

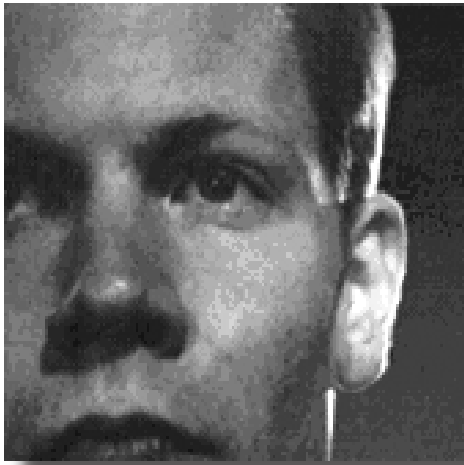


August 19, 2006 Speaker

Christopher Rice

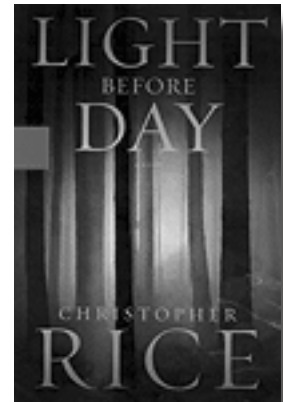
master of provocative suspense thrillers

The Secrets of Killer Suspense



Christopher Rice, the son of renowned “vampire” authoress Anne Rice, is a master of provocative suspense thrillers. His works include best-selling novels *A Density of Souls*, *Light Before Day*, and *The Snow Garden*.

With writing that is compared to that of Steven King, it is no surprise that Rice has garnered the *Lambda Literary Award* with his New York Times



best-selling novels.

A native of California but a Southerner by blood, Christopher returned to the West Coast four years ago and now lives in West Hollywood. Mark your calendar for August 19, and get ready for goose bumps during Christopher Rice’s presentation to the SCWA.

“What an author likes to write most is his signature on the back of a check.”

— Brendan Francis

“The worst thing you write is better than the best thing you didn’t write.”

— Unknown

Quotations provided by SCWA Vice President Victory Crayne

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President's Message

RECOGNIZING PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES

With the meteoric proliferation of the Internet, information is being transmitted almost exponentially more frequently now than twenty years ago. Whereas in the Seventies it took a huge amount of capital, personal labor, and ingenuity to establish a mass communication center, now virtually everyone with an on-line account has this same capability to communicate with the masses.

Unfortunately, we are now seeing bloggers with neither training nor interest in journalistic responsibility. They shamelessly slant their material to guide readers to their point of view, all too often with enormous success. Here are some of the most basic techniques propagandists use in hopes of fooling their readership:

1) The Slippery-Slope Theory

Example: "Today, people are asking us to legalize same-sex marriages. Next they'll want to be allowed to marry animals. Then they'll want to marry corpses. Then they'll want to outlaw traditional marriage. We must STOP THIS NOW before it goes any farther!"

Note how the argument is shifted from the merits, or lack of same, of the original concept by focusing on an imagined state of affairs that virtually everyone would find objectionable. This is a highly effective smoke-screening technique to divert attention from the real issue.

2) "If you oppose 'A,' then ergo, you must support 'NOT A,' and vice versa."

This is the argument used, as an example, by environmentalists who would like us to believe that anyone who supports drilling for oil in the Arctic Reserve has no regard for the future of the earth. (As a Civil Engineer, I can assure you that qualified professionals, working hand in hand with environmental specialists, are studying environmental concerns carefully to minimize the impacts if drilling should begin.) Or by those who argue in favor of the erection of crosses and other religious symbols at taxpayers' expense on government property. By using this propaganda technique, they can deliver the message that anyone who opposes their wishes is Anti-Jesus and Anti-Christian.

3) Use of inflammatory rhetoric

This one is often so obvious we miss it. Remember Mao's old totalitarian regime known as the "People's Republic of China?" How about the "German Democratic Republic," a.k.a. East Germany? Pretty obvious, okay? But how about some of the less obvious, such as the "Freedom Foundation"? The "Heritage Society"? The "American Civil Liberties Union"? All these organizations have adopted names with immediate emotional appeal, but if you dig into their activities, you may discover a special interest group lurking beneath the image they would have us see!

Any time you see any individual described by any of the following: patriotic, heroic, traitor, un-American, collaborator, I would hope that would immediately raise a red flag!

I'm sure all of you have seen these and other techniques used frequently, and have your own favorites. The key to honest writing, of course, is avoiding the tendency to convert the reader via the short cuts that these propaganda techniques provide. Give them the facts that neither side can deny, and allow the readers to make their own judgments.

Good luck and good writing!

Roy King, President

SCWA Critique Committee

Open to Members of SCWA

Nonfiction & Fiction

Roy King 3kings@urs2.net

Roy will take any amount of writing for critique. He prefers to see the entire ms at one time.

Please mail your manuscript to Roy at:

15772 Heatherdale Road, Victorville, CA 92394

Poetry

Dr. Joyce Wheeler

Joyce will critique up to five poems.

Please mail your work to Joyce at:

3801 Chestnut Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90807

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Meeting Reservations

Carolyn Smith, Treasurer treasurer@ocwriter.com

JULY HIGHLIGHTS:

Jerry Simmons: *Publishing Secrets That Publishers Don't Want Writers to Know*

Retired AOL Time Warner Books executive Jerry Simmons is on an unusual mission: to help writers make the most of their careers by not disappearing into the corporate publishing machine. He self-published *Inside the Business of Publishing: What Writers Need to Know*, after his five-year non-disclosure contract ran out. His presentation, "Publishing Secrets Publishers Don't Want Writers to Know," was pulled from his years as Vice-President, Director Field Sales.

"What do you want to do with your book? Get **published** or get **sold**?" Simmons asks. Repeatedly, he stresses that "the worst thing a writer can do is sign a contract and walk away" because a publisher's job generally ends with shipping books to booksellers. You need to say, "What can I do as an author to help you?"

The key term is "sell through," which relates to the percentage of a book's copies sold at retail price within a certain period of time. *"To continue in your field, you need a high sell-through of 70%, regardless of the numbers."* **If your sales are less, most likely your next book will not be published!**

If you do not push, your work can get lost in this enormous industry. You need to understand

and perhaps influence *where* they are going because some markets "have a better sell-through." To get the market's attention, the publisher may use the ploy of making the number of the "announced first print" bigger than it actually will be. Make sure if 30,000 are actually coming out or is it only 10,000?

These are the most common markets:

A. Large national and regional retail bookstore chains;

B. Independent bookstores, about 8,000;

C. Big box discount retailers like Costco or WalMart;

D. Discount chains that are either book membership clubs or dominant, discount retailers;

E. Book jobbers, who operate between the publisher and smaller outlets and, importantly, make recommendations.

The same marketing strategy does not work for all. An author needs to learn what's most effective for each and see how he/she can help the publisher.

Five publishing conglomerates represent 80% of the market and \$10 billion yearly: Time Warner Book Group, Simon & Schuster, Random House, Penguin Putnam, and Harper Collins. The specialty market brings \$15 billion.

Simmons was responsible

for the 1,500 books *each year* in the Time Warner pipeline alone. Because 10% of the titles generate 90% of the revenue, the company's limited sales/marketing personnel and resources are allocated to those titles of the 1,500 which promise the most return, as indicated by rank on the publisher's "List." Ask where your book is on the List, Simmons says.

Learn your market beforehand. Study not only your category/genre at stores but notice what's being promoted and how; prices; types of covers; and even color. Know which markets will more likely draw your type of customer. Next, "separate yourself from the 1,500+13 other titles" of your publisher by developing positive relationships with its art, production, sales, and marketing departments during "the dormant period," the 18 months to three year period from the contract to books in stores.

"Come across as someone who wants to be successful" by visiting the publisher. "Once there, say 'I want to meet everyone who has a hand in my book.'" Participate. Don't be afraid to say, "Hey, I want my books in the independents on the West Coast." But never be demeaning and work up the

See *Simmons*, page 4

Simmons, continued from page 3

food chain. Even if you're talking to assistants, "get all their names and write each a handwritten note later." Consider sending a gift certificate, etc., to your sales/marketing contacts because they're on a modest income. Be appreciative.

Simmons is not an advocate of either big or small publishers. In fact, he notes that if self-published, "you can create a situation where a [big] publisher comes to you." Sales reps browse in small bookstores, asking, "What's new? What's under the radar?" *The Celestine Prophecy* came by that route. Increase the chance by five ways:

1. Gather consumer information. Who are your target customers?
2. Think outside the mainstream and be willing to sell there—even neighborhood markets.
3. Work the niche markets—book clubs, organizations, etc.
4. Sell through the Internet.
5. Never ignore Middle America. The big publishers market only to the top geographical markets.

A book contract is like the birth certificate of a new baby. This offspring must be nurtured, closely and lovingly guided in its journey through the publishing process to emerge into public life, able to hold its own in a competitive world.

Glenda Rynn, Member
grynn@cox.net

SCWA News & Announcements

BOARD ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP!

We need help to keep our group growing....please get involved in the nominating committee chaired by Bill Thomas.

Contact Bill at (562) 431-7795 or e-mail billjthomas@gmail.com

Questions or comments about the *Writers News*? Editor Mary Michel Green can be reached at (949) 361-6581 or at

Share your knowledge with the other members of SCWA:
Stories wanted for *Writers News* – 100 to 700 words on any aspect of the writing experience.

"When this question comes up... and it will... 'When are you going to get a real job?' Just say 'My job is not reaching my death bed with regrets about dreams I was too scared to pursue. You should look into it.' That generally shuts people right up." — Stephen King

"Those who dance are thought insane by those who can't hear the music." — Angela Monet

"There is no perfect time to write. There's only now."
— Barbara Kingsolver

The August 2006 “Will Write 4 Food” Contest

Write: Look carefully at the photo (right) and write a short-short story (maximum 250 words) about what is happening.

Submit: One entry per member per month.

Via e-mail: Lynette Baum, therightwriter@cox.net.

Via snail mail: L. Baum, 17595 Harvard., Ste. C-144, Irvine, CA 92614.

Deadline: Stories must be received on or before August 18, 2006.

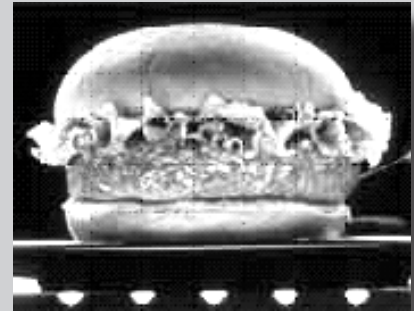
Revised requirements: To facilitate fair judging, put the story name on the top of the page with your **name** and **daytime** phone number underneath. Only the winning author will be contacted.

Subject Line: *August 2006 “Will Write 4 Food Contest”* with your daytime number or e-mail address.

(For snail mail put this information on the outside of the envelope.) **Warning: without the subject line, submission may not be read in time.**

Winner: Attends their next SCWA meeting for free. He or she will also be presented with a winner’s certificate. The winning story will be featured in the club’s newsletter, The Writers News, and on the organization’s Web site.

Criteria: Contestants must be members of SCWA. The story must be 250 words or less. No evaluation or comments will be offered on contest submissions. Only one **winning** entry per member per year.



Lynette Baum, V.P. Programming

July Contest Winner:



On the Road Again

By Polly Dunn

Burt was hot and tired when he pulled into Jake’s Grill. He had been driving on old Route 66 since morning and he desperately needed a break. He saw Pete pull in about the same time. They often ran into each other at pit stops. Truckers favored the historic route that wandered all over the country and was sprinkled with the best roadside diners this land has to offer.

Pete smiled. “How’s it going?” he asked Burt.

“Just another day in hell. I wish I liked truck driving.”

“It’s the open road, man. You can feel the heart beat of America,” Pete replied.

“All I hear is the thump-thump-thump of oversized tires on worn-out asphalt.”

“That sucks! I love being “king of the road.”

Besides, women love truck drivers, ya know.”

“I don’t get that kind of reaction. The women seem to run the other way.” Burt lamented.

The two ate their lunches then headed back to the parking lot. The waitress flirted with Pete but only nodded at Burt.

“Did you see that? It’s like I’m bad news.”

“I don’t know what to tell you, Burt. Maybe you should buy a Dr. Phil book or something?” Pete flashed a toothy grin and waved as he headed for his refrigerated Budweiser truck parked at the roadside. Burt just shrugged his shoulders, slumped a bit and grumbled under his breath as he went back to climb into the cab of his open-topped double bed fertilizer truck.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Punishment — Barbara Schnell

Mary Had a Gift — Mike Dunn

www.ocwriter.com/willwrite.html



**August Meeting:
Saturday
August 19, 2006**

CHRISTOPHER RICE

Secrets of Killer Suspense

(See inside to learn more about Christopher Rice)

Melting?

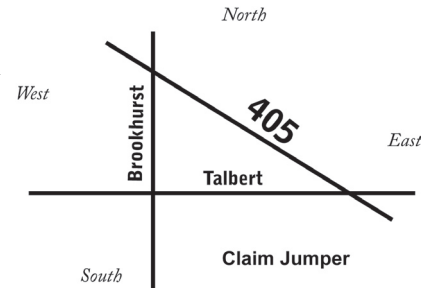


**THERE'S AIR CONDITIONING
AT THE MEETING! JOIN US!**

LOCATION: Claim Jumper Restaurant

Banquet Room Entrance, rear of building
18050 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA
Restaurant telephone: (714) 963-6711

Registration & Networking:	9:30 a.m.
Meeting & Program:	10:00 a.m.
Lunch:	11:30 a.m.
Afternoon Program:	12:15 p.m.



WALK-INS & GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME — \$25 AT DOOR

MEMBERS WHO DO NOT RSVP PAY \$25 AT DOOR

MEMBERS WHO DO RSVP PAY \$20

RSVP before August 12: Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, 630 Harbor Island Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660
Check must accompany reservations. Make checks payable to SCWA.

After August 12: Carolyn Kimme Smith, Treasurer, (949) 675-4284

BE SURE TO RSVP WHENEVER POSSIBLE! . . . Or register online at www.ocwriter.com/meetings.html

Southern California Writers Association

Writers News

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