

2025 LONDON RIGHTS CATALOG



Mari Lyons

MARCH 11-13

**JENNIFER LYONS
LITERARY AGENCY, LLC**

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ADULT FICTION

CROWN: A NOVEL

Evanthia Bromiley

GROVE PRESS JUNE 17, 2025

“Lyrical, unflinching, and emotionally compelling” (Dominic Smith), a debut novel tracking three days leading up to the eviction of a single mother and her nine-year-old twins from a trailer park in the American Southwest

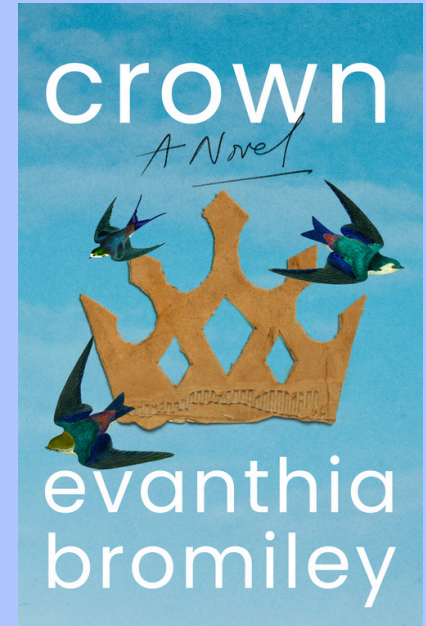
Jude Woods is on the brink of eviction. Pregnant, jobless, and mother to Evan and Virginia, she has three days to box up her family’s life and find a safe place to live. In the Woods’ quiet trailer park, neighbors keep to themselves, but it’s no secret Jude and her twins are in jeopardy—the eviction notice slapped on their front door like a white shout.

When Jude’s contractions flare just as their power is shut off, she rushes to the hospital instructing Evan and Virginia to hide in their car in the surrounding fields. If the children are discovered outside alone, they will be taken from her. Jude labors through the night in a crowded emergency room while the twins, desperate in the heat of the cramped car and spurred by their wild imaginations, strike out along the dangerous riverbank in search of a new home for their growing family. As night hurtles toward morning lockout, both mother and children reckon with what it means to live and dream in a modern America insistent on slamming doors.

Poetic and distinct, the voices of the three Woods open to a chorus of waitresses and oil men, veterans and graffiti artists as Crown trawls the laundromats, public bus systems, and waiting rooms of a forgotten blue-collar city. In this mesmerizing, singular debut, the tenacious spirit of a young family and their community comes to profound and moving life.

Advance praise for CROWN

“Evie has a particular strength in the way she portrays this family in jeopardy, never skimping on their emotional lives, but instead creating complex, layered scenes and moments of deep characterization. She has found opportunities to render beauty within otherwise bleak circumstances.”—Dominic Smith, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Last Painting of Sara de Vos*



Agent: Jennifer Lyons

Materials Available:

Finished Book

Rights Sold:

North American Grove/Atlantic

Rights Available:

All translation rights available.

[Evanthia Bromiley] is a writer who clearly has studied many great novels and then emerged with a voice wholly her own; a voice that shimmers with the kind of verve and light that arrives when a writer finds her true subject, then fearlessly accepts the challenge of writing about it.” —Dean Bakopoulos, author of *Summerlong*

About Evanthia Bromiley, the Author

Evanthia Bromiley is a graduate of the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers and the recipient of scholarships from the Aspen Institute, a Lighthouse Fellowship, a Lisel Mueller scholarship, and Elizabeth George and Carol Houck-Smith awards. Her short fiction and creative nonfiction can be found in *AGNI*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Five Points*, and elsewhere. When not writing, she works in impacted schools with young writers and their teachers as they sharpen their craft and voices, telling stories of growing up in the American Southwest. She lives in Durango, Colorado.

DISORDERLY MEN

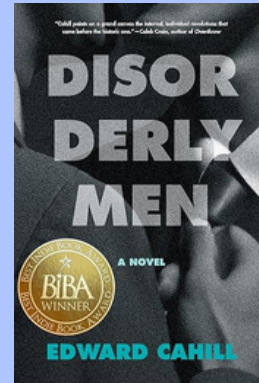
Edward Cahill

Fordham University Press - Empire State

Editions, (U.S. and Canada) JUNE 2025

(paperback); SEPTEMBER 2023 (hardcover)

- 2024 Gold Medal, LGBTQ+ Fiction, Independent Publishers Awards
- 2023 Best Indie Books Award for LGBT fiction
- Shortlisted for Cabell First Novelist Award
- For fans of period dramas about LGBT life such as "Queer", "Fellow Travelers", "Ripley"
- "Not since Edmund White's *The Beautiful Room is Empty* has pre-Stonewall queer New York been so expertly rendered." – QueerReader.com
- "Faceted, compelling . . . evokes a pre-Stonewall era of subversion, persecution, and growing defiance." – *Foreword Reviews*



DISORDERLY MEN is set in NYC's gay subculture in the period before the Stonewall Riots (the start of the gay rights movement in the US) and involves three men whose fates are thrown together when they're all caught in the police raid of a Greenwich Village bar. Three stories move in tandem, then intersect:

Roger Moorhouse, Wall Street banker and Westchester family man, sees his preciously guarded secret, and the safeguard of social status, threatened with ruin;

Columbia University literature professor Julian, living a careful but comparatively uncloseted life, finds his first committed relationship tested to its limits;

For Danny, a Bronx boy with a broadly diverse group of friends, the drama is a galvanizing, Spartacus moment: an injustice that he will not let stand. He is bent on violent revolt.

Blackmail, a private investigator, and Danny's personal quest for bloody retribution propel the novel to its conclusion, as each man meets the boundaries of his own fear, love, and shame. The stakes for each man are different – defined partly by social class – but all of them confront a fundamental question: how much happiness is he allowed to have ... and what share of it will he lay claim to? It's a novel that captures the period before organized protest begins, when a sense of mission, agency, and a correctable grievance is taking shape and power.

Agent: Pamela Malpas/JLLA

Materials Available:

Finished Book

Rights Sold:

Portuguese/Portugal (Alma dos Livros)

Film/TV rights via Independent Artists Group (Debbie Deuble-Hill).

Rights Available:

All translation rights available.

Praise for **DISORDERLY MEN**

"[B]right, vivid, funny, smart... A novel at once timeless and timely"—David Leavitt

"Story and style are perfectly aligned ... utterly absorbing."—*Passport* magazine

"A moving and deeply engaging portrait of pre-Stonewall New York . . . deftly uncovers the emotional and political complexity of the period."—Michael Bronski, author of *A Queer History of the U.S.*

Excerpt from **DISORDERLY MEN**

Roddy held up a copy of the *Post*.

"It's in the back," he said. "Next to last page."

Danny's face flashed hot as he searched his brain for some explanation or smoke screen or anything to deflect the truth. He knew that by simply taking the paper he'd practically admitted his guilt, but he couldn't think what else to do.

He went back to his office, closed the door, and on the next to last page of the paper found the article: "Police Raid Pervert Nest." It was a brief notice and the headline took up nearly as much space as the single sentence that followed: 'Early Friday morning, New York City Police arrested thirty-three men on charges of disorderly conduct at Caesar's Palace, a tavern on Bethune Street, after having received numerous complaints that homosexuals and other immoral persons were loitering on the premises.' Then there was a list of names and right near the top he saw his own: 'Daniel J. Duffy, age 23, 120 Starling Avenue, Apt. 8B, Bronx, grocery manager.'

He knew he'd given the cops all the information himself, but reading it on the page, so correct and precise—even the J. for St. Jude, who seemed to have given up on him altogether—was a terrible shock. He didn't just feel exposed. He felt dead. More than anything else, the notice looked like an obituary.

~~

"He's a painter, I think you mentioned," Roger said. "Your friend. Do you like his paintings?"

"Oh, I like them very much," Julian said, with a solemnity that was modulated by obvious pleasure. "They're big and messy but rather moving abstractions, very easy to stare at for half an hour. He's promised me one he's been working on."

"And he lives here with you?"

Julian seemed to bristle at the question at first but then smiled sadly. "He's been staying here most weekends," he said.

Roger tried to imagine how it all worked—eating, sleeping, friends, sex. He wondered if it was like two men living as unusually close roommates. But it was hard to picture Julian cooking bacon and eggs and Gus coming into the kitchen in his robe to give him a peck on the cheek. All he saw was naked bodies in a bed.

"It's all quite ordinary," Julian offered. "Just like men and women, really."

About the Author, Edward Cahill

Edward Cahill is a literary historian and professor at Fordham University in NYC and a 2025 judge for Publishing Triangle's Edmund White debut novel award.

THE DELICATE BEAST

Roger Celestin

Bellevue Literary Press, February 4, 2025

A novel of a life built on the ashes of childhood.

In the 1950s Tropical Republic, a boy lives amid opulence and privilege, spending days at the beach or in the cool hills above the sweltering capital, enjoying leisurely Sunday lunches around the family compound's swimming pool. That is, until the reign of The Mortician begins, unleashing unimaginable horrors that bring his childhood idyll to an end. Narrowly escaping the violent fate visited on so many of his fellow citizens, he and his brother follow their parents into exile in the United States where they must start a new life. But as he grows, he never feels at home, and leaves his family to travel across Europe and outrun the ghosts of the past.

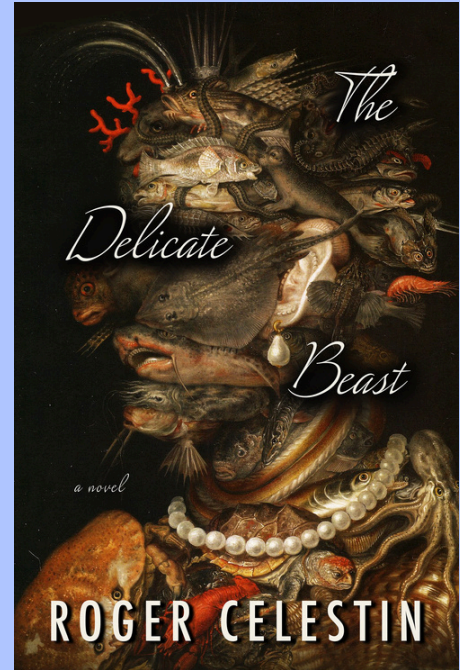
A searing debut novel of a life lived in the shadow of history, *THE DELICATE BEAST* portrays the persistent, pernicious legacy of political violence.

Advanced Praise for *THE DELICATE BEAST*

"In a headlong flight from history's black-winged angels, *THE DELICATE BEAST* spirals across the globe and the twentieth century in densely sensual prose that merges the Caribbean surreal of Alejo Carpentier with the looping, philosophical conundrums of Javier Mariás." —Esther Allen, translator of Javier Mariás's *Dark Back of Time* and Antonio Di Benedetto's *Zama*

"From the novel's lush opening, set in the 'Tropical Republic,' to countries and cities well beyond its frontiers, Celestin's voice echoes not only in a world of pain and violence, but also in the beauty and miraculous weapon of literature." —Maryse Condé, author of *Waiting for the Waters to Rise* and *The Gospel According to the New World*

"Brilliantly written, *THE DELICATE BEAST* is a sweeping novel of a young man's search for identity that follows him from a boyhood touched by the splendors and dangers of the 'Tropical Republic' into a new and startling international life. It is a powerful tale." —Peter Constantine, author of *The Purchased Bride*



Agent: Jennifer Lyons

Materials Available:

Full manuscript

Rights Sold:

North American rights sold to
Bellevue Literary Press.

“Henry James once said that it takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature. THE DELICATE BEAST is a fine example of history writ fierce and smart and large. This novel combines superb writing and psychological depth with grace and a knowing eye. Celestin’s protagonist struggles against the ‘determination of birth, blood, place, and time,’ until the ending suggests yet another possible beginning.” — Colum McCann, author of *Let the Great World Spin* and *Apeirogon*

About Roger Celestin, the Author

Roger Celestin was born in Haiti, emigrated to the United States at the age of eleven, and is Professor Emeritus of French and Comparative Literature at the University of Connecticut. THE DELICATE BEAST (forthcoming from Bellevue Literary Press in February 2025) is his first novel. He lives in New York.

THE SECRET WAR OF JULIA CHILD

Diana R. Chambers

Sourcebooks/Landmark (World English)

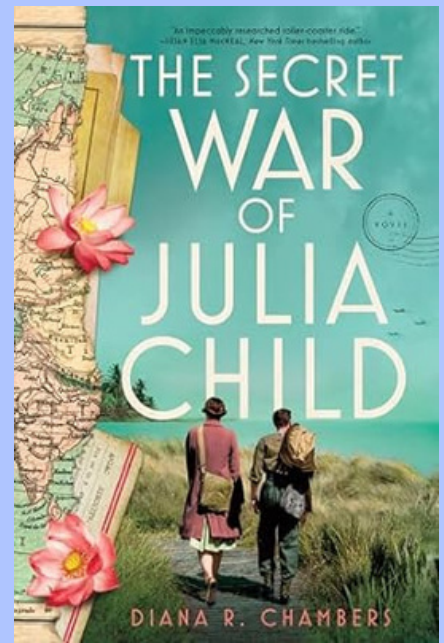
October 22, 2024

- National bestseller (*USA Today*)
- International bestseller (Globe & Mail)
- Independent Booksellers' bestseller (California and Midwest)
- One of *People* magazine's Best Books of Fall 2024
- A *New York Post* Best New Book Release
- On the *Washington Post*'s list of Best Historical Fiction of 2024
- On *Library Journal*'s list of Best Crime Fiction of 2024
- 30,000+ copies sold
- A speaker at the 2025 Ceylon Literary and Art Festival, Sri Lanka
- Appearing at Historical Novel Society (Las Vegas) June 2025

It's a little-known fact that before she became America's first television cooking star, Julia Child worked in the secrets trade in Asia during World War II.

Single, 6 foot 2, and thirty years old, Julia McWilliams took a job working for America's first espionage agency, years before cooking or France entered her mind. *THE SECRET WAR OF JULIA CHILD* traces Julia's transformation from ambitious Pasadena blue blood to Washington, DC file clerk, to head of General "Wild Bill" Donovan's secret File Registry as part of the Office of Strategic Services (precursor to the CIA).

The wartime journey takes her to the Far East, to Asia's remote frontlines of then-Ceylon, India, and China, where she finds purpose, adventure, self-knowledge—and love with mapmaker Paul Child. The spotlight has rarely shone on this fascinating time in the life of Julia Child. It is the world of a woman in a World War II spy station who has no idea of the impact she'll eventually have on the world. Her journey will delight both historical fiction fans and lovers of America's most beloved home chef.



Agent: Pamela Malpas/JLLA
Materials Available:
Finished books
Rights Sold:
Hungarian (Kossuth, sold at auction); **Ukrainian** (Fabula-One More Page); all other translation rights available
Film/tv rights via Amy Schiffman at Echo Lake Entertainment

Praise for **THE SECRET WAR OF JULIA CHILD**

"A compelling example of how fiction can create an alternate narrative . . . brings to life a forgotten period of Asian history."—*Financial Times* (Sri Lanka)

"The celebrated chef's zest, humor and generous spirit come through brilliantly in this captivating fictional take on her WWII work in Asia for a U.S. spy agency."—*People* magazine

"A work of alternative history as delectable as Child's coq au vin" —*The Washington Post*

"Fans of romance novels will spot the makings of an enemies-to-lovers tale...the sweet, slightly old-fashioned romance is fueled by lots of spicy, delicious-sounding food."—*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

"Deeply researched and written with verve, this imagining of a little-known part of chef Julia Child's life—one rife with courage and resilience—shines."—*The Toronto Star*

"Written with flair and charm, Chambers's novel really heats up whenever sex, danger, or dinner come into view."—*Library Journal*

"Chambers excels at explaining the complex geopolitics of wartime Asia and describing the landscape and delicious foods found there"—Booklist

"At turns charming, funny, and inspiring, **THE SECRET WAR OF JULIA CHILD** is a vividly written and deeply imaginative new take on World War II. By letting us see this historic moment through the eyes of a beloved American icon, Chambers beautifully captures the spirit of the women of the greatest generation." —Dr. Lena Andrews, author of nationally bestselling *Valiant Women: The Extraordinary American Servicewomen Who Helped Win World War II*

"Riveting twists and turns . . . not only a vivid exploration of a lesser-known chapter in the life of one of America's most beloved personalities, it's also an impeccably researched roller-coaster ride, with spies, danger, deception and heroics."—Susan Elia MacNeal, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Mr. Churchill's Secretary*

"In this gripping novel, a young and intrepid Julia Child tumbles headlong into espionage and romance in World War II Asia. Diana Chambers merges little-known details from Child's personal history with true wartime events to build a dynamic story. More, please!" —Sujata Massey, award-winning author of *The Mistress of Bhatia House*

"An exciting, little-known reveal of the story behind Julia Child's WWII service. A must read." —Rhys Bowen, bestselling author of *The Paris Apartment*

"This novel has everything I love—romance, intrigue, mouthwatering food, and a woman who makes no apologies for her voracious appetite for life!" —Kim Fay, bestselling author of the national bestseller *Love & Saffron*

"Chambers' impressive research informs this engaging novel—and yes, the food is spectacular!" — Laura Kalpakian, author of *The Great Pretenders*

Excerpt from **THE SECRET WAR OF JULIA CHILD**

It was already hot in the postage-stamp studio she'd been lucky to find in overcrowded Washington. When she leaned over the sink to push up the window, a blast of humid air bounced off the dawn-streaked alley wall, almost near enough to touch. A long diagonal crack down the bricks reminded her of the Italian coastline, those valiant fellows preparing to wade out of their landing craft into the Salerno surf—and the unknown. Last night, she'd learned of Italy's imminent surrender, but also of German forces massing outside Rome.

She sniffed. Coffee boiled is coffee spoiled, their cook often declared. Turning to the hotplate, she sniffed again.
Burnt toast. "Oh, my."

Mother Caro used to say she could burn water, but with such tenderness Julia felt embraced rather than criticized. Feeling the warmth of her smile, she closed her eyes. With your bright future, Jukie, you need never step into a kitchen. You'll be too busy to cook.

She dropped the toast in the waste bin. Fortunately, the OSS cafeteria produced delicious, deep-fried doughnuts.

~

"Scuttlebutt I picked up last night at Hotel Galle is there's some rivalry between US and British clandestine services."
Jane zipped her lips.

"Whoever fed you that line obviously had too much to drink." Julia looked into her glass. "Speaking of which, I could use a refill."

"Me, too." Jane raised her hand for the waiter, surveying the attractive males. "A pity you're married, Betty."

"If you knew Alex you wouldn't say that," she replied coolly.

Jane smiled. "Well, Julia might get lucky."

Sometimes she could smack her. As a fragrant breeze wafted through the open doors, moist but pleasant, skin warm, a couple splashed around the swimming pool, tossing a ball and laughing. Betty's husband was chasing down intel in the Burmese jungles, while they were drinking cool gin-and-tonics, cosseted in colonial luxury.

But Julia had her own intel to pursue. Intel that might inform the decisions of the President of the United States. She pushed her drink aside.

About **Diana R. Chambers, the Author**

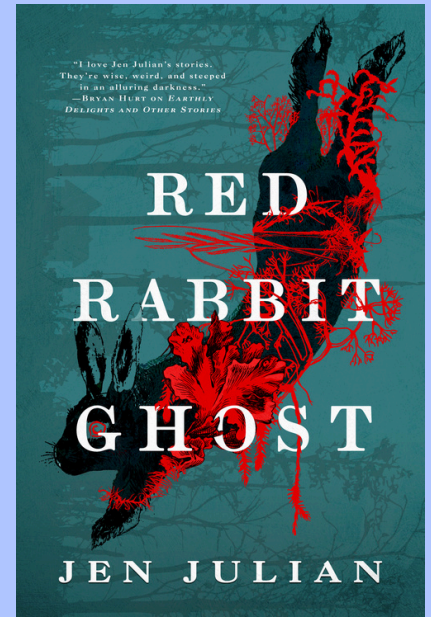
Diana R. Chambers was born with a book in one hand and a passport in the other. She studied Asian art history at university, worked at a Paris translation agency, then began an export business in India. She is an experienced scriptwriter and has followed her stories around the world. Diana lives in Northern California and Aix-en-Provence, France, with her fellow-traveler husband, artist daughter, and feral cat, Marco Polo.

RED RABBIT GHOST

Jen Julian

Orbit, Run For It, July 22, 2025

- An impulsive young outcast confronts his small town’s dark secrets in this atmospheric and haunting debut horror novel from brilliant new voice Jen Julian.
- A haunting, luminous Southern Gothic novel following a young man returning to his hometown to finally solve the mystery of his mother’s death.
- With confident, assured prose, a lived-in southern setting, and a weird fiction edge, this is perfect for fans of T. Kingfisher and Jeff VanderMeer.



The town of Blacknot is not what it appears, and a place on its desolate edge known only as The Night House is calling . . .

What remains of Jesse’s mother can fit inside an old jerky tin. Photos, postcards, a single, worn-out bracelet. But nothing that can explain why she was found dead eighteen years earlier on the bank of a river, her infant son left wailing by her side. When Jesse starts to receive anonymous messages promising him answers, he returns home to the regressive town of Blacknot, North Carolina so that his lifelong obsession can finally be laid to rest.

But Jesse’s investigation is stirring up trouble with the locals, including his well-armed ex-boyfriend and the mysterious daughter of a local businessman, each with their own inscrutable agendas. They will soon find that this backwater town holds a power more volatile than any of them could have imagined, and that the answers they seek might be better left buried.

Advanced Praise for RED RABBIT GHOST

Deeply immersive and darkly mysterious. Red Rabbit Ghost is certain to be one of the year’s standout horror reads for its complex family drama, richly textured setting, and modern Southern Gothic flavor.”—Craig DiLouie, author of How to Make a Horror Movie and Survive

Excerpt from RED RABBIT GHOST

Jesse keeps his dead mother’s things in an old Tarbarrel tin. Pork jerky smell, black pepper and molasses, ontained alongside photographs. His mother’s senior yearbook picture—her sharp, toothy grin. A Polaroid of her and Aunt Nancy toilet-papering the Confederate Memorial in cont.

Agent: Jessica Felleman

Materials Available:

1st Pass PDF

Rights Sold:

North American to Orbit

Rights Available:

UK, Translation, Film/TV

handled with Danny Hertz at

Gotham Group

downtown Blacknot. Nancy was seventeen then, his mother nine, both dressed in bell sleeves and fringe like it was still the 60s, though the Polaroid was taken by Jesse's grandmother in 1982. On the back, an inscription: *Nancy Jane & Constance Louise, getting in trouble.*

Also inside the tin: twelve postcards addressed to Nancy while she was in graduate school, messages in his mother's affected teenage voice—*If you find a man in the Queen City, bring him home so that we might sacrifice him to the swamp gods and ensure the harvest.*

Also: one bracelet of black wooden beads, which he guesses she must have worn.

Also: a series of articles from the paper about how they found her, dead, on the bank of the Miskwa River eighteen summers ago, and a small notebook of inscrutable thoughts, facts, and fantasies (Jesse couldn't remember his mother, so he resorted to inventing details), which he wrote when he was a kid.

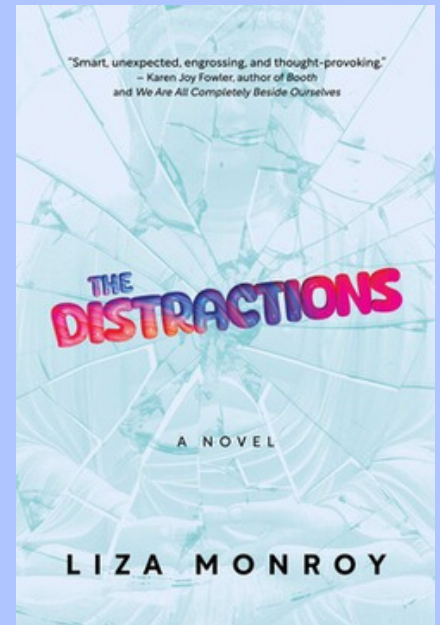
About Jen Julian, the Author

Jen Julian's previous publications include a short story collection, *Earthly Delights and Other Apocalypses* (Press 53, 2018), which was the winner of Press 53's Short Fiction Prize, as well as work in numerous literary journals, most recently a story in *Third Coast Magazine*, which received distinction in *Best American Short Stories* 2023. Jen holds a PhD in English from the University of Missouri and an MFA in Fiction from UNC Greensboro. A 2016 Clarion Alumna, she has contributed fiction both to the Sewanee Writers' Conference and the Texas Book Festival. These days, Jen lives in the mountains of North Georgia with her enormous ginger cat and teaches creative writing at Young Harris College.

THE DISTRACTIONS

Liza Monroy

Regalo Press, January 14, 2025



At a professional convention, solitary tech worker Mischa Osborn, who is mourning the shelving of her passion project—an algorithm capable of love—has a chance encounter with a HighlightReel celebrity, Nicolás Adán Luchano. Mischa experiences a brief but intense connection she mistakenly believes is going to last forever and will grant her a starring role and partnership she'd never admit to having wanted, least of all to herself.

After Nic vanishes, she watches him relentlessly on Reel until she discovers the truth about what happened, which, rather than giving her the answer she thinks she needs in order to move on, only leads her further down a spiraling rabbit hole of obsession and even “realspace” stalking, all the way from New York to Paris to Los Angeles.

When her journey and its ensuing deceptions land Mischa square in the life and world of “momfluencer” Ari Tyler-McKenna, who on the surface couldn't be more different from Mischa, Mischa discovers that what connects us are the common feelings simmering below the surface, feelings of tech-induced disconnection, and the desire for something that seems just out of reach no matter who or where you are, threads that cannot be watched onReel.

Meanwhile, as Mischa obsessively watches Nic and his new love, someone is equally obsessed with Mischa, tracking her every move, perhaps even controlling her story.

THE DISTRACTIONS invites us to reflect on who we are watching, and why.

Advanced Praise for THE DISTRACTIONS

“Smart, unexpected, engrossing, and thought-provoking. I'm honestly in awe.” —Karen Joy Fowler, author of *Booth*, Pen Faulkner award-winner and Man Booker Prize finalist for *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*

“It's the rare novel that has made me see the world differently.” —Elizabeth McKenzie, National Book Award longlisted author of *The Portable Veblen* and *The Dog of the North*

“Philip K. Dick meets *Bridget Jones' Diary*.” —Kristin Wilson, author of *Others Milk*

Agent: Jennifer Lyons

Materials Available:

Final PDF

Rights Available:

World English sold to Regalo. All translation rights available. Film/TV rights available. Film Agent: Michael Cendejas for Lynn Pleshette Agency.

About Liza Monroy, the Author

After getting her start in the storied William Morris Agency mailroom, Liza left the business side of creativity to pursue her calling as a writer. Her books include the memoir *The Marriage Act: The Risk I Took to Keep My Best Friend in America and What It Taught Us About Love* (Counterpoint/Soft Skull 2014), the debut novel *Mexican High* (Spiegel & Grau/Random House 2008), and *Seeing As Your Shoes Are Soon To Be On Fire* (Counterpoint/Soft Skull Press 2016), a collection of personal essays based on one of the “most popular, provocative, and unforgettable” columns for *The New York Times*’ “Modern Love” column and a voicemail from an ex. Another of her “Modern Love” installments was selected and read by Malin Ackerman for the series’ podcast. Her Longreads essay “Soli/dairy/ty” was selected for *The Best American Food Writing 2021*. Liza’s work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New York Times* magazine, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *O, Marie Claire*, *Longreads*, and many other publications and anthologies, including *The New York Times*’ *Best of Modern Love*, *Goodbye To All That: Writers on Loving and Leaving New York*, *O’s Little Book of Calm and Comfort*, and *Wedding Cake for Breakfast*. She was the inaugural John E. Nance Writer-in-Residence at the Thurber House in Columbus, Ohio and has been awarded residencies at the Jack Kerouac Project of Orlando and Kimmel Nelson Harding Center. She earned an M.F.A. from Columbia University in 2010 and lives in Santa Cruz, CA.

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Cory O'Brien

Pantheon, March 4, 2025

- From the beloved internet humorist, a debut novel that introduces an unforgettable investigator to the drowned streets of L.A. in a hugely imaginative and heartfelt blend of noir and cyberpunk.
- **A Publisher's Weekly Most Anticipated Book!**
- **"Sci-fi at its absolute very best."** –Peter Clines, NYT bestselling author of *Paradox Bound* and *The Broken Room*
- **Starred reviews from Library Journal and Booklist**



In a mostly underwater near-future Los Angeles, aging combat-drone veteran Orr Vue now lives a simple and small life, trading snippets of what's become the most valuable currency: information. So when the cops show up at his door looking for data on a murder he's not even aware has happened, things get interesting for the first time in 25 years.

At first, Orr is happy to exchange whatever he knows about the demise of InfoDrip's top exec to buy booze and pay rent on his memory storage, but that plan goes to hell when Orr's old boyfriend, Auggie Wolf, shows up as the number one suspect. Forced to stretch his atrophied spy skills and take his illegal horde of drones out of retirement alongside his busted knees, Orr finds himself in the crosshairs of the militarized police, a family of megarich corporate heirs, a clan of emancipated AIs, and a cult. Barely avoiding getting killed with every clue he collects, Orr realizes he's uncovered not just a murder, but a conspiracy that threatens Auggie's very existence. Ahh, the things we do for love...

But in a world where memories can be bought and sold, how can you truly know who anyone is—or what you yourself are capable of? Fast paced, funny, and shockingly romantic, *Two Truths and a Lie* is Raymond Chandler reinvented for the 22nd century.

Praise for TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

"O'Brien keeps your head in the action with antic, lyrical wit and vivid . . . action scenes as Orr's search for Mahoney's killer becomes more brutally complex. It all works out in extremely weird, perversely satisfying ways." —Kirkus Reviews

Agent: Jessica Felleman
Materials Available:
Final PDF
Rights Sold: North American
to Pantheon
Rights Available: UK,
Translation, Film/TV

"Ross McDonald meets William Gibson in this superb cyberpunk mystery. . . .
The noir narrative is cyberpunk perfect." —Don Vicha, Booklist (starred review)
January 1, 2025 print edition

"O'Brien's . . . fiction debut is a highly intriguing vision of the near future that
examines the role of memory in a functional aspect, which also underscores the
utility of forgetting: 'Funes the Memorious' by Jorge Luis Borges meets *Total Recall*
by Philip K. Dick, with a wry narration that balances the grim reality.—Henry
Bankhead, Library Journal, Don't-Miss Books | December 2024 Starred Reviews Round Up

"TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE is a masterpiece of shifting memory with twist after twist you'll
never see coming. Sci-fi at its absolute very best."—Peter Clines, New York Times bestselling author
of *Paradox Bound* and *The Broken Room*

"Boldly inventive, peppered with breakneck action and a blend of speculative wonder
and humor, Cory O'Brien's TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE packs an unforgettable punch.
Utilizing the vehicle of a thrilling, emotional, often hilarious cyberpunk detective story,
it pokes at the delicate line between memory and truth, ultimately wondering whether there
is even a difference. The result is ambitious, masterful, and hugely entertaining."
— Jinwoo Chong, author of *Flux* and *I Leave It Up to You*

"O'Brien's imagination has the raw power to go toe-to-toe with Neal Stephenson
and Philip K. Dick. This hardboiled cyberpunk gem is packed with dark wonders at every turn."
—Daniel Hornsby, author of *Sucker*

"TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE is a compulsively readable debut novel, an intricately plotted
cyberpunk-noir mystery that takes the idea that information is currency to hilarious and shocking
extremes."—Dexter Palmer, author of *Version Control*

"A stunning achievement, TWO TRUTH AND A LIE is many things at once: a hilarious
satire, a gripping thriller, a meditation on memory and identity, and a love story that
will have you wiping tears from your eyes, all set in a carnivalesque future where the
darkest dreams of capitalism have come true. Like other great comic novelists—Thomas
Pynchon, Rachel Yoder, Charles Yu—Cory O'Brien balances humor and pathos
to marvelous effect, a literary magician who can do almost anything on the page."
—Scott Guild, author of *Plastic*

"TWO TRUTH AND A LIE hit me square in the sweet spot: a propulsive story and crazy
cool tech mixed with healthy doses of noir, humor, and romance. But it's more than that,
too; a meditation on the amorphous and delicate nature of memory. Don't sleep on this
knockout of a debut."—Rob Hart, author of *Assassins Anonymous*

Excerpt from **TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE**

The L.A. sun squeezed in through my building’s cracked roof and poured itself onto the sheet-metal ceiling of my compartment, cooking me awake almost an hour before my kortiko would’ve zapped me conscious otherwise. Mornings are worthless. Nobody wants to buy a memory of bloodshot eyeballs and nostalgia for last night’s liquor, so my archives are loaded with identical copies of the same seven minutes of suffering, stretching all the way back to when I took the fact-checking gig at InfoDrip a decade and a half ago. Still better than your job, though.

I have some sympathy for you, since we’re in the same business. Difference for me was, I corrected a higher class of information than you kids on the municipal blockchain. More work to verify, but worth more. I’m sure most of the stuff you get on commission is nothing but conspiracy theories—“No, the mole men are not invading your teeth,” “Yes, gravity is a universal force, unaffected by how much raw beef you eat.” This, I assure you, is not that. Listen till the end, and I promise to make this submission worth your while. And, just for you, I’ve included plenty of irrelevant detail to line your pockets with. So where was I?

Right. A perfectly awful Wednesday morning in July. I peeled off sheets that would’ve been drier if I’d pissed in them and began the forty-five-minute process of convincing my atrophied muscles to crawl out of bed and carry me to work. My commute was five steps long, bed to table. At my age, that’s five steps too long, but I find that if I stay in bed to work my spine’s a solid rod by the end of the day, and not the kind of solid rod I like. At the table, I poured myself a bowl of Grape-Nuts drowning in caffeinated milk and slapped a handful of knockoff Think tablets into my mouth. Gotta keep the brain slippery, as the kids say. I stuck a lunch pack to my arm, strapped the Frosty to my face, and—with nothing else to do—made the fateful decision to clock in forty-five minutes early.

About **Cory O’Brien, the Author**

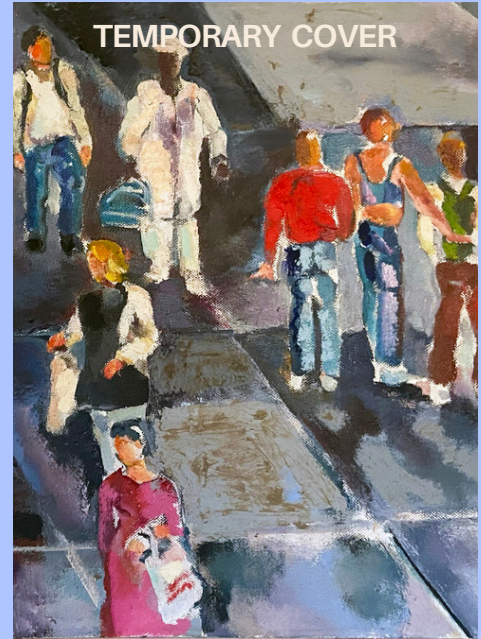
Cory O'Brien is the author of *Zeus Grants Stupid Wishes* and *George Washington Is Cash Money*. He has written for numerous award-winning video games, including *Monster Prom* and *Holovista*, and designed multiple tabletop games, including *Inhuman Conditions* and *Hand to Hand Wombat*. He lives in Chicago.

THE SHAPE OF DREAMS

April Reynolds

Alfred A. Knopf, February 2026

- April Reynolds is a bright star on the horizon. I could have kept reading long after the book ended. —Gloria Naylor, author of *The Men of Brewster Place*
- “A wonderous debut, a soulful, luxuriant riff on love and loss. Like the best of the blues, this novel has chops, and its music lingers, long after the last articulated notes.” —Oscar Hijuelos, author of *The Mambo Kings*
- “Compulsive reading. . .Reynolds is a natural-born storyteller, a gifted writer of lyrical prose, and a maker of indelible characters.” Randall Kenan, author of *Visitation of Spirits*
- “An intriguing exploration of the nature of memory, the burdens of motherhood and history, and the universal, bittersweet longing for home.” *The Washington Post*
- “The story of three generations of unforgettable Black women is as lush as its Southern setting, with rich narrative that causes readers to feel the sultry Southern heat fusing the past and present of one Black family.” *Ebony*



Mari Lyons

In this second novel by the award-winning novelist, a trio of women in East Harlem come together in friendship and tragedy to organize against the systems that hold them down.

It is East Harlem in the mid-1980 and the large and formidable (some say crazy woman) Twin Johnson discovers the body of Anita’s boy, Tyrone, on the sidewalk. She does just what her uncle, who runs the family crack business out of his basement warned her never to do: She calls the police, setting in motion a cycle of events that expand the consciousness of this struggling community.

Anita, a postal worker, army widow, and church lady, is determined to solve her son’s murder. Her quest for justice rattles the neighborhood, which itself is like a complex character in this teeming novel, with its Mets fans and gossips, immigrant shop owners and sneaker-obsessed teens. The local dreamers include a charismatic man of the cloth, a teenage girl with a Whitney Houston voice and no prospects at all, and Anita’s opinionated new bestie, Wanda, who brings both blessings and curses into Anita’s exploded world.

Anita, Wanda, and Twin, the power triad of this vibrant novel, are all drawn into the basement den as the reader sinks into their rich backstories. Will they be able to break its spell? Will the Reverend’s pressure on the authorities to find Tyrone’s killer yield answers? In the end, in the New York Mets’ banner summer of 1986, this community will come together to mourn, find justice, and shape their dreams as best they can.

Agent: Jennifer Lyons
Materials Available:
Manuscript avail. 10/30, less copyedits
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All translation rights available

About April Reynolds, the Author

April Reynolds is a novelist and professor of Creative Writing at Sarah Lawrence College. She is a recipient of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Award and a PEN Prize. She lives in New York City with her two sons.

UNDERJUNGLE

James Sturz

Unnamed Press, (U.S. & Canada) August 2023

- Finalist, *Foreword Reviews* Best Fantasy 2023
- Italian translation Edizioni Atlantide, Premio Caro finalist
- “A fabulous, poetic, mind-expanding adventure” - *Undercurrent*
- “Vividly strange”—*Literary Hub*
- “My favorite novel of the year and certainly one of the most unusual books in 2023”—*Travel Weekly*
- “Luminous, strange, thought-provoking, profound”—Junot Diaz
- *Sirene* magazine feature/interview (Italy) March 2025



In a world most people have never seen, deep below the surface of the ocean, a complex environment of life forms including sharks, octopus, jellyfish, and strange creatures beyond our imagination exist. They live, love, and examine their existence through instincts developed over millions of years, and—perhaps—belief systems as complex as any of our own.

Into their world comes an alien species—a man—who will say nothing over the course of the novel, but whose presence alters everything.

A lyrical novel of love and war, encompassing environment, art, philosophy, and grief, UNDERJUNGLE is as rich and deep as the sea floor. The story’s existential question—the purpose of human life—is buoyed by humor tinged with the unshakeable melancholy of loss.

Asked whether the story’s beauty and cruelty is intended to mirror the human condition; Sturz answers, “It’s not the human condition, it’s the condition.”

Praise for UNDERJUNGLE

“An aquatic, philosophical and intensely lyrical novel akin to Meijer or Ed Yong”—*La Repubblica*

“Extraordinarily poetic writing” - *Il Foglio*

(cont.)

Agent: Pamela Malpas/JLLA

Materials Available:

Finished Book

Rights Sold:

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Italian: Atlantide. All other translation rights available.

“Sturz’s provocation is an invitation not only to take care of the sea – still sadly far from our climate agenda – but to learn from the sea and its inhabitants to take care of one another.” —*Il Manifesto*

“[U]nforgettable.... It is a prose poem, a song and a cry for a better life.” —*Messaggero Veneto*

“A mesmerizing dissection of the best and worst of us, set in an undersea world ... so vividly and masterfully drawn that it feels both foreign and familiar. I have never read anything quite like it.” —
Shelby Van Pelt, author of *Remarkably Bright Creatures*

“Strange, beautiful, and brilliant!” —Sy Montgomery, author of *The Soul of an Octopus*

“James Sturz is the Jacques Cousteau of storytelling. In UNDERJUNGLE he has crafted a magical, mystical, almost mythological narrative unlike anything else I know, an undersea morality tale.”
—William Gibaldi, author of *Hold the Dark and Busy Monsters*

“Totally unlike anything you’ve ever read before” —Caroline Leavitt, *New York Times* Bestselling
author of *With or Without You*

“Underjungle is poetry, fantasy, love, war, mystery and philosophy. This book will make you think about the ocean in ways you haven’t before, and that might just make you want to protect it.” —Jean-Michel Cousteau, Ocean Futures Society

“James Sturz creates a world so colorful, imaginative and diverse that it could only exist within the waters of Planet Ocean. It brings us into intimate contact with a wildly strange, incredible, and yet familiar imagining of aquatic life.” —Paul Watson,
founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

Excerpt from UNDERJUNGLE

“Deep below the surface, our world is cold, dark and content. Colors are fickle. Red disappears first as you descend, followed by the yellow of the sun. The hundred shades of blue last the longest, but eventually there is only black—and the candied ooze of the ocean floor.”

“What did I hope for? That we’d become each other’s home, a movable fortress with nooks and crannies, where we could put our memories and keep them safe. I wanted the opposite of the ocean’s endless space.”

“I sing a song to the blood-drenched sea. A song of victory and of loss, of gain and sorrow, of life and death.”

About James Sturz, the Author

James Sturz is a diver and freelance journalist with profile as an outdoor writer (especially about oceans and diving) and credits in *The Atlantic*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Outside*, and other magazines. A member of the Explorers Club, his travel and food writing has been anthologized in *The Best Travel Writing* from the *New York Times* and *Best Food Writing*. His first novel, *Sasso*, was widely praised. James splits his time between Hawaii and New York City. His website is www.jamessturz.com.

ADULT NON-FICTION

Persuasion Genius

The Art and Science of Getting What You Want

Joshua Bandoch

BenBella Books, Spring 2026

Joshua Bandoch, Ph.D. brings a unique blend of mastery applying insights from a wide range of fields to any persuasion situation and

extensive practical communications work as a speechwriter, consultant, elite university instructor, and policy advocate as Head of Policy at the Illinois Policy Institute to teaching anyone how to become a persuasion genius.

As politics and technology increasingly divide us, we're losing the ability to communicate and persuade others. In political discussions, we dismiss anyone who doesn't think like us, making constructive conversation, let alone agreement, impossible. As technology gets better every day at sucking us in, we're forgetting how to even talk to each other. Far from being persuasive, we push people away or don't even interact with them in the first place. Most books on persuasion either double down on how to make your point and move on if someone doesn't agree, or offer surface tactics that quickly dissipate.

Persuasion Genius is different. *Persuasion Genius* combines groundbreaking research with practical experience persuading at the highest levels to give you a fresh approach that will get you what you want and need when it matters. It has three simple steps. Adopt the "persuader's mindset." Use knowledge of how our brains work to your advantage. And apply tested techniques to any situation. Whether you're trying to get a job, negotiate a salary, have a tough conversation, reduce your rent, deal with a lawyer, score a great price on a new car, or get a free room upgrade at check in, *Persuasion Genius* teaches you how to navigate any political, professional, or personal situation more effectively to get what you want and need each and every day.

Persuasion Genius

The art and science of getting
what you want

TEMPORARY COVER

Joshua Bandoch

Agent: Jennifer Lyons
Materials Available:
Finished manuscript
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available

Excerpt from **PERSUASION GENIUS**

Take a piece of paper, roll it up into a ball, throw it at someone, and try to make it stick to them. Did it? Nope. It just annoyed, and maybe offended them.

And yet, that's how we usually try to "persuade." We take our logic, roll it up, then throw it at others, certain it'll stick. If we hit someone in the head with our logic-rock, we'll knock something loose and make them start thinking like us. If we just collect enough data, discern the "truth," get our logic locked and loaded, then fire it at our opponent, we'll win, making them a loser in the process, which will motivate them to join us and become a winner.

Totally unrelated question: Has anyone ever persuaded you of anything this way? Nope.

We like to think persuasion is a "rational" endeavor. After all, if reason doesn't guide us, what does? Irrationality? The "Age of Reason" that reigned a few centuries ago during the Enlightenment held up reason as the ideal, and the best means of improving the world.

There's just one minor problem with viewing "persuasion" as primarily "rational": it fundamentally misunderstands the human mind, so it's counterproductive. An abundance of neuroscience and psychology research definitively shows reason doesn't come first in our cognitive processes. Which means our persuasive endeavors can't start with it.

The crucial upshot of this misunderstanding is that we focus on being "right," which prevents of us from making a difference, which is what persuasion is all about.

So: How does persuasion happen?

It starts with feelings. How come? Because our cognitive sequence always (yes, always) works like this: We feel first, then reason. Reason is never first. All human brains are wired this way. Sure, sometimes we feel then, a fraction of a second later, reason. Often, though, there's a notable delay before reasoning kicks in. Reasoning frequently arrives too late to matter in what we think, say, and do; sometimes, it never arrives. Just think of a time you were so overcome with anger you could only feel, and did something you still regret.

About Joshua Bandoch, the Author

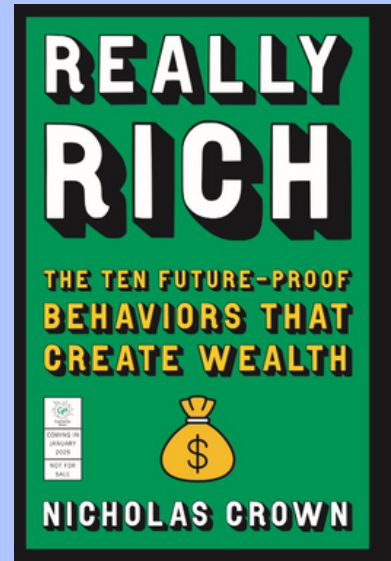
Josh Bandoch is the Head of Policy at the Illinois Policy Institute. His policy research focuses on empowering people to rise out of poverty, increasing social mobility, improving housing affordability, and removing barriers to opportunity (e.g. burdensome regulations). His writing has appeared in popular outlets like *National Review*, *Real Clear Policy*, *Real Clear Markets*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *The Washington Examiner*, *The Washington Times*, and *Discourse*. He is the author of *The Politics of Place: Montesquieu, Particularism, and the Pursuit of Liberty* (University of Rochester Press, 2017). He was a postdoctoral fellow at Brown University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He earned his bachelor's in Government and Politics from the University of Maryland, College Park, and his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Notre Dame.

REALLY RICH

The Ten Future-Proof Behaviors That Create Wealth Nicholas Crown

Hachette Go, January 26, 2025

From viral social media phenomenon Nicholas Crown of the Rich vs. Really Rich series comes a modern formula for personal and financial success in today's economy.



Crown has demonstrated for the TikTok masses that without the social grease of kindness immeasurable value would be robbed from society and innovation would grind to a halt. In Really Rich, he provides his ten-point formula for building wealth and happiness, including:

- Get rich by making someone else's life easier
- Optimize for quality of life, not a dollar amount
- Iterate until someone starts clapping
- Own creativity to become future-proof

Crown encourages his readers to embrace humility and realize that our world, due to continuing advances in technology and communication, is now a non-zero-sum game in which everyone can contribute to the growth of an ever-expanding economic pie without taking resources from another.

Excerpt from REALLY RICH

The lottery isn't itself lucky, only the person who cashes in the winning numbers is lucky; everyone else is an unlucky loser. Same with casinos – for every winner there are six thousand losers clutching a warm beer over a cold hand. A casino is certainly not generating luck. Is the universe lucky, or are the people that have life the lucky ones? The universe is a jumble of data and matter and whatever else it's made of – luck is as much a real part of the universe as life is. It's defined only from the perspective of the recipient.

If you succeed in business, I guarantee that you didn't just get lucky. And anyone who thinks you did must believe that luck is the only way to

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Advance Reading Copy

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get what they want out of life. Nothing can be further from the truth, and in fact this is a disempowering belief. Iteration – constant and deeply considered – is the only path to success.

The innovator who has a great idea that just hadn't yet matured or wasn't framed right for his or her market—an idea that somebody else picks up for a song and then creates something with it five or ten years later—that innovator is not unlucky. Rather, he's someone who did not iterate enough.

About Nicholas Crown, the Author

About Nicholas Crown: Nicholas Crown began his career as a fixed income trader in London, and is now a top voice on TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, best known as the creator of the viral social media series “Rich vs Really Rich.” He is also a serial entrepreneur and founder of Revise Annuity. He lives in Chicago.

My Love's a Noble Madness

Collectors from Antiquity to the Present

James Delbourgo

W.W. Norton, Fall 2025

MY LOVE'S A NOBLE MADNESS is a new cultural history of collectors from ancient looters and medieval idolaters to fin de siècle decadents and the modern-day hoarder. It tells the story of a singular idea repeated again and again down the ages: that collectors are mad.

The diagnosis of this madness has changed dramatically over the centuries, from theories of demonic possession to accusations of superstition, pathological greed, sexual perversion, political subversiveness and the psychiatric diagnosis of Hoarding Disorder.

The dark heart of collecting has a silver lining, however, because "mad" collectors have often been seen in a positive light. In Ming China, obsessive collectors were praised as highly sophisticated people. But it was in nineteenth-century Europe that the collector became one of the great anti-heroes of modernity. Because true collectors collected out of passion, not for profit, even the most deranged collector was an authentic self.

In the twentieth century, some saw collectors as threats to the political and social order. But to others, assembling even the weirdest collections became a symbol of freedom, integrity and truth to oneself. Collectors might be mad, bad, even dangerous – but they risk ridicule and ruin to create a rich private world of meaning and self-expression. Their love's a noble madness.

Praise for My Love's a Noble Madness

Engrossing . . . situates Sloane within the welter of intellectual and political crosscurrents that marked his times."

—*New York Times Book Review* for *Collecting the World*

"A magnificent scholarly coup and an enthralling read... It conveys the excitement of original research as well as the thrill of tracking exotic curiosities to their source."

—*Sunday Times* for *Collecting the World*



Agent: Jennifer Lyons
Materials Available:
Full Manuscript available
Rights Sold:
North American Rights
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UK rights sold to Quercus.
Taiwanese rights sold to
Rye Field. Russia: Alpina

“In rescuing Sloane from amnesia, [Delbourgo] has given a double-edged account that upends the conventional understanding of the early Enlightenment and indeed the ‘Enlightenment museum’ itself...Delbourgo’s challenging analysis shows how complex the cultural origins of the British Museum in fact were.”

— *New York Review of Books* for *Collecting the World*

About James Delbourgo, the Author

James Delbourgo holds the James Westfall Thompson Chair and is Distinguished Professor of History at Rutgers University, where he has taught the history of science, collecting, and museums since 2009. Educated at the University of East Anglia, Cambridge and Columbia, he has also taught at McGill and Harvard Universities. His last book *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* (Penguin & Belknap, 2017) won prizes from the American Historical Association, the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies and the British Society for the History of Science, made numerous shortlists and was widely reviewed on both sides of the Atlantic.

REAP THE WHIRLWIND

Violence, Race, Justice, and the Story of Sagon Penn

Peter Houlahan

Counterpoint, July 23, 2024

The bestselling author of *Norco '80* returns with a riveting story of mid-1980s San Diego that placed one young Black man at the center of a whirlwind of crime and punishment that profoundly altered Southern California.

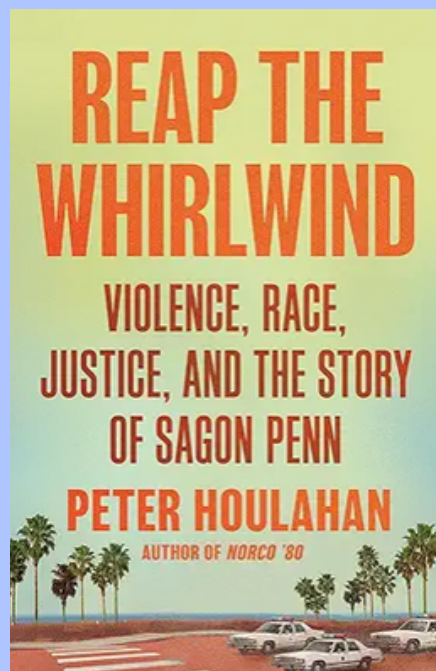
March 31, 1985. Two white patrol officers in search of a gang member followed a pickup truck carrying seven young Black men up a dirt driveway in the Encanto neighborhood of Southeastern San Diego. Minutes later, gunshots rang out, and the truck's driver, Sagon Penn, fled the scene in an officer's patrol car. The incident stunned the city. What followed would change it forever.

Penn was an idealist who believed in the power of Buddhist chants to bring about the oneness of humanity. The two police officers were rising stars in one of the most progressive police departments in the country, yet one that had suffered more officers killed in the line of duty than any other. While the facts of the case were never in dispute, what remained unresolved was what, if anything, could justify such a violent confrontation? For over two years, a determined prosecutor and a charismatic defense attorney engaged in a sensational courtroom drama that revolved around matters of mental health, racial biases, and the self-image of a once-sleepy beach town grappling with its transformation into a major metropolitan area. The Sagon Penn incident forever altered how San Diego would respond to incidents involving police and communities of color.

Based on court transcripts, personal interviews, and archival police reports, *Reap the Whirlwind* is a gripping true-crime narrative set against the evocative backdrop of Southern California.

Praise for REAP THE WHIRLWIND

"[A] propulsive legal thriller with deep insight into Southern California policing history." —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)



Agent: Jeff Ourvan

Materials Available:

Published Manuscript

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Rights Available:

Translation, Film/TV

"[A] fast-paced narrative . . . An assumption-shaking true-crime narrative that transports readers onto the street and into the courtroom." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"In meticulous yet utterly spellbinding detail, Houlahan lays out all aspects of the case, from the backstories of the principal figures to the tragic shootings that evening and in particular, the intriguing courtroom battle between prosecution and defense." —Booklist (starred review)

Excerpt from REAP THE WHIRLWIND

The sound of a terrified woman's voice coming over the San Diego Police Department radio frequency was chilling: "We need help. We need help." Police racing through the streets in response to the desperate cry for help barely took notice of the police cruiser that passed them going the opposite direction, its light bar whirling blue and red. Behind the wheel, a police revolver on the seat beside him, was a twenty-three-year-old named Sagon Penn.

In the aftermath of the horrifying incident, the city of San Diego was left wondering how a police force considered one of the most progressive in the country when it came to issues of race and use of force could see two of its rising stars pull over a truck full of innocent young men on their way back from a day at the park, and still have everything go so terribly wrong. Sagon Penn, a soft-spoken and idealistic young man who believed his Buddhist chants could bring about the oneness of humanity, never disputed the violent events that occurred on that driveway in Encanto. San Diego was left to decide: Was there anything that could possibly justify such an act? For the city's older, white establishment with their deep military traditions and rigid ideas of law and order, there could be no conceivable justification. But the Black community, numbering less than 7 percent of the population, had no trouble conceiving of such a scenario.

About Peter Houlahan, the Author

About Peter Houlahan: Peter Houlahan is an author, freelance writer, and book review contributor. His work has appeared in *CrimeReads*, *Salon*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, *Police1*, *Hearst*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Daily Mirror*, and *The Orange County Register*. His first book, *Norco '80: The True Story of the Most Spectacular Bank Robbery in American History*, was a finalist for an Edgar Allan Poe Award, the Hammett Prize, and a Macavity Award. The book has been chosen as a *New York Times* summer pick; a best book of the year by NPR, *The Wall Street Journal*, and Amazon; and a Gold Standard selection by the Junior Library Guild. Originally from Southern California, Houlahan now lives in Connecticut, where he works as an emergency medical technician.

AFRO SHEEN

How I Revolutionized an Industry From Soul Train to Wall Street

George E. Johnson with HILARY BEARD
Little Brown and Company, February 2025

From the creator of the iconic hair product, Afro Sheen, and the first Black company to be traded on Wall Street comes the story of multi-millionaire George E. Johnson

You might already be familiar with Afro Sheen and Ultra Sheen, but have you heard of the man behind the company that produced those products? George Ellis Johnson, Sr., the acclaimed self-made businessman—along with Hilary Beard—reveals his inspiring and captivating rise from humble beginnings to the top of the haircare industry.

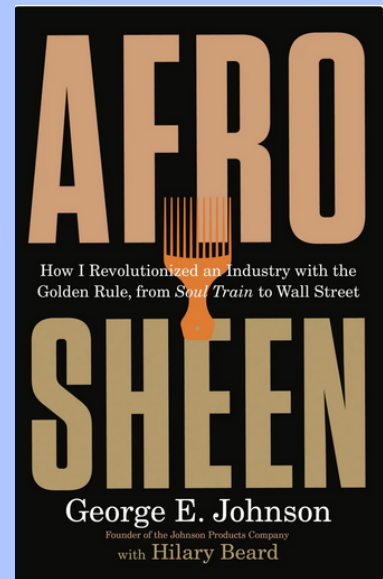
At just 27 years old, after years of traveling the country and going from barbershop to barbershop, Johnson created the Johnson Products Company. JPC was the first Black-owned company to trade on a major stock exchange, the financial sponsor of *Soul Train*, and once considered the largest Black-owned manufacturing company in the world. At the height of its success, JPC was worth \$37M (almost half a billion dollars today). In this coming-of-age story, Johnson uses the life skills and strong character built from working odd jobs as a teenager to create a business that would both nurture and advance the Black community. Without a formal education, he filled a gap in the Black haircare industry and created a high-quality formula for straightening hair without the toxic ingredients and widely hated emulsification process.

For decades, Johnson has been an inspiration to Black entrepreneurs, setting an example of Black wealth and providing a safe space for Black people to work.

AFRO SHEEN is a timely, impassioned look at both an industry and cultural moment; Johnson's impact is finally on full display, as he brilliantly highlights how having perseverance and a daring vision can create both change and a lasting legacy.

About George E. Johnson, the Author

George Ellis Johnson, Sr., is the founder of the Johnson Products Company, the maker of Ultra Sheen and Afro Sheen, the first Black-owned company to trade on a major stock exchange, the financial sponsor of *Soul Train*, and once likely the largest Black-owned manufacturing company in the world. Known for his generosity around Chicago and nationally, Johnson has received numerous honors for the philanthropic contributions of the George E. Johnson Foundation and the George E. Johnson Educational Fund, which awarded more than 1,000 college scholarships. In 1964, he co-founded Independence Bank, the first Black-owned financial institution to operate in Chicago in more than 30 years after the Great Depression, and became its chairman. He served on the boards of the Chicago Urban League, Commonwealth Edison, Lyric Opera of Chicago, MetLife, Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Northwestern University, and Operation PUSH. The recipient of nine honorary doctorate degrees, including several from HBCUs, Johnson received the Harvard Medal, Stanford Graduate School of Business's Marketing Man of the Year recognition, and Chicago Mayor Harold Washington's Lifetime Achievement Award. In 1999, the *Wall Street Journal* included him in its Special Report "10 Who Made a Difference: The minds that transformed entrepreneurship in the 20th century."



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About Hilary Beard

Hilary Beard is an award-winning writer, editor and book collaborator. She is the co-author of three *New York Times* best sellers: *21 Pounds in 21 Days: The Martha's Vineyard Diet Detox*, with Roni DeLuz, N.D. Ph.D., and James Hester; *Friends: A Love Story*, with Angela Bassett and Courtney B. Vance; and *Venus and Serena Serving from the Hip*, with tennis's Williams sisters. She won an NAACP Image Award for *Health First: The Black Woman's Wellness Guide*. . A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Beard now lives in Philadelphia, where she is active in her community.

UNDESIRABLE: A Father's Odyssey

Laura Kalpakian
**University of New Mexico Press (World
English) Autumn 2026**

- A story of paternal devotion to a 'prodigal son'
- 2025 is the 60th anniversary of the start of the US ground war in Vietnam.

UNDESIRABLE is a story about the cost of war, the tragedy of addiction, and the dedication of a father to his son.

In 2023, following the death of her mother, Laura Kalpakian opened the basement document-safe that she had stored for her parents for decades. In it was a 50-year old file containing stacks of letters from, and to, her father, Bill Johnson, on the subject of her brother Doug, who had returned from the Vietnam War in 1970. Doug's fighting war was short (barely more than a year), but its effects remained with him until his death; Bill's war continued for years after Doug's discharge – a punishing fight to prove that his son was not, as the Army had designated him, "Undesirable."

Returning without an 'honorable discharge', Doug—and hundreds of thousands of Vietnam-era veterans in the U.S.—were deprived access to pensions, home loans, and health care. A generation of young men returned from war with no welcome, and no framework to support their recovery from war.

This family memoir is written with a novelist's flair for character and story development, following a dramatic arc. It reflects the personal cost of war, and the extraordinary, obsessive effort of a father (himself a veteran of the Second World War) to reverse the charges.

About Laura Kalpakian, the Author

Laura Kalpakian is an award-winning novelist, (*The Great Pretenders*, *The Memoir Club*, etc.) and the author of the nonfiction *Memory Into Memoir: A Writer's Handbook*. She has taught memoir writing for more than two decades.

Undesirable
A Father's Odyssey

Temporary Cover

Laura Kalpakian

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THE PICNIC: A DREAM OF FREEDOM AND THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

Matthew Longo

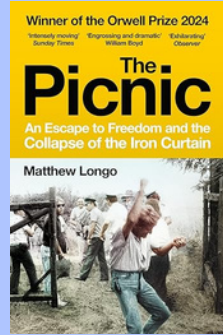
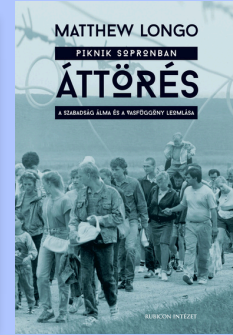
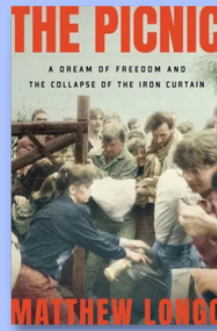
**W.W. Norton (US, Canada) November 2024 (paperback),
November 2023 (hardcover)**

- Winner of the 2024 Orwell Prize for Political Writing
- Shortlisted for 2024 Historical Writers' Association Crown Award for Nonfiction
- On NRC Handelsblad's Best Books of 2024
- On Tortoise Media's list of Best Nonfiction of 2024
- *A New York Times* Editors' Choice
- In Kirkus Reviews' Best Nonfiction of 2023
- On *Slate*'s list of Best Books of 2023
- 'Beautifully written . . . THE PICNIC reads like a thriller'
—Peter Frankopan

Three decades ago, the Berlin Wall fell, the Iron Curtain collapsed, and the world order shifted from its bipolar axis. Many things played a part in this momentous change—the relentless pressure of progress, the crumbling Soviet economy, the influence of Gorbachev—but as political philosopher Matthew Longo argues, it started with something much simpler: a picnic.

In 1989, a handful of people had the audacity to organize a gathering on the Austro-Hungarian border; government officials chose to look the other way, and a group of desperate East Germans seized an opportunity: the Pan-European Picnic became the greatest breach of the border in Cold War history, and the snag that would lead to the unraveling of the Iron Curtain.

Longo examines the history of the event, and its effects, profiles the key players in the drama, interviews families who fled the East and those who returned there, and interrogates the issues of the borders, migration, and security that define our present political moment. The story of the picnic isn't just about the rush to freedom—the end of one era and the beginning of another—but something larger that prefigures the world we live in now: a moment of ideological fracture we are still experiencing.



Appearances:

- Aldeburgh Festival (UK) March 2025
- Adelaide Writers Week (Australia) March 2025
- Chipping Campden Festival (UK) May 2025

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Materials Available:

Finished Book

Junior Library Guild bookclub selection

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Praise for THE PICNIC

"For Longo, a whole field of political philosophy opens up . . . a thoughtful account of the before, during and after of the momentous event in a Hungarian field on August 19, 1989."

—*The Budapest Times*

"Brisk and engaging" — *The Guardian*

"A little gem of a book" — *Sunday Times*

"Engrossing and dramatic . . . adds a new, captivating chapter to the history of the Cold War."
— *New Statesman*

"An eloquently written book for a broad public" — *Contemporary Political Theory*

"Gripping . . . refreshingly fast-paced . . . For anyone interested in the collapse of communism this book's account of how Hungary reshaped European history should be required reading."
— *History Today*

"The chain of events and historical context are outlined with clarity and verve." — *The Daily Telegraph*

"An elegantly crafted account of an extraordinary but largely forgotten August 1989 gathering . . . [Longo] quickly proves himself an unusual sort of political scientist, evincing a philosophical bent, a gift for poetic turns of phrase, and a knack for gaining the trust of widely varying interview subjects. . . . 'The Picnic' illuminates the curious alchemy through which structural forces, personalities, contingency, minor miscalculations, and lucky little choices can combine to lead to unusual results." — *Boston Globe*

"A vivid, fast-paced narrative . . . [that] never lacks verve" — *New York Times*

"The true charm of Mr. Longo's book, and its greatest historical value, lies in his accounts of ordinary citizens—mostly East German—who sought to throw off their Communist shackles by fleeing west at great personal peril. We also owe him a debt for resuscitating the Picnic, now "largely omitted from history books, pushed aside by the macroscopic politics of the end of the Cold War." — *Wall Street Journal*

"Extensively documented, well written, and thoughtful in its consideration of what freedom means . . . A much-needed reminder of the inexhaustibility of the human quest for personal and collective freedom." — Kirkus starred review

"Stunning . . . heart-wrenching . . . impressive . . . This captivating narrative brings an underreported Cold War turning point into focus." — *Publishers Weekly*

"Brilliantly researched and endlessly fascinating . . . a compulsive and compelling read!"

—Giles Milton, author of *Checkmate in Berlin*

"A fascinating reconstruction of the extraordinary moment in 1989 when the spontaneous actions and inactions of a few individuals made history swing wide open on its hinges . . . Longo makes that great moment newly vivid and freshly urgent." — Philip Gourevitch, author of *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*

Excerpt from **THE PICNIC**

The press conference was held under the cloak of a cloud-thick sky, with journalists transported in specially for the occasion. As spectacles go, the May 2nd event was a muted one—there was only so much the Nemeth government [of Hungary] could do without the [Communist] Party catching wind.

It was dramatic nevertheless: a circuit-breaker was pulled, a bit of electrical wiring rolled up. Rows of border guards, young men in dark green uniforms with white, heavy-duty gloves and large wire clippers, made their way across the stretch of fencing, snipping the wires from their concrete posts, and rolling them up into bundles, like metal bushels of hay.

The audience was sparse, but the message was clear: from that day forward, the current that made the Iron Curtain so deadly, would be switched off.

This sent a shockwave around the world—including within the Hungarian Communist Party. [Hungarian Prime Minister] Nemeth's event blind-sided [Communist Party head] Grosz. All the planning and coordination happened under his nose, but he knew nothing. It was all over before Grosz had time to react. On the outside, it was a triumph of political theatre; on the inside, it was a heist.

May Day was supposed to be a special event, a chance for the Party to rekindle confidence in its vision. Tens of thousands of people were anticipated. But the weather didn't cooperate—sheets of rain poured over the venue, turning the fairgrounds into a muddied lagoon. Few but Party functionaries showed up. When it came time for speeches, Nemeth stood on the damp, cheerless stage beside Grosz, who sermonized about the glories of communism and hectored Nemeth for his reckless reforms.

If Nemeth took any solace, it was in knowing what was to come the following day.

The wire-cutting went off without a hitch. Eager journalists sped home to write up the shocking news, border guards soaked up the attention of the world, so rarely cast upon their far-flung stretch of it. That evening, news of the event was aired on Hungarian television and the country watched in profound disbelief.

About Matthew Longo, the Author

Matthew Longo, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Leiden University (Netherlands). His book *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018), won the Charles Taylor Book Award from the American Political Science Association. His work has been published in *Politico*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Nation*, *New York Times*, and *Los Angeles Times*.

The Lost Trees of Willow Avenue

A Story of Climate and Hope on One American Street

Mike Tidwell

St. Martin's Press, (Hardcover) March 2025

A story of climate change on one city street against the backdrop of the record heat and wildfires of 2023 and the hopes for clean energy.

In 2023 author and activist Mike Tidwell recorded the growing impacts of climate change on his one urban block in his town near Washington, DC. Tidwell's tells the story of his neighborhood's battle to save the magnificent oak trees. Against the backdrop of record global temperatures, wildfires, and hurricanes, Tidwell tells the story of people on his block: those who are innovating ways to combat climate change—like the midwife who builds a geothermal energy system—and those for which climate change means personal struggle, like a young woman who has decided not to bring children into a world besieged by global warming. Tidwell explores the ethics and science surrounding “geoengineering” as a way to save the world’s trees by reflecting sunlight away from the planet.

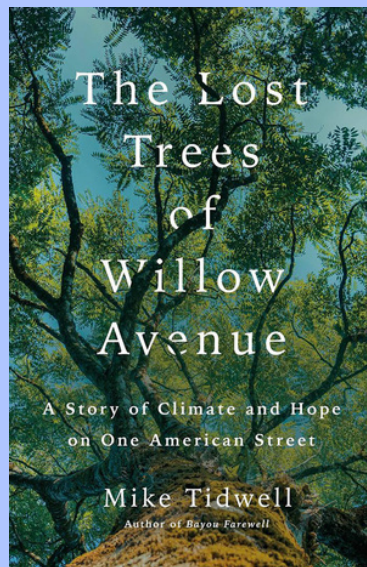
Tidwell’s focus on how the climate crisis shapes the lives of ordinary folk shines a spotlight on this serious issue in a unique and engaging way.

Praise for THE LOST TREES OF WILLOW AVENUE

“Powerful ... Tidwell is an excellent reporter whose hyperlocal focus shines light on how the climate crisis shapes the lives of ordinary individuals. This will stick with readers long after they finish the last page.” —*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“Tidwell connects his very local story to the global consequences of climate change and covers potential technologies, such as geoengineering and tree burials, that might become part of a solution.” — *Library Journal*

“Beautiful. Not only is Mike Tidwell a very fine writer, there's almost no one I know who's earned more of a right to set forward their ideas about how we climb out of the climate mess. For decades he has fought the fossil fuel industry, and done it creatively, effectively, and tirelessly. I'm awfully glad he's taken the time now to reflect.” —Bill McKibben, author *The End of Nature*



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Cont. next page

Mike Tidwell tells the story of how climate change is unfolding in his literal backyard, following the changes he can see in a single neighborhood. He reminds us that the fight for our planet begins at home, revealing how the fate of our planet—and our neighbors—are inextricably linked. As a longtime climate leader, Tidwell has been on the frontlines of protecting our world for decades. An insightful, poignant read.”
—Leah Stokes, author, *Short Circuiting Policy*

“Few American writers render the climate crisis so vividly—not in statistics and headlines, but in the daily elegies sung quietly in the backs of our heads. This is a book about community, human and non-, holding together as the places we live in come apart.” — Daniel Sherrell, author *Warmth: Coming of Age at the End of Our World*

“Record rainfall and drought are bad news, but losing the giant oaks in your hometown to climate whiplash can turn angst into a worthy creative endeavor, as it has done for Mike Tidwell. The strength of the story is Tidwell’s use of local resources, from his neighborhood to NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center, to explore the big issues. Are there reasons for climate optimism, and if so, what are they and do they have a chance? Saving trees and saving humanity, it turns out, have much in common.” - John N. Maclean, author of *Home Waters* and *Fire on the Mountain*

About Mike Tidwell, the Author

MIKE TIDWELL is a writer and climate change activist. His previous six books include *Bayou Farewell* (2003) about the disappearing wetlands and Cajun culture in south Louisiana. As a contributing travel writer for *The Washington Post*, Tidwell has won four Lowell Thomas Awards, the highest prize in American travel journalism. In 2002 he founded the Chesapeake Climate Action Network and still serves as executive director, where he has led local, state, and national campaigns for clean energy. He lives on Willow Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland with his wife Beth and their cat Macy Gray.

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