

**Sisters
in
Crime**



Heart of Texas
Chapter
www.HoTXSinC.org

HOTSHOTS!
September 2008

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Sisters in Crime is an international organization of women and men whose purpose is to promote mysteries written by women and to combat discrimination against them. Speakers include published mystery authors and technical experts who help writers craft better mysteries, and readers enjoy what they read. Meetings are free and open to all.

For more information, check out the Sisters in Crime website at www.hotxsinc.org



Sunday, September 14, 2008
2:00 p.m.

**The Texas Rangers:
Wearing the CincoPeso, 1821-1900**

Austin Statesman Journalist
Mike Cox

Westlake Barnes & Noble bookstore
located in The Village at Westlake shopping center
at the southeast corner of Loop 360 and Bee Cave Road
512.328.3155

Austin Statesman journalist Michael Cox explores the inception and rise of the famed Texas Rangers. Starting in 1821 with just a handful of men, the Rangers' first purpose was to keep settlers safe from the feared and gruesome Karankawa Indians, a cannibalistic tribe that wandered the Texas territory.

As the influx of settlers grew, the attacks increased and it became clear that a much larger, better trained force was necessary. From their tumultuous beginning to their decades of fighting outlaws, Comanche, Mexican soldados and banditos, as well as Union soldiers, the Texas Rangers became one of the fiercest law enforcement groups in America. In a land as spread-out and sparsely populated as the west itself, the Rangers had unique law-enforcement responsibilities and challenges.

The story of the Texas Rangers is as controversial as it is heroic. Often accused of vigilante-style racism and murder, they enforced the law with a heavy hand. But above all they were perhaps the defining force for the stabilization and the creation of Texas. From Stephen Austin in the early days through the Civil War, the first eighty years of the Texas Rangers is nothing less than phenomenal, and the efforts put forth in those days set the foundation for the Texas Rangers that keep Texas safe today.

This meeting is free and open to anyone who enjoys writing or reading mystery or True Crime.

October Spotlight Author

Author **L. C. Hayden** will be spotlighted in the October edition of **HOTSHOTS!**



**News and
Announcements**

Thursday, September 4, 2008 - 7:00 p.m. - Oak Hill library branch in Austin, Texas

Have you been carrying a non-fiction book idea around? To make that dream a reality you need to write a book proposal.

On Sept. 4, **Diana Fanning** taught a writing class, **WRITING A BOOK PROPOSAL THAT SELLS**, in which she showed writers how to pull together a book proposal that will make agents and publishers smile and put money in your pocket. The class was free. Contact Diane at www.dianefanning.com for information regarding future dates when she will present this class again.

Monday, September 8, 2008 - 8:35 AM CDT
Radio Interview of Weslynn McCallister writing as Jamie Cortland and her novel, SKIN DEEP

Morning Edition with Rick Carl Show - KWOC (Coverage extends from Poplar Bluff, Mo. into Arkansas and Tennessee, including the NW part of the Memphis area.)

Wednesday, September 10, 2008 - 7:30 PM
The Mystery Book Discussion Group will meet to discuss *SANIBEL FLATS* by **Randy Wayne White at Barnes & Noble Booksellers (Arboretum) at 10000 Research Boulevard, Austin TX 78759.**

For more information, contact Caren Kreech Berlanga, Community Relations Manager, 512.418.8985.

Thursday, September 17, 2008

The large print edition of **L. C. Hayden's** novel, **WHY CASEY HAD TO DIE**, an Agatha Finalist for Best Novel, will hit the market on September 17. For those who have trouble reading small print, this will make an ideal gift.

For more information about **WHY CASEY HAD TO DIE**, please turn to Page 10.

Tuesdays, September 23 and 30, 2008 - 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Award-winning author **L. C. Hayden** will present a workshop on *Writing the Novel in 60 Days* through the University of Texas at El Paso's continuing education program in El Paso, TX, at UTEP, 6-8 pm.

Upcoming Chapter Programs

October 12 - HoTxSinC Member **Marcia Spillers**, will present a program on screenwriting.

November 9 - **Gary Payne** will present a program about the **Capitol City Mystery Players**

December 14 - Author **Woody Falgoux** will present a program on **The Book Marketing Pyramid: Product, Publicity & Distribution**

January 11, 2009 - **Orange, TX Chief of Police Sam Kittrell** will present **CSI Mayberry: Big city policing in small town America.**

February 8 - **Renowned Forensic Artist Lois Gibson**, named in the Guinness Book of Records as the World's Most Successful Forensic Artist.

March 8 - Author **Vallie Fletcher Taylor** will present *Putting the Paranormal in Your Mysteries.*

April 12 - Author **Micqui Miller** will lead a panel discussion on e-books, entitled, *Go Green! Read (or Write) an e-Mystery and Save a Tree!*

*If you missed the August meeting ...
By Sylvia Dickey Smith, VP of Program*

... you missed a great time! We had a great August in-door picnic today, held at the home of Dave Ciambrone. Our speaker was George Wilhite, author of the Texas Rodeo Murder. Dave's wife Kathy outdid herself with a marvelous Sisters in Crime Cake, skull, knife, blood and all.

If you missed it, you missed great food, great folks, great speaker and a fantastic, murderous décor!!



Photos by Sylvia Dickey Smith

Upcoming Chapter Programs

(Continued from Page 2)

2009 Texas Mystery Month

May 10 - Niki Nichole, Private Investigator

May 17 - Barbara Burnett Smith Aspiring Writers Event

June 14 - P. J. Nunn, founder of **Breakthrough Promotions**, will present a program on **What You Don't Know About Book Promotion**



**FRIDAY,
September 26, 2008**
is the deadline for
News, Announcements
and Submissions for
the
OCTOBER 2008 edition
of **HOTSHOTS!**

Send all information, including digital copies of book covers and photos, to Micqui Miller at micquim@yahoo.com. Your comments and suggestion are always welcome.

Diane Fanning September 2008 Spotlight Author

Vance Holmes, noted theatre artist, educator, director, choreographer, playwright, composer, *trial tracker* and *forensic poet*, owner of Poetic Justice,* said it best about our September Spotlight Author, **Diana Fanning**. "Diane is one of America's living treasures. She can say in 14 words what it takes the rest of us pages and pages to establish."

This month we had the pleasure of visiting with Diane and now bring you an up-close and personal look at this extraordinary woman and her day-to-day, no-nonsense approach to the books she writes and her incredible talent for saying so much with such an economy of words.

MM: *How long have you been writing?*

DF: All my life but I actually earned money for writing for the first time in 1970.

MM: *Do you write full time?*

DF: Yes I do. For the last three years

MM: *When did you first consider yourself a writer?*

DF: Although I had won multiple awards for my commercial writing and had several magazine publishing credits along with corporate newsletter credits, I did not consider myself a writer until I actually had an agent with a project. It seemed even more real to me when one of my books was nominated for an Edgar Award.

MM: *What inspired you to write your first book?*

DF: When I was nine years old, a stranger tried to abduct me. I got away only because of the timely arrival of another vehicle. I memorized his license plate number and told my mother. When the police picked him up, they found evidence in the trunk of his car tying him to the sexual assault and murder of an 8-year-old the month before.

When I heard the story of 10-year-old Krystal Surles who managed to end the two decade killing spree of a serial killer, her story resonated with me because of my past experience. She was my hero and I simply HAD to write her story.

MM: *What comes first: the plot or the characters?*

DF: It depends. Every story is different. The idea can be rooted in character or story or both at the same time. Inspiration chooses its own path.

MM: *Do you have a process for developing your characters?*

DF: I learn how they think and create the situations that reveal their thinking and promote their transformation.



MM: *We always hear that authors write themselves into their characters. Is there any part of you in your characters and what they would be?*

DF: There is always a nugget of me in every character. Sometimes, it is a piece of who I want me to be, sometimes it is a piece of me that I do not like, sometimes it's just a little thing like what kind of wine I drank the night before.

MM: *Do you plot your stories first with an outline or does it come to you as you write it?*

DF: I do not outline in advance. I form a big picture in my mind of where I want the story to go. Then I start writing when I see the movie of a scene in my head. After writing that scene, the story seems to form itself. Along the way, I might do short term outlines covering a couple of chapters whenever I know where I want to go but am not sure how to get there.

MM: *How do you come up with the titles to your books?*

DF: I always have a working title that reflects an element of the content of my story. Sometimes my working title is the final title, other times, it is changed either by the publisher or after some back and forth between the two of us.

C S ... I Don't Think So

by Lee Lofland

(Reprinted with permission)

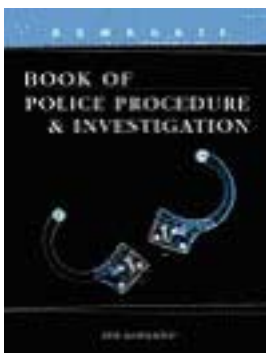
Ah, to live the life of a crime-solving, danger-seeking CSI investigator. After all, the career offers the best in life—fancy clothes, expensive cars, fine dining, high-speed car chases, and high-tech, James-Bondish gadgets. We see all this on television, so it must be true, right?

Actually, the above description couldn't be further from the truth. The sad reality is that most forensic laboratories don't have enough funds or manpower to test all the evidence submitted to them by law-enforcement agencies. Many of the laboratories are understaffed, lack modern equipment, and are in sub par facilities.

Understaffed crime labs add to the already huge backlog of cases that many areas of the country are experiencing. A backlog of cases means evidence goes untested; untested evidence means that cases aren't solved; unsolved cases mean bad guys are still out on the street committing crimes.

Television laboratories examine crime scene evidence immediately, and as a result cases are solved at breakneck speeds. Not so in real life. In August of this year, the Maryland State Police crime lab reported a shortage of twelve forensic scientists, a lack that caused much of their evidence to go untested. Another August report, this one from Jacksonville, Florida, states that the crime labs of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement have evidence from approximately 1,000 cases on hold, waiting to be examined by their forensic scientists.

A study conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2005 shows that Tennessee's crime labs are among the most backlogged laboratories in the country. In fact, the same report indicates that a typical crime lab has an average monthly backlog of approximately 400 cases. The 351 publicly funded laboratories in the U.S. ended the year 2002 with a backlog of over 500,000 requests for evidence examination.



Television shows us scientists who work almost exclusively on DNA evidence, firearm comparison, and blood and trace evidence analysis. Actually, scientists and other specialists who work in these laboratories spend only about 5% of their time examining DNA

evidence (which by the way, normally takes a minimum of three days to examine, not the fifteen or twenty minutes TV suggests). The rest of their time is spent examining and testing other evidence, such as narcotics and fingerprints, with narcotics being the most often examined piece of evidence in nearly all crime labs.

A backlog in a forensic laboratory slows the entire judicial system. Criminals who are incarcerated while awaiting trial must often remain behind bars until the testing of the evidence from their crime-scenes is complete. This delay often results in continuances of their trials over and over again. The costs for this wait-time can be staggering. Attorneys and judges schedule court cases and police officers, witnesses, and other experts are often subpoenaed for those cases only to find out the case has been rescheduled. The list goes on.

Actors on CSI shows depict the life of crime-scene investigators as action-packed. In reality most of their time is spent in a well-lit (not darkened like we see on TV) laboratory or office. Most CSI technicians are not sworn police officers. They don't question suspects, they don't chase bad guys, and they don't carry firearms. And, they don't drive Hummers!

A real-life crime-scene investigator has an enormous responsibility. They are sometimes the people who discover the identity of a serial killer or a pedophile. Their jobs are an integral part of law-enforcement, but they're not magic, and they shop at the bargain stores just like you and me.

If you want to see real police work on TV, do yourself a favor and tune in to a rerun of the Andy Griffith Show. Andy and Barney...now there were two top-notch CSI folks.



Lee Lofland is a former detective and author of *Police Procedure and Investigation, A Guide For Writers*, from *Writer's Digest Books*, a 2008 Macavity nominee for best nonfiction mystery. Visit his site at www.leelofland.com. He also writes and manages *The Graveyard Shift*, www.leelofland.com/wordpress/, a blog about cops, forensics, and crime scene investigation.

Lee and legendary FBI criminal profiler Clint Van Zandt appeared on NPR's *Talk of the Nation* last Friday. You can listen here: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93597384>

(Spotlight Author - Continued from Page 4)

MM: *Do you ever suffer from writer's block? If so, what do you do about it?*

DF: You need to develop writers-block escape habits. Learn to be comfortable writing a rough draft on paper with a pencil and with a pen. Learn to be comfortable writing on a computer.

Try to concentrate in noise, with music, with stark silence and any combination of noise pollution. When you have worked on all these, there will always be a place and set up that is your preferred method and that is what you will almost always use. But, when the block disrupts your normal flow, you've now got practiced alternatives to use.

Can't get a word on an empty computer screen in your office, step outside with a pencil and paper and try to force the flow. This kind of change-up can break through your barrier and sometimes give you the most intense writing episode you've ever known.

MM: *What would you say is your most interesting writing quirk?*

DF: My rough drafts are done in pencil on legal pads.

MM: *When in the process of writing your book did you begin to look for a publisher?*

DF: When I completed the manuscript, I sent it to my agent who made a few suggestions to polish it up. Then she sought a publisher.

MM: *What struggles have you had on the road to being published?*

DF: I once had the world's largest collection of rejection notices. Now I have an agent and ten published books with two more completed and in the process of being published.

MM: *What has been the best part about being published?*

DF: Bringing pleasure or information to my readers. To learn that in some way, something I'd written empowered them.

For example, I've heard from Domestic Violence Shelters across the country telling me about the importance of my book, **GONE FOREVER**. And with **THROUGH THE WINDOW**, I included information that enabled a wrongfully convicted woman to get a new trial and acquitted of the charges against her.

MM: *What advice would you give a new writer just starting out?*

DF: Read fiction, non-fiction, all genres, all the time. And write, write, write – and save every piece of paper. You never know when you'll dig back and rescue a gem to use elsewhere and it will give you a good sense of how you have improved on days when you feel like you've not gotten anywhere.

MM: *Tell us about your current release.*

DF: In **THE TROPHY EXCHANGE**, life's been tough for Lieutenant Lucinda Pierce. She lost an eye and how her face was disfigured responding to a domestic violence call. She accidentally killed a small child in the middle of a shoot-out with his father.

Now, she's up against a serial killer and her main suspect is a highly respected doctor known for his international relief work.

It's a good thing she doesn't mind bending the rules.

MM: *What is your favorite part about this book?*

DF: How Lucinda conquers the loss of sight in one of her eyes.

MM: *What do you want readers to remember and carry with them after reading your novel?*

DF: Persistence and determination make you unstoppable.

MM: *Are you working on anything at the present you'd like to share with us?*

DF: I just finished the copy edits for **PUNISH THE DEED**, the second Lucinda Pierce novel. It will be released in December in the UK and in March in the US.

I am in the final stages of completing another true crime book about an Air Force staff sergeant who survived five tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq but could not survive five months of marriage to his wife.

When that's finished, I have several projects to jump on: a true crime about the 76-year-old woman arrested in June for the murder of the fourth of her five dead husbands; a new Molly Mullet Mystery and a new Lucinda Pierce novel.

(Spotlight Author, Continued on Page 9)

**Bookshop
HOTSPOTS!**



**Margarite Holt, Owner
Hill Country Book Store
719 Main Street
Georgetown TX
512.869.4959**



Photos by Bill J

Hill Country Book Store, a jewel in Georgetown!

One of the best things about the job of HOTSHOTS! editor is meeting remarkable women like Margarite Holt, owner and proprietor of Hill Country Book Store. Recently I had the pleasure of spending some time with her. Here are a few of the things she shared with me.

MM: *Tell us about Hill Country Book Store, Margarite, when it opened and your role in its operation.*

MH: I was employed as a data processing consultant in a large mainframe environment in New York City when my husband and I decided to retire and move back to Texas. We weren't quite sure what we wanted to do, but when we saw the space that's now the bookstore, I knew I'd found my next career. At first, we were disappointed to learn the store had been leased to another business. Then a few days later, while we were vacationing in Hawaii, the leasing agent called to let us know it was back on the market again. Right then and there we made one of the best decisions of our lives. We opened in July 1996.



Margarite Holt in her Local Author Section

My husband Robert and I are co-owners, but I run the business. We've been happily married forever; that doesn't mean we'd do well working together.

MM: *Tell us a little about yourself. Are you a native Texan, and did you come from a background in bookstore management?*

MH: My husband's a native Texan, from the Panhandle. And no, I had absolutely no experience in bookstore management. However, I did a lot of research, and that led to my attend a conference sponsored by the American Booksellers Association. It was an intense two-week course that covered every aspect of bookselling, from ordering, to stocking shelves, marketing, advertising—anything a bookstore owner needs to compete and succeed.

I was heartened to learn during the training that Georgetown proved to be an excellent choice. Even as naive as we were when we chose this location, it met several criteria the association said was a must for a successful operation – an attractive location, a major highway nearby, an upscale suburb of a large urban area, and with a university. Georgetown has all of that, plus there's such a strong sense of community among the residents, the merchants, the schools, libraries and even the city government. I don't think we could have chosen better even if we'd really known what we were doing.

MM: *Are you open everyday?*

MH: Monday through Saturday, 10 AM to 6 PM, and 1 to 5 on Sundays.

MM: *Tell us about some of the good things you face as an indy bookstore, and some of the challenges from the big chains.*

MH: It can be difficult competing with the chains. We're like a small car dealership. We can order ten Corvettes and we're lucky to be shipped one. The same with large quantity pricing incentives, and so forth. But we knew that going in, and there's a place for both of us insofar as our customers are concerned.

Where I think we have the advantage is in our sense of community. The mall stores had great parties for the Harry Potter releases, but we had the entire town involved. We didn't just entertain the kids, they came up with things they wanted to do and they took charge of them.

(Bookshop HOTSPOTS - Continued from Page 7)

We have a terrific merchants association. Everyone pitched in and we turned the square into a true Harry Potter celebration, which of course, is a celebration of literacy. Everyone took part in it, from the restaurants, the shops, the library, the Fire and Police Departments. It was a terrific time for all. We made friendships that will last a lifetime.

We do a lot of special parties, signings and things like that, and we're very supportive of our local authors. That's why I have one section of the shelves dedicated to their work. These are the things we *can* do that the big chains can't.

(Editor's Note: while looking through the shelf of local authors, I saw many from members of H.O.T./SnC, including Sylvia Dickey Smith, Dave Ciambrone, L. C. Hayden, Karen Swartz MacInerney, John Foxjohn, Barbara Burnett Smith, Jan Grape and others. Margarite also hosts a monthly meeting of a Mystery Book Club. H.O.T./SnC is you haven't stopped by to meet Margarite, now is the time.)



MM: *What is your take on the future of book selling, both for the indies and the chains?*

MH: If you read the news, you know that a lot of the chains are hurting and there's been way too many indy closures. We're faced with technological challenges bookstore owners did not have to compete against back in the day, like computers, Game Boys, an environment where things travel at warp speed. But no one will ever convince me that there won't always be a place for books.



We knew when we entered this business that we probably wouldn't take our millions and run, but we're doing fine. We have a great team working here. We're like a small family – we have young people on staff, and women reentering the workplace after raising their families. We work hard, but it's work we love. I can't imagine not doing this.

MM: *Tell us about your books. Are they new, or do you trade in used books, too? And what are your best sellers?*

MH: We only carry new books, no used ones. Our best sellers by far are Texana. Our area's growing. We have a lot of new people



You're never too young to love books!

moving here from other places and who want to learn about the area, and a lot of tourists, too.

Children's books and young adult books are our second best sellers. I think we're a little different in that we gear our ordering to what our

customers ask for rather than following the trends. Historical fiction is our best selling fiction genre. We host books clubs and groups, and order to their preferences too. Mysteries probably make up 40 percent of our inventory.



In the time we visited, I saw a steady stream of customers, most of whom were known by name by the staff. They spanned several generations in age and taste. All things that are signs of healthy business. As a reader and writer, I can't resist a bookstore. The large chains are convenient and their bargains so tempting, but there's definitely a place in my heart, and I'm sure in yours too, for that little corner bookstore on the square. Treat yourself to something special – the jewel on the corner of Eight and Main in downtown Georgetown!

**Micqui Miller
HOTSHOTS! Editor**

(Spotlight Author - Continued from Page 6)

MM: *Would you like to share your heritage?*

DF: I am a mutt with smatterings of a lot of different nationalities. My father's side is predominately English; on my mother's, it is Germanic with a touch of northern Italian. My biggest ancestral claim to fame is that on my father's line, the first person to come to this country was a felt-maker who was an indentured servant to George Washington. In my mother's, there are those who fought in the Revolutionary War.

MM: *Are you a native Texan? If not, where are you from and how did you arrive in the Lone Star State?*

DF: No, I'm not a native Texan. I was born in Baltimore, lived in the mountains of Virginia, then moved to New Braunfels sixteen years ago.

MM: *Are you married? Any children?*

DF: I am married. We are celebrating our 25th anniversary with a trip to Jamaica in October. Together, we raised three children from our previous relationships.

MM: *Any pets?*

DF: Right now, we are down to just one, a cantankerous yellow tabby named Betty who adopted us over 12 years ago.

MM: *Are you a morning person or a night person?*

DF: Morning. I usually get up at 4:30, get caffeinated and get writing. Then I take a break with the sun comes up and the birds sing their first songs of the morning.

MM: *Do you play an instrument, sing or dance? Participate in live theater?*

DF: I dance when no one is watching, I sing when I am alone. I played the piano for years and did community theatre before I moved to Texas.

MM: *Are you a collector?*

DF: Of course, I collect books. My favorite collectible books are children's books from the first half of last century. The highlight of that collection are my Honey Bunch titles. I also have a collection of old glass paperweights with tourist destination or advertisements on the bottom.

MM: *What are your hobbies?*

DF: Reading and more reading. I enjoy flower gardening and herb gardening, too. And when the opportunity presents itself, I love to snorkel.

MM: *Do you consider yourself an introvert or an extravert? Did you ever morph from one to the other?*

DF: I once tested out as an extroverted introvert. I've never quite zoned in on that description but I guess it does fit me—I both love my time alone and love speaking in public and meeting with readers.

MM: *What would you do if money were no object?*

DF: I love writing and love being a writer. I have a difficult time connecting the money I make with the work I do. I think I'd just keep on living for the thrill of holding a new book I'd written in my hands.

MM: *If you could wish for anything, what would you wish for?*

DF: More time and the resource to make the most of that time.

MM: *Do you have plans to write another book?*

DF: I am finishing up a true crime book right now. I have a contract for an additional true crime book. I also plan to write a third Lucinda Pierce novel and a second Molly Mullet Mystery.

MM: *Where can readers find a copy of your book?*

DF: It is in a lot of stores and libraries. At this moment, I personally know that you can get a copy of **THE TROPHY EXCHANGE** at Murder by the Book in Houston, Curves in New Braunfels, and I think it should be available in all the Barnes & Noble stores in Austin, and definitely in the Bee Cave and Round Rocks stores where I've had signings. Of course, it is available from all the on-line outlets. However, some are currently out of stock since the book had to go into a second printing. You can also visit my website, **www.dianefanning.com**, and order an autographed copy of any of my books and also find links to other on-line venues to order a copy.

You'll also find a sample chapter from every one of my published books there.

For more information on Diane's latest release, THE TROPHY EXCHANGE, please turn to Page 10.

*** As mentioned in the introduction to Diane's interview, you can visit her friend Vance Homes, and enjoy his fascinating accounts of the pursuit of Poetic Justice at <http://www.vanceholmes.com/court>**

***The Trophy Exchange:*
A Lucinda Pierce Mystery**

By Diane Fanning

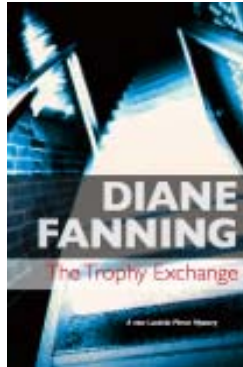
Severn House Publishers, Ltd.

July 2008

ISBN: 9780727866956 and

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Hardcover: \$27.95



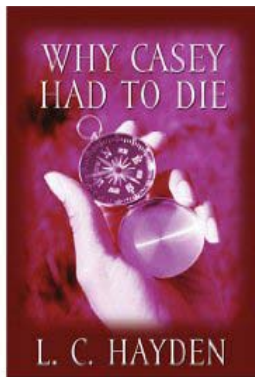
A fast-paced thriller introducing an unforgettable heroine - Homicide Investigator Lucinda Pierce is physically and emotionally scarred by her job. She is angry and bitter, but her life is her work. Lucinda gets sent to investigate the brutal killing of Dr. Kathleen Spencer. There seem to be links with other dead women: could it be the work of a serial killer? And will Lucinda be able to solve it or has she become too emotionally involved this time?

Library Journal: Fanning (*Bite the Moon*) provides plenty of forensic details, plot twists, and suspense. Though this near-perfect police procedural is not for the faint of heart, readers who like Kate Flora and Alex Kava will put it on their reserve lists. Highly recommended.

Kirkus Reviews: Fanning has produced an exciting, emotionally intense story with a complex heroine whose future adventures will be widely anticipated.

Booklist: Fanning's true-crime writing experience gives the story added verisimilitude, and she has made great strides at tightening her storytelling. She is one to watch

Book Club Queen: We all know by now that I'm a mystery lover and have read more than my fair share of books in this genre. So when I shout out "5 Stars" at the top of my lungs for Diane Fanning's *The Trophy Exchange* it is with extreme enthusiasm. Every now and then you encounter a book that just speaks to you. You can't put it down, you run the gamut of emotions from anger to fear to elation so intensely that you feel as if you are riding in the front pocket of the narrator.



***Why Casey Had to Die:*
A Harry Bronson
Mystery**

By L. C. Hayden

Five Star (ME)

December 2006

ISBN 9781594144936 and

1594144931

Hardcover: \$25.95

WHY CASEY HAD TO DIE has a mystery convention, a cold case, a savvy retired detective, great character development and a mystery that keeps you guessing. I enjoyed this book immensely. I highly recommend it. - *Karen Dyer*

Harry Bronson is a retired detective drawn into investigating a case that has haunted him for over twenty years. The murder of Casey Secrist had been Bronson's first case. Her boyfriend was eventually implicated in her murder; however, Bronson never fully believed he was guilty. Bronson begins receiving mysterious notes and finds himself the host of a murder-mystery convention with an all too familiar plot.

Following the murder of a convention member who appeared to have information about the case, Bronson finds himself with a group of suspects containing both familiar and unfamiliar faces. As Bronson becomes a suspect in the murder, his wife disappears and he must find a series of geocaches to find her and solve this decades old murder before the killer kills again.

Who wouldn't love the character of Harry Bronson? He is a smart, competent man who loves his wife and loves solving crimes. Throughout his career he was infamous for bending the rules slightly and he hasn't stopped now that he is retired.

Drawn in from the first page, I was reluctant to put the book down until the very end. In *Why Casey Had to Die*, L. C. Hayden has created a suspenseful tale full of interesting characters that will keep readers guessing. Every twist and turn adds depth to this well crafted story. All fans of whodunit mysteries will find a new series to devour. I am already anxiously awaiting the next Harry Bronson mystery. - *Anne K. Edwards*