any writing boards. Too depressing.

(Note: This topic will appear on PWW in slightly different form on Saturday, December 7. Which I feel is appropriate since December 7 is Pearl Harbor Day and my topic is so obviously a bomb. See below.)

From the Wow, That Didn't Take Long Department...

I receivedd two responses to my foolish waste of time on the reddit board:

1. from the reddit moderators asking me to please not promote myself on the board (I suppose my mention of the Journal and providing my email address to the individual involved constituted self-promotion), and
2. from the writer herself, who explained her post wasn't real, that she was only "trolling" the board to show how silly it is. I found that a little ironic.

Despite the time I already wasted there, I replied one more time, telling her cryptically if she needed anything as a writer to type my name into her search engine (I didn't mention the name itself again). That will have to do.

Then I deleted my account so I won't be tempted to waste my time again.

Today I'll waste the day doing pretty much nothing other than finishing a Jack Higgins novel, maybe learning a bit, and maybe researching a few licensing options.

Sometime this week I'll write another short story or two, or maybe the opening chapters of a novel. At the moment (4 a.m.) I have no clue. But it will be a good day.

I'll talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “On Following Advice” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/on-following-advice/>.

See “Why Disabled Romance Is Important” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-disabled-romance-is-important/>.

See “The Secret Society of Women Writers in Oxford in the 1920s” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-secret-society-of-women-writers-in-oxford-in-the-1920s/>.

See “TheBalanceCareers” website at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/>. Browse the menu in the left margin for topics that might interest you.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	1030 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	13310
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	294390
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	685964
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Pro Writers Writing](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [TheBalanceCareers.com](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Complying with Consumer Laws and Stuff](#)

[November 20, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Topic: Complying with Consumer Laws and Stuff
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Topic: Complying with Consumer Laws and Stuff

California, I suppose in an attempt to keep up with Europe, has recently enacted the “California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)..., a new data privacy law that applies to certain businesses which collect personal information from California residents. The new law goes into effect on January 1, 2020.”

Now no less an authority figure than Google itself tells me I have to “prepare for CCPA,” ostensibly by enabling some form of restricted data processing. Which, of course, Google has already done pursuant to the “General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe.”

Okay. Whatever. I’m just trying to pass along information about writing and publishing here, okay? And every now and then (much less often than every blue moon) I sell my copyediting service or a book or whatever. I honestly don’t know how many Californians or other Europeans have bought any of those services or books or how they might have suffered as a result of doing so. Mea culpa.

Google further says I can “refer to [this article](#) for more information on restricted data processing and to determine whether restricted data processing meets [my] CCPA compliance needs.” I didn’t even realize I *had* any compliance needs. Go figure. But better safe than sorry.

I didn’t read the article, but I included the link in case you need a good snooze fest. In the meantime, to be as certain as I can be that I am compliant with everybody’s rules, I’m considering posting the following notice at the end of every edition of the Journal forthwith:

Note: By continuing as a subscriber to The Daily Journal at HEStanbrough.com and/or to the weekly blog (Pro Writers Blog) at HarveyStanbrough.com, you agree that nothing in either blog or on either website is violating your rights under either the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Europe or the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) in California. If you suspect or believe your consumer rights are being violated by the content of either website listed in this paragraph, please either unsubscribe directly or email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com and I will unsubscribe you. Thanks. (Note that I personally “collect” no personal information, although I suppose MailChimp does collect your email address so it can email you these free blog posts. I, on the other hand, barely know from one day to the next what day it is and I have my own information to look after, so why would I want yours? Finally, if you are feeling litigious, please note that I have very few pockets and no money in any of them. Just sayin’.)

Then again, maybe I won’t.

Today went about like the topic above reads, except that I had a delightful meeting with an excellent writer. So at least there was that.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Tinker, Tailor, Wizard, Spy: The Joys (and Dangers) of Blending Genre Elements” at <https://crimereads.com/blending-genre/>.

See “Copy Edits and Good News” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/copy-edits-and-good-news.html>.

See “Louis L’Amour and the Legend of the West” at <https://crimereads.com/louis-lamour-and-the-legend-of-the-west/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	520 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	13830
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	294910
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	686484
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Idiocracy](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: The Internet](#)

[November 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * This is me, griping.
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

This is me, griping. You might want to skip it and go straight to “Of Interest.”

Apparently, an al-Quaeda operative (or other bad guy) deep in a cave in Afganistan can talk clearly on demand by cell phone to a contact on the planet Jupiter. Yet if a gnat passes gas in Mississippi, my internet doesn't work in Arizona.

For the past two days, the internet's been down in the Hovel. It's hard-wired with a cable that isn't supposed to be affected by moisture or otherwise adverse weather. (The Hovel is about ten feet outside the effective range of WiFi from the house. Go figure. I refer you back to the story about al-Quaeda.)

We do still have WiFi at the house, if sporadically, depending on that gnat in Mississippi and what he ate recently. So this should be only a minor inconvenience. However, apparently I'm spoiled.

The thing is, I've gotten used to working in the Hovel in the early morning from around 3 to 5 a.m. and then through the rest of the day. In the early morning, I search the internet for items for "Of Interest." I also prep the Journal, during which ideas come to me for topics, etc. I even delve into Facebook a little when I remember to do so.

By then my first cup of coffee is gone. So I slog up to the house in the pre-dawn, refill my cup, and head back to the Hovel to start my day. Seriously, if I had a coffee maker and a cot out there, I'd never have to leave.

At that point I attend to one of the many notes scribbled on the white board that hangs near my desk. I can write, or I can work on one of the many licensing projects I have in the works. And I can do all of that knowing if I need to hop on the internet for a moment of spot research or to listen to another lecture or whatever, I can do so.

In other words, I've built a routine around the framework of the luxury of having the internet available in the Hovel.

Not having that luxury is annoying. And it really is a luxury. I know that intellectually. But sometime over the years, it's also become a necessity.

But the only sure-fire fix I can think of would involve me switching sides philosophically and killing people for no reason. So I guess I'll put up with the inconvenience, albeit begrudgingly. I just hope I don't have a need to call Jupiter.

Today I'll work on creating a new routine, one that I hope will be temporary. I'll get today's edition of the Journal out early (since I'm doing it from the house) and then return to the Hovel to write and/or work on some of the other projects I have going on.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Reviews and the Art of Avoiding Them” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/reviews-and-the-art-of-avoiding-them/>. Read and heed. This is a wise man.

See “Debunking Copyright Myths” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/debunking-copyright-myths/>. I recommend registering the first work in a series (or not), but not everything you write. But to each his own.

See “Whose Story Is it?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/whose-story-is-it-first-page-critique-sunny-days-ahead.html>. Some good stuff here.

See “6 Steps to Get Your Self-Published Book Into Libraries” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/6-steps-to-get-into-libraries-self-pub/>.

See “Writing Truthiness” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/11/writing-truthiness/>. When your writing gets “stuck” you can try all the stuff in this article. Or you can just write the next sentence. Works every time.

See “Business Musings: Scheduling: A Process Blog” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/11/20/business-musings-scheduling-a-process-blog/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today.....	0
Nonfiction words today.....	610 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	6481
Total fiction words for the year.....	391574
Total nonfiction words for the month...	14440
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	295520
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	687094
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

[The Journal: Story Gestation](#)

[November 22, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Dean Wesley Smith
- * I actually wrote
- * Topic: Story Gestation
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Dean Wesley Smith has announced he's going to shut down sign-ups for both the Licensing Transition learn-along and the Shared Worlds class on December 8. Just sayin'.

I actually wrote 1700 words on the Blackwell Ops 7 novel yesterday. I keep thinking I could just set it aside and forget it, but the story's too good to ignore. So I'm back at it again.

I was going to share a comment I left on a post (see the 3rd item in "Of Interest" today), but when I went back to copy it, it wasn't there. The gist of the comment was this:

Topic: Story Gestation

I've learned that everything happens for a reason. So many people echo this thought that it's become cliché. I actually mean it. Even encountering a delay in writing a story happens for a reason.

Of my 50+ novels and novellas, that unnerving kind of delay has happened to me twice.

Once, a friend inadvertently let slip how he would end the story I was working on at the time. I was only about halfway through, and he was right. It would be a great ending. But that slip shut me down cold. I can't write to an ending that I already know. Where's the excitement of discovery in that?

So I let it go, wrote other things, and eventually returned to the story and finished it a couple of months later. Without the pat ending. (grin)

It's important to note that the finished story itself was probably different than it would have been had I kept writing despite having been inadvertently handed an ending. Something I learned or read or wrote during the delay no doubt informed the story that I eventually finished. In other words, the delay allowed the story to be what it was supposed to be from the beginning.

The second time was with my current WIP, Blackwell Ops 7. This time I simply got stuck. Even "just write the next sentence" didn't work, though it usually does. The story simply didn't "feel" right. I've learned to listen to that little creative voice in the back of my mind.

So I stopped writing on BO7 back in mid-August. No harm, no foul, and no worries. I "tried" a little in September and October, but it just wasn't there. Still, the story excited me each time I looked at it. So I knew I would finish it eventually. When it was time.

Again, I let it go and moved on to other things: short stories, learning, etc.

And during my time away from the story, it simmered in the back of my mind. When I returned to it yesterday, it was time. It was right, and I blazed through 1700 words in just over an hour like it was nothing.

Now I'm back to the "just write the next sentence" stage. The story is already nearing the wrapping stage, so I suspect it will be a short novel (25,000 to 40,000 words), which is fine. It will be what it will be.

The lesson? Sometimes a story just needs longer for gestation. Heinlein's Rule 2 says to finish what you write. But it doesn't say when. (grin)

Today I'll write more on BO7, and I'll probably dive into the new Shared World videos Dean put up. (I'm more excited about that than I am about the WIP.)

And maybe I'll work a little more on setting up the shared world I'm developing for others to write in. I still plan to announce it formally at the first of the year.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Breaking Leonard's 10 Rules—If You Want" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/breaking-leonards-10-rules-if-you-want/>. A thought-stirring post.

See "New Videos In Shared World Class" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/new-videos-in-shared-world-class/>.

See "October 2019 progress" at <https://www.perpetualized.com/october-2019-progress/>. Thought-provoking post. Do you see yourself or your process here?

See the Passive Guy's take on "NaNoWriMo Has The Writers..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/nanowrimo-has-the-writers-to-solve-the-book-industrys-diversity-problem/>.

See "Favorite Holiday Recipe" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/reader-friday-favorite-holiday-recipe.html>. Includes a step-by-step recipe for Almond Biscotti.

The Numbers

Fiction words yesterday.....	1700
Nonfiction words today.....	680 (Journal)
Total fiction words for the month.....	8181
Total fiction words for the year.....	393274

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15120
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 296200
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 689474

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Perpetualized](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Some Thoughts on Structure](#)

[November 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Getting back in the habit
- * Topic: Some Thoughts on Structure
- * A side note
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

I'm trying to get back in the habit of building this Journal through the day, writing fiction, and then posting everything at once in the afternoon. To that end, I've added the daily update for my WIP back into the numbers below.

Hard as it may be to believe, I started Blackwell Ops 7 way back on August 7. Yet in all that time, yesterday was only the 17th writing day for that novel. I allowed several things to sidetrack me and I wrote only a little over a thousand words of fiction. Still, I expect this one to be finished before the month is out.

But today is Saturday. I rolled out early (2 a.m.) because most of today will be devoted to being as normal as I can (as opposed to being fiction-writerly) and spend time with my bride. So I want to get done what I can do before the world wakes up.

I also want this Journal to remain relevant and important to you, though, so I'll also post a topic.

Topic: Some Thoughts on Structure

I sent this, in slightly different form, to my patrons about a week ago. I won't share everything here that I share with them. To get in on that, visit [my patronage page](#).

If you write short fiction, it's important to learn and understand the structure of short stories (or of vignettes, or both). If you write novels, of course, the same thing applies. Fortunately, acquiring the various types of structure isn't difficult.

Short Fiction

If you've read a lot of short fiction — and why wouldn't you if that's what you want to write? — you've already subconsciously absorbed that structure. Your subconscious mind “knows” even if you believe you don't.

So if you've read a lot of short fiction, all you have to know is that the short story is always about One Event. No more. That's the whole trick to writing short fiction.

A short story has an opening, during which you ground the reader (pull him in), a middle, and a satisfactory resolution. Or if you want to look at structure from a bits-and-pieces standpoint, it has a character with a problem in a setting — and a satisfactory resolution.

The vignette is the same, except for the resolution. It doesn't have one. It's simply a scene, a slice of life. The reader is left to infer his own resolution. In a way, short story writers and novelists write vignettes all the time, though as part of a larger work.

(Note: If you supply a specific resolution, even through implication, the scene is still resolved into a complete short story: See Frank Stockton's “The Lady, or the Tiger?” or my own flash fiction short story “At Confession.”)

So the vignette... If, as you're walking along a sidewalk, you pass an open window and overhear an argument or part of an argument and write it down, that's a vignette. If you stop and listen until the argument is concluded (and resolved) and write it down, that's a short story.

Novellas and Novels

If you write novels, it's important to learn and understand the structure of novels. I'm not talking about the “act” structures (3-act, 5-act, 7-act) or even about the expectations readers have in particular genres. It's important to learn those as well. Learn with the conscious mind and apply with the creative subconscious.

But...

If you read a lot of novels — and again, why wouldn't you if that's what you want to write? — you subconsciously absorb novel structure anyway. So really, if you read, you're all set. All that remains is to trust that you're all set. All you need to know beyond what your subconscious mind already knows is that the novel begins with a character who has a problem in a setting. Sound familiar?

But unlike the short story, the novel is about *several* events, each of which leads to the next until you reach — you guessed it — a satisfactory resolution.

You might have picked up that the primary difference between the short story and the novel is the number of events covered by each. Simple as it sounds, that is correct.

In fact, many writers have written both at one time (see Isabel Allende's *The Stories of Eva Luna*). I've often pulled scenes out of my novels, resolved them, and published them as stand-alone short stories.

Why? Because a novel is one publication (one more time my name gets "out there"). But a novel plus three short stories derived from that novel is four publications. (grin) It's called discoverability. And any of the short stories will introduce the same reader to the other shorts and to the novel and to the novel series if there is one.

So is it important to take workshops in which you study structure? For example, the 3-act (or 5-act or 7-act) structure? Sure. Of course. But learn and absorb it with your conscious mind (just as you learned how to form letters into words and where to put a period or a question mark back in the day) and then don't worry about it.

Just write. Your subconscious mind will supply what you need without conscious thought on your part.

A final note, and here I'll invoke that conscious, critical mind: If part of a particular short story or novel that you're reading blows you away, first, finish reading it for pleasure. Then go back and study the part(s) that blew you away to determine how the writer pulled that off.

Next to reading for pleasure in the first place, that's the easiest and quickest way to learn structure.

Hope you found this helpful. Any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

A side note, appropos to nothing: The ability to use cliffhangers is important. If you aren't aware of the several kinds of cliffhangers, I recommend [WVG Publishings "Cliffhangers" classic workshop](#).

Today, I probably won't write fiction. This morning I was moved to write a couple of topics, and that took some time. One is above. The other, I just sent via email to my patrons.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Gahan Wilson: Born Dead, Now Dead Again" at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2019/11/gahan-wilson-born-dead-now-dead-again.html>.

Wow. See “The Messy Legal Fight to Bring Celebrities Back From the Dead” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-messy-legal-fight-to-bring-celebrities-back-from-the-dead/>. Story ideas, anyone?

See “A Writer’s Thanksgiving” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/a-writers-thanksgiving>.

The Numbers

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan

(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549

Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567

Day 18..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Fiction words yesterday..... 1018

Nonfiction words today..... 1940 (1070, Journal) 870, other topic)

Total fiction words for the month..... 9199

Total fiction words for the year..... 394292

Total nonfiction words for the month... 17060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 298140

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 692432

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Neil Gaiman](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Writing Sales Copy](#)

[November 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * An excellent example
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

If you'd like to see an excellent example for now NOT to write sales copy (your book description), take a look at what the publisher did to describe Steven Pressfield's latest novel, 36 Righteous Men.

I saw an ad for the novel in CrimeReads, and I clicked through. What the hey? It's Steven Pressfield, right? So I might as well at least read the blurb.

And I did. And I won't buy the book.

Rather than enticing me to buy the book (that's the job of your book description), the description of 36 Righteous Men actually dissuaded me.

Not because it isn't a great premise or because I think the book won't be exciting. If I thought either of those were true, I wouldn't have clicked through in the first place.

I won't buy the book because there's no need. I already know the whole story. Whoever wrote the sales copy for the description laid out the plot: lock, stock, and barrel. If I tried to read it now, I'd be bored because I already know not only how it ends, but several of the major plot points along the way.

I hope Mr. Pressfield didn't write the description himself. And I hope whoever did write it takes a gander at Dean's book, How to Write Fiction Sales Copy <https://www.wmgpublishinginc.com/project/how-to-write-fiction-sales-copy/>. Because seriously, folks, what's on the cover of 36 Righteous Men isn't it.

If you'd like to read the description for yourself, visit <https://wnorton.com/books/9781324002895>.

I probably will write fiction today. If I do I'll report the numbers in the next edition of the Journal. Tomorrow I have a follow-up appointment with a doctor. Just routine, but it's in Tucson so it will consume much of the day.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "What One Thing is Your Novel About?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/what-one-thing-is-your-novel-about.html>.

See "THAT I Write is important" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/that-i-write-is-important>.

The Numbers

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan
(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549
Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567
Day 18..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Fiction words yesterday..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 320 (Journal)

Total fiction words for the month..... 9199
Total fiction words for the year..... 394292
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17380
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 298460
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 692752

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Book Descriptions](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Writing Sales Copy](#)

[The Journal: Write Sloppy?](#)

[November 25, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Yesterday
- * Topic: Write Sloppy? Umm, No.
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Yesterday, I wrote a few hundred words, then took a break. I meant to come back and write more, but I didn't.

I also read Dan Baldwin's blogette, "Advice Worth Ignoring, in which he related a tale about a successful author who advised beginning writers to "Just write a bad book. Start with something that's subpar, and learn. It's extremely fulfilling...."

Honestly, that infuriated me. And it quickly gave rise to today's topic.

Topic: Write Sloppy? Umm, No.

As a successful professional fiction writer, and especially as a writing instructor, hearing some “successful author” telling beginning writers to “start with something subpar” is truly annoying.

For years, Dean Wesley Smith has been trying to lay to rest the pervasive “myths” about writing. You can find most of them in his Killing the Sacred Cows posts on his website or in the books by the same name. Yet oddly, many writers read his posts, dismiss his over 4 decades as a successful long-term fiction writer, and fall back on “learning” from other novices.

The myths are inane bits of writing advice we were all taught BY NON-WRITERS. We heard these ridiculous things first in school and later as they were repeated as “gospel” by other writers. But bad advice is bad advice no matter how often it’s repeated.

Even before I refreshed my acquaintance with Dean almost six years ago, I too was railing against bad advice. It costs new writers SO much time (and often, money), and that’s infuriating.

One of my least favorite bits of advice is something I hear repeated all through the year, though it flares up each year with the advent of NaNoWriMo.

The advice? Write sloppy on purpose.

This age-old (and dead-wrong) “wisdom” comes to us in various forms. Some self-styled writing instructors advise, “Just write the story; you can fix it later.” Others say, “Just get the words down; you can’t edit a blank page.” Or the advice Dan found in a blog by a writer he chose not to name: “Start with something subpar.”

This advice is so stinking bad that I sometimes suspect those who advocate it are intentionally trying to knock out the competition. They can’t possibly be serious. Yet, laughably, they are.

Consider this carefully: When you follow that advice, you’re intentionally setting out to write less than your best, believing you can make it better during an edit. And honestly, nothing could be further from the truth.

Editing is a process of the conscious, critical mind. Every editing pass weakens the work by taking it farther from your unique, natural, authorial voice. The voice that is You. The voice that comes from your creative subconscious.

Ironically and incredibly, even all the traditional publishers say they’re looking for a “unique” voice. Then they do their best to quash it with round after round of edits.

If, on the other hand, you go into the story knowing you WON’T edit it later, you will write to the BEST of your ability. Maybe you cycle back every thousand words or so as you go (in creative mind, as a reader) to repair typos, patch plot holes, etc., but that’s it.

And when you reach the end, voila! That story will represent the very best you could do at that point in time. And what's wrong with that?

We learn with our conscious, critical mind. We create with our creative subconscious.

Think about that for a moment.

When you sit down to write with the preconceived intent that you will edit later, you're telling your creative subconscious — your storyteller self — that you don't trust it. You're saying, "Yes, I want you to write the story. But really, you aren't all that, so I'll go back and fix it later. I might invite a few friends over to criticize it too."

Still, I can halfway understand especially a beginning writer being so unsure of himself that he's tempted to double-check with his critical mind what his creative mind has created. (Professional writers should be striving always to get past that.)

But for those of you who avail yourselves of input from peer critique groups, think about it: Any Critiquer Can Know Your Story Only From a Critical-Mind Standpoint. Why in the world would you trust someone else's critical mind over your own creative subconscious?

Why? Because you lack self-confidence. You trust your critical mind, and even others' critical minds, more than you trust your own unique, creative subconscious and your own authorial voice. That wonderful, one of a kind thing that comes naturally from inside you.

And that is just a shame.

Intentionally writing sloppy is not a matter of "doing what works" (another cliché); it's a matter of doing what wastes time.

Today, a trip to Tucson for a followup with a surgeon. I wrote a little more in the early morning. Those numbers (from yesterday and today) are reported below.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Spoilers" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/spoilers>.

See "e-Book Cover Design Awards, October 2019" at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/11/e-book-cover-design-awards-october-2019/>.

Especially if you design your own covers, check these out and the judge's comments. Some good stuff here.

Note: I regularly follow a distinctly small number of blogs. If you know of any that I haven't mentioned here in the past, please share those with me. Thanks.

The Numbers

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan

(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549

Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567

Day 18..... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 30254

Fiction words today..... 1687

Nonfiction words today..... 900 (Journal)

Total fiction words for the month..... 10886

Total fiction words for the year..... 395979

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18280

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 299360

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 695339

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [NaNoWriMo](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [Writing Sloppy](#)

[The Journal: Take Two on Writing Sloppy](#)

[November 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * OMG Alert
- * Topic: Take Two on Writing Sloppy
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Every now and then Dean mentions The Copyright Handbook by Stephen Fishman from NOLO. It's an essential investment for a writer.

At the moment, NOLO is having a 50% off sale on everything they offer, including The Copyright Handbook. Visit <https://store.nolo.com/products/the-copyright-handbook-coha.html>. Use the promo code BF50 when you order.

Plus, at the moment the handbook is on sale for only \$39.99. Which means if you use the code, you can get the book for only twenty bucks.

Topic: Take Two on Writing Sloppy

Yesterday I pretty much ranted about writing slop intentionally and what a terrible idea it is. I haven't changed my mind.

Writing crap with the intention of going back to fix it later is an insane waste of time. It's like filling a wheelbarrow, moving only partway to your destination, then dumping it so you can come back and fill it again tomorrow.

For anyone who's never filled a wheelbarrow by hand with a shovel, trust me: dumping it short of your destination only so you can fill it again tomorrow is a stupid idea. Nobody who's operated a shovel would even consider it.

Likewise, no serious writer should ever consider writing sloppy intentionally just because he can revisit it (revise it, rewrite it, edit it) later.

The friend who handed me the idea for yesterday's topic didn't directly cite a particular article or author. Nor did he mention the writer's name or provide a link to the article itself.

But another friend, [Phillip McCollum](#), found the article, or at least one that was extremely similar, and sent me the link. I am grateful.

I read that article myself, and I have to say I agree with the author of the article and with the writer she was profiling. The writer wasn't advocating intentionally writing garbage from the outset.

Like Dean Wesley Smith's advice that you should "dare to be bad" (which he got from [Nina Kiriki Hoffman](#)), the writer profiled in the article was actually saying you should do your best, then publish what you write no matter what you think of it personally.

Now that's advice I can get behind.

It's all about intention and believing in your work. Defending your work. In other words, it's all about self-confidence and believing in yourself.

Put simply, if you write to the best of your ability at the time, and if you believe in yourself enough to publish what you write, you will never go wrong.

You have to get past the notion that you are the sole judge of your work. Judging your work is not your job. You really are the worst judge of your own work, and that holds true whether you think the work is good OR bad. Judging your work is the reader's job, but he can't do his job unless you publish what you've written, warts and all.

But you (as the reader in this case) be the judge of the article yourself. The article is by McKenzie Brickl and it's about writer Andrew Watts. You can find it at <https://blog.aboutamazon.com/books-and-authors/just-write-a-bad-book-and-learn-from-it>.

A few notes on the article from my personal perspective —

1. Like most of America, the author of the article defines a “novella” as up to 40,000 words. Outside of America (and *in* America before traditional publishers artificially inflated word counts to reach certain price points), 25,000 to 40,000 words is a short novel. A novella is 15,000 to 24,999 words. (For my realistic “Fiction Length” guidelines, [email me](#). I'll be happy to share.)
2. Yes, by all means go with Amazon KDP, but don't go *exclusively* with Amazon KDP. Go wide.
3. Note that Mr. Watts wasn't intentionally writing sloppy. He was “just writing for fun,” which is exactly what I recommend.
4. The quote that stands out most to me from Watts is “I believe in myself.” Yes. What he said.

Through his quotes in the article, Andrew Watts outlined the “secret” of success as a professional fiction writer:

1. Believe in yourself and your work,
2. Do the best you can at your current skill level,
3. Publish what you write and let readers be the judge,
4. Continue to learn and apply what you learn to your next novel, novella or short story.
5. Repeat 1-4 into perpetuity.

Happy writing.

Today things are shifting back to normal. Anf of course I'm still adjusting my personal schedule, a seemingly never-ending process. I'll write on the novel and maybe even finish it. However, I want to get this edition of the Journal out, so I'll go back to reporting my own fiction numbers one day late.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Radio Secrets” at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2019/11/radio-secrets.html>. Some great history and insights. Neil Gaiman twice in three days! Are you kidding me? And video to boot.

See “Happy 100th Birthday” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/happy-100th-birthday.html>. Story ideas abound.

See “The Top 10 Reasons to be Thankful for Self-Publishing” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-top-10-reasons-to-be-thankful-for-self-publishing/>. I recommend reading the Passive Guy’s take, then clicking through to the original post.

See “Why Online Mobile Publishing Is the Future” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-online-mobile-publishing-is-the-future/>.

See “My Current WIP” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/my-current-wip/>.

See “Stay Safe Out There” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/stay-safe-out-there/>. My thoughts exactly.

See “17 Specialized Manuscript Publishers that Accept Direct Submissions” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/17-specialized-manuscript-publishers-that-accept-direct-submissions/>. I queried one of these publishers via comment form to find out about rights, a rights-reversion clause, and royalty split, none of which were included in their submission guidelines. I received a quick response via email, but the publisher only directed me back to the submission guidelines. Sigh.

The Numbers

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan

(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549

Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567

Day 18..... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 30254

Fiction words yesterday..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 920 (Journal)

Total fiction words for the month..... 10886

Total fiction words for the year..... 395979

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19200

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 300280

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 696529

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Neil Gaiman](#), [Phillip McCollum](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: More on Shared Worlds

[November 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: More on Shared Worlds
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quotes of the Day

“The toughest thing we do as artists is trust our own vision. If we don't, we will not end up with a long career. ... What good writers do is make familiar stories new, so new in fact that they seem breathtakingly original.” — Kristine Kathryn Rusch

And for those of you who write in series, this one really struck me:

“When you're writing in your own world, you don't go for the details that the fans expect. You keep that world organic and original to your vision. If you don't, then you suck the energy out of your creation.” — Kristine Kathryn Rusch

Topic: More on Shared Worlds

I'm posting this today mostly because I had a kind of epiphany yesterday that I want to share.

I didn't write fiction. I got sidetracked and did some work on the bible for the forthcoming shared world I mentioned here awhile back.

As I was doing that, I realized I have more than one world that's large enough to open up to other writers. That was the first part of the epiphany.

The second part was a stark reminder that working as a licensor (vs. only a publisher) takes time and patience.

I was originally going to open up my one shared world to other writers on January 1, 2020. Yesterday, I realized that's too soon.

Not because I can't have the bible for the original shared world ready by that time — I can, easily — but because I'm currently in a Shared Worlds class with Dean and because I haven't done all the shared-world research I can do yet.

In other words, I'm learning on behalf of myself and all those who will eventually write in my shared world. And I want potential writers in that world to share in as few mistakes as possible.

When you set out to be a professional fiction writer, you write the best story or novel you can at the time and publish it. Then you learn new things — so your best becomes better — and apply those things to your next work (never look back!), which you then publish. Lather, rinse, repeat.

It's the same when you're starting any new venture. Mistakes and missteps are inevitable. So you make those mistakes and missteps. You learn new things from them (and other sources), and then you enter a minor course correction and continue moving forward.

So I intend to learn as much as I can and make as many mistakes as I can before I open up my shared world(s) to others. I want the burden of my mistakes to be mine alone as much as is reasonably possible.

To that end, my plan is to delay the official launch of my shared world(s) until mid-2020 at the earliest. If I had to put a "latest" date on it, that date would be January 1, 2021.

In the meantime, here's a teaser of sorts —

1. In the "WEO" (World Equality Organization) shared world project, the genres will be wide open: Romance, Science Fiction, Crime, Science Fantasy, Mystery, Thriller, Horror, Action-Adventure, War, Political Intrigue, Historical, etc. In fact, I can't think of a genre that wouldn't be appropriate. So a lot of possibilities there.

2. Any fantasy writers out there? More specifically, any magic realism writers? If so, you might want to write in my "Keeper of the Promise" (magic realism) shared world. The new king has ascended to the throne of the world and, though his agents, metes out justice. But always under the umbrella of magic realism. The Keeper of the Promise shared-world stories will occur in that place where reality folds into fantasy.

3. Any action-adventure, crime, thriller authors out there? If so, you might want to write in my Blackwell Ops shared world. Or even branch out to work in opposition to Blackwell Ops. Blackwell Ops is a private organization. TJ Blackwell vets assignments, collects fees, and then sends his operatives around the world to carry out those assignments—which usually have to do with assassination. Plenty of room here for elements of almost any commercial genre.

That's only three shared worlds, and once I open them up, you'll be able to write in any or all of them. You're limited only by your own interest.

And I have several more shared worlds rattling around in the back of my mind, including the (western) Wes Crowley world; the (wide-open) world of Agua Perlado (a small fiction fishing village on the Pacific Coast of Mexico); the they-came-here future-Earth (SF) world of The Consensus; the we-went-there other worldly (SF) world of "The Rain Cart"; the throwback (noir) detective world of Stern Talbot; and the (time travel, action-adventure) world of Nick Spalding.

Some of those will make the cut and become shared worlds, worlds in which others are allowed to write. Others probably won't.

For now and over the next few months, be thinking about which of those worlds interests you, in which of those worlds you might want to write stories or novels. Then let me know. You can leave a comment or you can email me directly at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Your interest will inform my decision of which worlds to open up.

This is an exciting prospect for me, and I hope, for you. Writing in any of these worlds will enable you to write in your chosen genre(s) while stretching your skills and opening your mind to other genres. It will be a win-win for you.

And when I do formally announce the opening of one or more of these shared worlds next year, I will have learned enough to absorb any risk.

Today I'll write on the novel, and I'm considering moving my writing 'puter up to the house, at least for the winter. If I do, I'll move the other computer to the Hovel, and attend to email, Facebook, etc. when I need a cigar break.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

Via Diane Stoddard, see "Welcome to Noraville, the Small Maryland Town Rebuilt by Nora Roberts" at <https://jezebel.com/welcome-to-noraville-the-small-maryland-town-rebuilt-b-1832961839>. Beneath the surface, this is a primer on licensing. Think of what you could do with your works, characters, and other parts of your stories outside of publishing.

See "What Tweets and Emojis Did to the Novel" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-tweets-and-emojis-did-to-the-novel/>.

See "E-books at libraries are a huge hit..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/e-books-at-libraries-are-a-huge-hit-leading-to-long-waits-reader-hacks-and-worried-publishers/>. This is a must-read if you're a writer. "Go wide!" it screams. "Go wide, young writer!"

For another take on the critical voice, see "Resistance Thrives in Darkness" at <https://stevenpressfield.com/2019/11/resistance-thrives-in-darkness/>.

See “A Vivid Character Is More Than a Series of Attributes” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/vivid-characters/>.

See “Beware the Platitude Trap” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/beware-the-platitude-trap/>. More on this tomorrow in the Journal and at PWW on Saturday, November 30. (grin)

See “The Writing Habit I Needed the Most” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/the-writing-habit-i-needed-the-most/>. Note that I do not necessarily agree with or recommend what I post in “Of Interest.” My only comment on the OP would be that, for a writer, the “area that needs my attention the most” would be writing the next story. But importantly, this writer found a way to alleviate the pressure he was feeling, so good for her.

The Numbers

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan

(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549

Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567

Day 18..... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 30254

Fiction words yesterday..... 0

Nonfiction words today..... 1210 (Journal)

Total fiction words for the month..... 10886

Total fiction words for the year..... 395979

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20410

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 301490

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 697469

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Shared Worlds](#), [Steven Pressfield](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Happy Gathering Day and “On Platitudes”](#)

[November 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Happy Gathering Day
- * Topic: on Platitudes and "Just write the next sentence"
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

"Any day that starts with you seein' the sunrise and ends with you seein' the sunset is a pretty good day. If what happens in between ain't big enough to interfere with those two events, it'll wear off." Wes Crowley

Here in the States it's Thanksgiving Day, a major holiday. Ostensibly, it's a day set aside to count our blessings and express our gratitude for those blessings. Unofficially, it's also the jumping-off point for the commercial Christmas season.

I personally don't see the point of a special day set aside to give thanks, but I understand that's only because I'm contrary.

I believe we should be grateful every day for our blessings and the opportunity to improve our lot. And I believe we should express our gratitude in the moment to those who are important to us.

Still, having a special holiday provides an excuse for families and friends to gather, share a meal and conversation, and relive (relieve?) old transgressions (grin), so I suppose that's a good thing. Perhaps it should be called Gathering Day.

However you spend today, here in the States or wherever you are, I hope it's a great day for you and that you will enjoy it safely and come out the other side unscathed.

Topic: On Platitudes

Yesterday, [Alison Holt](#), a friend and writer whom I greatly respect and whose works I admire, posted an article in PWW titled "[Beware the Platitude Trap](#)."

As I commented on her post, I was pleased, in an unnerving kind of way, that she'd relegated "Just write the next sentence" to the status of "platitude." I was both complimented and appropriately chastised.

On one hand, it's gratifying to know folks have heard "Just write the next sentence" so much that the new-advice smell has worn off. On the other hand, I am and always have been all about warning writers not to automatically bow to platitudes, so I'm right there with Alison.

In fairness, I should mention that Alison pointed out in a reply to my comment that “Just write the next sentence” has been around forever. That wasn’t true for me.

I first heard the phrase in a passing comment from Dean Wesley Smith on what to do when a story bogged down. His advice worked, so I picked it up and ran with it. So to my thinking, “Just write the next sentence,” as advice, was brand new when I heard it a few years ago, and the patina hadn’t worn off when I started repeating it in seminars, blog posts and emails.

Anyway, as I’ve said many times, the fact that any advice has become a platitude doesn’t mean writers should automatically accept it, but neither should they automatically dismiss it. It only means writers should delve deeper into the platitude, figure out its true meaning and thereby determine whether it’s helpful or just so many words in a row. A few biggies come to mind (these actually make me groan):

- * kill all your darlings
- * show, don’t tell
- * never use passive voice
- * never use gerunds (though proponents of this one most often say “never use ‘ing’ words”)
- * never [insert your favorite clichéd advice here]

Frankly, that we can now add “Just write the next sentence” to that list boggles my mind. Apparently it’s become one of those traps newer writers stumble into and apply without thinking. Go figure.

But if that’s the case, then for this one too, even though it’s my own favorite reminder of how to get past the critical voice, I advocate thinking about it, figuring out what it means and whether it is actually helpful.

To help with that thought process, here’s what *I personally* mean when I advise writers who are “stuck” to “Just write the next sentence.” Your results might vary, but it isn’t meant to be as flip and clichéd as it apparently now sounds.

1. When you’re stuck, “just write the next sentence” that pops into your head. In other words, write the next unedited thought that comes from your creative subconscious. Most often that leap of faith will propel you forward in your story and you will be off and running again. I promise. (Note: If you find yourself trying to “think” of what the next sentence should be, that isn’t just writing the next sentence. That’s bowing to the conscious, critical mind.)
2. *Occasionally*, if you “just write the next sentence” it will propel you instead into a meandering mishmash, possibly even a paragraph or two that you will later (while cycling, still in creative mind) cut. But it will still eventually lead you back into the story and (again) propel you forward.
3. Much less occasionally, there flat won’t be a “next sentence” to write. The story will slow rapidly, or bog down altogether. When that happens (it’s happened to me, twice) it usually means you wrote past the end of the scene or chapter. If that happens, I recommend you back up, read (as a reader) the last few paragraphs you wrote. Usually the end of the scene or chapter will

become readily apparent. Then skip a line or insert a new chapter head and Just write the next sentence.

It really is that simple and that difficult. Once the writer trusts his or her subconscious mind, everything else is gravy and the writing is fun again.

And if writing isn't fun for you, well, you probably have more serious problems than facing-down platitudes.

Today I might write some fiction (early), visit with our neighbors briefly, and probably spend the rest of the day watching old movies.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Business Musings: Raising The Bar” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/11/27/business-musings-raising-the-bar/>. A great post.

See “Writer Wants Versus Reader Needs” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/writer-wants-versus-reader-needs/>.

See PG’s take on “Care About Journalism? Maybe You Should Cancel Your Newspaper” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/care-about-journalism-maybe-you-should-cancel-your-newspaper/>.

For what it’s worth, see “Book Promotion: Do This Not That – November 2019” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/11/book-promotion-do-this-not-that-november-2019/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words yesterday..... 1586
Nonfiction words today..... 1020 (Journal)

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan (Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549
Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567
Day 18..... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 30254
Day 19..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 31840

Total fiction words for the month..... 12472
Total fiction words for the year..... 397565
Total nonfiction words for the month... 21430

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 302510
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 700075

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#),
[The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

[The Journal: Licensing and Everything Else](#)

[November 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Licensing and Everything Else
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

"I'm thankful there are people out there who read what I write and who like what I make. I'm very lucky, and I know it." Neil Gaiman

Topic: Licensing and Everything Else

DWS has said many times that licensing is a process, one that takes time. It has occurred to me that how long it takes from concept to actual production seems even longer when compared to the ability of today's writers to write what they want and make it available to the world almost immediately.

Neil Gaiman put up another blog post today. You'll see it in "Of Interest."

In Neil's post, he outlines the time it took for one of his books to be licensed and made into a stage play. Three years. Which is an incredibly short amount of time in licensing. (And believe me, I haven't given away much in this post.)

Congratulations to Neil. I can only hope that he will also license the video rights to someone to film the play and put it up so those who can't afford the air fare to view a live performance and see it later in another venue.

Neil's post both slowed me down (calmed me) and enthused me.

But this post isn't about Neil Gaiman or Stephen King or Dean or me or other successful writers. This post is about You.

In this new world of publishing, literally anyone can write an original story, design a striking cover, format the story for e-book production, write great sales copy for the cover, and make their story available to the reading public with a few clicks of the mouse.

So what's stopping you?

If "gatekeepers" and "rejection" are stopping you, I suggest you stop using the excuse of "needing" to be traditionally published. In the real world now, that's just silly. Get over your need for outside validation. Gatekeepers exist only if you want them to exist.

If expense is stopping you, again, stop using it as an excuse. You can do everything yourself. There are free resources available to teach you everything you need to know.

Back in the day, anytime I or one of my siblings uttered the word "can't," my momma would say "Can't never did anything." With a scowl on her face.

You can...

Read blogs like mine and Dean's and JA Konrath's et al to learn all about

- * writing techniques, including
 - * grounding the reader
 - * flow and pacing
 - * characters and character voice
 - * setting
 - * major and minor scenes
- * cover design,
- * sales copy
- * publishing,
- * motivation, and now even
- * licensing.

You can download (free) my book [The Essentials of Digital Publishing](#), which lays out step by step instructions for formatting a book for publication.

Not familiar enough with Microsoft Word? You can read (free) [my series on Microsoft Word for Writers](#).

Not familiar enough with all the ins and outs of publishing? You can read (free) [Dean's posts on Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing](#).

You can download from me (free) a host of other resources [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

You can read Story to absorb story structure. You might argue that books cost money, but I'll give anyone who asks a free copy in any digital format of [any novel or novella](#) I've ever written. You have only to browse the categories and [email me](#).

And if my stories aren't your cup of tea, you can easily check out any books you want from any public library that will admit you as a member.

So again, what's stopping you?

If you do have funds available, there are tons of paid resources. Dean offers excellent lectures and workshops at <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com>.

To the best of my knowledge, Dean is still taking on mentoring students. You only have to [email him and ask](#). I personally have room for one more mentoring student. You can read about what I offer at <https://harveystanbrough.com/pro-writers/mentoring/>. If you're interested, email me.

And you can get special, patron-only content by visiting Patreon and searching for Kristine Kathryn Rush or by visiting <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

So go free or go paid (or both), but get on with it. Because the most valuable asset you have is time.

Today I'm in the middle of another reset of my own schedule. I might be absent from your inboxes for awhile. When I am, don't be concerned. My own WIP is threatening to run longer than I expected. So I'll be writing, publishing and working on licensing opportunities.

I will talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "An Ocean of Story" at <http://journal.neilgaiman.com/2019/11/an-ocean-of-story.html>.

See "Why? Why Are You A Writer?" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/why-why-are-you-a-writer>.

The Numbers

Fiction words yesterday..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 750 (Journal)

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan
(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549
Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567
Day 18..... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 30254
Day 19..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 31840

Total fiction words for the month..... 12472
Total fiction words for the year..... 397565
Total nonfiction words for the month... 22180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 303260
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 700825

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 7
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [free books](#), [Free Resources](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [J. A. Konrath](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Licensing](#), [Patronage](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [publishing](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [WGM Publishing](#)

[The Journal: Quotes of the Day and Where Did It All Go?](#)

[December 1, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * It's December 1—2019!
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quotes of the Day

“Mail your first draft. Publish your first draft. That book you’ve rewritten 15 times? Go back to the first draft. Publish that one. Because that’s your authentic voice. That’s the one you haven’t interfered with at all.” Kristine Kathryn Rusch at the 20BooksTo50K conference

“Behavior presents as it does for a reason. It’s more than complex. It’s the way a life goes.” Mauro Altamura, an extra on the set of the Netflix original, *The Irishman*, a film based on the biography of Frank ‘The Irishman’ Sheeran’s *I Heard You Paint Houses*, written by Charles Brandt. If you’ve wondered what really happened to Jimmy Hoffa in 1975 or if you’re a crime writer whose characters are or deal with mobsters, I recommend the book.

It’s December 1—2019 of all things! Where did November go? For that matter, where did the year go? But never mind that. How in the world is it already the 21st century, much less twenty years in?

I’m pretty sure I lost track of time somewhere around 1978. Everything since then is a blur, with occasional highlights poking through the fog. Sigh.

But one thing I wouldn’t change even if I could go back is the advent of ebooks and our ability to go directly to readers with our work. And yes, that’s only one thing.

Privately, I’ve been commiserating with myself that I haven’t put out any major publications for four months in a row. I finally published four short stories in November, but nothing major (novel/novella/short story collection) since July.

Then I took a breath, opened my New Fiction file, and looked it over. Since April 2014, I’ve written and published 197 short stories, around 30 short story collections, 8 novellas, and 43 novels. I’ve also re-released 2 nonfiction books on writing, and I’ve written and published 14 other nonfiction books.

That’s a sobering thought.

Consider, if I were still with a traditional publisher, in the past almost six years, I would have released 5 new novels and have one about ready to be released. On their schedule.

The last three words of the previous paragraph encapsulate the true benefit of this wonderful new world of publishing: we’re no longer “on their schedule.”

* What we write is up to us.

* Whether we rewrite or have the confidence to send our original authentic authorial voice to readers is up to us.

* How much and how often we write is up to us.

* And maybe most importantly from a publishing standpoint, what and when and how often we publish is completely up to us.

In other words, we are able to Practice our craft and get better instead of hovering over one work. And we are able to send that work out directly to readers, gatekeepers be damned.

Speaking of which, some of you know I've written a book of snarky definitions. The most recent addition is a new definition of "gatekeeper":

gatekeeper, n. 1. One who defines terms of admittance. 2. In publishing, that person or entity who asks for an "authentic voice," then submits the manuscript to a rigorous four-part process (critique, revision, rewrite, and editing) that is dedicated to erasing that voice. The gatekeeper then occupies itself with wondering why sales are tanking.

I'll spend what's left of today enjoying the remainder of Thanksgiving weekend with my wife and babies.

This morning I cycled back through the final scene of Blackwell Ops 7, let my creative mind tie up a few loose ends, and finished the novel. It's off my desk now, winging its way to my first readers. It's good to have that one behind me.

By the way, I'm looking for a female first reader. I find having input from a woman's point of view is invaluable. If you're interested, please email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. Of course, there are more benefits than just getting to read my stories first. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "My Talk On Perfection At 20Books" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/11/30/my-talk-on-perfection-at-20books/>. Be sure to listen to her bit on punctuation at about 12:20. Her example of Emily Dickinson is one of the best I've ever heard. And her response to the question about "authentic voice" at about 38:50 is outstanding.

See "Classic Workshops" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/classic-workshops/>. An absolutely excellent offer. Tell people who love you. After all, Christmas is coming!

See "Learning From the Movies: The King's Speech" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/learning-from-the-movies-the-kings-speech.html>. This is a post about structure. Remember to learn with your conscious, critical mind, but apply what you absorb with your creative mind.

See "Lucky Thomas: Probable Cause..." at <https://www.leelofland.com/lucky-thomas-probable-cause-and-collard-greens-a-recipe-for-arrest/>.

See "Top Tips for Writing the Copy for Your Author Website" at <https://fundsforwriters.com/top-tips-for-writing-the-copy-for-your-author-website/>.

See “Ages of Authors When They First Publish a Bestseller” at <https://www.inthebook.com/en-us/bestsellers/>. Sadly, I’ve surpassed all of those ages. Sigh. (grin)

See “The Write Motivation” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/the-write-motivation>.

See “Giving and Receiving” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/11/giving-and-receiving.html>.

See “The Old Stone Butter Church” (a free short story) at <http://dyingwords.net/the-old-stone-butter-church/>.

If you’re a crime writer, see “Our Boys From Jefferson Street...” at <https://crimereads.com/jimmy-hoffa-irishman/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words yesterday..... 1852
Nonfiction words today..... 840 (Journal)

Writing of Blackwell Ops 7: Philip Dunstan
(Brought forward..... 25849)

Day 16..... 1700 words. Total words to date..... 27549
Day 17..... 1018 words. Total words to date..... 28567
Day 18..... 1687 words. Total words to date..... 30254
Day 19..... 1586 words. Total words to date..... 31840
Day 20..... 1852 words. Total words to date..... 33692 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 1852
Total fiction words for the year..... 399417
Total nonfiction words for the month... 840
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 304100
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 703517

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [DyingWords.net](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal: Today, and All That Entails

[December 2, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Today I'm posting this primarily to get the "Of Interest" items out to you. I'm not sure yet what the day will hold.

Some learning, certainly, almost certainly more work on licensing projects and maybe on my shared world bibles. And a couple of new story ideas (and a couple of older ones) have been nagging me over the past few days. Decisions, decisions.

And then there are things I want. Like I want to set or re-set some new goals. I've been wanting to start writing at least one short story per week for awhile now. And I want to set a novels-per-year goal. And I'd really like to finish this year with 9 novels instead of 8... if my numbers below are correct. (I think maybe they're approximations.)

And admin stuff. Like I need to study my "New Fiction" spreadsheet and verify (sigh... once and for all) how many stories and novels I've actually written both since I started writing seriously back in 2014 and during this year.

And I want to revise that spreadsheet a bit to more accurately reflect when I *finished writing* a fiction as opposed to when I *published* it. Sometimes those events happen in different months. And delete old things and add new things to my white board in the Hovel.

So a lot going on here at Casa Stanbrough, but not really that I can delineate in detailed fashion. I did at least come up with a cover for the new Blackwell Ops novel yesterday.

Overall, I'm not complaining. I'd rather have far too much to do than not enough. It's a good problem to have. I wish the same for you.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Write To Market" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/write-to-market/>.

See "21 Themed Calls for Submissions" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/21-themed-calls-for-submissions-december-2019/>. If you need a catalyst to spur your creative self, perhaps this will provide it.

See “Stop Guessing: Split Test Your Cover...” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/12/stop-guessing-split-test-your-cover-with-pickfu/>. In the article, the author asks “But how do you know if a cover is good or not?” My immediate answer is “Study covers in your genre and put out a good one in the first place.” Still a good post.

See “Commenting on Blogs: The Easy Way for New Writers to Build Platform” at <https://annerallen.com/2019/12/commenting-on-blogs-builds-platform/>.

See “PURSUE YOUR ART, BEAT RESISTANCE” at <https://blackirishbooks.com/jabs>. Another learning opportunity, this time from Steven Pressfield.

See “What Is This Historic Mystery Stone?” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/what-is-this-historic-mystery-stone.html>. A GREAT starter for any number (or length) of stories.

See “I didn’t know...” at <https://preview.mailerlite.com/i5z0z2/1301525820887536888/n7z8/> (from The Digital Reader).

See “Why Would American Crows Do THAT?” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/why-would-american-crows-do-that/>. A fun post, and everything you’d want to know about crows.

The Numbers

Fiction words yesterday..... 9
Nonfiction words today..... 450 (Journal)

Writing of

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 1852
Total fiction words for the year..... 399417
Total nonfiction words for the month... 1290
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 304550
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 703967

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Steven Pressfield](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Book Designer](#), [The Digital Reader](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal: Learning Never Stops

[December 3, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: The Learning Never Stops
- * Today
- * A Note in Passing
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“The key to all story endings is to give the audience what it wants, but not the way it expects.”
William Goldman

Topic: The Learning Never Stops

Seriously. And if you pursue knowledge of any particular topic, then mull over that knowledge, realizations come quickly and often.

This will be a thought-process post. A little insight into what goes on in my head during pretty much every waking moment. I hope you have a similar experience because frankly it's a hoot, and I hope you don't because just as frankly, it's a curse. (grin)

A few weeks ago, I was determined to create at least one shared world. (Don't panic. I still am.) It would work in two ways, and both I and the authors would make money:

* I would license-in (pay writers for) short stories and novels written in a world I'd created. I would license first rights, and all rights would revert to the authors after a certain length of time (probably 6 months after publication for short stories and probably 3 years after publication for novellas and novels).

* And with authors who didn't want to do that, I would license-out (receive a fee for) the right to write in that world. In that case, the writers would publish their stories in whatever way they wanted (traditional or indie, etc.) and of course they would retain all rights from the beginning. Basically, they would pay to legally plagiarize characters, settings and events from the world I had created.

To a degree, I've over-indulged in my shared-worlds fantasy. In fact, over the past few days, I've been listing on my whiteboard the worlds that I've created that are large enough to share with other writers. At this moment, I have nine different shared-world possibilities on that list.

This morning I finally caught my breath, sat back and looked at the list. Were all of those really big enough to be shared worlds?

Yes. Every one of them. And I could probably add at least half a dozen more.

Which caused me to realize, finally, that I could easily spend the rest of my life setting up and administering shared worlds and never write another word of fiction if I don't want to.

Which led me to realize I could easily over-extend myself with this shared-worlds stuff. But the thing is, I don't want to do that.

My greatest desire (and therefore my top priority) is to continue to write fiction, both in my established worlds and in new ones.

Okay, then I can't allow myself to become mired in administering the worlds I've already created.

So then I decided I would have to focus-down a bit, pick only one or two worlds to share, and develop bibles for those.

One will definitely be the future-Earth World Equality Organization (WEO) shared world. It's too wide-open not to share. Of all the fictional worlds I've created, the WEO has the largest number of undeveloped story ideas, and they're spread across every genre imaginable.

Still, I'll leave the list on the white board for a while so I can figure out whether and which other world(s) I want to share.

For example, there's the Wes Crowley world. I've pretty much mined Wes himself for all he's worth. There aren't many (if any) stories to tell about him that I haven't already told. So there's that.

But there are also the fellow Rangers and other men and women he knew in Texas. Several of them are strong enough to have any number of stories. And there are Wes' son and daughter (and his later descendents), and Coralín's gay sister. And there are the other people who live and work in the fictional fishing village of Agua Perlado. And there are other hyper-interesting characters Wes encountered in other towns and villages between Texas and Agua Perlado. In other words there are still tons of stories in that overall world.

And then there's the Keeper of the Promise world. I might keep that one to myself, though, since very few people seem interested in writing fiction steeped in magic realism. I don't blame them. It isn't the easiest genre to write.

And there's Blackwell Ops (crime genre). I might have to flip a coin to decide whether to share that world. It's a practically endless world that, with 7 novels, I've only begun to explore. Still, I'd kind'a like to see what other writers come up with.

And the list goes on. There's a noir/detective world, two SF worlds (aside from WEO), an action-adventure world and a time-travel world, all only barely tapped.

Which is one of the reasons I wanted to open up some of these worlds and share them with other writers: *I want to know what happens in places I haven't gotten to yet as a writer.* (!!!)

And that's the thought that stuck.

WHY do I want to share these worlds with other writers? To license-in works and license-out rights and thereby make a little extra money? Okay, there's that,

But the Big reason, the Main reason I wanted to open up these worlds to other writers is so those writers will help me explore what goes on in those worlds. What events occur. How the characters react. Which new characters are born whole, along with *their* stories.

So that's what I'm going to do.

Oh, there will be a contract. It will be boilerplate standard, and it will say that you own what you write in my shared worlds. As "payment" I might ask that somewhere in the front matter or backmatter of your story or book it says your story was based on the XXXXXXXXX shared world created by Harvey Stanbrough, with my name linked to my website (or printed in any paper editions).

But that's it. As always, I don't want money as much as I want to play and have fun. (grin) In other words, you won't pay me anything to write in my shared worlds once I open them up.

Now, I won't promise that I won't someday put out a call for submissions to an anthology of short stories that other writers write in my shared world(s). But if I do, *I'll pay you* to license first rights, and those rights will revert to you after a certain number of months.

But beyond that, honestly, I don't want the headache of administering a shared world. Seriously, I just want to know what happens.

Stay tuned. This is gonna be a fun ride.

Today I did relatively little, and no fiction writing. In an attempt to find my own next story, I browsed a few of my worlds and I ran a few new ideas through my brain-housing group.

Sometime during all of that, I hit on the topic above and wrote it. I already know of one extremely talented novelist and short story writer who's interested in writing in my WEO world, and I already know of one great poet who's interested in writing poems based in some of my worlds.

So for me, at least, this is a very exciting time. I hope it will be for you too.

A Note in Passing

Everyone knows about my patronage tiers at <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

I also accept and am grateful for one-time donations, so I added some stuff to the bottom of that Patronage page. In addition to my latest release, one-time donors can select any reward from the Patron Writer tier for their one-time donation above \$11. And as always, thank you from the bottom of my regulated ticker. (grin)

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “What Makes For The Perfect Ending? Take Your Choice” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/what-makes-for-the-perfect-ending.html>.

See “Ghost Footprints” at <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/white-sands-fossil-footprints>. Maybe a story idea or two. As a matter of interest, I’m a New Mexico native, was born in Alamogordo, and had my 5th birthday party at White Sands. Still a stunning place to visit.

See “Searching for Subjects” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/searching-for-subjects/>.

See “Open Educational Resources...” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/open-educational-resources-the-story-of-change-and-evolving-perceptions/>. Check this for some excellent open-source (free) learning resources.

The Numbers

Fiction words yesterday..... 0
Nonfiction words today..... 1370 (Journal)

Writing of

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 1852
Total fiction words for the year..... 399417
Total nonfiction words for the month... 2660
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 305920
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 705337

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Atlas Obscura](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Learning](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Kris Rusch, A New WIP, and Today

[December 4, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Kris Rusch's Patreon Page
- * Smashwords is patenting new technology
- * Today
- * I've also had a few questions
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

Via my friend Bob Calverley, "Bad books on writing tell you to 'WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW', a solemn and totally false adage that is the reason there exist so many mediocre novels about English professors contemplating adultery." Joe Haldeman, author of *The Forever War* and *Vietnam vet*

Topic: Kris Rusch's Patreon Page

Because of the way the world is today, I'll start with a disclaimer: This is not a paid ad and I receive no special benefit from the following, other than the good feeling I get from trying to guide you in the right direction.

That being said, if you're interested in learning licensing (and if you aren't, you should be) I urge you (again) to donate as little as \$5 to [Kris Rusch's Patreon page](#).

She shared a post there today that I wish I could share with you, but it's labeled "for patrons only." I won't violate her copyright.

The post is also labeled "Business Musings," so it might come out later in her blog on her website, in which case I'll share it then. But why take the chance?

For as little as \$5 per month, you can get all patron-only content. Even if she shares it on her free blog later, you get it at least a week early, and much that she writes for patrons never makes it to her regular blog.

And as if that weren't enough, you also get access to her Patreon archives, so you can read back at your leisure and catch up. The current count is 159 posts on *Business Musings*, 179 posts on

Writing, and 161 posts on Publishing. It's like taking a master's course on business... for only \$5 per month.

I pass along what I can when she posts articles that are free (as I do with posts from Dean, JA Konrath and others), but I urge you to spend the \$5 per month on yourself and take advantage of Kris' generous nature.

Smashwords is patenting new technology to allow for pre-sales (not the same as pre-orders) to readers selected by the creator of a given work.

This is exciting news, and it comes at just the right time for me personally.

Over the past couple of months I've thought about creating an author newsletter with the sole intent of building my reader base. With this new tool at my disposal, I think now is the time.

And I've just finished a new novel. I'd planned to distribute it immediately through the usual channels (Smashwords, D2D and Amazon) anyway, but with this added benefit, it makes more sense to

- * upload it as a pre-order today for say two months down the road,
- * upload the finished version as soon as my first readers are finished with it,
- * and set up a pre-sale date that is maybe a month earlier than the official release date.
- * I'll also offer it at a discounted price for those who order the pre-sale version and sign on to my newsletter.

As I said, it's exciting news. To read the announcement in full, see "Of Interest."

Today I started a horror novel. Yeah, horror. Real, graphic, physical (but not gratuitous) horror with a double dose of psychological suspense tossed in for giggles.

As I mentioned here recently, I've been mulling over a few new ideas both in and out of already established fictional worlds. This one is wedged between those two. It's an old idea, but one that is not lodged in any of my already-established worlds. Weird.

But both Stephen King and Ray Bradbury (two Stage-5 masters of the craft) advise writers to write what scares them, what makes them uneasy.

The WIP I started today fits the bill perfectly. It stems from a short story I published back in November 2016. I thought it would be a novel even back then. But at the time, frankly it was too disturbing to continue writing, so I wrapped it as a short story, published it, and felt fortunate to escape with my mind more or less intact. (grin)

I also wasn't ready (skill-wise) to write it, though I didn't really understand that at the time. Now I am.

So I brought forward the short story (see the numbers below), did a quick read-through (cycling) to let my narrator and characters play with it, and began writing. It was just as if I hadn't let it sit for three years. (grin) I was even excited as I cycled through what I'd already written. (And I spent some time being slapped around by my characters over all the stuff I left out.)

Now I'll hedge my bet. Whether this story runs to a novella or novel is anybody's guess, but I'm settled with the notion it will run to one or the other. However, I'm not the same writer as I was three years ago. My original intent with the story has faded (thank goodness).

This will also be a stretch for me: new genre, a new world to build, and probably a one-off novel after I've been writing in series for so long. So I have no predispositions in writing this one, other than launching it off the short story, which now makes up chapters one and two of the novella/novel.

I do know it will be a twisted and wild ride with multiple characters who might or might not be "the bad guy." But otherwise I know nothing (even the characters' names). I'll write it completely into the dark, as I wrote the short story.

But I'll start in earnest tomorrow.

Today is a short day, much of it consumed with cycling through the story and other things I had to do. Beginning tomorrow, the real ride begins. (grin) Of course, I'll detail-out the process in "Numbers" below. Follow along if you want.

I've also had a few questions regarding my shared worlds. Based on those, I plan to write another topic about that soon. So please, if you have any questions, ask them. I won't identify you by name, but I'd love to have more input in the form of your questions. Thanks!

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Introducing Smashwords Presales" at <https://blog.smashwords.com/2019/12/presales.html>. Very exciting news!

See "In a Hurry" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/in-a-hurry/>.

See "I Hate Being Caught Being Wrong" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/i-hate-being-caught-being-wrong.html>.

See "Beware of Similes or Metaphors That Leave Readers Unaffected" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/beware-of-similes-or-metaphors/>.

See "The Ar'rothian Laws of Physics (Really)" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/the-arrothian-laws-of-physics-really/>.

See “The Passive Voice” at <http://www.thepassivevoice.com/>. Many interesting entries.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 1047
Nonfiction words today..... 1050 (Journal)

Writing of Ice Scream Novel (placeholder title)
Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463

Total fiction words for the month..... 2899
Total fiction words for the year..... 400464
Total nonfiction words for the month... 3710
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 306970
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 707434

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 8
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Smashwords](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Production

[December 5, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Yesterday I raved
- * Topic: Production
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Yesterday I raved about Kris Rusch’s post on licensing in Patreon. I recommended signing up for her Patreon account. As a result (go figure), today she made that post public.

I still recommend subscribing to her Patreon account. Again, it's only \$5 per month for all her Patreon content. But you get to read Business Musings: Die Hard (Licensing) today. See "Of Interest." Great post. You might want to read it a couple of times.

Topic: Production

An email from another writer prompted me to look back on the year. To do so, I opened my 2019 Annual Production spreadsheet. It was eye-opening.

This has not been a good year for me in fiction writing. Yes, it all adds up, but this will be a mediocre year for me at best with a projected total of only around 450,000 words of publishable fiction.

My average year is around 750,000 words of publishable fiction, so I'm way behind the curve. That only makes me want to hurry on to January and a fresh start.

My all-time largest fiction month was a year or two ago with around 120,000 words of fiction, an average of around 4,000 words per day. There's no good reason that I can't do that every day. (Note: I don't have an outside job, etc. No excuse for me. Your life/results may vary.)

This year, I had two good months with 83,000 and 76,000 words of fiction. Those were followed by a few fairly good months — one with 59,000 words, two with 44,000, and one with 45,000 — and that's pretty much it. The other months were poor, with 7000, 16000, 6000, 5000 and 12000 words, respectively.

So two good months, four more fairly good months, and then five paltry months.

I have the rest of December to build back up to a decent "speed" (time in the chair, writing) to build momentum for January and the new year. Still, four days into December I've written only 3000 words of fiction (rounded up).

My goal for the rest of this month is to write at least 1000 words of fiction every day. Most days should be a lot more than that. The little daily goal is designed only to get me into the chair and writing fiction.

If you're taking your productivity prompts from me, note that this will not be frantic. It won't be about hurrying or worrying. It will be about resetting priorities and putting myself back on track. Or to borrow the British tagline, Keep Calm and Write. (grin)

Stay tuned and we'll see how it goes. And if you'd like to share your own fiction numbers, please feel free to leave a comment.

Today was a slow start. Stayed up too late last night watching a Brit mystery series, hence woke up later than I like this morning.

I rushed through the Journal and other requirements I've placed on myself (priorities, remember?), dug out the old tray for the ice maker in the refrigerator, cleaned it and installed it. After not working for the past two years, the icemaker miraculously and gratuitously started working again last night. (grin)

Then I ate breakfast (a ham and cheese omelet), received and thoroughly enjoyed a brief phone call from a friend, and saw my wife off to work at 8:30. After that I quickly stomped out a blogging forest fire, and finally, FINALLY, turned to the writing computer and my WIP at 9:15.

As always, now the rest of the day is up to me. I hope to add at least a few thousand words to the WIP, post this edition of the Journal, and eventually watch the sun set. That will make for a successful day. (grin)

Well, not a big writing day today as it turns out. I'm feeling a bit under the weather. But a good start and a good day overall.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Business Musings: Die Hard (Licensing)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/12/04/business-musings-die-hard-licensing/>.

See "Tip of the Week Has Ended" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/tip-of-the-week-has-ended/>.

See "Key Ways to Begin A Story..." at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/keys-ways-to-begin-a-story-first-page-critique-the-young-lieutenants-dog.html>.

See "The Importance of Setting..." at <https://prowriterswriting.com/the-importance-of-setting-in-grounding-the-reader/>.

See "Tips for Writing Speculative Detective Fiction" at <https://crimereads.com/speculative-fiction-crime-tips/>. Speculative detective fiction—who knew? Maybe just in time for my WEO shared world. (grin)

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 710
Nonfiction words today..... 1050 (Journal)

Writing of Ice Scream Novel (placeholder title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717

Total fiction words for the month.....	5153
Total fiction words for the year.....	402718
Total nonfiction words for the month...	4420
Total nonfiction words for the year.....	307680
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog).....	710398
Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date.....	8
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date.....	1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date...	4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	43
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: A Note From My Mother, and Naysayers

[December 8, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Sorry... but
- * Topic: A Note From My Mother
- * Bonus Topic: Don't Listen to the Naysayers (and Don't Be One)
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Importance is the worst thing you can put on any kind of creativity. As soon as you think it's important, you're dead.” Jerry Seinfeld

Topic: A Note From My Mother

if I had one with me as I appear before you again, would read, “Please excuse Harvey's recent absence. But just so you know, he is untenable so it will probably happen again.”

Sorry to have been gone for a couple of days, but this will probably become the norm for 2020. I expect to post a new edition of the Journal on most days, but not all days. The first part of that might change, but the second part almost certainly won't.

As I've mentioned before, writing fiction has to take priority again in my life.

I've also thought about renaming this blog Habits of a Hobby Writer. Because really, I am a hobby writer. I have been for most of my life, and moreso the past almost-six years.

What do I mean by hobby writer? After all, I follow Heinlein's Rules, am constantly learning, and I write practically every day. I create covers and publish what I write so others can buy it and be entertained.

But labels really are only a matter of semantics. I've often said I write because writing is the most fun I can have. And that's true. If writing weren't fun, I'd find something else to do that I enjoy more. I'd travel, or I'd go fishing.

When one does something for the sheer enjoyment of it, that's a hobby. If I didn't find writing so much fun, traveling or fishing would be my hobby. Shrug. But I love to tell stories. More specifically, I love to be the first to discover the stories my character want to tell me.

So I've decided to call myself a hobby writer because I write for fun. I write to entertain myself. Then, since I wrote and enjoyed a story, I might as well publish it so others can enjoy it too.

Being a "professional" anything adds pressure. It means you have to show up and do a job of work. I don't like "work." That word evokes in me all the horrible connotations associated with the word "travail." Ugh.

It evokes images of a guy in a luxurious tux, grasping a glass of wine and a bit of cheese in his right hand, his left forearm firmly set to his brow at a launch party as he decries what terrible drudgery writing is.

I don't like drudgery or travail or work. Been there, done all of that, and didn't even get the t-shirt.

I'm an old guy. I want to take it easy in my senior years. I want to have fun. No story on Earth is important. Stories are only a moment's entertainment — nothing more — so why take writing them so seriously as to commit work or travail, much less drudgery?

The only work I want to do is help cut the learning curve for other writers by sharing what I've learned and made my own. If you knew the tiny subscriber base of this very Journal, that alone would tell you how unimportant even that is.

Still, as an old war chief in a John Wayne movie once said, I will "endeavor to persevere."

Bonus Topic: Don't Listen to the Naysayers (and Don't Be One)

Note: This topic below appeared previously in slightly different form in the email in-boxes of my patrons.

“Oh, he’s indie published? Then I won’t bother!” said only brain-dead lemmings ever.

There. I said it. Aloud.

There are people in this world who live only to be protected. They want to be told what and when to eat, which medicines to buy for real and imagined ailments, what time to go to bed and get up, and... you guessed it, what to read.

And traditional publishers are only too happy to spoon-feed them. Because traditional publishers are scared. And stupid.

They’re scared because their very infrastructure (brick and mortar stores, their distribution systems, their antiquated “agency model” of pricing and writer compensation) is crumbling beneath their very feet.

They thought indie publishing was a passing fad when it all started back around 2006. But today, almost 14 years later, indie publishing is burgeoning.

And they’re stupid because all they care about now is the bottom line. They suck-in writers with measly advances, for which the writers grant them ALL RIGHTS (complete with a non-compete clause) FOR THE LIFE OF THE COPYRIGHT.

The tradpubs make money IMMEDIATELY by doing nothing more than adding that IP to a line in their spreadsheet and then amortizing the value of that IP over the expected life of the author plus 70 years. Can you say “millions?” Yet authors make the trade every day. They give away potential millions of dollars for a piddling \$10,000 or \$20,000 advance. *Millions*. Do the math.

But I said they’re stupid, didn’t I? And trading a few thousand dollars for millions in company value seems pretty smart.

Well, it is. But that’s ALL the tradpubs do with the IP: Add it to the spreadsheet, where it adds phantom worth to their company. To their bottom line.

In the meantime, they know NOTHING about licensing. They don’t even think about it. They grin and bray like jackasses all the way back to their New York penthouse apartments while allowing all of that mind-numbingly valuable IP to languish on their spreadsheet. (Except for their bestselling authors, yes.)

Meanwhile, the authors can’t cash-in on the value of their IP either. BECAUSE THEY SIGNED AWAY ALL RIGHTS.

Now for the truly incredible part. Difficult as it is to imagine, MANY AUTHORS ACTUALLY SIDE WITH TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING in their fear-invoked the-sky-is-falling warning. And even more incredibly, not only traditionally published authors. EVEN MANY INDIE-PUBLISHED AUTHORS propagate the same tired, world-weary piles of bovine excrement.

I'm not kidding. Recently I read a comment from an indie author on another website who inadvertently (I hope) ran down other indie authors.

As a staunch believer in myself in particular and in indie publishing in general, I was — to say the absolute least — annoyed.

Listen to me.

If you (or I) opened a restaurant with our own money and skill, nobody would even consider calling it a “vanity” restaurant. Same with a carpet store or starting a band or anything else.

Only in writing does following your passion and believing in yourself invite ridicule. BUT THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE THE READING PUBLIC ATTENDED THE SAME SCHOOLS YOU AND I ATTENDED. They've been indoctrinated with the same BS myths about writing and publishing that we were all taught — BY NON-WRITERS — in our formative years.

How insane is that? Seriously? Would you take legal advice from your plumber? Or for that matter, plumbing advice from your attorney? Then why would you, now an adult, take fiction writing advice from those who have never written fiction?

Admittedly, there are millions of indie books published annually. But the cream really does rise to the top. My own career as a fiction writer is a perfect example.

All we as writers can do is

- 1) study and learn the craft from those who've been there,
- 2) write to the best of our ability with our current skill level,
- 3) publish what we write, and
- 4) move on to write the next story.

Writing the next story goes to discoverability. Eventually, those who say, “Oh, he's indie published? Well, then I won't bother!” begin to notice that same indie author has 10 novels out, or 30, and 40 or 60 short stories and the attendant collections.

And word of mouth begins to spread, not to mention reviews. Then the prevalent opinion among readers becomes, “The guy must be a good storyteller. Maybe I should try one of his books.”

As John M. Williams (a friend and writer) has said, “Good storytelling is good storytelling.” And folks, once a reader tries and likes your work, they don't check to see who published it.

As an added bonus, most of the “indie” writers who come in to get rich or get known are gone after a few years and a few books. And that leaves more room for those of us who keep learning and keep telling stories.

Hang in there, my friends. It can only get better. And for goodness' sake, PLEASE watch what you say about other indie authors. When you run-down one, you run down us all.

Please share this with any writers you know.

Today I awoke late after catching up on some much-needed sleep. I took care of a lot of admin stuff this morning, including updating plugins on a few websites and writing a couple of blog posts for my weekly blog. I finally turned to my WIP at 9:40. As you'll see below, I didn't write a lot.

I've researched, revised and updated the archived numbers below too, not only to reflect the past few days' writing but to reflect number of publications written this year. I was pleasantly surprised to find I'd written not 8, but 10 novels. And there's a good chance I'll finish the WIP before the end of the month, bringing the total to 11.

This feels particularly good to me when I consider that from July through November (5 months!) I wrote a total of only 46,000 words of fiction (9200 words per month or 306 words per day). Ugh.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "We Need Diverse Agents" (especially PG's take) at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/we-need-diverse-agents/>.

See "51 Book Review Resources" at <http://forsengfiction.com/51-book-review-resources/>. You might also click his Home link and browse other blog posts.

A must-read: "Look Back at Self-Publishing in 2019" at <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/look-back-at-self-publishing-in-2019/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 1592
Nonfiction words today..... 1640 (Journal)

Writing of Ice Scream Novel (placeholder title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477

Total fiction words for the month..... 10913
Total fiction words for the year..... 408478
Total nonfiction words for the month... 6060

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 309320
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 717798

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
 Short story collections..... 31

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

The Journal: The Ornery Little Comma

[December 10, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: The Ornery Little Comma
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“The euphoria of self-publishing has worn off. ... eBook Publishing, in general, seems to have stabilized.” Emily Harstone for AuthorsPublish.

This is good news for those of us for whom writing and self-publishing is part of a business plan instead of a get-rich-quick scheme to make a quick buck.

Topic: The Ornery Little Comma

Note: I wrote this topic to fill a rotation slot in the PWW blog later this month, but I thought I'd share it with you today.

There's been much ado lately online about comma use. When to use them, where to use them, how to use them. I even read a blog post recently by a New York Times bestselling thriller author who admitted he didn't have a clue as to when to use a comma.

So I thought I'd make a brief post here on comma use. I call them “ornery” because for all their apparent insignificance, you can't simply “read through” a misplaced comma.

Like all other marks of punctuation, the comma forces the reader to pause for a certain length of time. That pause is hard-wired into the reader's brain.

Unlike all the other marks of punctuation, the comma forces the shortest pause. And that's why the "rules" you heard in school were written the way they were.

Every reader has a standard length of time that s/he pauses for long-pause punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation point and colon); medium length punctuation (semicolon and em dash or "long" dash); and short-pause punctuation (the comma).

As an aside, I call the other marks of punctuation "spelling punctuation," because they don't force a pause at all: those are the parentheses or brackets (though you would probably never use brackets in fiction), the en dash, the apostrophe and the quotation mark.

Folks generally know when and where to use long-pause punctuation (only after a subject-verb complete thought).

Medium-pause punctuation is always used to convey cause-and-effect (semicolon) or to indicate an interruption or explain why the reader just read a list (em dash). Most writers tend to understand those as well.

But the comma gives writers endless problems. And no wonder.

In the edition of the Harbrace College Handbook that was in use when I was teaching in the early 1990s, there were 19 pages of comma rules. Seriously?

Here are what I termed "The Rules As They Should Read" regarding comma use to pare things down a bit. As I told my students back then, if you follow these rules, you will be "right" 90% of the time, and a 90 is an A in anybody's book:

1. *Never place a comma* between a subject and its verb(s) or between a verb and its object(s). (Realize that a subject may have more than one verb and that a verb may have more than one object. See Chapter 7, Punctuation for Writers. [paperback](#) or [ebook](#).)

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 the misuse of commas, not their omission.

When you're writing fiction, the rules are less important than the effect the punctuation will have on the reader. Take Rule 4 (above) for example. Although you should most often use a comma to separate and coordinate two (or more) independent thoughts in a compound sentence, sometimes it's better not to do so.

In every case, if you insert a comma, you will force the reader to pause. If you don't, you won't. So use the comma (or not) to force the effect you want.

Punctuation is the most effective tool you have at your disposal to direct the reading of your work.

Hope this helps. I'm open for questions. (grin)

Rolled out a little early at 2 this morning and spent some time on this and other things. Slipped back into my old habit of not turning to the WIP until after my wife left for work.

Even on days when I don't post a Journal entry, I'm keeping up with the numbers below. There you can follow the progress on the WIP if you're interested.

This morning I have to wrap a few gifts, and that will fill the time before I go to the post office. (I'm all thumbs where gift-wrap and tape is involved.)

Then I'll deal with whatever comes of my trip to the post office, and then turn to the WIP. Fortunately, it's running well right now, so it should be a good writing day.

Well, not quite as good a writing day as I was hoping, but the need to get at least 1000 words of fiction continues to drive me to the computer. So there's that.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Writer Delusion" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writer-delusion/>.

See "How Women Authors Are Reshaping the Horror Genre" at <https://crimereads.com/writing-crime-as-a-woman/>.

See "First Page Critique – Hell Hath No Fury" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/first-page-critique-hell-hath-no-fury.html>.

Via Linda Maye Adams, see Dave Farland's "Temporal Motion" at <https://mystorydoctor.com/temporal-motion/>.

See “The 10 Major Publishing Trends of 2019” at <https://www.authorspublish.com/the-10-major-publishing-trends-of-2019/>. Grain of salt, especially as regards subsidy publishers by any name. They are not “self-publishers” but scams. Every one of them.

See the last few posts in Pro Writer Writing at <http://prowriterswriting.com/>. Almost always good stuff there.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 1905
Nonfiction words today..... 1010 (Journal)

Writing of Ice Scream Novel (placeholder title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477
Day 6..... 2705 words. Total words to date..... 16182
Day 7..... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 18087

Total fiction words for the month..... 15523
Total fiction words for the year..... 413088
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7070
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 310330
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 723418

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [CrimeReads](#), [Dave Farland](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Linda Maye Adams](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Writing Sales Copy (Book Descriptions)

[December 11, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: Some Stuff on Writing Sales Copy
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Topic: Some Stuff on Writing Sales Copy

To clarify, when I say “sales copy,” I’m talking about the book description that goes on the cover of your print book and/or that accompanies your cover on Amazon, B&N, Kobo, Smashwords and anyplace else where your book is for sale.

A few days ago, a mentoring student and I talked in some depth about sales copy for her new novel. Later, she sent me two options to look over.

I made very few recommended changes. And the only major change I recommended was that she combine the two options into one description. She saw immediately what I was talking about.

We all know how important it is to write strong sales copy, right? Copy that is enticing enough to make the reader want to buy the story.

In a rare error, Kris Rusch has revealed a tiny bit of her thought process in writing sales copy.

Visit “Free Fiction Monday: Loop” at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/12/09/free-fiction-monday-loop/> and read the first three paragraphs.

The second and third paragraph are almost identical. Obviously she meant to keep one and omit the other. Which do you think works better?

(You can see which one she chose at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B004E9U96S/>.)

While you’re there, I strongly recommend picking up a copy of Dean’s [**How to Write Fiction Sales Copy**](#).

In a related note, I think I mentioned awhile back a new novel release by Steven Pressfield titled *36 Righteous Men*.

I’d been looking very forward to reading this novel, but I made the mistake of reading the sales copy (description) first. It’s what you’re supposed to do, right? You’re supposed to look at the cover, which makes you want to read the sales copy, which entices you to buy the book, right?

Right. That’s how it’s supposed to work. Only it didn’t.

The cover is great, in my opinion. The sales copy, which probably was put together by the editor at his publishing company, not so much. In fact, it gave away so much of the plot that I no longer felt the need to buy the book.

Not that I wasn't intrigued by the plot. But now that I knew how everything was going to unfold, why bother read the actual book?

The point is, the sales copy read like a book report. It was so filled with spoilers that I flat didn't want to buy the book.

Here's the sales copy, copied directly from the Amazon listing for 36 Righteous Men (note also the boring, incredibly long paragraphs):

When James Manning and Covina “Dewey” Duwai are called in to investigate a string of murders, their investigations take them from the headquarters of the Russian mafia in Brighton Beach to a sweltering maze of shops in Little Hong Kong, with scant leads on the killer. But when Manning and Dewey apprehend a woman—a disgraced but brilliant rabbinical scholar—fleeing one of the crime scenes, they're brought face-to-face with the shocking truth: the Jewish legend of the hidden Righteous Men, the 36 who protect the world from destruction, is no legend at all. They are real, and they are being murdered.

As the bodies pile up and the world tilts further into chaos, Manning and Dewey must protect the last of the Righteous Men from a ruthless killer able to beguile his victims and command them against their will. Plunged into a deadly game of cat and mouse, the detectives find their arsenal of bullets and blades of little use against a foe who knows their every move.

Joining forces with the rabbinical scholar and a renowned anthropologist, Manning and Dewey set off on a perilous quest from New York to Gehenna in Israel to confront a murderer who won't stop until he's killed every one.

Now, do you want to spend money to find out what happens? I didn't. I already know what happens. The description tells me what happens.

(You can see the listing for yourself at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1324002891/>.)

Again, folks, if you haven't bought Dean's How to Write Fiction Sales Copy, please do. The paperback version is a slim volume, but it's only \$9.99. (The ebook is only \$5.99.) But it's literally filled with gems. And learning what it offers can earn you literally thousands of sales.

Disclaimer: The sales copy for a lot of my own work completely sucks. I'm in the process of going back and changing my book descriptions, but with over 50 major publications (not counting short story collections) and 200 short stories, it's going to take awhile.

If your books aren't selling as well as you'd like, here's the three-step process to more sales:

1. Write the next story or novel. The more work you have out there, the more discoverable you are and the more readers will take you seriously as an author.
2. Create (or have created) a genre- appropriate cover.

3. Write intriguing sales copy that hints at the genre, introduces the main character, gives away NONE of the plot and entices the reader to buy the book. (See almost any description by Dean or Kris.)

There are actually a host of genre-specific formulas for writing sales copy. Don't make the same mistake I made for years. Go buy Dean's book already!

This is a special edition of the Journal. I want to get this out to you early, so I'm posting it now, around 3 a.m. I'll write today, but I'll update my fiction numbers later.

Talk with you again soon.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... XXXX
Nonfiction words today..... 920 (Journal)

Writing of Ice Scream Novel (placeholder title)
Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477
Day 6..... 2705 words. Total words to date..... 16182
Day 7..... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 18087
Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 15523
Total fiction words for the year..... 413088
Total nonfiction words for the month... 7990
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 311250
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 724338

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#),
[Writing Book Descriptions](#), [Writing Fiction Sales Copy](#)

The Journal: Yesterday and Thoughts on Burnout

[December 12, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Yesterday and Thoughts on Burnout
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“I may never become a millionaire through my writing, but it makes me richer every time I put fingers to keyboard.” Adela Crandell Durkee

Topic: Yesterday and Thoughts on Burnout

No writing yesterday as it turned out. I did a few chores, went to the grocery and the post office, and on my return my little girl cat wanted me to spend some time with her. So I did.

Writing fiction is important, but it isn't all-important. The baby asks very little of me, so she generally gets what she wants. And that's perfectly fine.

I also spent some time in reflection. Not the navel-gazing “What's the purpose of life?” stuff, but more a series of small epiphanies.

I often take cues from DWS. Often, but not always, if he starts a new challenge, I start a new challenge. Often, but not always, if he sets a particular goal, I set a similar goal.

Two days ago, during a video I watched in the Licensing Transition class, Dean mentioned he was about to ramp-up his fiction writing production again. (After all, a writer who isn't writing isn't really a writer.) That was after his having endured a major life roll for the past year-plus with Kris' illness, selling off part of their business, their move to Las Vegas, and rebooting the philosophy and structure of their company from publishing to licensing.

So my first thought was maybe I should ramp-up my fiction writing production too.

Then I remembered I was happily surprised to learn during an audit of my productivity spreadsheet that I'd written 10 novels this year instead of 8 as I had thought. So pretty much par for the course. And that was with me basically taking 3 months off.

So I don't need to ramp-up my production. When I'm writing, my production seems to take care of itself.

But “when I’m writing.” That’s the key.

My stalled Blackwell Ops 7 novel was a short novel at only 33,000 words. It took only 20 writing days. (The longest novel I’ve ever written took only 32, if I remember right.) Yet the first writing day of that novel was August 7 and the twentieth writing day was December 1.

If you’re counting, that’s 116 calendar days, during 96 of which I didn’t write fiction. To put it into perspective, at an average of even 2,000 words per day, that’s 192,000 words of fiction. At my old average of 3,000 words per day, it’s 288,000 words.

Water under the bridge. You can’t get it back, so no reason to dwell on it.

Still, I wondered how many more novels I might have turned out on the year had I actually written during those 3 months. When that novel stalled, why didn’t I just change gears and write a different novel? Or two or three? After all, I’ve done so before.

While writing the Wes Crowley series, I let one novel languish at about the midway point and wrote and published three other novels in other, unrelated genres before returning to it.

So I chastised myself for being so lax. Why hadn’t I continued to write during those 3 months? If I had, I probably would have written more novels than there are months in the year. For the first time ever. Dang it. (grin)

But for whatever reason, I *didn’t* write other novels during the interim, though I did manage to pound out three short stories. And the reason came to me:

When I stopped writing Blackwell Ops 7, I was in the midst of a temporary burnout. At the time, I thought maybe I was burned out on the Blackwell Ops series, but that couldn’t be it. Blackwell Ops has endless possibilities.

No, I was burned out on writing fiction, period.

I’d been going hot and heavy for almost 6 years, writing fiction pretty much every day, not to mention maintaining this Journal, my weekly blog, and other nonfiction writing projects. As a result, although the BO7 novel was running along fine, I lost interest for awhile.

When burnout happens, there’s no real choice but to take some time off and ride it out. And from what I can tell, all long-term writers experience it at one time or another. The key to riding it out, I believe, is to be self-confident. To trust that the words haven’t left you; they just need a respite.

Having recognized that probable burnout with 20/20 hindsight (and having started a new novel), I now feel like I’m past it.

So my takeaways?

1. As I mentioned above, I don't need to ramp-up my production. When I'm writing, my production seems to take care of itself, so...
2. I need to ramp-up my discipline, an endeavor in which I am already happily engaged. For one thing, I will continue to stick doggedly to Heinlein's Rules, which are my core and my solid foundation. But I hereby give notice that I'm amending Rule 2. For me, it now reads, "You must finish what you write, but you don't have to finish it *Right Now*. You can write something else, then come back and finish it later." And finally...
3. I'll try not to be blindsided again by temporary burnout. That is, I'll try to recognize it when it happens, take the steps necessary to get through it, and return with a fresh mind.

As a gentle reminder, burnout is not the same as laziness or laxity or a shift in priorities. It isn't a conscious decision to just not show up for work, or the result of dealing with a life roll or succumbing to fear.

It's more of a frozen inability to work, a sense that you are suddenly and inexplicably indifferent about something you've loved doing your entire life.

On top of everything else, I have a twitchy feeling deep inside that I might embark on a short-story writing frenzy soon. I keep noticing titles of novels I've written and thinking of all the untold stories that are not included in those novels. My creative subconscious keeps saying, "Hey, what about this over here?"

We'll see what comes of that. For now, back to my WIP. Naturally, I'd rather finish it and be done with it before moving on to the next thing. But the key phrase is "I'd rather" instead of "I must." For me, that's a major shift in thinking.

I hope something in this introspection helps with your own writing.

Today, I finally had a good day of writing with just under 4,000 words.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Knowing When You're Ready to Submit..." at <https://www.janefriedman.com/qa-with-adela-crandell-durkee/>. This is chock full of wisdom, delivered in gems like the Quote of the Day above. (But notice the implied bias of the title even though Mr. Durkee is self-published. Proponents of tradpub never quit.)

See "Gartner's Predictions For Retailers..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/gartners-predictions-for-retailers-show-more-change-ahead/>. Especially see PG's take afterward.

See "Business Musings: Habits (A Process Blog)" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/12/11/business-musings-habits-a-process-blog/>.

See “When a Writing Break Turns Into a New Novel: J.T. Ellison” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/when-a-writing-break-turns-into-a-new-novel-j-t-ellison.html>.

See “Control Or Creativity?” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/control-or-creativity/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 3818
Nonfiction words today..... 1190 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (formerly Ice Cream, tentative title)
Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477
Day 6..... 2705 words. Total words to date..... 16182
Day 7..... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 18087
Day 8..... 3818 words. Total words to date..... 21905

Total fiction words for the month..... 19341
Total fiction words for the year..... 416906
Total nonfiction words for the month... 9180
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 312440
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 729346

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Requesting Your Recommendations

[December 13, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Topic: Requesting Your Recommendations
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quotes of the Day

“Readers don’t buy books, they buy stories by voices that resonate with them. The more distinct your voice, the more likely your signal stands out from the rest of the noise.” Russell Blake

“We all think we live in an exceptional time, and this is the big show, and all else was preamble. Wrong. This is only our show, and we are tomorrow’s preamble, so lighten up and have fun with whatever you’re doing, and if nothing else, try to be nice, unless you’re a dick, in which case be honest about it.” Russell Blake

“I’ve made the decision to take it easy this year [and write only 4-5 novels], recharge my batteries, and only write when I want, so it’s not like it’s a job. Part of the problem in turning what you love into a job is you can lose the passion for it.” Russell Blake

Topic: Requesting Your Recommendations

Every now and then over the years, I ask for your recommendations for websites. Most often I hear crickets.

I’m not sure whether there are no other websites that you visit, or whether you just don’t want to share. Or maybe I’m just not specific enough with my request.

I’ll try again.

Please recommend the websites of any authors who

1. have written and published 10 or more novels or 100 or more short stories (traditional or indie) and
2. who share their experience and/or wisdom in a blog, BUT

Please DO NOT recommend any websites of authors who

1. are not successful from at least a productivity standpoint and
2. in their “advice” to writers offer nothing but the same old tired myths. I won’t share and perpetuate the myths, and frankly I don’t really want to waste my time reading regurgitated nonsense.

That's it. That's what I need. And I need it so I can share it with all of you and with a wider audience on the Writers Resources page of my author website.

Recently, Alexander T, a friend in Russia, shared some good news with me: the completion of his second novel.

But he also shared the website of Russell Blake. Blake is comparable to DWS, KKRusch, and me with his productivity. Five and one-half years into his journey as a novelist, he'd just finished his 51st novel.

He's also a plotter, and says outlining first is more efficient. Hey, to each his own. Obviously it works for him, and I'm happy for him.

I personally can't bring myself to outline only because I can't imagine wanting to write a story when I already know the story. For me, that's boring. But that's me. If you can write an outline and then the story, more power to you, though I hope you'll allow the outline to serve only as a guide.

But Blake has things of value to teach us all.

Finally, he's also fantastically successful as a NY Times and USA Today bestselling novelist. (It doesn't hurt that he writes Romance and Young Adult titles, in addition to other things. I'll be ordering one of those other things today.)

You'll see a link to a couple of his posts in "Of Interest" today. I encourage you to check out his website, especially at <https://russellblake.com/category/writing/>. I admit, I spent the first few hours of the day today just exploring his website. Good stuff.

If you know of any writers who fit the first set of criteria above, please mention them in the comments on the website or email me. Share the wealth.

Occasionally, too, I stumble across the website of an author who is not so accomplished but still offers great advice. Such is the case with Adela Crandell Durkee, whom I featured in yesterday's Journal.

Ms. Durkee is the exception that proves the rule. She is still mired in many of the myths, but she doesn't preach them. And what she does preach (and how she preaches it) is pure gold if you're paying attention.

Today will be a good day. I was about to turn to the novel at 7:30. Then I remembered I hadn't yet applied my first readers' input on Blackwell Ops 7.

So I did that. First readers are indispensable, folks. I usually have two (male and female) but I was blessed with four for this novel. In addition to covering each other with similar input re typos, each one pointed out things the others didn't see. It took me only a half-hour to read and apply their suggestions.

Robert S showed a place where I needed to add a sensory description, which I solved by adding three words to an existing sentence.

Tony H offered only two comments, and one was a compliment that showed I was on the right track with the opening. The other was a structural issue (a mangled sentence) that I corrected with only a slight rewording.

Mike R pointed out a few things I corrected and a few I set aside as a matter of taste. And the last, Nan D, pointed out a few places where a character said something that was decidedly out of character. Again, I corrected it with only a few words.

Excellent input, and the story is a TON better for their relatively few recommended changes. My sincere thanks to you, Robert, Tony, Mike, and Nan. Now I can publish the thing. The first readers and my patrons will receive a copy of the finished novel in about an hour (as I type this).

Well, the actual publishing to Smashwords, Amazon, Draft2Digital and BundleRabbit took only about a half-hour. Then I remembered I needed to create a new book page on the publisher website, etc. Sigh. So I did that, visited Books2Read to verify the universal book link, etc. No wonder I sometimes put off publishing. (grin)

If you're interested in the cover and/or book description (sales copy, remember?), see <https://stonethreadpublishing.com/bo-7/>.

I'd hoped to write a little more today but I had to settle for just over 2000 words, many of those added by my characters as I read through the almost 4000 I wrote yesterday. Where there were three chapters, there are now five.

This is a very exciting journey!

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "5 1/2 Years" at <https://russellblake.com/5-12-years/>.

In a nod to yesterday's Journal topic, see also "Taking a Break" at <https://russellblake.com/taking-a-break/>.

See "Think Like a Writer: TOC" at <https://www.dareypattison.com/writing-life/think-like-a-writer-toc/>. This might help, depending on how you're wired.

See "Voicing a Revolution" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/voicing-a-revolution/>.

See "A Bunch of Workshop Bundles" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-bunch-of-workshop-bundles/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 2253
Nonfiction words today..... 1110 (Journal)

Writing of **Jonah Peach** (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477
Day 6..... 2705 words. Total words to date..... 16182
Day 7..... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 18087
Day 8..... 3818 words. Total words to date..... 21905
Day 9..... 2253 words. Total words to date..... 24159

Total fiction words for the month..... 21594
Total fiction words for the year..... 419159
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10290
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 313550
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 732709

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Darcy Pattison](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Russell Blake](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: On Rejection

[December 14, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Rejections are positive. ... They are the best indicator in building a publishing career that you are doing a lot of things right. ... My favorite rejection of all time was from Asimov’s Magazine back in 1982 or so. ‘Dear Dean, Sorry, we do not want to pioneer new roads into tastelessness. Signed George (Scithers).’ I sold that story to Damon Knight for his Clarion Awards anthology the very next month in early 1983.” Dean Wesley Smith

One of my cousins and his wife showed up yesterday to visit. I’ll write today (this morning, before everyone gets up, then probably spend much of today and tomorrow visiting.

So no topic today or tomorrow. But I wanted to push this out because of the quote above and “Of Interest” below.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “Rejections” at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/rejections/>.

Also see “Listen To Rejection Slips” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/listen-to-rejection-slips/>.

See “Writing Boards and Other Silliness” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/writing-boards-and-other-silliness/>.

If you’ve been wanting to create a website on WordPress.org (not WordPress.com), see “How to Create a Website” at <https://websitesetup.org/>. I do NOT recommend BlueHost or most of the other “big” companies as a webhost. I personally recommend [HostingMatters.com](https://hostingmatters.com).

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 1490
Nonfiction words today..... 210 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)
Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477
Day 6..... 2705 words. Total words to date..... 16182
Day 7..... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 18087
Day 8..... 3818 words. Total words to date..... 21905

Day 9..... 2253 words. Total words to date..... 24159
Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649

Total fiction words for the month..... 23084
Total fiction words for the year..... 420649
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10500
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 313760
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 734409

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [HostingMatters.com](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Websitesetup.org](#)

The Journal: More on Rejections

[December 15, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Definition of the Day
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“[K]eep rejections, print them off when electronic, for tax purposes. Just a friendly reminder.”
Dean Wesley Smith

Definition of the Day (for fun)

I enjoy writing definitions. They're usually snide, ironic, or otherwise sideways. So sue me.
(grin)

cliché ... n. a word, phrase or clause that's been around so long it's built up an unusual, unnatural level of gravity, which in turn causes it to Suck. Perpetuation or repetition of a cliché has the immediate and irreversible effect of adding more gravity, making it suck even harder.

Thus, the cliché sucks the very life out of any piece of writing of which it is a part. Ergo, avoid the cliché.

My cousin and his wife (Lester and Julia) will take off sometime today, so spending time with them is my priority.

We had a great visit yesterday, one that will continue today for awhile.

I plan to write later (at least 1000 words) but we'll see. I want to get this out, so I'll update my numbers in the next edition of the Journal. For reference, today (or the next time I write) will be Day 11 on this WIP.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments on "Rejection" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/rejections/#comments>. Especially the very informative one from Angie. (And see the next entry.)

See "Angie's Desk" at <http://angiesdesk.blogspot.com/>. Very informative! And in the sidebar, she offers a ton of (maybe) helpful blog links.

See "Shooting For Survival: Are Your Heroes Prepared?" at <http://www.leelofland.com/shooting-for-survival-are-your-heroes-prepared-2/>.

See "Acting changes the brain..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/acting-changes-the-brain-its-how-actors-get-lost-in-a-role/>.

See "Best-Laid Plans" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/best-laid-plans/>.

FWIW, see "Set Up a Command Post Inside Your Character's Head" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/set-up-a-command-post-inside-your-characters-head.html>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... XXXX
Nonfiction words today..... 290 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 1..... 1047 words. Total words to date..... 5463
Day 2..... 2254 words. Total words to date..... 7717
Day 3..... 1196 words. Total words to date..... 8913
Day 4..... 2972 words. Total words to date..... 11885
Day 5..... 1592 words. Total words to date..... 13477

Day 6..... 2705 words. Total words to date..... 16182
Day 7..... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 18087
Day 8..... 3818 words. Total words to date..... 21905
Day 9..... 2253 words. Total words to date..... 24159
Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649

Total fiction words for the month..... 23084
Total fiction words for the year..... 420649
Total nonfiction words for the month... 10790
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 314050
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 734699

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... Isofck
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Angie's Desk](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Lee Lofland](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#),
[Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal: An Excellent Opportunity

[December 17, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: An Excellent Opportunity
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“I have always followed one bit of advice that echoes in my head, and it’s that as a writer ... your number one job description is to communicate properly your idea. Being self-indulgent is for fine artists.” world-famous writer and cartoonist Bob Eckstein

Topic: An Excellent Opportunity

For anyone out there who wants to make money with your stories or the story bits that I call “internal IP” (settings, characters, items, gadgets, etc.), Dean Wesley Smith announced today

that he's closing sign-ups for the Licensing Transition at the end of this month (see "Of Interest").

Hence this post.

And just in case you're wondering, no, I don't get any kind of affiliate kickback or anything like that. This really is just too good an opportunity to pass up.

I've been in the Licensing Transition since the beginning, back in July. Basically, I'm following along as Dean and Kris transition their publishing company (WGM Publishing) to a licensing company.

But it's so much more than that. In addition to taking advantage of lessons they're learning (and mistakes they're making) as they go, I and all the other students who are signed up are also participants.

What Dean and Kris learn, they share with us. What we learn, we share with Dean and Kris and each other. This really is an incredible opportunity.

The Licensing Transition currently has 50-some videos (each 5 to 10 minutes long, so you can take them in small chunks) and it will continue through next July.

So if you want to make money from your writing, I can't recommend strongly enough that you sign up for the Licensing Transition course.

ESPECIALLY if you're constantly turning out new stories and/or novels. In other words, especially if you're an actual writer, I urge you to make this investment.

'Nuff said.

Today I'll write. I wrote nothing the day before yesterday and around 1500 words yesterday. I spent the balance of yesterday watching films with my wife (she's off on Mondays now).

We had a hard freeze last night and this afternoon something was leaking on the roof. Which called me away from my writing.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Workshop Details" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/workshop-details/>.

See "Writers Blaming Editors" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/writers-blaming-editors/>.

See "Art Versus Commerce" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/art-versus-commerce-bob-eckstein/>.

See “David Farland’s Writing Tips: Writing Priorities” at <https://mailchi.mp/xmission/david-farlands-writing-tips-writing-priorities?e=257d4f2e70>. (The weird URL is because this is a newsletter. I recommend you sign up.)

See “Just Breathe... You’ve Got This” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/just-breathe-youve-got-this.html>.

See “How to Power Your Novel Through the All-Important Second Act” (especially for thriller authors) at <https://crimereads.com/how-to-power-your-novel-through-the-all-important-second-act/>.

See “Judge’s Commentary” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/judges-commentary/>.

For a fun break, see “Kids, Don’t Try This At Home...” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/kids-dont-try-this-at-homesome-really-awful-opening-lines.html>.

See “3 Fiction Marketing Success Tips for 2020” at <https://www.thebookdesigner.com/2019/12/3-fiction-marketing-success-tips-for-2020/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 1554
Nonfiction words today..... 460 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649
Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193
Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747

Total fiction words for the month..... 26182
Total fiction words for the year..... 423747
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11250
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 314510
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 738257

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [David Farland](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Book Designer](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Trusting the Process

[December 18, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Have you ever blown an entire morning noodling with a single paragraph or, worse, a solitary sentence? Resistance has outfoxed you. You have hung up an entire battalion trying to capture an outhouse.” Steven Pressfield

Had a good writing day today. This is a really twisted novel, but the disparate parts are starting to come together.

Folks, this is the truly great thrill of writing into the dark: to just write the next sentence and let the story unfold as it will, trusting that all the seemingly irreconcilable pieces of the puzzle will come together when they're supposed to. And then they do! What great fun!

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See “The year art censorship came back in style” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-year-art-censorship-came-back-in-style/>.

See “Why North Carolina Is the Most Linguistically Diverse U.S. State” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/why-north-carolina-is-the-most-linguistically-diverse-u-s-state/>.

For a great writing tips newsletter from David Farland, see “Boosting Your Prose” at <https://mystorydoctor.com/boosting-your-prose/>. I first saw this in his free newsletter, which (again) I recommend.

For a special offer from Steven Pressfield, see “The Black Irish JABS – Season 2” at <https://blackirishbooks.com/jabs2>.

See “What’s that word I’m looking for?” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/whats-that-word-im-looking-for/>.

For fun, see “Zipper Rescues and the Importance of Communication” at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/my-7th-grade-venereal-disease-and-the-importance-of-communication.html>. Men, be warned, this article might make you shudder. (grin)

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 4102
Nonfiction words today..... 230 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649
Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193
Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747
Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849

Total fiction words for the month..... 30284
Total fiction words for the year..... 427849
Total nonfiction words for the month... 11480
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 314740
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 742589

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [David Farland](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Steven Pressfield](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal: Translation, and the POV Character’s Opinion

[December 19, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today’s Journal

- * Quotes of the Day
- * Translation

- * Topic: The POV Character's Opinion
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quotes of the Day

“If the character had more of a colorful opinion, I might see the reason for the description-to ... give insight into the character.” Jordan Dane, the Kill Zone blog

“Translating from one language to another is the most delicate of intellectual exercises; compared to translation, all other puzzles, from bridge to crosswords, seem trivial and vulgar. To take a piece of Greek and put it in English without spilling a drop; what a nice skill!” Cyril Connolly via The Passive Voice

Translation has always interested me. An excellent translator must be absolutely fluent in the destination language, though strictly speaking only a working knowledge of the source language is required. Why? Because the trick of translation is not to translate literally, but to translate the spirit of the original work.

Topic: The POV Character's Opinion

Note: This topic first appeared in slightly different form in an early morning email to my patrons.

According to Realtors, the three things that matter most with real estate are location, location and location. With fiction, short or long, the three things that matter most are characters, characters and characters.

Short fiction leads the reader through One Event. But the story is about how the characters *react* to that one event.

Novellas and novels lead the reader through several interrelated events. But they're about how the characters *react* to those events.

No matter the genre, all stories are character driven. They're all about the reaction of the characters to what's going on around them. Even in “hard” science fiction, in which the secondary emphasis is on the science, the primary emphasis is on how the characters react to that science.

All well and good. I've known that seemingly forever. I knew it even when I wrote my very first story at the ripe old age of six. As I recall, that story was about an ant bed located at the edge of a rock and how the ants and their neighbors under the rock (various beetles, roly-polies, and a centipede or two) were affected when a kid tripped over the rock, dislodging it and disrupting their world in much the way a major earthquake would disrupt the human world.

I might have even added a few insect opinions that illustrated their personality, but if I did, it was strictly an accident.

Flash forward about 56 years.

In 2014, I rediscovered Dean Wesley Smith. In our ensuing conversations at different times over the next couple of years, probably as passing comments (vs. directed lessons), he advised me to

1. use setting at the beginning of every major scene/chapter to ground the reader,
2. let the POV character (not the author) provide the description of the setting, and
3. be sure to include the POV character's opinion of the setting.

The first two were easy-peasy. The third one, not so much.

After a lot of practice (about fifteen novels, a couple of novellas and a few dozen short stories), the value of the POV character's opinion finally settled over me. I finally got it.

Not that I hadn't been allowing the POV character his or her opinion all along. But I didn't *know* I was allowing it. I didn't realize the value of it. So in some places, I omitted it. Or far worse, I allowed my own opinions to leak through.

A description of the setting is important for grounding the reader because it enables the reader to see, hear, smell, taste and feel (physically and emotionally), the time, place and surroundings of the scene.

Allowing the POV character to provide that description ensures it won't be just a laundry list of what's in the setting. That is, the POV character will notice (see, hear, smell, etc.) only what's important to the story. (If the author provides it, not so much.)

And allowing the POV character to provide his or her *opinions* of the setting will also provide insight into the POV character. Which, in turn, will negate the need for any info dumps to explain why the POV character possesses certain personality traits.

In other words, you won't feel a need for info dumps, so you won't write them in the first place. Because the POV character's opinions of the setting, other characters, and even the situation itself will reveal those traits.

Honestly, I hope this topic is something you didn't need. But if you did need it, I hope it's helpful. (grin)

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning. I checked email and then the sites I routinely visit. I was headed to the WIP when I happened on this topic while reading the Kill Zone blog. I still expect today to be a good writing day.

This WIP is so incredibly twisted that it's truly a roller-coaster ride. (grin) Almost every chapter and every major scene leaves me all but breathless. And in almost every major scene something

occurs that requires me to refer to my reverse outline, then go back to an earlier scene and add or change a usually minuscule detail. Incredible. And great fun.

Fairly good day today, though I'm posting a little early.

By the way, my son and grandson arrive tomorrow for a little early Christmas, so I might not be here for a few days.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Key Ways to Lure Readers with an Opening" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/key-ways-to-lure-readers-with-an-opening-first-page-critique-follow-the-raptor.html>.

See "Mentor Program" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/mentor-program-3/>.

See "The Decade Ahead" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/the-decade-ahead/>. A course offering. If you're writing and publishing regularly and you've at least begun to think of all the ways you can license your work, you probably don't need this.

See "Business Musings: Translations 2019" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/12/18/business-musings-translations-2019/>.

See the Passive Guy's addendum on "Maradona successfully sues ..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/maradona-successfully-sues-dolcegabbana-over-unauthorized-use-of-his-name-on-a-jersey/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... 3538
Nonfiction words today..... 970 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649
Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193
Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747
Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849
Day 14... 3538 words. Total words to date..... 36387

Total fiction words for the month..... 33822
Total fiction words for the year..... 431387
Total nonfiction words for the month... 12450

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 315710
 Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 747097

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
 Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
 Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
 Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....
 Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
 Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
 Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: A Cautionary Tale

[December 21, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: A Cautionary Tale
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“[I]t’s equally important to put the book aside and write another.” Mark Alpert

Topic: A Cautionary Tale

Author Mark Alpert, in the Kill Zone blog today, posted what he calls the “Lesson of the Decade.” Please go read it now.

The first three paragraphs have to do with nostalgia rather than writing. That’s fine. But those and the lesson he imparts in paragraph four (see “Quote of the Day” above) are the best parts of the post.

Unfortunately, he didn’t take his own advice.

The rest of the post is sobering. When I consider how many impressionable young-in-the-craft novelists will probably read it, the thought is actually frightening.

I shudder to think what might have happened to my own writing career had I read Mr. Alpert's post back in late 2014 when I started my first novel.

Had I submitted that novel to a traditional publisher, and had the publisher accepted it, today I would have published five novels.

Five.

And writing would be no fun at all. It would be strenuously laborious at least, not to mention boring. I would have to drag myself through writing each novel, revise and rewrite and "take years" to write each one.

I would strive to make every word perfect (something that isn't possible even in the tight form of poetry), and I would be sorely disappointed at every turn.

If my stories were perfect, why wasn't everyone buying them? And of those who did buy them, why wouldn't everyone love them? Why am I not a multi-millionaire?

Not too long ago, Mr. Alpert himself expressed disappointment that writing novels hadn't delivered the monetary riches he'd been led to expect — by other writers who pass out exactly the same kind of advice he posted in this article.

So I cheated a little in the Quote of the Day above. I took it slightly out of context because, as it's written above, it's great advice.

Here's the whole quote (emphasis added):

"Aspiring authors come here for advice on how to revise their novels, but *once you've completed all the revisions and done everything you can to perfect the manuscript*, it's equally important to put the book aside and write another."

This is just head-shakingly bad advice. Because you can't "perfect the manuscript." What is or isn't perfect (or even "good") is up to each individual reader.

Consider, the author is the first person to read his or her work. So s/he revises, rewrites, and fine-tunes until it is "perfect."

S/he submits this "perfect" manuscript to an agent (another reader), for whom the manuscript is NOT perfect. The agent requires additional revisions.

So the author goes back to the salt mines, revising further. The agent finally submits the now-"perfect" manuscript to an acquisitions editor (another reader) with whom she has a professional relationship.

To cut this short, let's say that finally, the manuscript is accepted for publication — well, contingent on the author revising it further to "perfect" it.

Back to the salt mines.

But FINALLY the acquisitions editor deems the manuscript “perfect.” To cut additional length off this post, let’s assume the publisher agrees with the acquisitions editor.

So when the manuscript is finally published (having been read and deemed “perfect” three times by three different readers), it should sell millions of copies, right? After all, the author, the agent and at least one publisher have deemed it perfect.

But those three people are only readers with opinions. Of all the “regular” readers who buy the book, a few think it’s perfect (or close), some like it and some think it sucks canal water from all 50 states.

Tada! Anyone get the feeling maybe the author was spinning his wheels and seeping deeper into the muck while revising and rewriting?

But let’s rewind a bit. This is as good a time as any for a year-in-review post.

As I wrote above, “... had I read Mr. Alpert’s post back in late 2014 when I started my first novel ... today I would have published five novels.”

And that’s since late 2014. This year, 2019, I would have published the fifth one.

But I was fortunate. Instead of seeing Mr. Alpert’s post back in 2014, I read a post by [Dean Wesley Smith](#), a long-term professional fiction writer.

And I finally came to understand that “perfection” (what’s good and what isn’t) lies strictly in the perception of each individual reader. It was a pressure-relieving revelation. I’m not responsible for readers’ taste, to wit,

1. My job is to write fiction, to tell stories.
2. The READER’S job (not mine) is to judge those stories.

As a direct result of that realization, writing is actually fun for me. Beyond trying to avoid typos and misspellings, I don’t have any responsibility for the readers’ perception of perfection. None.

And this year alone, even taking three months off, I’ve written and published 10 novels, 1 novella and 4 short stories.

Since October 2014, I’ve written and published 44 novels and 8 novellas. And since April of that same year, I’ve written and published almost 200 short stories.

So which would you rather be? A writer? Or a reviser-rewriter endlessly chasing EVERYONE’S definition of perfection?

It really is all up to you.

No fiction writing yesterday and probably none today. My focus is on a very enjoyable visit with my wife, youngest son and eldest grandson. More than likely I'll return to my WIP tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "How Good is Your Agent?" at <https://mystorydoctor.com/how-good-is-your-agent-2/>. Read this even if you don't have an agent, at least if you're looking for one.

See "Anthology Markets" at <http://angiesdesk.blogspot.com/2019/12/anthology-markets.html>.

The Numbers

Fiction words today..... XXXX
Nonfiction words today..... 950 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649
Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193
Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747
Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849
Day 14... 3538 words. Total words to date..... 36387
Day 15... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 33822
Total fiction words for the year..... 431387
Total nonfiction words for the month... 13400
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 316660
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 748047

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Angie's Desk](#), [David Farland](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Picking Up Again and Censorship

[December 23, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Picking Up Again and Censorship
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“Writing into the Dark isn't just putting down random happenings and letting your characters wander about blindly.” Terry Odell

She's right, it isn't. WITD is trusting your subconscious to use the knowledge it's absorbed over the years. It's the writer allowing the characters to tell the story that they, not the writer, are living.

Topic: Picking Up Again and Censorship

Usually when I return to a story, even after a few days away (as in this case), I read back over the last few paragraphs I wrote to get back into the flow of the story. Then I write the next sentence that occurs to me and just continue on.

But every story writes differently.

My WIP is a very twisted story with multiple and alternating POV characters, all centered and interacting around a series of events that are compressed into a few days. So there's a loose timeline involved. (“Loose” as in Tuesday morning, Tuesday noon, Tuesday early afternoon, etc.)

So this morning, to get back into the flow of the story, I had to read over my entire reverse outline (partly to see which character POV to write next), which led me to notice a couple of things were out of order re the timeline.

So I moved a couple of chapters in the novel to fix that concern first. Then, I took a break to catch up with Pro Writers Writing.

I shouldn't have done that. Or at least I shouldn't have read the comments. One of them made me realize censorship has its place. (Now there's a sentence I never thought I'd write.)

One comment was so derisive it sidetracked me. So I decided on the spot, from now on all comments will be moderated, meaning I will decide, on a comment-by-comment basis, whether a

comment gets through intact or is disallowed in whole or in part. After all, I have a responsibility to those who look to me for writing instruction.

I'm not talking about people who disagree with me or what I teach. Everyone knows I am a staunch advocate of writing into the dark. However, there are literally millions of writers out there who advocate outlining, revising, rewriting, workshopping (sending stories through critique groups), polishing, etc.

I disagree with them. But I'm not going to belittle them. If that's how they write, that's how they write. No skin off my teeth. I learned long ago that what doesn't affect my paycheck or my vacation time simply doesn't matter.

But I will not allow comments that make use of innuendo, half-truths and outright lies to spread misinformation.

So a little more on my already heaping plate, but that's the world we live in. Sigh.

Today, after spending a few hours on all of the above, I came here to write this (and a lot more, which I deleted). So I'll take today for what it is, a non-writing day, and get back to the WIP tomorrow.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Great Challenges" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/great-challenges-2/>.

See "What Path Should a Writer Take in 2020?" at <https://killzoneblog.com/2019/12/what-path-should-a-writer-take-in-2020.html>. Some good links inside this post. I've included some of those separately below.

See "Smashwords vs. Draft2Digital" at <https://www.indiesunlimited.com/2019/01/29/smashwords-vs-draft2digital/>. Like the author of the article, I use both.

See "Sometimes We Need a Little Help" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/sometimes-we-need-a-little-help/>.

See the comments on "All Focus On The New Year" at <https://www.deanwesleymith.com/all-focus-on-the-new-year/#comments>.

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Indies Unlimited](#), [KillZone Blog](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: A Lot of Stuff, and 2020 Goals

[December 24, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Thinking Out Loud
- * Pressure (Fear)
- * My Personal Writing Goals
- * The Rules and Caveats
- * My Patrons
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Thinking Out Loud

If you've been thinking about jumping into Dean's short story challenge (or the novel challenge, for that matter), be sure to see the first item in "Of Interest" below. Both challenges are an absolute win-win.

Yes, it costs \$600 to buy-in. But if you drop out anywhere along the line, you get \$600 worth of credit toward his workshops. So you lose nothing.

You also get input from Dean on every story or novel, and when you're finished you have that many more short stories and collections or novels earning you money.

If you succeed (and there's no reason you shouldn't) you get a lifetime subscription of your choice. The lifetime subscription to online workshops right now is worth \$17,000.00. For only 600 bucks. Sheesh.

I was actually thinking (again, for the umpteenth time) about jumping into the short story challenge myself, but I probably won't for two reasons:

1. I would kind'a feel like I'm cheating. I've already written a story a week for 70 weeks, so I already know I can do it. No real challenge there. (I might write to Dean and ask whether he'll offer me the same deal but with the requirement that I have to write a short story every week for 72 weeks.)
2. Focusing on writing a story per week for a year (for a lifetime subscription as a reward in the end) would also more than likely sidetrack me from the novels I want to write. And that's the real stopper for me.

Pressure (Fear)

Yep, I still feel pressure when I set goals. There, I said it.

Pressure, n. In fiction writing, an unreasoning fear combined with a kind of vapor-lock that the conscious, critical mind puts on the subconscious mind. “Unreasoning” because what, if you fail, someone’s gonna come to your house and shoot you? C’mon!

One facet of pressure: “Oh my god! Why did I ever say I’d write a novel every month! A novel is *huge!*”

To overcome that pressure, that fear, I recommend turning it around: How will I feel if I DON’T write a novel every month?

The answer is, I’ll feel like crap. But that’s tempered with “But at least I wrote X novels this year, so it’s all right.”

And that tempered response makes it easier to slack off and not reach my goals.

I would personally feel better and be more strongly driven if it were an all-or-nothing gambit.

For example, say I pay the \$600 to Dean, so I have skin in the game. Then I start writing either a story per week or a novel per month.

In my all-or-nothing version, if I fall short, I forfeit the \$600 and get nothing. But if I succeed, I get the lifetime subscription of my choice. (grin) Now THAT’S a challenge. And I would personally feel I’d earned the prize. (Note: Dean’s too nice to do this. See “Thinking Out Loud” above.)

Still, I like to believe I’m disciplined enough to set and reach goals on my own. And I want to overcome that unreasoning fear. So all this thinking out loud has led me to...

My Personal Writing Goals

My personal writing goals for 2020, *strictly for the fun of it* (to relieve the pressure a bit), are as follows:

1. Write at least one short story per week every week for 72 weeks beginning on Sunday, January 5, 2020. (The end date of the challenge, should I choose to end it then, will be Saturday, May 22, 2020. Yeah, I actually took the time to count out the weeks. Hope I didn’t screw it up.)

2. Write at least one novel per month during the same time frame. So 17 novels in 17 months. (The beginning date would be January 1, 2020, and the closing date, should I choose to end it then, would be May 31.)

Does that seem like a lot? Maybe. But it really isn’t.

So that actually gives me a boatload of short-term and long-term goals:

1. A weekly goal of short story every week.

2. An annual goal of 52 short stories in 2020, plus the extended overall goal of 72 short stories in 72 weeks to break my previous personal best. And I might go for 78 short stories in 78 weeks just to make it an even year and a half. (grin)
3. A monthly goal of 1 novel every month.
4. An annual goal of 12 novels in a year (I've never quite done that), plus the extended overall goal of 17 novels in 17 months (or 18 in 18).

And it's totally do-able. Even if I write only 2000 words per day on average (two hours of writing per day) that's 60,000 words per month. Subtract four 2000 word short stories (minimum length), that leaves a novel of 52,000 words.

The Rules and Caveats

1. For purposes of the challenge, each short story must be at least 2000 words. Each short story has to be written within that Sunday-to-Saturday week.
 2. For purposes of the challenge, each novel must be at least 35,000 words. Each novel has to be written during that calendar month. (So my current WIP doesn't count for the challenge unless I finish it by December 31. If I do, my novel challenge expands to 18 novels in 18 months.)
 3. You might have noticed I'm focusing here on [Heinlein's Rules](#) 1–3. I haven't said anything about publishing (Heinlein's Rule 4). Publishing is important, but for a goal of this magnitude, publishing must be secondary to writing. So...
 - a. I'll publish every novel sometime during the month after it's finished. (But patrons will receive it as it's finished.)
 - b. I'll hold off on publishing the individual short stories. Instead I'll send them to my wife (and of course, to my patrons) for submission to major traditional-publishing magazine markets. (To qualify, they must pay at least 5 cents per word and all rights must revert within a year at the longest.)
- So there you go. It should be fun to see how long I can last in the overall challenges and how close I can get to reaching each goal (week by week and month by month).

So what crazy thing(s) are you planning with your writing goals for 2020 and beyond? Don't measure yourself against me unless you're an old guy with a lot of time on your hands (grin).

Just create a goal or goals that will cause you to stretch without breaking. And please share that goal or goals in a comment below. You never know who you might help along the way.

My Patrons

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention where my patrons figure in all of this. They are increasingly playing a larger role than this Journal in holding my feet to the fire. These folks are sending me money or contributing in other ways.

So as they have from the beginning, those on my Patrons list will receive a copy of every novel and every short story I finish during this challenge as I finish it. That means they'll receive it in PDF, .mobi (Kindle) or .epub (Nook/Apple) format, albeit probably without a cover. (I've thought this out: see Caveat 3 a. and b. below).

If you aren't yet a patron but have been considering it, this would be a great time to jump in for as little as \$3 per month. If you're interested, take a look at <https://harveystanbrough.com/be-a-patron/>.

Today I'll get hot on my current WIP. It would be really nice to wrap this one up by December 31 so I can count it in the novel challenge. (grin)

In light of my goals, I've also changed my numbers reporting a little bit. From now on, I won't report fiction numbers as a stand-alone line (see below). In the future, I'll report them in the individual "Writing of" section below. For example, I'll report any fiction numbers on my current WIP tomorrow as Day 15.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments on "Great Challenges" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-challenges-2/#comments>.

See "Great Publishing Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-publishing-challenge/>.

See "Hardcover Decisions" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/hardcover-decisions/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)

Nonfiction words today..... 1320 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649

Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193

Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747

Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849

Day 14... 3538 words. Total words to date..... 36387

Day 15... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 33822

Total fiction words for the year..... 431387

Total nonfiction words for the month... 15310
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 318570
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 749957

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [the writing life](#)

The Journal: Dual Days and Making Your Goals Public

[December 26, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Dual Days
- * Topic: Making Your Goals Public
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“The only unacceptable short story is one that misses the deadline. A bad story is OK as long as it's turned in – write a better one next week. No one cares about your bad story – and next week you [w]on't have time to care about it. Read the bad story later and it probably turns out it's not as heinous as you thought – besides, no one cares what you think, see above.” Tina Back in a comment on Dean's site (see “Of Interest” below)

Dual Days

Every now and then we get two days wrapped as one. Yesterday was one of those dual days. It was Christmas, a celebration and holiday. But it was also December 25, so one of 365 potential writing days on the calendar.

I was up early as usual, but the holiday celebration doesn't start until all the players are on site or on their way, right? My wife planned to drop a roast into a crock pot at around 6 for the Christmas dinner, so I didn't even have much in the way of Christmas prep to do.

So for me, December 25 (the writing day) came first.

I started by cutting three chapters (just over 6,000 words) from the Jonah Peach novel. I mention this only because of the number adjustment below. Those chapters just didn't fit, and I'd known (felt) that for awhile. Normally I wait until the end of the story to go back and cut any excess (loops, etc.) just before I send the novel to my first readers.

For any writers out there, notice that I cut the words from the specific story count, but I did not cut them from the monthly or annual totals. I wrote the words, so they count.

But back to the cut — Those three chapters had nagged at me for the past several days. My subconscious knew they didn't fit and weren't adding anything to the story. They were side roads, little loops that closed back in on themselves. And my subconscious mentioned them every time I sat down. So I cut them.

Then I went back to writing. With December 25 also being Christmas, with gifts to give and receive, a special meal to enjoy, etc., I wrote just under 2000 words (see Day 16 below).

I like dual days. There's the writing day and then the rest of the day. The writing day belongs to you and your writing. The rest of the day is shared with your loved ones, your friends, your job and whomever/whatever else.

Topic: Making Your Goals Public

A couple days ago a young writer (see <https://blog.topazhauyn.com/>) commented on the Journal that she is thinking about making her writing goals public, [like I do](#).

I was a little stymied. Why wouldn't she make her writing goals public? You don't have to put them on your website for the world to see, but I recommend you share them with someone — family, friends, other writers — for two reasons:

1. For the support they'll provide.
2. To hold yourself accountable.

Especially if fear (a function of the conscious, critical mind) occasionally freezes you and stops you from writing, sharing your goals is part of turning the fear around.

Instead of being afraid of what will happen if you write or finish or publish a story, be afraid of how you'll feel if you DON'T write or finish or publish a story.

If you make your goals public, knowing that others are aware of what you want to accomplish will drive you to the computer to write.

If you set your goals right, eventually you will fail. But turn that around too. Look at all you accomplished in reaching for your goals.

I've set a goal to write a new short story every week for the upcoming year and beyond. There's absolutely no reason (that I can foresee) why I shouldn't reach that goal. I've also set a goal of writing a new novel every month for the upcoming year and beyond. Again, I see no reason why I should fail.

But say something unexpected happens, something that's out of my control. Say for some reason in the last week of December 2020, I miss writing a short story. And say for some reason I don't finish the novel I start in December 2020.

Did I fail in my goal? Yes.

But I also wrote 51 short stories (and compiled five 10-story collections) during the year. And I still will have finished 11 new novels during the year. So really, how is that a failure? That's what we call "failing to success."

And all of that starts with me telling the world I'm planning to write 52 short stories and 12 novels during the next year.

If I hadn't shared my goals with you and others, I can all but guarantee I wouldn't have written anywhere near that much on December 31 2020.

So please, think about sharing your goals with someone. Let them help you, as you have helped me over the years, hold your feet to the fire.

Today I spent more time than I expected on writing all of this, posting a goals blog to my author site, and checking for articles of interest.

Later today I'll add to the WIP. And I'm really excited because with six days left in the year, there's an excellent chance I'll finish the novel on or before December 31. It doesn't get any better than that.

Which means my novel-writing goal started retroactively on December 5 when I started this novel. (grin) Which means I can now plan to write a novel every month for 18 months instead of 17.

I think today was maybe the best day of fiction writing I've ever had. Woohoo!

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "A Tough Week..." at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/a-tough-week/>.

See "I'm Doing The Great Publishing Challenge" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/im-doing-the-great-publishing-challenge/>.

See Tina Back's comment on "Great Challenges" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/great-challenges-2/#comment-205776>. Chock full of gems.

See "Business Musings: The Future of Audio 2019" at <https://kriswrites.com/2019/12/25/business-musings-the-future-of-audio-2019/>.

See "The Importance of Writing and Exercise" at <https://www.authorspublish.com/the-importance-of-writing-and-exercise/>.

See "Scientists Discover Why Exercise Makes You Smarter" at <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201310/scientists-discover-why-exercise-makes-you-smarter>.

See PG's take on "'Little Women' and the Marmee Problem" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/little-women-and-the-marmee-problem/>.

See also PG's take on "The 2010s were supposed to bring..." at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/the-2010s-were-supposed-to-bring-the-ebook-revolution-it-never-quite-came/>.

See "The Evolving Novel" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/the-evolving-novel/>.

Finally, strictly for fun, see the video at <https://vimeo.com/150814306>.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)
Nonfiction words today..... 1070 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)
Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649
Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193
Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747
Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849
Day 14... 3538 words. Total words to date..... 36387
Day 15... 1096 words. Total words to date..... 37483
Note: Cut 6351 words on Day 16..... 31132
Day 16... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 33037
Day 17... 5951 words. Total words to date..... 38988

Total fiction words for the month..... 42774
Total fiction words for the year..... 440339
Total nonfiction words for the month... 16380

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 319640
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 759979

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [AuthorsPublish.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Psychology Today](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Paper or No Paper

[December 27, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Paper or No Paper
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“The freelance writer is a man who is paid per piece or per word or perhaps.” Robert Benchley, via The Passive Voice

Topic: Paper or No Paper

In today's “Of Interest,” DWS talks about the fear of publishing. It's a good article, and I recommend it.

However, his article is tied to his Great Publishing Challenge. Seems he received a lot of comments that (to him) indicate fear of some aspect of publishing as the reason people don't want to jump into the challenge.

I was going to post a comment to his article, but I decided to publish it here instead. Mostly because I don't want my reasons for not publishing to paper to inadvertently feed the fear of anyone else.

First, I used to fall off [Heinlein's Rule 4](#) ("You must put it on the market" = publishing) a lot. In fact, at one point I had several short stories (around 15) and 4 or 5 novels that I'd written but hadn't yet published. Long-time Journal subscribers probably will remember that.

My falling off HR4 was not a result of fear, though. It was basically a result of me being lazy. Writing is fun; publishing is work.

Yes, designing covers is another artistic outlet, and I enjoy it when I'm in the middle of it. But I don't enjoy pouring over seemingly endless cover art BEFORE designing the cover, and I don't enjoy actually uploading the books, scheduling them for release, etc. AFTER designing the cover.

The other (main) reason I fell off HR4 so often was Time. When I think of Return On Investment (ROI), I most often think in terms of time. And I apply the WIBBOW rule, which I first learned from Dean: Would I Be Better Off Writing? In other words, would my time be better spent on writing?

If I have the cover art selected (or have narrowed my choices down to a few pieces of artwork and already have them in a folder on my desktop), publishing takes less time.

But if don't already have the cover art, Time is a great unknown. I have to browse royalty-free sites for cover art. That might take an hour or it might take 3 or 4 hours, and I just don't want to waste that much time.

I finally got past that by browsing sites on days when I'm between books. When I find art that I might want to use in the future, I download it and save it in a genre-specific folder. That trims some time off the process later.

So I no longer fall off HR4 or stay off it very long. In fact, I have a self-imposed rule that I can't call a story or novel "finished" until it's published.

That's all well and good for epublising (Kindle, Nook/Apple and PDF). But as I mentioned above, Dean's post was aimed primarily at publishing to paper. (Don't say publishing to "print." Ebooks are "print" too.)

There's a learning curve involved in publishing to paper. You can use the same cover you use for the ebook with a few adjustments for trim size in paper.

But even if you have the actual cover done (vs. the art selected but the cover not done), the sales copy written, etc., you still have to invest at least a few hours in calculating the spine of the paper book, and doing the interior layout and other things specific to the paper edition.

And frankly that's time I don't want to spend. For me, that isn't an artistic endeavor. For me, that's sheer drudgery.

So for me personally, not going to paper is strictly a business decision because spending time to go to paper with all my books provides a bad ROI.

And this isn't theory. I have actual empirical evidence.

I went to paper with my first 20 novels or so (and several short story collections) and got pretty much zilch ROI. My paper books were priced anywhere from \$12 to \$18, and I earned roughly \$2 in royalties when anybody bought one.

The same books in e-versions were priced from \$4 to \$7 (so lower cost and therefore more attractive to the reader), and I earned 70% (so \$2.80 to \$4.90 per ebook sold).

(Note: Your results may vary. If you go to paper and then sell copies yourself when you give talks or out of the trunk of your car, you can earn a better royalty. But I no longer speak at conferences and conventions, so that isn't a viable option for me.)

Plus, at least partly because of the necessarily higher price of the paper books, I sold a lot fewer of them, whereas my ebooks have always shown fairly steady sales.

So for me, when I consider publishing to paper vs. WIBBOW, WIBBOW wins. Handily.

Now, I won't use the N word here. I won't say that I'll Never go to paper with my books.

But until the technology advances to the point that the learning curve, production time and demand for my books in paper pretty much matches those same factors in ebook production, it just ain't gonna happen.

I don't have a finely tuned business mind. But in every business decision I make, I invoke that timeless question: WIBBOW?

And for me, that's good enough.

UPDATE: I emailed DWS privately about this, and he reminded me that a paper book will often garner 5 or 6 new readers over its lifetime. So I'm still looking at it. If I decide to do paper, I'll post a topic about that here.

The only other advantage I can think of to having paper books is the price comparison shoppers see when they google your title. The paper book with its higher price pops up right next to your ebook.

Today I'm excited to get back to the WIP. I sense that it's winding down toward the end, and that's always the most exciting part of a novel for me.

Like yesterday, I took far longer than I'd hoped to write the Journal entry.
Talk with you again soon.

I thought the novel might wrap today, but now it looks like it'll be tomorrow or maybe the weekend. Definitely in the final scenes.

Of Interest

See “Fear and Publishing” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fear-and-publishing/>.

See “Robert Benchley’s Legacy in an Era of Fraught Comedy” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/robert-benchleys-legacy-in-an-era-of-fraught-comedy/>.

See “inspiration’s where you find it” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/inspirations-where-you-find-it/>.

With a shaker of salt, see “How Long Does it Take to Write a Novel?” at <https://mystorydoctor.com/how-long-does-it-take-to-write-a-novel/>. Just trying to be fair. I don’t like that he equates writing fast with composing “a piece of excrement.” But whatever works for you.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)
Nonfiction words today..... 1120 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649
Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193
Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747
Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849
Day 14... 3538 words. Total words to date..... 36387
Day 15... 1096 words. Total words to date..... 37483
Note: Cut 6351 words on Day 16..... 31132
Day 16... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 33037
Day 17... 5951 words. Total words to date..... 38988
Day 18... 2967 words. Total words to date..... 41955

Total fiction words for the month..... 45741
Total fiction words for the year..... 443306
Total nonfiction words for the month... 17500
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 320760
Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 764066

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10
Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1
Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197
Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#),
[publishing](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Nonfiction Topics

[December 28, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: Nonfiction Topics
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“[D]on't let your opinion get in the way of sales.” Dean Wesley Smith

You are the worst judge of your own work (we all are) when we think a work is “bad” as well as when we think it's “good.” Hence, the quote above.

Topic: Nonfiction Topics

Now and again, professional fiction writers have complained to me, albeit mildly, that they find it difficult to come up with a new topic for a blog post every week. Or even every month.

Each time I hear that, I'm amazed. Some of these are the same folks who, when asked where they come up with ideas for stories or novels, respond with “How do you NOT come up with ideas? They're everywhere.”

I agree. New fiction ideas occur to me at least several times each week. But nonfiction ideas occur just as regularly, but every day.

Often, as today, I'll write a topic or blog post based on a question.

I also read the blog posts of several other authors every morning. More often than not, I'll find something I agree with that I can give a new slant. Or I'll find something I disagree with. But instead of arguing with the writer on his or her website, I write my own post.

My topic yesterday on publishing to paper was both. I agreed with what Dean wrote in his post, but I put my own slant on it. And I disagreed with him regarding the importance of publishing to paper, so I included that in the topic as well.

To write fiction, you have only to trust your characters to tell the story they're living. That's all. Don't second guess them, don't think you know better than they do. Just write what they tell you to write, what they do and say as they live the story.

To write nonfiction, you only need an opinion you're willing to share. And if you aren't willing to share it, well, maybe you need to check in with yourself and ask whether it's something you actually believe.

There are a few caveats to what I write in nonfiction. For example, I will never propagate the stupid myths about writing. That detailed outlines are a good thing, for example. (They aren't.) Or that revising and rewriting a work will actually improve it. (It won't.) Or that workshopping your fiction through a critique group isn't the same thing as writing by committee. (It is.)

But for every voice like Dean's or mine or the handful of other writers who preach self-confidence and trust in your characters, there are several million others out there who are all too happy to regurgitate the same old worn-out clichés.

For the record, yes, there are a few long-term professional fiction writers who adhere to the myths. Or say they do because that's what people want to hear.

And there are hundreds or thousands of professional writers who will never be long-term because they believe they've learned all they need to know and are stuck in Stage Two.

And of course, there are millions of would-be writers, all advising each other with the same ridiculous silliness.

And there are endless minions of other would-be writers who will believe them.

Like a guy going down in shark infested waters, there's little or nothing I can do for them, so I stand on the deck of my boat and watch them sink, albeit a little sadly.

But I threw them a life preserver. Is it really my fault they shoved it away?

Uh, no.

And that's why I keep coming up with nonfiction topics. Try as I might, I can't build a good reserve of life preservers. There's too much water, too many sharks. Still, I have a driving urge to at least try to pull those ill-fated swimmers out of the water before they're so drowned in the myths that they're gone forever.

And new swimmers show up every day. So I have to keep writing new topics and revisiting old one so I have something to toss to them from the deck of the boat.

So there you go. That's how I come up with topics, and that's why I keep coming up with topics. Can you think of a better reason?

Today I'll finish the novel. (In easier times, I consider a novel "finished" only when it's published. But for the duration of my challenge, I'll call stories and novels finished when I send them to my first readers.)

This morning, because it's Saturday, I rose early, around 1 a.m., fixed my coffee, came to the Hovel and got busy. I did the normal "wake up" things, checking email and Facebook and websites and all that. I also listened to the last four vids Dean posted to the Shared Worlds class.

I finally turned to the WIP at around 3:30. By 7, I'd written around 3200 words. If that seems slow (it is, around 914 words per hour or 15 words per minute), it included a lot of cycling and updating my reverse outline. (grin)

Then I took a break for a few hours for breakfast and to visit with my bride and let her know I still had a couple of chapters to write to finish the novel today.

But she's working in the house today. We aren't going anywhere, so that was fine with her.

I went back to the Hovel at 9:30 or so and wrote everything above this. Then at 1015, I turned to the WIP again for what I suspect will be the final (long) session on this novel.

When I'm through writing, I'll run a spell check (my second draft) and then send it to my first readers. And for purposes of the challenge, it will be finished. In 19 writing days.

And to go back to the topic for a moment, it won't have any plot holes or unresolved issues. That's what is possible when you are confident in your ability as a storyteller and trust your characters to tell the story.

Okay, had some emails come in, so now it's 10:45 and I'm just now going back to the WIP. (grin)

Finished right at noon with another 2000 words.

Of Interest

Any Romance writers out there, see "Has RWA Lost Its Way?" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/has-rwa-lost-its-way/>. It will come as no surprise that I agree with PG.

See "Priorities" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/priorities>.

See the comments on "Fear and Publishing" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/fear-and-publishing/#comments>.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)

Nonfiction words today..... 1090 (Journal)

Writing of Jonah Peach (tentative title)

Brought forward..... 4416 words

Day 10... 1490 words. Total words to date..... 25649

Day 11... 1544 words. Total words to date..... 27193

Day 12... 1554 words. Total words to date..... 28747

Day 13... 4102 words. Total words to date..... 32849

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Day 15... 1096 words. Total words to date..... 37483

Note: Cut 6351 words on Day 16..... 31132

Day 16... 1905 words. Total words to date..... 33037

Day 17... 5951 words. Total words to date..... 38988

Day 18... 2967 words. Total words to date..... 41955

Day 19... 5255 words. Total words to date..... 47210 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 50996

Total fiction words for the year..... 448561

Total nonfiction words for the month... 18590

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 321850

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 770411

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: Question Everything (and Safeguard Your Credibility)

[December 29, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

* Quote of the Day

* Topic: Question Everything (and Safeguard Your Credibility)

- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Quote of the Day

“In the face of misuse, it’s much easier to write a new definition than to teach the old one.” Me, on the dumbing down of English language usage America

If you love the language and enjoy “tangential discussions,” see “Priorities” and the comments at <https://prowriterswriting.com/priorities/>.

Topic: Question Everything (and Safeguard Your Credibility)

Yesterday (and through to this morning) I got into a discussion with some other folks about something silly. Is the adjective “likely” also an adverb? Because I believe the discussion had some redeeming value, I thought I’d expand on my thoughts here in a topic.

I say the discussion was silly because except for serving as food for thought, it didn’t matter. By that, I mean it didn’t change any minds, or at least not obviously.

If you’re wondering, for me the answer to whether “likely” is an adverb is a resounding No. When the weather guy on TV says, “It likely will rain tomorrow,” I mentally cringe. Because what he meant to say, even if he didn’t know it, is “It probably will rain tomorrow.” I cringe because the guy makes his living with words. So I’m thinking he should know better.

Now, maybe he DOES know better and just chooses to misuse “likely.” Or maybe he doesn’t know better at all. More’s the pity.

The fact remains, “probably” is an undisputed adverb. The adjective form is “probable.” And the word “likely,” despite the “ly” ending (which many adverbs have) is synonymous with “probable,” not “probably.”

Now, to save you some time, at least four dictionaries disagree with me. They say “likely” is also an adverb, though using it as such is not preferable.

Duh. That’s because it’s an adjective, synonymous with “probable,” another adjective. So double duh. As I noted in the Quote of the Day above, it’s far easier to change the meaning of a word than to teach the correct meaning.

During my lifetime, write or wrong (I’m not judging) one dialect — ebonics — was redesignated (by the Oakland, California school board) as a new “genetically based language,” a result of the acceptance of misspellings and mispronunciations.

And this discussion doesn’t stop with words and languages. During my tour as a Marine Corps recruiter, HQMC redefined “high school graduate” as a student who had attended at least 12

years of school vs. a student who had actually graduated and received a high school diploma. (I disagreed with that too, though it was beneficial to me.)

Again, it's easier to change a definition than to teach or uphold and enforce the old definition.

But the point here is that you don't have to agree with anything. You're a writer, and a human being with a mind capable of original thought.

You don't have to agree with me. And you don't have to agree with those particular dictionaries that disagree with me. On this question or any other.

There are several usages that dictionaries now deem all right (or "alright") that I disagree with and see as misuses:

- alright vs. all right;
- OK vs. okay;
- likely (as an adverb) vs. probably);
- cachet (pronounced "cashay," a seal of approval or respectability) vs. cache (pronounced "cash," meaning a horde, as in "weapons cache");
- till vs 'til (or until);
- impact (as a verb) vs. affect;
- and a host of others.

As a side note, in yesterday's discussion on PWW I erroneously defined "cachet" as a scent. (I was thinking of the scent that emanates from a "sachet" and apparently confused myself.) But a knowledgeable friend pointed out to me this morning in a private email (not in a public attempt to prove me wrong) that "cachet" is actually a seal of approval or respectability, generally bestowed by a human or society on a product, policy or another human. (grin) Thank you, my friend.

Back to the argument. I personally always default to the side of logic. For example, "all right" and "alright" sound exactly alike, so why not use the correct one? Anyone? But please don't say "alright" is for dialogue and "all right" is for narrative. Again, they sound exactly alike.

If you want to express dialect, you might omit letters. For example, you might write "a'right a'ready" for a New York wise guy who's heard enough or "a'ight" or "a'ight'ten" for a Louisiana Cajun who's seen enough of a particular rattlesnake or copperhead in his field. But taking the time to "hear" the word and omit letters to convey the pronunciation to the reader at least shows that you're using your mind. (For much more on writing dialect, see <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B004SBOAB2>.)

For years, I've kept and maintained a list of stupid, misused tag line verbs (e.g., "he ejaculated" vs. "he said"). I might start keeping a list of what I see as misuses like those above too.

But again, whether or not you agree with me isn't the point. The point is that you have a brain. You can think things through and make up your own mind. Which word you choose to use and how you use it is strictly up to you.

If you want to, you can even call the large black bird that pays particular attention to corn crops a duck, despite the fact that it's a crow or raven.

So my advice is to Question Everything. Not to prove yourself right or to prove someone else wrong, but to exercise your brain, to learn and improve in the craft.

As I said before, which word you choose and how you choose to use it is strictly up to you. But remember that there are readers on the other side of your writing. And whether the words you choose or how you choose to use them is "right" or "wrong" is up to the individual reader.

I think I'm safe in saying if I write "It will probably rain tomorrow," no reader anywhere ever will wonder *Why did he pick 'probably'?* *Why didn't he pick 'likely'?* And that really is the whole point.

Just sayin'.

Today I might not do any fiction writing. I need to let the previous story clear from my head before I jump into something else. Just my way.

Of Interest

See "Channeling" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/channeling>.

See "Playing With Covers" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/playing-with-covers-2/>.

See the always-interesting PG's take on "How the decade in books changed what and how we read" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/how-the-decade-in-books-changed-what-and-how-we-read/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)

Nonfiction words today..... 1090 (Journal)

Writing of

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 50996

Total fiction words for the year..... 448561

Total nonfiction words for the month... 19680

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 322940

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 771501

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4	
Novels (since Oct 19, 2014).....	44
Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)

The Journal: On Daily Word-Count Goals

[December 30, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Topic: On Daily Word-Count Goals
- * Today
- * Of Interest
- * The Numbers

Topic: On Daily Word-Count Goals

In case you don't read the "My Own Getting Ready" in today's "Of Interest," I found it very interesting (and pleasantly surprising) that both Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rusch still use word-count goals. As I learned from Dean back in early 2014, a daily word-count goal is indispensable for several reasons:

1. Whether you fall short or go way over on a particular day, the next morning the goal resets to zero and it's a new day. That's refreshing.
2. Having a daily word-count goal drives you to the computer every day, including some days when you might not write if you didn't have that goal.
3. It reminds you to keep coming back during the day until you've reached your daily goal.
4. It's a great way to get a streak started, which will also drive your writing.
5. Maybe most importantly, having a daily word-count goal helps you train yourself as a writer. It shows the critical mind that you, not it, are the boss.

Back in early 2014 I set a goal of 3,000 words per day. And I maintained that through the first few years, writing *almost* every day. In many months, I wrote well over 100,000 words of publishable fiction per month. As a result, today I have over 50 novels and novellas and am just shy of 200 short stories.

Then, at the beginning of 2018, I let go of the daily word-count goal. I was in the habit of writing fiction almost every day, so I felt like I probably didn't need the daily goal anymore. (Conscious, critical mind, anyone?)

That was a huge mistake. As you might imagine, my production fell off.

So as I wrote above, I was pleasantly surprised to read that both Dean and Kris still use word-count goals. If someone with their experience and accomplishments needs word-count goals, who am I to argue? (grin)

So in 2020, I will re-establish my own daily word-count goal again, bearing in mind the average over time is what matters. It feels really good to put up a 100,000 word month.

By contrast, this month I felt satisfied with writing only 51,000 words of fiction. That's how far I've slipped.

In 2020 my life and my schedule will change considerably too, as my wife retires and transitions from working away from home every day to being home every day.

But she's also moving into her new position as the publisher at [StoneThread Publishing](#). And in her capacity as a publisher who wants our business to succeed, she too will enable my new daily word-count goal. After all, I'm 99% of the Production Department. She can't publish what I don't write. (grin)

So think about this. Give it some serious thought. No matter your life or your schedule, almost everyone can find at least one hour per day to write, even if it's in 15-minute increments. (If you really believe you don't have an hour every day and want to learn how to find wasted time, email me at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. I'll be happy to share.)

If you can put even 17 words per minute (1000 words per hour) on the page, people will consider you a prolific writer.

2020 is coming on fast. Just think of the possibilities.

Today I hadn't planned to publish an edition of the Journal, but I decided to put out a short one so you could see the items in "Of Interest." Then I read Dean's post for today and was moved to write the topic above.

By the way, through a comment on Dean's site I went to a website called Six Figure Authors. It's billed as "the podcast that helps you take your writing career to the next level."

Wow. I bookmarked it and will be browsing it off and on. I recommend you do the same. You can find it at <https://6figureauthors.com/>.

Also, just a heads-up reminder: The Licensing Transition Class and Shared World Class will close for new sign-ups on the 1st.

If you want to take your writing business to the next level, I really strongly recommend the Licensing Transition course. There are already 50-some videos up, with a lot more to come. To check it out, go to <https://wmg-publishing-workshops-and-lectures.teachable.com/> and look for the Licensing Transition course (or any others).

Now I'm gonna go write some fiction. You'll see my updated fiction numbers when I write another edition of the Journal.

Have a great day. Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See the comments on "Playing With Covers" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/playing-with-covers-2/#comments>.

Listen to Dean talk about writing and publishing on "Six Figure Authors" at <https://6figureauthors.com/podcast-player/161/why-revising-can-be-detrimental-and-pantsing-like-a-pro.mp3>.

See "My Own Getting Ready" at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/my-own-getting-ready/>.

See "Science Fiction Writer Writes Whatever" at <https://prowriterswriting.com/science-fiction-writer-writes-whatever/>.

See "The Joys (and Perils) of Serial Novel Writing" at <https://www.janefriedman.com/serial-novel-writing/>.

See "Latest Top Pages" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/latest-top-pages/>.

See "What John Dos Passos's "1919" Got Right About 2019" at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/what-john-dos-passos-1919-got-right-about-2019/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)

Nonfiction words today..... 800 (Journal)

Writing of

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

Total fiction words for the month..... 50996

Total fiction words for the year..... 448561

Total nonfiction words for the month... 20480

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 323740

Total words for the year (fiction and this blog)..... 772301

Calendar Year 2019 Novels to Date..... 10

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas to Date..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories to Date... 4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 44

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015).....	8
Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014).....	197
Short story collections.....	31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [6FigureAuthors.com](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#), [WMG Publishing Workshops](#)

The Journal: More on Word-Count Goals (a process post)

[December 31, 2019](#) by [Harvey](#)

In today's Journal

- * Quote of the Day
- * Topic: More on Word-Count Goals (a process post)
- * Today
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Quote of the Day

“If you’re not productive in this new world, you’re done. You’re just done.” Dean Wesley Smith

Topic: More on Word-Count Goals (a process post)

I had a few questions about this, so I thought I’d revisit it.

My daily word count goal is 3000 words per day beginning on January 1. Yesterday, I practiced. I started a short story that didn’t pan out, and I missed my goal. In fact, I wrote only a little over 1000 words. Shrug. No biggie. The goal resets this morning. (More on this later.)

But why did I pick 3000 words per day?

Some of you will remember, not too long ago I set a daily goal of 1000 words per day. Then I further buffered it by saying that was my goal “on days when I write.”

Frankly, for me personally, that goal was a joke. Been there, done way more than that. In setting that goal, I wasn’t living up to my ability, much less stretching myself.

What was I thinking?

Well, I was thinking that any goal was better than no goal. But I erased that when I added “on days when I write.” That was directly from the critical mind.

Hitting 1000 words in a day is massively easy for me. It's an hour or less of writing, period, as long as I get out of my own way. It's a snail's pace of 17 words per minute. Many who have families and jobs, etc. routinely hit far more than 1000 words per day.

So a few days ago, I checked in with myself, thought about all of that, and figured out some things.

While writing my most recent novel (in 19 writing days and 25 calendar days), I wrote just short of 3000 words on two days and exceeded 3000 words on five days. On two of those five, I wrote almost 6000 words. All while I had a 1000 words-per-day goal.

Okay, so a 1000 words-per-day goal is just silly for me.

Back when I was first starting out and trying to make myself a professional), I set a solid goal of 3000 words per day. And it worked.

A few years later, because I haughtily thought I was beyond the need for word-count goals, I dropped them altogether. And my production suffered. (How I wish someone had called me on that!)

Yes, I still wrote several novels per year, but almost no short stories. By dropping my word-count goal, I made it too easy to just go do something else.

So now I'm re-instituting my 3000 words-per-day goal, and I'll stick to it. I'm sure I'll miss on some days, but not most.

Here's why (and this is the essence of this topic):

1. When I know my daily goal is 3000 words every day (on average), it pushes me to the computer.
2. But more importantly, it also pushes me to Keep Coming Back. Even on days when I have other things that I have to do (like today, laundry), that goal in the back of my mind won't let me slack off.
3. By contrast, when my daily goal was only 1000 words, it actually dragged me down. If I didn't hit 1000 words that was fine because it reset the next day. And that was only on "days when I write." Rubbish.
4. What's worse, that small goal set a dangerous precedent. When I reached my 1000 words for the day, it was okay for me to stop writing. In short, it was a false achievement that harmed my production. (See the Quote of the Day above.)

Let's look at some math.

Like everyone else, I have 24 hours in every day. Minus my sleep time, I have 16 to 18 hours every day.

So with a 3000 word goal, I have to find 3 hours out of that 16- to 18-hour period to write.

To further stretch myself (and drive myself to the computer, and exercise my story-idea brain) I also set weekly and monthly goals. I talked about those here several days ago: one short story per week by Saturday midnight and one novel per month by midnight on the last day of the month.

Can I do that? Honestly, I don't see why not.

To carry forward the time factor, even going with the smallest number of hours I have available every day (16), that's 112 hours per week and 480 hours per 30-day month.

A novel takes 40 to 100 hours to write. And writing four short stories per month takes 3 to 5 hours per story, so 12 to 20 hours per month.

So even a longer novel and longer short stories add up to 120 hours per month — out of 480 total hours when I'm not asleep.

So that's why I set such seemingly "lofty" goals. When you look at the math, they aren't all that lofty. Especially if I'm hitting around 3000 words per day. See?

I welcome any other questions. When you ask me questions, we both learn.

One caveat — if writing 1000 words per day for you stretches you and makes you reach, that's fine. In most cases, any goal really is better than no goal. Just don't buffer it with "on days when I write." Science Fiction Grand Master Fred Pohl wrote 1000 words per day, every day, before he allowed himself to do anything else. In the words of DWS, "maybe that's why he was a grand master."

So the bottom line, as always, is do what's right for you. And most of all Have Fun and enjoy the process. (grin)

Today, as the year draws to a close, I'll practice writing again. And practice reaching for 3000 words. I might make it, and I might not. With any luck I'll have a good novel start or a good short story before the sun goes down.

Either way, I hope it's a great day for you and that you've set your writing goals and other resolutions for what you want to achieve in the weeks, months, year, and years ahead.

Happy new year's eve, and happy new year.

Talk with you again soon.

Of Interest

See "Do You Want to Be an Apex Writer?" at <https://mystorydoctor.com/do-you-want-to-be-an-apex-writer/>. (To apply, send "Apex" to davidfarland1@gmail.com.) An opportunity.

See “Family Annihilators + A Look Back at 2019” at <https://www.suecoletta.com/family-annihilators-look-back-at-2019/>.

See “David Maurer, the Dean of Criminal Language” at <https://crimereads.com/david-maurer-the-dean-of-criminal-language/>. Great article, and at the end is “A Glossary of Essential Maurer Slang.”

See “The Exclamation Point: It’s More Than Punctuation” at <https://www.janefriedman.com/the-exclamation-point-its-more-than-punctuation/>.

See “What WMG Publishing Did” at <https://www.deanwesleysmith.com/what-wmg-publishing-did/>.

See “Night Visions” at <https://prowriterswriting.com/night-visions/>.

See “Garrison Keillor” at <https://www.thepassivevoice.com/garrison-keillor/>.

The Numbers

Fiction words (see specific numbers below)

Nonfiction words today..... 1090 (Journal)

Writing of Distant Worlds (short story)

Day 1..... 1088 words. Total words to date..... 1088 (nah, fell off)

Total fiction words for December..... 55128

Total fiction words for 2019..... 452693

Total nonfiction words for December... 21570

Total nonfiction words for 2019..... 324830

Total words for 2019 (fiction and this blog)..... 777523

Calendar Year 2019 Novels..... 10

Calendar Year 2019 Novellas..... 1

Calendar Year 2019 Short Stories... 4

Novels (since Oct 19, 2014)..... 45

Novellas (since Nov 1, 2015)..... 8

Short stories (since Apr 15, 2014)..... 197

Short story collections..... 31

Categories [Daily Journal](#) Tags [CrimeReads](#), [David Farland](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Jane Friedman](#), [Pro Writers Writing](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Sue Coletta](#), [The Passive Voice](#), [the writing life](#), [Topic](#)