

# Writing Crime Fiction

★ Budewitz, Leslie. *Books, Crooks and Counselors: How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure.*

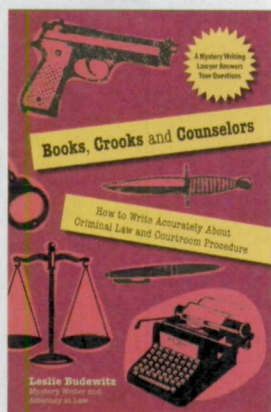
Quill Driver: Linden.

2011. 200p. index.

ISBN 9781610350198. pap.

\$14.95. COMM

Budewitz, an attorney-at-law who has been published in mystery magazines, wrote this book to help crime writers wade through the time-consuming and often confusing process of legal research. She provides an insider's perspective on often overlooked legal concepts and pinpoints common errors writers make when incorporating criminal and civil law into their fiction. The book covers 160 topics, including proper legal terminology, realistic courtroom behavior and dialog, proper procedure (both at the state and at the federal level), and the legal system as a whole. The frequently asked questions featured in each chapter are also arranged by topic within the table of contents, enabling readers to pick and choose the legal aspects most relevant to their writing. The final chapter offers guidance on conducting legal research, and the "Book Links" section references useful URLs listed through-



out. **VERDICT** Budewitz's material is straightforward and user-friendly. Her content will help shave off hours of research time and enable writers to focus more energy on craft, plot, and character development. Highly recommended for aspiring writers of crime fiction. [Quill Driver also published Carolyn Kaufman's *The Writer's Guide to Psychology*.—Ed.]—Karen McCoy, Northern Arizona Univ. Lib., Flagstaff

**Now Write! Mysteries: Suspense, Crime, Thriller, and Other Mystery Fiction Exercises from Today's Best Writers and Teachers.**

Tarcher: Penguin Group (USA). Jan. 2012. c.384p.

ed. by Sherry Ellis & Laurie Lamson.

ISBN 9781585429035.

pap. \$14.95. COMM

This is the newest in El-

lis's "Now Write!" series; previous entries contain fiction, nonfiction, and screenwriting exercises. When Ellis passed away unexpectedly, Lamson, her niece and coeditor for *Now Write! Screenplays*, finished the book with a moving dedication to her aunt. While the other series volumes have a general scope, this title takes a more specific view. Topics include how to plot thrillers, create realistic detectives and villains, and write suspenseful crime scenes. The chapters are divided by subject; each is written by a published mystery and/or crime author (some concepts, such as "setting as character," are presented by multiple authors). Sections like Meg Gardiner's "Ratcheting Up the Suspense" focus on thrillers, while others, like Jane K. Cleland's "Avoiding Saggy Middles," can be applied to general fiction. Each chapter offers writing exercises to help readers put knowledge into practice. **VERDICT** The bulk of the content focuses on the craft of crime writing, and research strategies are mentioned in brief. Recommended for beginning writers of fiction.—Karen McCoy, Northern Arizona Univ. Lib., Flagstaff

strategy she calls "Lifestyle Driven Investment." She draws on her own experiences with money and investments and discusses what she learned from her financial disasters (including a lawsuit and bad investments) to help others avoid similar pitfalls. She debunks some Wall Street myths such as "In the long term, the stock market always goes up" and "Diversification and asset allocation are the keys to retirement success." Her chapters are replete with case studies and each ends with a section called "Erin's Essentials," a summary of key concepts. She also covers strategies for investments, including bonds, annuities, and stocks. **VERDICT** This clear, concise guide should interest just about every person who wants to learn how to plan for retirement. Recommended.—Lucy T. Heckman, St. John's Univ. Lib., Jamaica, NY

Sykes, Charles J. *A Nation of Moochers: America's Addiction to Getting Something for Nothing.* St. Martin's. Jan. 2012. c.320p.

ISBN 9780312547707. \$25.99. ECON

Sykes (*Dumbing Down Our Kids*) has produced a determinedly one-sided look at the current American economy, arguing that the population is becoming increasingly dependent on government assistance. While many of the issues he raises are timely and newsworthy (e.g., unnecessary farm subsidies, loss of collective bargaining rights by public workers, the European debt crisis, corporate welfare, bank bailouts), his repetitive and biased viewpoint provides little new information, focusing instead on extreme and perhaps apocryphal examples of people taking advantage of the system, be it loans for education, mortgages, farm subsidies, pensions, or flood insurance. While researched and heavily footnoted, the book is crowded by quotations from the Heritage Foundation, and an entire chapter is devoted to Ayn Rand. No government program is deemed worthy, from free breakfast for school children to financial aid for college students. The only answers are to return to a culture of pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps and to "restore some of the stigma of mooching." This is a prime example of preaching to the choir. Those who agree with the author will have already heard all these stories; those who disagree will only be infuriated by them. **VERDICT** A strongly biased book. Not recommended.—Susan Hurst, Miami Univ. Libs., Oxford, OH

## EDUCATION

Poundstone, William. *Are You Smart Enough To Work at Google?: Trick Questions, Zen-like Riddles, Insanely Difficult Puzzles, and Other Devious Interviewing Techniques You Need To Know To Get a Job in the New Economy.* Little, Brown. Jan. 2012. c.288p. illus. bibliog.

Lincoln; *The Young Eagle: The Rise of Abraham Lincoln*) is likewise a sympathetic but balanced portrait of the Lincolns and their marriage. Winkle describes how Mary's social and political acumen and family connections helped her husband during his political ascent but became problematic during his wartime presidency. He concludes that though the Lincolns did experience marital difficulties, which sprang from faults on both sides, the marriage was loving. **VERDICT** This accessible work includes a valuable essay on sources and is recommended for public and undergraduate libraries as well as for

Lincoln buffs who already own longer, more focused works such as Catherine Clinton's *Mrs. Lincoln: A Life*.—Theresa McDevitt, Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania Libs.

## ECONOMICS

Botsford, Erin. *The Big Retirement Risk: Running Out of Money Before You Run Out of Time.* Greenleaf. Jan. 2012. c.204p.

ISBN 9781608322480. \$21.95. BUS

Financial planner Botsford (founder, Botsford Group) helps investors prepare for the worst and hope for the best with this book about preparing for retirement, based on a