

# THRILLERESQUE

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**Building a Spy Plot in Istanbul**

# Building

a

# Spy Plot

in

# Istanbul

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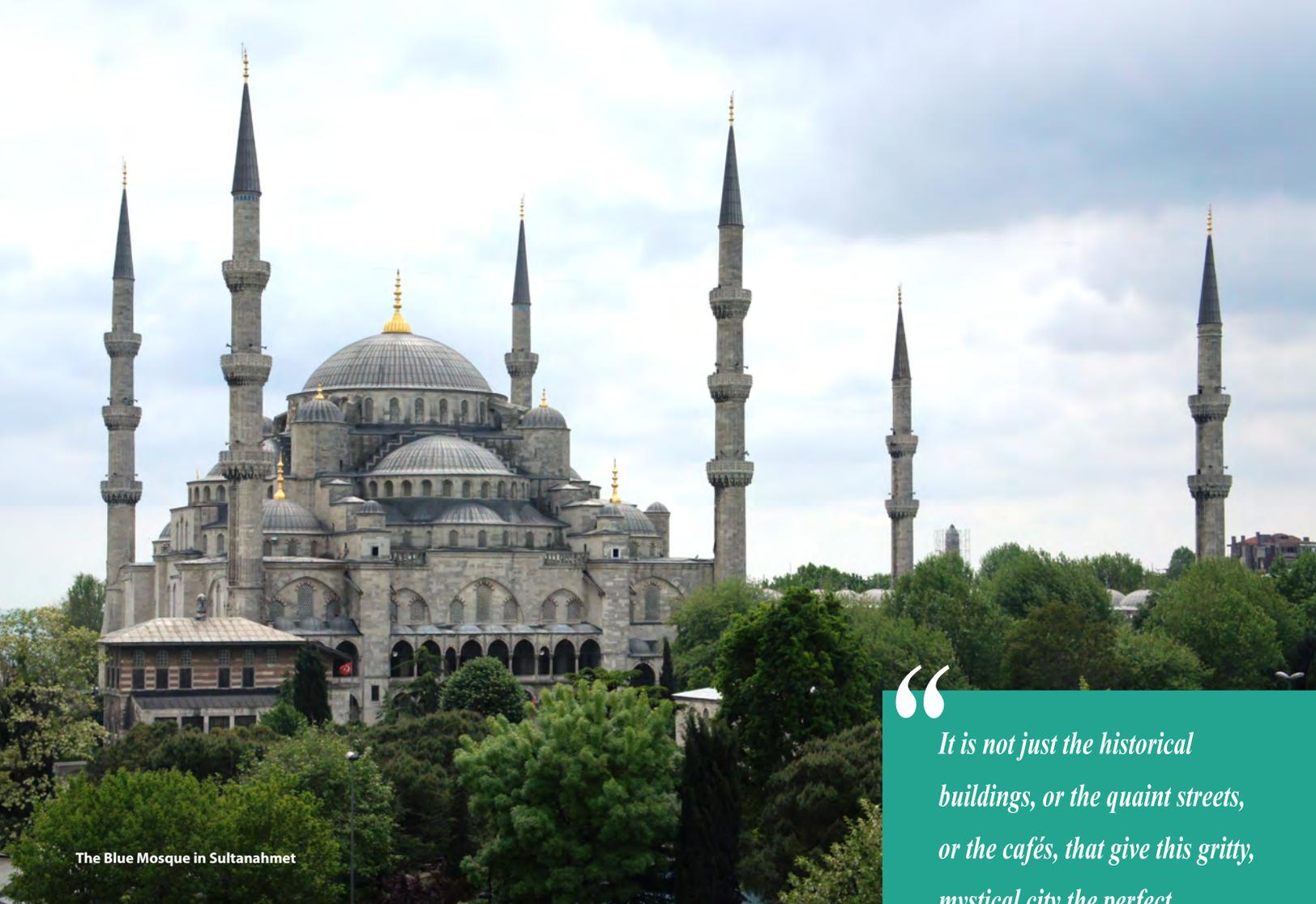
**E**spionage is no stranger to Istanbul, a city that has served as the capital of great civilizations, from the Romans to the Ottomans, and a place that found itself in the midst of immense conflict and tragedy, from World War I to the Greco-Turkish Wars, to the Cold War, and to the current global fight against terrorism.



Thriller author A.C. Frieden at the Galata Tower in Istanbul.

Turkey's membership in NATO and its strategic location on the Black Sea and Mediterranean contributed to its importance during the Cold War, a conflict that inducted Istanbul into an elite club of top espionage cities, joining Berlin, Moscow, London, and Paris, among others. Consequently, this bustling waterfront metropolis of 13 million turned into an ideal setting for spy movies, like the James Bond hits *From Russia with Love* (1963) and *The World is Not Enough* (1999), the

acclaimed Israeli film *Walk on Water* (2004), and the recent thriller *The International* (2009). Turkey's largest city also became a chosen venue for countless espionage novels, such as Forrest Devoe Jr.'s *Into the Volcano*, Claire Berlinski's *Lion Eyes*, and John Le Carré's classic tale *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*, which has been adapted for a movie set for release in December 2011. With such a rich history of cloak-and-dagger gamesmanship, it is no wonder that spy



The Blue Mosque in Sultanahmet

novelist A.C. Frieden headed to Istanbul this summer to hunt for scenes for his upcoming spy thriller, *Letter from Istanbul* (Aventia Publ.), the third installment in the Jonathan Brooks series due out in early 2013.

“As I stroll the cobbled streets and shadowy alleyways of lower Taksim and Tünel,” says Frieden, exploring two of Istanbul’s neighborhoods, “I already envision my fictional characters immersed in the same environment, going about their tasks as the convoluted plot unfolds.” But as he continues to weave through the downhill maze of narrow streets toward the Ataturk Bridge, Frieden confesses, “it is not just the historical buildings, or the quaint streets, or the cafés that give this gritty, mystical city the ideal credentials for an espionage setting, it’s the people, especially their attitudes and contradictions as they navigate the cultural intersection of East and West.”

### ***The Games Spies Play***

It is also no coincidence that Frieden selected his hotel in Taksim adjacent to the British Consulate, a diplomatic post targetted in 2003 by an Al Qaeda truck bomb that killed dozens, including the UK’s top diplomat. His top-floor room overlooks the fortress-like compound that serves not only as a hub of consular activities but also functions as an important base of operations for a handful of MI-6 intelligence agents and counterterrorism officials. Their responsibilities, not unlike those of many of their foreign counterparts stationed in Istanbul, are varied, among them: surveying ships crossing the Bosphorus; keeping tabs on Iranian, Syrian, Russian and Ukranian diplomats and operatives; conducting joint missions with Turkey’s National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, or MIT) agents and other local authorities; and

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*It is not just the historical buildings, or the quaint streets, or the cafés, that give this gritty, mystical city the perfect credentials for an espionage setting, it’s the people, especially their attitudes and contradictions as they navigate the cultural crossroads of East and West.”*

tracking couriers and middlemen working for Middle East terror groups, arms traders and drug dealers.

The Cold War as we know it is over, but what emerged in its place is an unstable morass of shifting alliances, caused in part by the influence of emerging powers and the perceived relative decline of traditional powers, all vying for limited natural resources, technological leadership, and greater wealth using a variety of overt and

and covert means. Whether this is a Second Cold War or something less sinister, Istanbul is not about to lose its spot as a center of espionage activity. “Today, dozens of intelligence and law enforcement agencies deploy people and assets to scour this age-old city for the secrets it harbors,” says Frieden.

Most recently, Turkey’s southern neighbor Syria launched a violent crackdown on protestors, which has heightened the need to track Syrian agents and diplomats operating in

Istanbul, some of whom have been tasked with identifying and disrupting dissident networks operating from Turkey. Istanbul is also buzzing with Iranian and Israeli operatives, particularly after the Israeli Mossad and Shin Bet are believed to have orchestrated the “defection” of an Iranian general earlier this year. General Ali Reza Asgari, formerly of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, transited through Istanbul from Damascus after apparently being lured by Mossad agents in cahoots with the

CIA. Asgari never made it to his hotel, and there are conflicting accounts of what happened next, except that Turkish authorities were unhappy to see this happen on their soil. For Israel, this comes not long after several other incidents have harmed relations with Turkey, including the killing of protestors by Israeli troops aboard a Turkish vessel and the unauthorized use of Turkish airspace by Israeli jets in a mission that destroyed a nuclear facility in neighboring Syria.



*Today, dozens of intelligence and law enforcement agencies deploy people and assets to scour this age-old city for the secrets it harbors.”*

Frieden explores Karaköy, a working class neighborhood at the bottom of Galata Hill.



Following in James Bond’s footsteps, Frieden visits Istanbul’s ancient cisterns.

### **Turkish Eyes**

Any visitor to Istanbul will readily see the city’s heavy police presence. One or two armored vehicles remain strategically parked in each neighborhood, and paramilitary forces wait in local police stations and windowless vans for orders to swing into action. “There are police, cameras and all kinds of surveillance all over the city,” observed Frieden as he surveyed sites for his fictional plot. “But there is so much more unseen.” Indeed, the local security apparatus has a growing

clandestine presence, driven by the Turkish intelligence services, the MIT. The country’s heightened scrutiny of foreign intelligence activities on its territory, and particularly in its most populous city, coincides with MIT’s restructuring under the new leadership of Hakan Fidan, a political expert with substantial foreign experience. With the close support of newly reelected Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan, MIT is evolving into a more dynamic and internationally-focused spy agency. “Its younger recruits have better language skills, technical proficiency,

and specialized knowledge that are essential to properly transform what is collected into actionable intelligence. This growing capability comes after some recent investments in tracking technology. For example, improvements include more effective cell phone surveillance and data analysis, which is helping MIT keep better tabs on targeted individuals. Turkish banks have also implemented new data sharing arrangements to help track suspicious funds transfers. “Another area of improvement is maritime surveillance,” says Frieden, as he toured the Bosphorus by boat. In the last three years, Turkish authorities have installed advanced software, radar and communications systems to better monitor cargo ships in Turkish waters, including this strategic waterway that links the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. “Cargo ship security is a key aspect of my novel’s plot,” he adds. “Some of my story’s most important action takes place here, and they tie in to other maritime-related scenes in the thriller, including Panama, Ho Chi Minh City, New Orleans and Saint Petersburg.”



A Tanzania-flagged cargo vessel heads north through the Bosphorus.



The Bosphorus is one of the world’s most strategic waterways, linking the Black Sea with the Mediterranean.

### *A Wealth of Thriller Scenes*

While tourists tend to flock to Istanbul’s most popular areas like Sultanahmet, which hosts the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia and the Topkapi Palace, or central Taksim, a hip area for shops and restaurants, many fiction authors in search of interesting venues look to Istanbul’s other offerings—and there are plenty. “Given Istanbul’s long-held association with espionage and international crime, perhaps the greatest challenge for authors is to avoid cliché settings or places featured in prior books and movies,” says Frieden, who had done extensive background research on several parts of the city before arriving. Istanbul offers thriller authors in particular a hugely diverse selection of settings, ranging from seedy urban locales, to sites of extreme opulence, from ancient ruins to ultramodern places, from tranquil escapes to heart-thumping chaos.

Take for instance the narrow hillside streets of the lower Galata neighborhood, with its sloping cobbled streets, tired facades, and shoddy dwellings squeezed together like haphazardly stacked Lego pieces—perfect for a terrorist or arms trafficker hideout, or a druglord’s command center, you

name it. The area’s untouristy three- or four-table cafes and narrow kiosks can add a tantalizingly mysterious edge to any scene, as can the residents’ more serious, reserved moods, expressions, and gestures.

On the other end of the scale, Istanbul hosts the affluent, historical neighborhood of Bebek, with its haute fashion boutiques, luxurious condos and trendy restaurants, many of them sitting on the richly forested banks of the Bosphorus. The area was also a center of affluence during the Ottoman times. Just off the bay in Bebek is Suada, an artificial island with several restaurants, a night club and a huge, opulently equipped pool that attracts Turkey’s rich and famous. In this part of town, authors can house their villains in any number of stunning waterfront mansions, with balconies and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Bosphorus and the distant lush green, hilly banks on the Asia side.

Alternatively, an author may simply opt for a more mundane setting, such as a scene in Kadıköy, a large, fairly modern middle-class district on the Asian side of Istanbul, facing the historical center from across the Bosphorus. Some might find parts of

Kadıköy similar to Cleveland or Oakland, but don't be fooled. While it is more Western than many other neighborhoods, the area retains many distinctive Turkish features and is a perfect reminder of the crossroads of civilizations that makes this city such a magnet for mystery and thriller authors, particularly those delving into the opaque world of espionage.

### *All Five Senses, Istanbul-Style*

For an author building thriller scenes in Istanbul, the city is what you make of it. Everything in some form or other is here for the taking. But what ultimately will elevate any scene to an exciting, near-hypnotic experience for readers depends on whether the story retains the ultimate gift Istanbul has to offer: its cocktail of senses. The ultimate literary challenge is to successfully marry these rich elements into each scene, bringing readers into it, as if they are in fact walking the cobbled streets, hearing the cacophony of car horns, pedestrian chatter, Turkish curse words, and the echoing calling to prayer, while siphoning the aroma of lamb kebab, rising sewer fumes and the damp, salty breeze. "I was always taught that writing a scene is more about immersing the reader into the surroundings than simply describing what's around," says Frieden. "That's why I'm spending hours sitting at sidewalk cafes and walking the streets — to take it all in and digest this mental stimulus into something I can write well."

More importantly, this immersion transcends fiction. It forms the reality that this amazing city offers for the real world of espionage and crime, where agents, handlers, informants, defectors, traitors, security forces, diplomats and others fight their battles and play out their roles, often with the highest stakes. For them, and the authors who replicate this reality on the pages of novels, Istanbul has the literary gravitas to anchor a storyline to a rich mix of intrigue and mystique that few other places on earth can do so easily. ⊕

For a fiction author there is a fascinating mix of sights and sounds in the various neighborhoods of Turkey's largest city.



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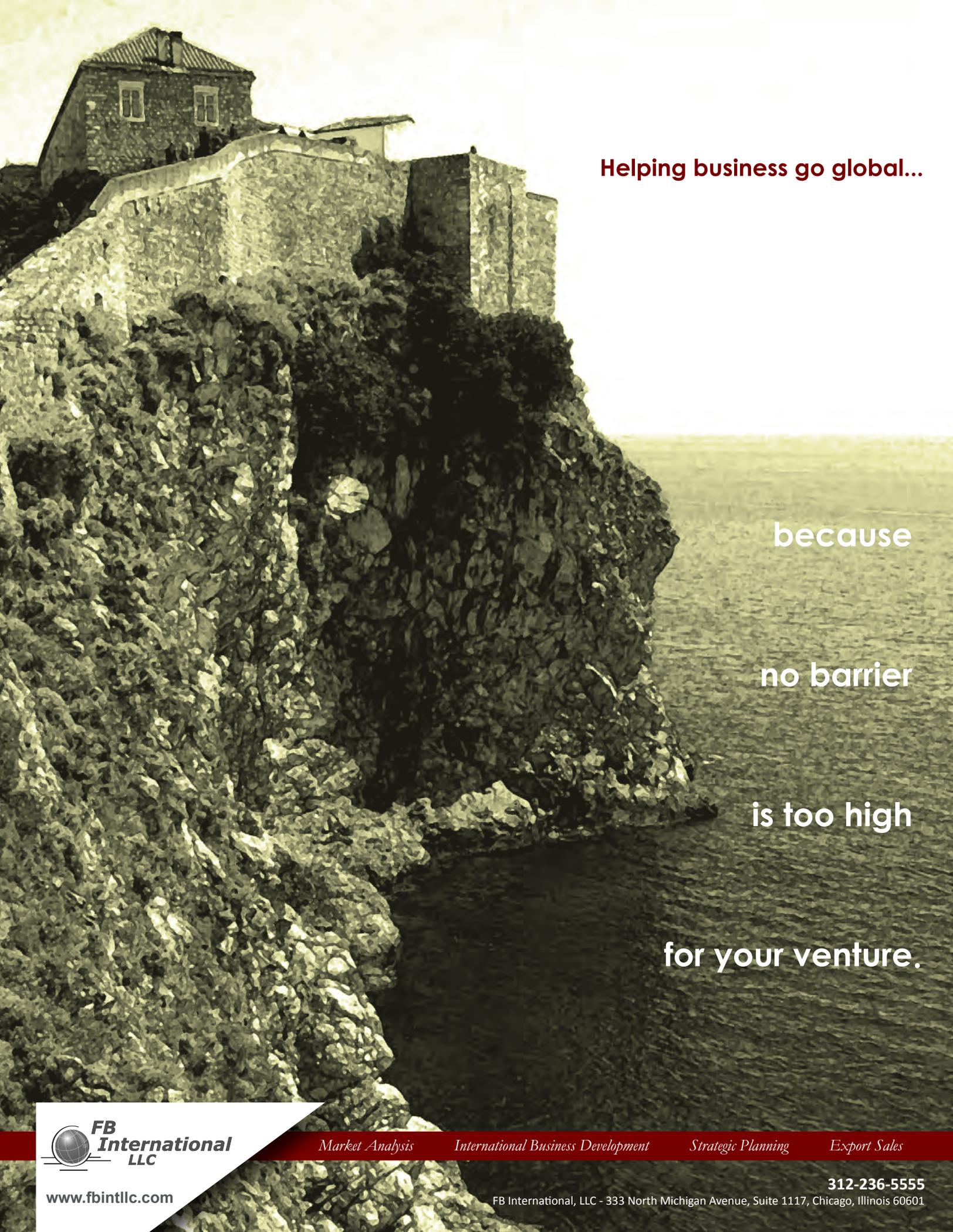


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Paraguay is a landlocked South American nation about the size of California and shares a border with Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia. The country's vast undeveloped lands and relatively poor infrastructure are just some of the contributing factors to the country's increasing role in the region's drug trade and other criminal enterprises, such as counterfeiting, money laundering and arms trading.

The drug trade has proliferated in Paraguay in two key ways. First, the manufacturing of drugs, either as finished products or ingredients, has increased for almost all controlled substances. Second, and more strategic in nature, is the increasing command, control and financing establishment of regional cartels, much of it centered in the capital, Asunción, and the border town Ciudad del Este.

Illegal drugs production has increased over the last ten years in part because Paraguay's rural lands and limited road networks have helped shelter narco-traffickers from law enforcement. Detecting these remote outposts often requires state-of-the-art equipment and well-trained police, which are limited resources in Paraguay. According to a 2010 UN drug report, Paraguay has a very low wholesale price for cannabis and cannabis resin. The same report claims that methamphetamine use in Paraguay is also on the rise.

According to federal law enforcement authorities in neighboring Brazil, Paraguay has become a major center for Brazilian drug trafficking organizations. Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff recently revealed that its military is using high-tech tools to patrol its border with Paraguay, including the use of advanced UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) in hopes of reducing the flow of narcotics, counterfeit and stolen goods, and weapons. As an example of rampant corruption in Paraguay, in late 2010 a three-judge panel absolved and released a known drug trafficker after receiving an alleged \$1 million payoff. Although the government of Paraguay

# Narco-Trafficking

in

# Paraguay

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*While so much law enforcement resources and media attention are focused on drug cartels operating in Mexico and Colombia, another country in Latin American — Paraguay — has gradually become a relative sanctuary for sophisticated drug traffickers seeking greater anonymity and freedom of action.*

later suspended the judges after substantial pressure from the United States and neighboring countries, many experts believe the case was only the tip of iceberg in the country's endemic closeness between criminal groups and the judicial system. But the judiciary is not the only branch with ties to the organized drug trade. Law enforcement is also struggling with corrupt officials. Since 2008, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has become increasingly suspicious of Paraguay's primary drug interdiction agency, the Secretaria Nacional Antidrogas (SENAD). At least one cannabis eradication operation and two money laundering investigations may have been compromised because of suspected ties between senior agency officials and established drug cartels. The DEA believes corruption and legislative restraints on the SENAD result in much fewer drug seizures than desired, estimated at only two to three percent of the cocaine likely transiting Paraguay.

Recently, the DEA, in partnership with the U.S. National Security Agency and local Central Intelligence

Agency assets, has increased the surveillance of several Paraguayan officials in Asuncion without the knowledge of the country's law enforcement agencies. These operations are designed to root out key government collaborators that have given drug lords relative security in the country. So far, however, Paraguay is continuing to expand as a regional narco-hub regardless of the U.S. government's move in September 2010 to drop Paraguay from its list of major narcotics transit or producing countries—a move widely believed to be based on political motives. Paraguay previously appeared on the list as a significant marijuana source country, though Paraguayan marijuana is not trafficked to the United States, but rather to other South American countries, in particular Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. The U.S. government also acknowledged that Paraguay remains an important transit country for cocaine produced in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. Therefore, for now evidence suggests that Paraguay will continue to be a relatively safe place for drug cartels. ⊕



A former general's mansion in Asunción's most prestigious neighborhood, where drug traffickers have also built large homes.

*Since 2008, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has become increasingly suspicious of Paraguay's primary drug interdiction agency, the Secretaria Nacional Antidrogas (SENAD).*



Poverty in Paraguay's capital is rampant, even on this street located just one block from the National Assembly.

# NATO's Attack

## on Belgrade

## Revisited

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*As the world witnessed NATO's recent campaign that helped bring down the Gadhafi regime in Libya, some experts are reexamining an earlier NATO operation: the bombing of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia and its capital, Belgrade. Understanding this prior conflict may help predict how post-revolution developments will unfold in Libya and in other areas where NATO is engaged in combat.*



In both conflicts, a brutal despot defied the international community and persisted to crush a rebellion within its borders. In Libya, Gadhafi's regime faced an uprising that rapidly expanded from its eastern enclave. Similarly, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the regime of Slobodan Milosevic fought an armed independence movement in its southern province of Kosovo. In response to Milosevic's crackdown, U.S. and European leaders launched a massive military operation under the umbrella

of NATO, the world's largest military alliance that, coincidentally, was in need of a renewed purpose, given the fall of its longtime enemy and *raison d'être*, the Soviet Union.

The campaign against Yugoslavia (that is, Serbia and Montenegro) began on March 24, 1999 and remained primarily an air war focused on decimating Milosevic's military, including its infrastructure and command and control. But NATO leaders were quietly admitting that the



Author A.C. Frieden visits the former Embassy of China in Belgrade that was heavily damaged by a U.S. strike.

broader goal was to inflict damage in such a way as to break the will of the Serbian people, thereby forcing Milosevic to withdraw from Kosovo. NATO used cruise missiles and other stand-off weapons on a wide range of military targets, but also set its sights on bridges, power stations, water treatment plants, food warehouses, and other civilian or dual-use sites to cause great discomfort the locals, particularly in the capital Belgrade and the city of Novi Sad.

The conflict lasted just under three months and resulted in the extensive damage NATO had intended. Serb forces agreed to a ceasefire and its troops left Kosovo. After dropping over 23,000 bombs and missiles on Yugoslavia, NATO was victorious. But the cost was high, the latent costs especially. Today, more than a decade since the conflict ended, the damage is still evident: buildings and infrastructure not fully repaired or rebuilt; popular resentment over Serbia's joining the European Union; and a distrust of the West in general, and the United States and NATO in particular. These post-war consequences are of key interest to experts, including NATO planners and those tied to reconstruction and stabilization efforts, as the alliance sets its sights on future potential hotspots, such as Syria, Algeria and Lebanon.

Avendia Publishing author A.C. Frieden recently traveled to Belgrade to research the NATO strikes for an upcoming novel. "It's widely believed that during the war many Belgrade residents didn't favor Milosevic or his Kosovo strategy," said Frieden, "but they also were deeply angered by the NATO bombing, a feeling still present today." This dichotomy is seen in conflicts like Iraq and Afghanistan, and to a much smaller extent in Libya, where a regime was generally despised but the military action by outsiders was also very unpopular.

Significant collateral damage was expected, as in any air war, but NATO targets were in line with its broader strategy. While it didn't specifically



The wing wreckage of a USAF F-117 stealth aircraft shot down on March 27, 1999, is on display at the Aviation Museum in Belgrade.

target civilians, NATO sought to chip away popular support for Milosevic by making daily life miserable, if not intolerable. And only a third of the munitions were so-called "smart bombs" and damage was significant in and around Belgrade. By the second month of the war, NATO planners stepped up attacks on civilian infrastructure partly because Serb forces had found creative ways to shield themselves from the bombing.

The war had other consequences. A strike by a USAF B-2 bomber on China's embassy killed several Chinese staff and destroyed one side of the building. While much evidence suggests the Clinton administration authorized the strike, the truth lies behind a thick wall of secrecy that neither China nor the U.S. is keen to revisit. Did China aid and abet Milosevic's command and control? Did its embassy store advanced American hardware lost over Serbia, such as parts of the F-117 stealth aircraft shot down in the early days of the conflict? We may never know.

Now that the Libyan conflict has ended, it may be useful to compare it to other NATO-led wars, like the one with Yugoslavia, in order to win more hearts and minds in future wars. ⊕

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The front section of an unexploded Tomahawk cruise missile is on display in Belgrade.



The weathered remains of Somoza's bunker atop Tiscapa Hill overlooks Managua's newer district.

Researching

# Nicaragua's

Cold War  
Legacy

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**S**ince the end of the 1979 revolution that took down the repressive Somoza dynasty, Nicaraguans have endured a difficult political evolution, with its conflicting roles as both an ally and antagonist of the United States.

This struggle continues today as the presidential election of November 2011 marks yet another chapter in Nicaragua's internal battle over political ideology, factionalization and class warfare, all of which makes this Central American country a fascinating study and a benchmark for the effects of populism in the region. Many would argue that today's Nicaragua has more in common with its Cold War past than the open, free democracy its current government wishes to portray. But this election has only exacerbated the problems by enabling a third term for President Daniel Ortega, the mastermind of the

1979 Sandinista revolution, the leader of the regime that fought the U.S.-backed *Contras*, the head of the ultra-powerful Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), and a fervent provocateur of anti-Americanism. Ortega's win and his party's supermajority control of its Congress have only emboldened his desire to exert more control over the country. Furthermore, the country's key institutions, including the judiciary and police forces, have been severely manipulated—principally by the FSLN but also by members of the opposition—to a point where they generate little public confidence.

But why does this small, relatively poor nation of about six million people receive so much attention? After all, its military is significantly diminished from the days of the Cold War, and the Soviet Union is no longer there with a helping hand. Well, it's principally for two reasons: (1) its political and economic conditions resemble many other Latin American nations—the poverty, a disconnected elite, empty promises by politicians of all parties, etc.; and (2) its leadership has the ability and interest to fan the flames of discontent well beyond its borders. With fellow choristers like Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Evo Morales of Bolivia, and Rafael Correa of Ecuador, the potentially destabilizing effects are of concern to the U.S. and other democracies in the region. The recent “Arab Spring” is a reminder that even today an internal revolt of the masses can explode well beyond national borders.

While the Cold War confrontation is over, the underlying conflict between the haves and have-nots persists throughout the region. In this environment, demagogues have been able to take advantage of the poor majority, whose upward mobility has remained systematically impaired by corruption, substandard education, and political manipulation by a powerful, entrenched minority. And this general frustration is apparent regionally, with only Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Panama seemingly able to show an acceptable distribution of wealth, by South American standards. So, what happens in Nicaragua is an indication of what could happen elsewhere.

While Ortega has been able to rile up the poor masses within and beyond Nicaragua's borders, it is ironic that he is increasingly exerting power in ways reminiscent of the Somoza dynasty that ruled Nicaragua for most of the 20th century. For example, Ortega and members of his family now control more than half the country's TV news channels in an effort to diminish the influence of the opposition.

One of Managua's heavily guarded military compounds adjacent to Tiscapa Hill.





A guard tower near the military headquarters that once housed Somoza's Guardia Nacional

Anyone delving into Nicaragua's contemporary politics should understand this nation's tumultuous 20th century history. General Anastasio Somoza García became the first in a line of dictators who ruled Nicaragua with an iron fist. He used the feared National Guard to suppress dissent, to orchestrate constitutional changes in his favor, and to secure U.S. commercial and political interests, regardless of the consequences to his people. He was assassinated in 1956, but his U.S.-educated son Luis Somoza Debayle took over the presidency and his other son, Anastasio, took over the National Guard, continuing a steadfast pro-American, anti-communist rule. After Luis died of a heart attack at age 45, Anastasio took over, and then circumvented constitutional term limits to permit his re-election in 1974. But by then the Sandinista rebels were gaining strength and the U.S. under Jimmy Carter was giving the dictatorship the cold shoulder. In July 1979, with the Sandinistas closing in on Managua, Anastasio Somoza and his family fled to Miami but were denied asylum. They eventually took refuge in Paraguay, at the time under the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner. The following year, a Sandinista com-



Avendia Publishing author A.C. Frieden (left) meets Tomas Stargardter, Nicaragua's top photojournalist, as he researches an upcoming novel.

mando team assassinated Anastasio in Asunción.

Liberated from the ruthless Somoza dynasty, Nicaragua then endured a lengthy post-revolution socialist regime led by Daniel Ortega until 1990, when the centrist candidate Violet Chamorro won the presidency. Amazingly, Ortega returned to power in the 2006 elections and was re-elected this month. With this history of violence, oppression, and liberation, all with strong shifts of the political pendulum, it's no wonder things remain a bit chaotic. Nicaragua's current political system consists of a volatile mixture of idealism, corruption, and pragmatism with many of its democratic institutions still too new to be reliable for long-term stability. ⊕

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A poster supporting President Ortega's party in Plaza de la Revolución in preparation for the November 2011 elections.

# Secrets of the World's *Embalmed Leaders*

CHỦ TỊCH HỒ CHÍ MINH VĨ ĐẠI SỐNG

The modern mummification of former national rulers is mostly associated with communist or autocratic regimes. While this association is generally true, the complete lineup of leaders whose bodies have been embalmed for long-term viewing is longer than one might guess and include the following: Vladimir Lenin (USSR; d. 1924); Georgi Dimitrov (Bulgaria; d. 1949); Kemal Ataturk (Turkey; d. 1938); Khorloogiin Choibalsan (Mongolia; d. 1952); Joseph Stalin (USSR; d. 1953); Klement Gottwald (Czechoslovakia; 1953); Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam, d. 1969); Mao Tse-tung (People's Republic of China; d. 1976); Agostino Neto (Angola; d. 1979); Linden Burnham (Guyana; d. 1985); Ferdinand Marcos (Philippines; d. 1989); and Kim Il-Sung (North Korea; d. 1994). However, only a few of the bodies are still publicly displayed, and most have been buried in traditional graves or cremated over the years. The Vatican also embalmed several of its former leaders, notably Pope Pius XII (d. 1958), Pope John XXIII (d. 1963), and Pope Pius X (d. 1914), but the embalmings were not as successful as in Russia and other countries that benefited from Russian expertise.

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*The preservation of deceased leaders for public viewing dates back to ancient Egypt, but the practice was brought to new heights in the 20th century with the embalming of Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin.*

Ho Chi Minh died at the age of 79, and his embalmed body is on display in this mausoleum in Hanoi's Ba Dinh Square.

In the United States, the body of President Abraham Lincoln was embalmed for extended preservation after his assassination in 1865 but was buried shortly thereafter. In Argentina, former leader Eva Peron was embalmed for what had intended to be decades, but instead she was buried only a few years after her death.

Embalming is a method of slowing the natural decomposition of the human body after death. This involves the use of chemicals and invasive methods to slow the decay. Embalming is a fairly common practice in North America, but the process is typically designed to give deceased a rested look for just a few days, not for months or years. The most challenging type of embalming is when the body must be preserved for decades, as has been done with some of the world's most notable political and military figures. However, environmental factors such as humidity and heat can diminish the period of time the body will appear in a fairly well-preserved state. Also important are the fabrics that come into contact with the body after embalming. Even embalming will not completely stop the decay of certain parts of the body, such as fingers, feet and areas of the face.

The leading embalming techniques were developed in Russia and put to use after the death of Vladimir Lenin. The process was enhanced with the embalment of Joseph Stalin in 1953. The skills, tools and chemical formulas developed at laboratories in Moscow were in high demand in parts of the communist world as founding leaders of several nations faced the inevitable. After Ho Chi Minh died, North Vietnam's government sought the help of Soviet experts to preserve the body for long-term viewing, but the climate in Hanoi made the process particularly difficult. As recently as two years ago an expert team of scientists, including Russian specialists, arrived in Hanoi to repair decaying areas of Ho Chi Minh's body, after which rumors spread that none or only part of the body remains "real" today.

Perhaps the most intricate efforts at preserving a deceased leader are seen in Pyongyang, North Korea. Visitors to the mausoleum containing the body of Kim Il-Sung are required to pass through elaborate security measures, a shoe-brushing machine and air blowers before entering the dark, cold, marble-clad room in the center of a palace to view his body in a glass sarcophagus. A team of about thirty scientists and technicians are dedicated to maintaining the body and performing periodic repairs and make-overs with skills borrowed from the Soviets and Chinese. The world's leading embalmers are no doubt curious to see whether the body of Kim Jong-Il, who died on December 17, 2011, will be embalmed in the same manner. ⊕



**Right:** The mausoleum in Pyongyang, North Korea where Kim Il-Sung's embalmed body is on display.

**Below:** Former Chinese leader Mao Tse-tung's body is on display in this mausoleum in the center of Tiananmen Square, Beijing.



**Vladimir Lenin's body is kept in this mausoleum in Red Square.**



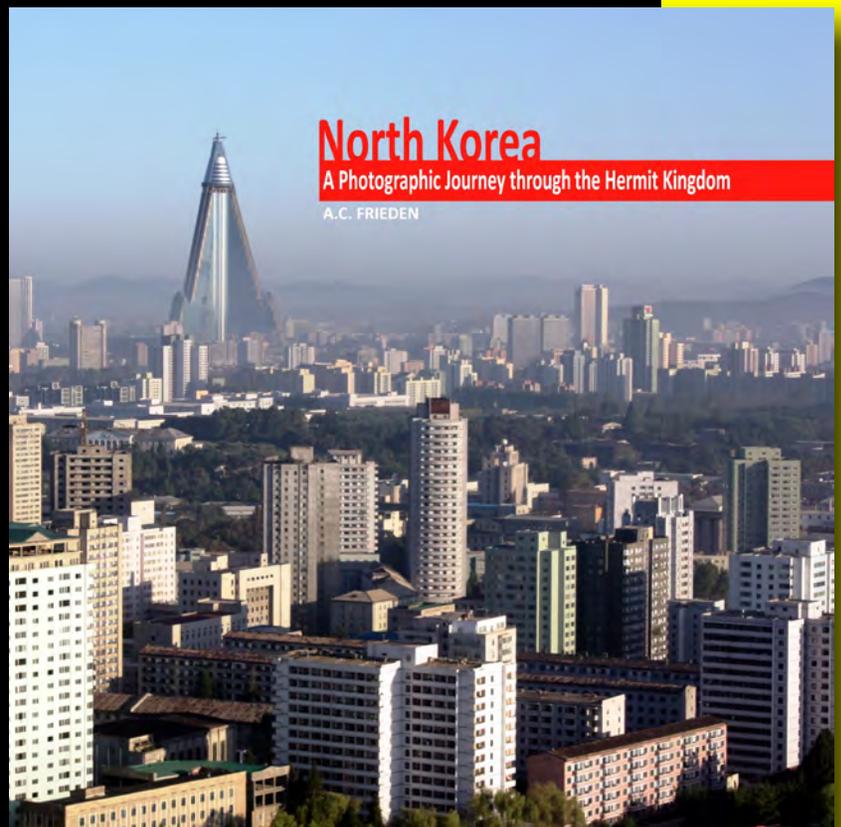
***North Korea***

***revealed***

***like***

***never***

***before.***



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Wreckage of a U.S.-made U-2 spy plane (aircraft no. 358) shot down over China in 1965 is on display in Beijing at the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution.

# American U-2 Spy Planes Lost Over China

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**T**he venerable American U-2 spy plane is most often remembered for its role in the Cold War, and most prominently when one piloted by Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Russia in 1960. However, a far lesser known fact is that several U-2 aircraft were lost in hostile territory, but over China instead.

In 1958, nearly ten years after the communist revolution swept through mainland China and forced the former regime to find refuge on Taiwan, the United States entered into a secret pact to station U-2 aircraft on Taiwanese soil. Secrecy was crucial for this sensitive mission, codenamed *Project Razor*. The Central Intelligence Agency ran the operation, rather than with the U.S. Air Force. Taoyuan Air Base, located on the western coast of Taiwan, was selected as the deployment site, which was less than 100 miles from mainland China. From there the planes were to fly in China's airspace and take photographs of the

communist nation's military installations and troop deployments. The major difference from other U-2 missions was that the aircraft would be flown by Taiwanese pilots rather than Americans. However, the surveillance film taken by the aircraft during each flight would be sent to U.S. intelligence facilities in Okinawa and Guam without being shared with Taiwan's military. Only a small fraction of the strategic and tactical information derived from the photographs and electronic surveillance was shared with Taiwan, and very selectively at that. Only ten years after the first flights did the U.S. finally agree to allow Taiwan access to the imagery and also give it the ability to process and analyze its own film.

Preparations for *Project Razor* began with a contingent of Republic of

China Air Force (ROCAF) pilots arriving in Texas for training. Twenty-six pilots qualified on the aircraft and the first two U-2 planes landed in Taiwan in July 1960, joining the newly formed 35th Squadron, known as the “Black Cat.” Two more aircraft joined the squadron in December 1960, the same month that the first missions over mainland China began.

The first pilot fatality occurred during training at Taoyuan in 1961, when a U-2 crashed on takeoff. But the risks were even greater over hostile territory, often at altitudes of 70,000 feet for seven or eight hours. The U-2 surveillance targeted mostly China, though some flights crossed into North Korea, North Vietnam and Laos. The planes also used other U.S. airbases in the region, including those

in Thailand and South Korea.

The first shoot down of the squadron’s U-2 occurred on September 9, 1962. Piloted by Lt Col Huai Chen, the aircraft was hit by a Chinese SA-2 missile as he flew over Nanchang. Chen survived the ejection but died later from his injuries. Five more U-2 aircraft were shot down over China between 1964 and 1969. The only two ROCAF pilots who survived being shot down were released in 1982, after more than fifteen years in custody.

More advanced U-2R models were sent to Taiwan in 1968, but that year the U.S. ended the flights over China for fear of antagonizing the communist nation at a time when its relations with the Soviet Union were deteriorating and those with the U.S. were improving. The last U-2 to fly over the mainland did so in March 1968, and all subsequent flights were kept at least 20 miles off China’s coast.

Despite the drawbacks of operating at such distances, new optics and electronics were added to the U-2 to improve effectiveness. U.S. satellites were also reducing the need for manned reconnaissance flights.

The 102 missions over hostile territory carried out by the squadron helped provide important intelligence, but they eventually ended completely. During a visit to China in 1973, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger promised that all U-2 aircraft would be removed from Taiwan within a year. The U.S. also agreed to remove all nuclear weapons and fighter aircraft stored on the island. The last flight occurred on May 24, 1974. ⊕

### Key Mission Facts

- 102 surveillance flights over China
- 19 U-2 aircraft assigned to squadron
- 26 Taiwanese pilots trained
- 6 U-2 aircraft shot down over China
- 4 pilots killed in action



Wreckage of a tail section of a U-2 shot down over China and now on display in Beijing.



# Author Q&A

with  
**Delphine  
Pontvieux**



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**T**hrilleresque caught up with award-winning French-American thriller author Delphine Pontvieux to find out more about what makes her so passionate about her fiction writing.

Delphine is a tall, blonde, multilingual diver, rock climber, runner, music industry expert and globetrotter, with enough energy to light up any conversation, on any topic. There's no guessing why we wanted to interview her!

***Tell us about yourself.***

I was born in Versailles and grew up in France. I have lived in Australia, the United States, Spain, and the Netherlands and traveled to several more

countries before moving to Chicago in 1998, where I live today. I worked for ten years in the music industry until a few years ago, when I transitioned to writing full-time and also founded my company, Miss Nyet Publishing.

***What is your latest novel?***

*ETA-ESTIMATED TIME OF ARREST* is my first published novel and came out in hardback in December 2009 and in digital form in late 2010. The novel has exceeded expectations and led to

me being given this year's *Indie Book Excellence Book Award* in the Thriller category, and the *French in Chicago community award* in the arts and culture category. *ETA* is set in the French Pyrenees and the Basque country. The story is a fast-paced, action packed thriller combining politics, romance, suspense and police drama. After participating in a pro-separatist march that turned violent in January of 1992, 21-year-old Lorenzo Lartaun Izcoa is wrongly charged with the fatal bombing of a police station in Irun and finds himself on the Spanish Secret Service's "most wanted" list, branded an active member of the Basque terrorist group ETA. He has no choice but to flee his country until two years later, Lartaun's childhood friend, Patxi, offers him the chance to return to Europe under a new identity in exchange for a "small favor." Lartaun seizes the opportunity, yet soon realizes that the favor he owes his friend is not so small after all, as Patxi is secretly planning a violent confrontation that will send shockwaves through Spain's political establishment.

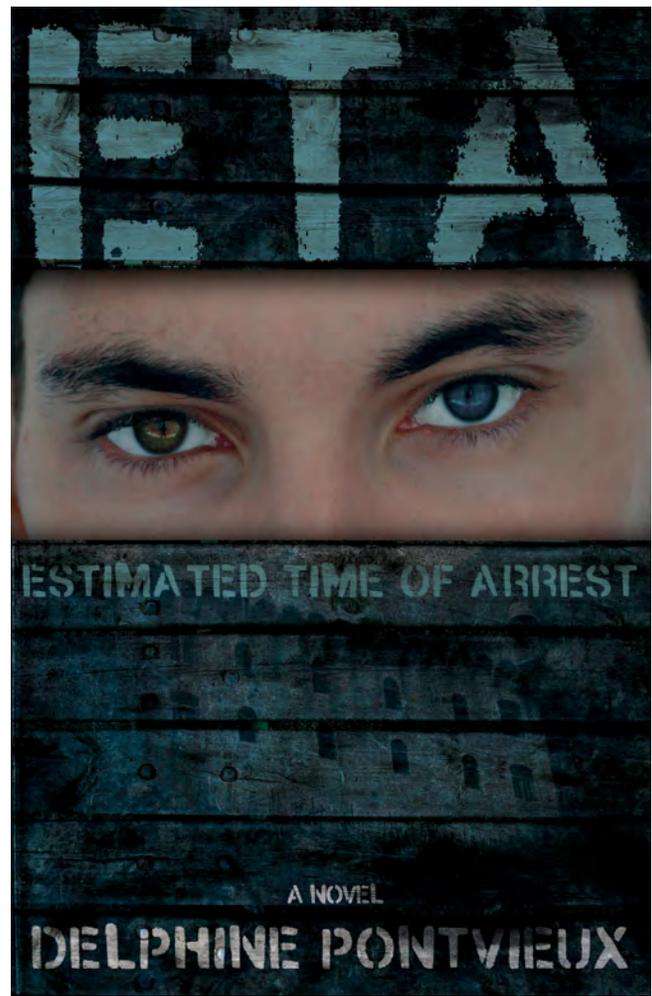
**How did you come up with the book's title?**

It's a play on words. It's not only a variation of the abbreviation for "Estimated Time of Arrival"—I used "Arrest" instead—but ETA is also the name of the Basque terrorist group that's been active for over fifty years throughout Spain. ETA stands for *Euskadi Ta Aska-tasuna*, meaning "Basque country and freedom" in Euskara, the language spoken in this region of Spain. While I have no Basque roots or family origin, I've always been fascinated by the region's language, culture and social and political history, as well as its beautiful landscapes, with spectacular mountains, green pastures and rugged coastline. When I was a teenager in the mid-1980s, the Basque struggle for independence was in full swing. The terrorist group ETA often made the news with bombings, shootings and kidnappings. Looking back today, I guess those incidents marked me more than I expected—they inspired me to write this book.

**What were your inspirations for the characters in your story, and do you identify with the protagonist?**

Though a work of fiction, *ETA*'s plot is set within the current political situation in Euskal Herria. I focused on tightly weaving the story within the actual historical context to give the novel the needed credibility. What the characters go through could indeed have happened in the real world, and perhaps did happen in some way. None of the characters were based solely on any familiar person, whether well known or not. Rather, they're the result of a patchwork of bits and pieces of individuals I pulled

together to these complex characters. I find there also is a piece of me in all of them, even if their personalities are wide-ranging. I avoid pushing my own opinions or biases onto the reader, but instead I let the characters expose and represent the cross-section of views on the complicated Basque separatist conflict. In other words, each character plays a role in swaying the reader toward a particular side without much influence from the author. I tried to put myself in their shoes, and to talk their talk, and walk their walk the way they would based upon their respective beliefs and the events that challenge them, whether they are police officers, secret agents, fascists, peaceful activists, disabused militants or even terrorists. And yes, I feel particularly close to Lartaun, the protagonist, because I can relate to his complex personality which often causes him to be misunderstood, sometimes to his detriment.



(above) French-American author Delphine Pontvieux's debut thriller *ETA—ESTIMATED TIME OF ARREST* (Miss Nyet Publishing).



### ***What is your typical writing day?***

A normal writing day for me really starts at night. I'll sometimes write during the day, but I seldom get anything accomplished—far too many distractions. I prefer writing when I'm alone at home, especially if I know I can pull an all-nighter if I feel like it without worrying about bothering anyone else. Otherwise, I write in my office, where it's quiet and out of the way. Sometimes, however, if I feel like being social while writing, I'll find a spot at the kitchen counter. Whichever location I choose, I often find myself struggling to muster the discipline to write longer hours. Thank goodness I'm the only one who imposes deadlines on my writing.

### ***What techniques do you use to develop your story?***

I call it my "dream technique." I never follow an outline. When I started writing *ETA*, I didn't even know the fate of my protagonist, Lartaun, until much later on. I simply dreamed about the story at night (yes, I can dream in episodes, and pick up from where I left off) and wrote down what happened the next day. I trust my characters to figure out what they'll do, and I trust their judgment when they face a new situation. By the time I'm done writing the manuscript, I know each character completely, down to the smallest detail—as if I'd known them a lifetime. I never thought I'd end up with my own novel. It just sort of happened. I started writing one day, and by the time I realized it, I'd already finished five chapters. It was too late to back out.

### ***Which are your favorite French or European authors, and why?***

I've always loved the French classics: Emile Zola, in particular, for his talent in describing the Paris of his era. When I read *L'ASSOMMOIR* or *NANA*, I'm transported back to the France's Second Empire, with amazing vividness. I also love Marcel Pagnol for his stories that literally



Thriller author Delphine Pontvieux explores a sunken vessel in Lake Michigan.

transport you to Provence. I also admire the works of Colette, Boris Vian, Ionesco, Albert Camus, Antoine de St Exupery, Victor Hugo, and the poets Beaudelaire and Apollinaire.

### ***Tell us about your passion for scuba diving and how this will play a part in your new books.***

I went diving with my dad when I was a kid. Back then it was a lot tougher than what today's recreational diving. There were no fancy bouyancy control devices, backup regulators or dive computers, but just a basic harness and a tank. Later on, as a teenager, I became more interested in rock climbing (which found its way into my novel, *ETA*) and soon forgot all about diving. That is, until I moved to Chicago, where I soon rekindled my love of the water, so much so that I became a scuba instructor in 2004 and am training students today. I am also active in technical diving, as well as wreck and cave diving. In fact, I am in the middle of writing a story that takes place in Quintana Roo, Mexico, in which the heroine is an expert cave diver.

### ***How does having lived in France and the U.S. influence your writing?***

*ETA* takes place in France for the most part and the majority of the characters are French. Since I grew up in France, it obviously gave me an edge to capture their backgrounds and personalities. The same applies to how I

describe the settings. I believe it gives more authenticity to the story, because the reader knows this is where I come from. As for living in the U.S., I have spent enough time here now to relate to the culture, to what affects Americans. I also read American authors. Even though I maintain a writing style different from typical U.S. thriller authors, I have learned to adapt my style to the local market (more action; heightened emphasis on credibility; and getting straight to the point!).

### ***Where can readers find your book?***

*ETA* is available everywhere in both hardcover and digital version, and also on Amazon.com. You can subscribe to my blog at [www.missnyet.com](http://www.missnyet.com) (which is also on [goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com), [imdb.com](http://imdb.com) and Facebook, among other sites). I am still focusing my efforts on the sale and promotion of *ETA*, particularly since it continues to get great reviews and awards. I always welcome new readers and reader feedback!

### ***What projects are you working on?***

I'm writing my second novel, and I've finished some short stories due out this year in several anthologies. I'm also focused on my budding acting career, with a role in the upcoming motion picture *LOL*, featuring Demi Moore, Ashley Greene and Miley Cyrus (for details, visit the site: [www.imdb.com/name/nm4041746](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm4041746) or check out her Facebook page).

# Author Q&A

with

**Marc Paoletti**



It's not often that we encounter such astute writers in the increasingly overcrowded literary arts, and in a fiction writing industry ever more dominated by marketing driven hum-drum themes void of nuance. These are just some of the reasons we find it refreshing to delve into what makes Marc tick as an author.

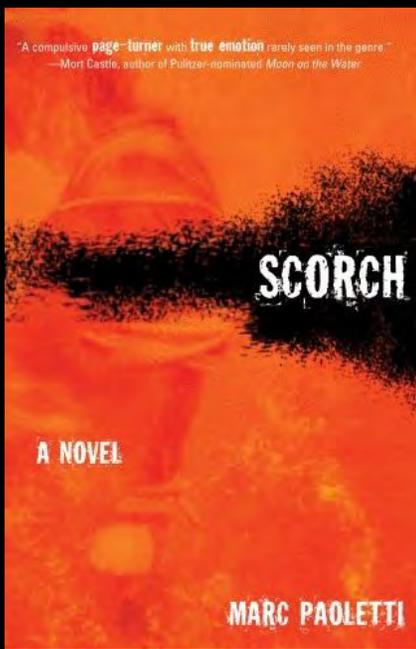
***What brought you to the world of fiction writing?***

A number of things, certainly, but I suppose the largest motivating factor was lack of resources. There was a point in Los Angeles when I was dirt poor and wondering what sort of hobby I'd like to try. You know, something to take my mind off the fact that I couldn't afford to do much. I

couldn't exactly ski or surf or do anything else that required expensive equipment, so I started to write. Cheapest habit going—pen and paper. Things progressed from there.

***What is your typical writing day?***

I work as a freelance advertising copywriter, so my writing day depends on my schedule. If I'm working at an agency, I'll write for 2-3 hours after work, but I won't go home to do it. If I go home, I'll be too tempted to do anything but write. I'll head to a coffee shop instead so it feels like I'm still at the office. If I'm between freelance jobs, I'll spend most of the day writing, which is a mixed blessing. Yes, it can be a productive time, but any gains I might



Marc's first thriller, *SCORCH* (Five Star).

make in a novel or story is counterbalanced by feelings of guilt that I didn't use that time to find another freelance assignment.

***In addition to novels, you've written short stories that have been published in anthologies. Tell us what you enjoy most about short stories.***

I love short stories because they allow you to explore a singular incident, or a narrowly focused period of time. Typically, in a novel, these types of incidents are glossed over somewhat for the good of novel — i.e., to keep the story moving — so it's nice to delve a little more deeply. For example, my story "Twenty Minutes" describes a young man's emotional state in the moments before making a phone call of forgiveness to his father. In "Apple," the entirety of the story takes place in the time it takes an assassin to stalk his prey down an airport concourse. Also, I'm a huge proponent of theme, and short stories give you the opportunity to present your theme in a more consistent manner than you might in a novel. The simple reason is length. When you're writing 90,000 words, there's a far greater chance you'll jump the rails for any number of reasons — an editor's suggestion, for example. In a

short story, you're better able to make sure that every character, action, setting, line of dialogue, etc. reflects your theme to deliver your message

***Tell us about your current projects.***

I'm in the process of finishing a crime novel. After that, I'll start work on a light mystery series and a literary coming-of-age tale. Some time after that, I'll write a road novel, a quirky love story, and maybe a young adult urban fantasy. Plenty of stuff planned. Additionally, I'm making several of my previously published short stories available on the Kindle and Nook. I'm packaging these stories in groups of three according to genre — mini-anthologies, if you will. Among others, I've posted a crime anthology entitled *BOUND BY BLOOD: 3 STORIES OF DARK CRIME*, a magical reality anthology entitled *WAKING UP: 3 STORIES THAT BLUR THE LINES OF REALITY*, and a literary anthology entitled *THE DAY THE RADIO DID MOST OF THE TALKING AND TWO OTHER STORIES*. I've also posted novellas that I've written myself — for example, one entitled *JORGE, EL RATÓN VOLADOR*, which is about the weird and wonderful world of Lucha Libre — and others that I've co-written. All are selling well. I find the rise of electronic publishing very exciting; it's given these stories a life beyond the printed page.

***Do you identify with any of the characters in your stories?***

Unconsciously or not, I tend to write about people who undergo traumatic physical and psychological transformations in the course of their narrative arcs. I'm not quite sure why that's the case. Something within my psyche must demand it, so I suppose I identify with many of my characters — heroes and villains both — even if I don't always know the reason. However, I do know these reasons are rarely literal. For example, I don't in any way identify with the actions perpetrated by the telemarketer in "No Eye

to Watch, Not Tongue to Wound," but I do identify with her desire to escape a deeply unsatisfying situation. I've never experienced dawning and absolute existential terror like the kid in "The Day the Radio Did Most of the Talking" or the young man in "We Belong Inside You," but I do identify with change that is lifelong and inescapable. My penchant for writing about physical change is equally curious. David Cole in *SCORCH* is burned, Scott Boulder in *THE LAST VAMPIRE* turns into a monster and then changes again in the sequel, the father in my short story "Depths" hallucinates so severely that his son becomes a reptile, and so on. It might have something to do with changes I'd like to make in my environment at any given time.

***How did your experience in movies and television influence your writing?***

I worked as a special effects pyrotechnician in film and television for four years and, before that, I held low-ladder positions like production assistant, etc. Honestly, I don't think my experiences in Hollywood had more or less affect than any other experience in my life. I've mined those movie biz experiences for story purposes, of course — *SCORCH* is a

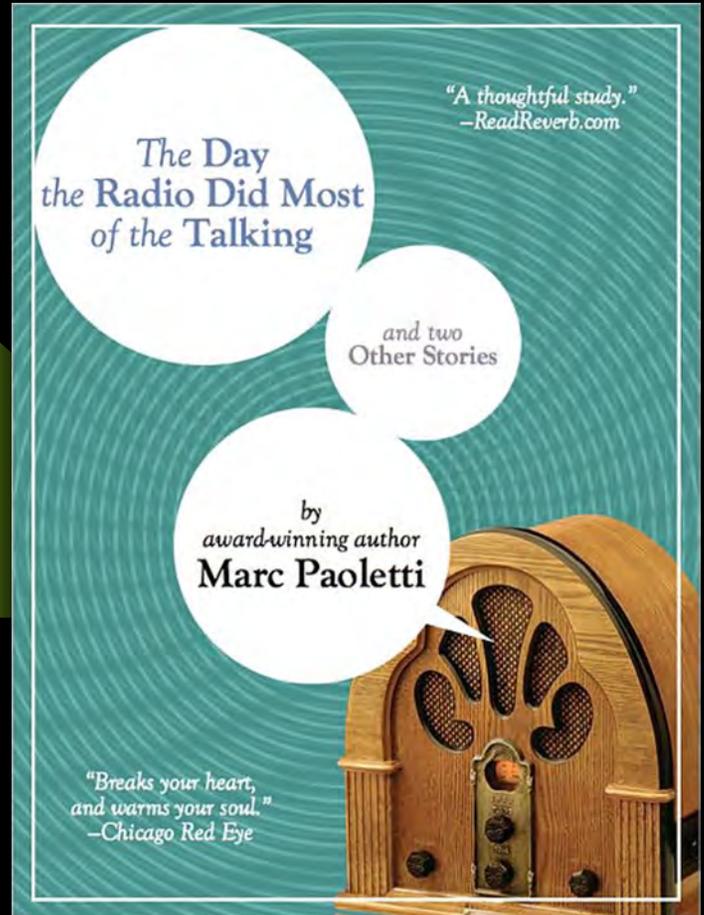
“

*I love short stories because they allow you to explore a singular incident, or a narrowly focused period of time.”*

prime example — but, since then, I've mined other experiences just as frequently. However, I will say this: the people I worked with in special effects were among the most noble I've met anywhere, and that quality — as it pertained to them — often makes its way into my protagonists.



Some of Marc's recent books: *THE VAMPIRE AGENT* (Del Ray) and a short stories collection.



### *What would you recommend to aspiring fiction writers?*

Three quick things: 1) I believe that writing is about artistic and intellectual freedom, so I'd recommend that you write about what moves you. Want to spin a tale about politics? A failed relationship? Vampires? Midget kleptomaniacs, or some rare species of flower found above a certain elevation in the Himalayas? Go for it. I sold a story entitled "Waking Up" that follows a man as he attempts to uncover the cause of his nightmares—it's metafiction wrapped in literary analysis wrapped in a mystery. If I'd thought twice about the salability of that story, I probably never would have written it, but, at the time, I felt like it had to be done. Your passion about the subject matter will shine through and affect readers on an emotional level. 2) Rewriting is a key part of the writing process; don't let it freak you out. That story about how Kerouac wrote *ON THE ROAD* in a single draft is bullshit. Every writer must write multiple drafts to get to the good stuff. Think of it this way: How many times in life do you get do-overs? As a writer, you're able to improve on reality without anyone knowing the how or why of it. 3) If

you write with the exclusive purpose of getting published, it'll never happen. Getting published shouldn't be the goal; writing as honestly as you can should be. With the possible exception of love, sex, spiritual enlightenment, and Dutch apple pie, there's little better than writing something that says exactly what you'd hoped to say in exactly the way you'd hoped to say it.

### *How has living on the East and West coasts, and in the Midwest, changed you as an author?*

To me, writing is all about sensibility, and living in diverse areas of the country has helped developed that sensibility. My first novel, *SCORCH*, takes place in Hollywood, and borrows heavily from my experiences of working as a special effects pyrotechnician in Hollywood for film and television. The crime novel that I'm

writing now takes place in a small, Midwestern steel town modeled after Gary, Indiana, and features a mill very much like US Steel. My ghost story "Veils" takes place at a burlesque theater in turn-of-the-century San Francisco—a city I adore. I've traveled out of the country, so a few of my stories have an international flavor. "Polenta," for example, is set at the end of the 19th century and deals with an Italian immigrant family.

### *Which are your favorite authors, and why?*

I enjoy any author who can teach me something while entertaining me. I'm not picky about the lesson, but I believe that art—especially writing—should have a motivating thematic purpose behind it. If an author simply conveys a series of plot points, s/he might as well be writing advertising copy. ⊕

## The 2011 Printers Row Lit Fest in Chicago

Throughout the year Chicago proudly hosts several prominent literary events, and a popular favorite is the Printers Row Lit Fest. This past summer more than 150 exhibitors, including booksellers, publishers, writers associations, book clubs and media organizations, along with countless authors and celebrities, converged onto Chicago's South Loop to offer 120,000 visitors two days of literary excitement.

This year's festival gave book lovers the opportunity to meet many of their favorite authors. Among the most anticipated fiction writers attending the fair was Marcus Sakey, introducing his latest crime novel, *The Two Deaths of Daniel Hayes*, and discussing with Sean Chercover, (author of *Trigger City*) Marcus' upcoming TV series on the Travel Channel about cities and their infamous crimes. Fellow Chicago thriller novelist Jamie Freveletti was also on hand, moderating a panel with authors Kevin Guilfoile and Andrew Gross on the topic of thriller-writing techniques.

The literary festival included dozens of expert panels, book readings and other literary programs touching upon a wide range of genres and market segments. Mystery and thriller fans were treated to two other interesting panels: A presentation titled "The Future of the Mystery Novel," offering insights into the evolving genre by authors David Heinzmann, Andrew Grant, Luisa Buehler, and Sharon Fiffer; and another panel discussion titled "And Murder Most Cozy", featuring fiction authors Betty Hechtman, Ellery Adams, and Joelle Charbonneau and moderated by Julie Hyzy.

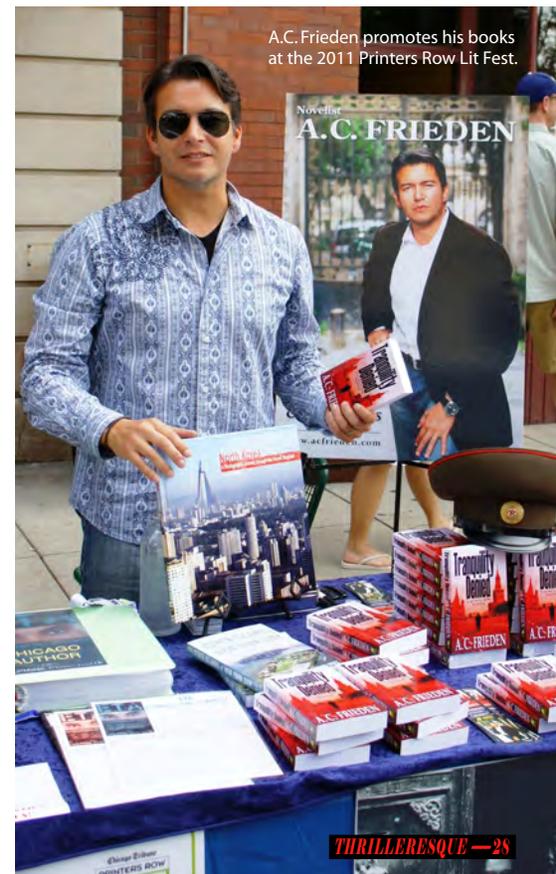


A busy Dearborn Street during the Printers Row Lit Fest

Anecdotal feedback from exhibitors seemed to show higher sales than last year. This was attributable to higher attendance and perhaps more books purchased per visitor. The weather also may have helped — remember the downpour at last year's fair? But for those organizing the show, there are lingering concerns. Exhibitors remain sensitive to the cost of attendance, which for some includes much more than renting a booth or table. Costs of travel, custom signage and promotional materials and giveaways add to an industry already constrained by tight margins, at least for print books. We can only hope that exhibitors continue to see the value of this fair in broader terms than mere profit.

While Chicago is not about to take the premier location for the publishing industry, it can be proud of a substantial presence, particularly in the numbers of authors, small/medium-sized publishers and retailers. The Printers Row Lit Fest is one of the key events to highlight this local and regional strength in the marketplace, and many in the publishing industry are eager to foster this positive image. We hope organizers of this and other literary events in Chicago will continue to foster even more collaboration among industry participants in the months

and years to come. A good sign of this is the strong participation of local presses and authors at the upcoming Chicago Book Expo 2011, set for November 19-20 (for details, visit: <http://www.chicagowritershouse.org>). Avendia Publishing was thrilled to participate in the Printers Row Lit Fest and will be one of nearly forty Chicago-based publishing houses at the Chicago Book Expo. ☉



# Marketing Tips For Authors

Today authors need to be more aggressive and resourceful than ever to promote their literary works and push their names and brands in the marketplace, particularly now that publishers have become more frugal with advertising and promotional activities. While this may seem like a daunting task for some authors, there are many reasons to embrace this marketing opportunity, even if it may take time away from writing a new manuscript. Many new technologies now enable authors to have more control over their book promotions and to reach larger pools of consumers. Discussed in this article are five key marketing tools that thriller authors consider as part of their marketing efforts.

## Graphic Intensive Web Site

Over the past five years, most retail web sites have significantly enhanced their graphic features, adding many more videos, still images, and color/pattern schemes that make the user experience more stimulating. This is no less important for thriller authors. Many of the websites of *New York Times* bestselling fiction authors still fall way short in terms of usability and sophistication, particularly substantive content that is also visually appealing. Image-based navigation tends to attract and retain more user attention, such as using Flash animation, video, dynamic banners and buttons, and other captivating features that hook visitors to the site and, hopefully, onto a purchase.

## Book Trailers

Book trailer videos are not yet the norm in the fiction industry, but they are more prevalent than ever before. The videos are no longer as expensive to produce and distribute. While it may not be sufficient to simply upload

your book trailer onto YouTube, the introduction of such a video into a comprehensive marketing campaign can be quite effective. It is also an easy tool to help promote a book virally, if it's done with sufficient creative genius.

## Twitter

Fiction authors spend a good bit of time expanding the reach of their online promotional activities, with varying levels of complexity. Creating a following involves using a range of tools to bridge the literal distance between consumers and their favorite writers. Twitter is probably the simplest tool on the Internet and may also be one of the most effective. Short and to the point, this online networking site allows authors to connect instantly to a wide audience and to channel information to followers. While it is not the ideal platform for the content itself, it helps push an author's materials (such as newslet-

ters, blog entries, and other news) in a simple manner.

## Newsletters

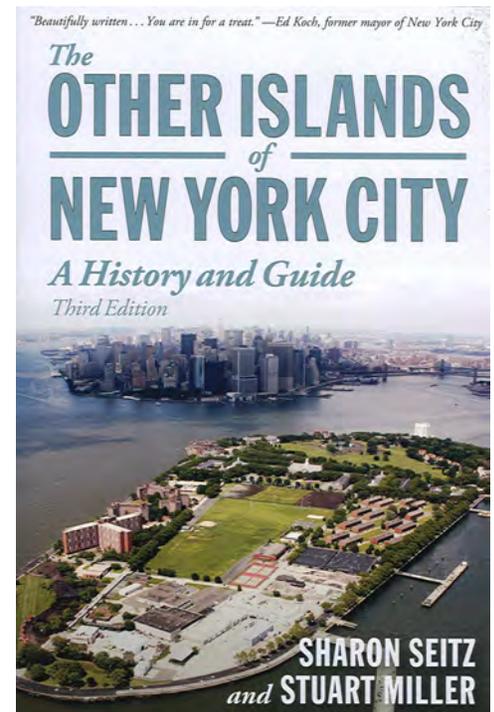
Authors should also consider reaching out to fans with a newsletter. It's also another way to strengthen an author's brand in the industry by reaching out to fellow authors, agents, editors and publishers. Even a 2-page electronic newsletter can generate welcomed traffic on the author's web site.

## QR Codes

Authors should also take advantage of a simple technology called QR codes (short for Quick Response codes). They are a type of digital indicia or bar code that allows compatible digital readers to access data. An author may have a QR code on an ad that then automatically directs the viewer to a web site of the author's choosing. (See ads in this magazine for examples of QR codes used to promote books) ⊕

## Photography: A Diverse Tool for Writers

Ansel Adams once said, "When words become unclear, I shall focus with photographs." Perhaps fiction authors can follow suit by delving into the visual arts to enhance their literary passion. Many fiction authors have transcended other forms of art, in particular photography, often as a hobby and sometimes as commercial endeavor to repurpose archives, as was the case with Avendia Publishing fiction author A.C. Frieden. To research an upcoming novel, Frieden traveled to North Korea and amassed an extensive collection of photographs showing a broad cross-section of life in this reclusive Asian nation. This collection eventually became the basis of a photography book on North Korea published in March 2011. "It happened unintentionally," said Frieden. "At some point when I was writing scenes in my novel and verifying the information in photos I'd taken, it hit me that I could do something more



Above: The recently published non-fiction book *The Other Islands of New York City* with a cover featuring an aerial photograph taken by thriller author A.C. Frieden (Countryman Press, 3rd Ed. 2011).



Aerial view of Burano island near Venice, Italy taken from a helicopter by author A.C. Frieden.

## North Korea

A Photographic Journey through the Hermit Kingdom

A.C. FRIEDEN

with those pictures.” This trend is likely to continue given the increasing ability to share photographs more widely online and the improved affordability, quality and simplicity of digital photography equipment.

Photography is a diverse art, much like writing. As an avid pilot, Frieden also tapped into his vast archives of aerial photographs to see which ones could be of use to other publications. Most recently one of Frieden’s nearly five hundred aerial photos of New York City appears on the cover of a

new book titled *The Other Islands of New York City* (Countryman Press; 3rd Ed. 2011). “Authors sometimes underestimate the value of the photographs they’ve taken over time, particularly if they were for purposes of researching a scene for a novel,” adds Frieden.

In some cases, publishing photographs can help to enhance credibility of an author’s fictional work. An espionage author could publish photographs of famous spy locales. A crime novelist could have a photography book of places associated with infamous murders. A fiction author who scuba dives could publish a photography book of underwater wrecks and marine life. A thriller author with firearms training could release a book on weaponry and tactics. The possibilities are nearly endless.

Authors can go online to market their photos, and some sites even provide a way of collecting license revenues for images selected by licensees. While not likely to be substantial additional income, some authors have found ways to earn money from photographs originally taken for non-commercial purposes tied to researching scenes. ⊕

**Above:** A photography book of North Korea, published by thriller author A.C. Frieden.

**Below:** Author A.C. Frieden in Uruguay, researching and photographing sites using a helicopter.



**Below:** An aerial photograph of Joliet Prison, near Chicago, originally taken to verify line of sight limitations for a scene in a crime novel.



# Weapons: Top Five Errors by Novelists

Crime and thriller authors don't need military training or a law enforcement background to write credible scenes featuring weapons. However, today the average fiction reader is more knowledgeable than ever before and better able to spot technical errors. Access to weaponry information is only a click away thanks to the Internet, and with advanced ebook readers that link directly to dictionaries and encyclopedias, the chance of a glaring mistake standing out like a huge ink stain on a page is higher than ever. Authors quiet simply need to do their homework about weapons they write about, whether it's a knife, a crossbow, a pistol, a rocket launcher or a tank. A little research to overcome the top five errors will go a long way to enhancing an author's credibility, even for those who've never spent time in combat, on the streets or at firing ranges.

## Nomenclature

Using the proper terminology is essential. There is a huge difference between an assault rifle and a sniper

rifle, or a pistol versus a revolver. Authors also need to know when to use lay terms or street names for certain weapons, depending on the character and setting. Weapons terminology is readily accessible online, but authors should also buy their own, more comprehensive resources as a backup.

## Origin

Another error for authors to avoid is identifying the wrong country of origin or manufacture for a weapon, if that information is important to disclose in the story. For example, not all AK-47s assault rifles are made in Russia or the former Soviet Union. They've been manufactured in several Eastern European and Asian countries, and most recently in Venezuela. Furthermore, weapons produced in countries other than the first originating country may incorporate technical variations or improvements.

## Mechanical Functions

Proper understanding of a weapon's technical capabilities is also important for authors. Whether it's the rate of fire, ammunition type, magazine capacity, common malfunctions, disassembly, or the compatibility of

aftermarket components and accessories (night vision, stocks, grips, etc.), authors need to get this right. Keeping a small library of weapons books is a good way to validate the information available online.

## Hit Probabilities and Effects

Even with characters that have super-human skills and great luck, weapons typically cannot accomplish what they are not designed to do. A Mini Uzi submachine gun most likely will not take down a human target 100 yards away; an AR-15 round will not penetrate all bullet-resistant glass; and the wound profile of a victim hit by a 7.62mm round will be different than one by a 9mm. Authors need to understand the hit probabilities, non-penetrations, and the differences in effects for targets hit with different ammunition. This kind of information is difficult to get right consistently, and its accurate scenario in a novel depends on the ammunition, the weapon and the environment. Ammunition comes in different calibers and has varying shapes, material and explosive power, with different velocities and penetration profiles. Authors need to do this research, especially if the story includes forensic evidence collection and analysis. ⊕

Below: Author A.C. Frieden handles a U.S. Browning .50 caliber machine gun on board the captured USS Pueblo in North Korea.  
Far right: Three pistols used by Kosovo rebels against Serbian forces and now on display at a military museum in Belgrade.





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# LITERARY SCENE



NEW YORK | CHICAGO

Chicago and New York offer a wide range of exciting and informative literary events, from book signings by bestselling authors to publishing industry expos. Whether you are a writer, a published author, an industry insider, a vendor or an avid reader of fiction, there's always plenty to choose from. On this page we've attempted to list some of the events that are most closely connected to the thriller and suspense genres, but it is by no means a comprehensive list. We encourage you to check your local papers, bookstore websites and literary organizations for event updates.

## LITERARY EVENTS NEW YORK

**December 4, 2011**

**The Writer's Studio: 2011 Pushcart Prize Reading**

4:00 p.m.

Le Poisson Rouge, 158 Bleecker St., NYC

Authors Lydia Davis, Sigrid Nunez, Mark Strand, and Susan Wheeler will read works in honor of the literary prize.

**December 5, 2011**

**The Writer's Studio: 2011 Pushcart Prize Reading**

8:00 p.m.

92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave., NYC

Cuban-American writer Oscar Hijuelos, author of the memoir *Thoughts Without Cigarettes*, will discuss his new novel, *Chango's Beads and Two-Tone Shoes*, set in Cuba in the fifties.

**December 11, 2011**

**KGB Bar Fiction Reading Series**

7:00-9:00 p.m.

KGB Bar, 85 E. 4th St., 2nd fl, NYC  
www.kgbbar.com

A lively weekly reading scene featuring talented authors in a fun locale. This evening will feature Pulitzer Prize

winning author Robert Olen Butler, who's published twelve novels, among them *The Alleys of Eden*, *Sun Dogs*, *The Deuce*, and numerous short fiction and other writings.

**January 22, 2012**

**Readings by Ellis Avery and Eli Gottlieb**  
7:00-9:00 p.m.

KGB Bar, 85 E. 4th St., 2nd fl, NYC  
www.kgbbar.com

Avery is the author of the award-winning novel, *The Teahouse Fire*, and Gottlieb authored the New York Times Notable Book, *The Boy Who Went Away*, and the bestselling *Now You See Him*, and will read from his new novel *The Face Thief*.

**January 23-25, 2012**

**Digital Book World Expo**

Sheraton Towers & Hotel, New York, NY  
www.digitalbookworldconference.com

This is a conference of particular importance to trade publishers who want to keep track of the book business in today's increasingly digital environment.

## LITERARY EVENTS CHICAGO

**November 19-20, 2011**

**Chicago Book Expo**

Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sun., 12-6 p.m.

The former Borders (4720 N. Broadway)

Presented by Chicago Writers House, the event will feature more than 40 Chicago area publishers will participate in the event, spread over the entire ground floor space of the former Borders in Uptown.



**November 20, 2011**

**Book Signing by David Heinzmann**

1:30-3:00 p.m.

Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore  
7419 W. Madison St., Forest Park  
www.centuriesandsleuths.com

David Heinzmann returns to Centuries and Sleuths to discuss & sign his latest mystery *Throwaway Girl*.

**November 21, 2011**

**Luncheon with Author Nada Prouty**

12:00-1:30 p.m., The Union League Club,  
65 W. Jackson Blvd, Chicago (to register,  
call The Book Stall, 847.446.8880)

Nada Prouty will discuss her book *Uncompromised: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of an Arab American Patriot in the CIA*, a story covering her life as an Arab immigrant inducted into the FBI and involved in CIA operations before being charged with sharing intelligence with Hezbollah and stripped of her U.S. citizenship, only to eventually be exonerated of all charges.

**December 7, 2011**

**Reading Under the Influence (RUI)**

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Sheffield's

3258 N. Sheffield Ave. (\$3 cover)

A monthly reading series created by Chicago writers Amanda Snyder, Carly Huegelmann, Rob Duffer, Joe Tower and Julia Borcherts. Each event features RUI regulars and outside guests reading short pieces of original work.

**January 3, 2012**

**Book Signing by Sara Paretsky**

7:00 p.m.

Anderson's Bookshop

123 West Jefferson, Naperville

www.andersonsbookshop.com

New York Times best-selling author Sara Paretsky will presents her latest V.I. Warshawski novel, *Breakdown*, a Vampire style mystery set in Chicago.

**January 7, 2012**

**Book Signing by Julie Hyzy**

1:30-3:00 p.m.

Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore

7419 W. Madison St., Forest Park

www.centuriesandsleuths.com

Julie will talk about her fifth White House Chef, Olivia Paras mystery, *Affairs of Steak* and her Manor House series.

**February 3-5, 2012**

**Love is Murder Mystery Conference**

Intercontinental Hotel Chicago O'Hare

5300 N. River Rd., Rosemont

www.loveismurder.net

The 13th annual convention is open to writers, readers, educational groups and for-profit vendors. There will be panels and other presentations by numerous bestselling authors, including Julie James, David Morrell, and Donald Bain.

# Spy Quiz



## PART I

Examine the photograph below to answer the following six questions.



### Question #1

What type of VIP aircraft is this?

- A. Boeing 777
- B. Airbus A340-800
- C. Boeing 747SP
- D. Boeing 747-600

### Question #2

Approximately what time of day was this image taken?

- A. Late afternoon
- B. Noon
- C. Early morning
- D. Night

### Question #3

If the aircraft is facing south, the image was taken in the:

- A. Southern hemisphere
- B. Northern hemisphere
- C. At the equator

### Question #4

How many security vehicles are protecting this aircraft?

- A. One
- B. Two
- C. Four
- D. None

### Question #5

Which government operates this aircraft?

- A. Saudi Arabia
- B. United Arab Emirates
- C. Pakistan
- D. Libya

### Question #6

Where is the principal VIP passenger of this plane?

- A. On board the aircraft
- B. Near the aircraft
- C. Not near the aircraft

**PART II** A suspected terrorist has just entered this downtown apartment building. Answer the following four questions based on what you see in this photograph of the front of the building.

**Question #1**

Which unit is most likely to be the terrorist's apartment?

- A. Unit 7-A
- B. Unit 5-A
- C. Unit 4-B
- D. Unit 3-D

*See apartment numbers marked on picture*

**Question #2**

Which floors are the easiest to conduct infrared surveillance?

- A. Ground floor
- B. First and second floors
- C. Top floor
- D. Second floor

**Question #3**

What is unusual about the 3rd floor compared to other floors?

- A. Has no plants on balconies
- B. Is the most recently renovated
- C. One additional apartment
- D. Has air conditioning

**Question #4**

Where is this apartment building located?

- A. Brussels, Belgium
- B. Sofia, Bulgaria
- C. Athens, Greece
- D. Damascus, Syria



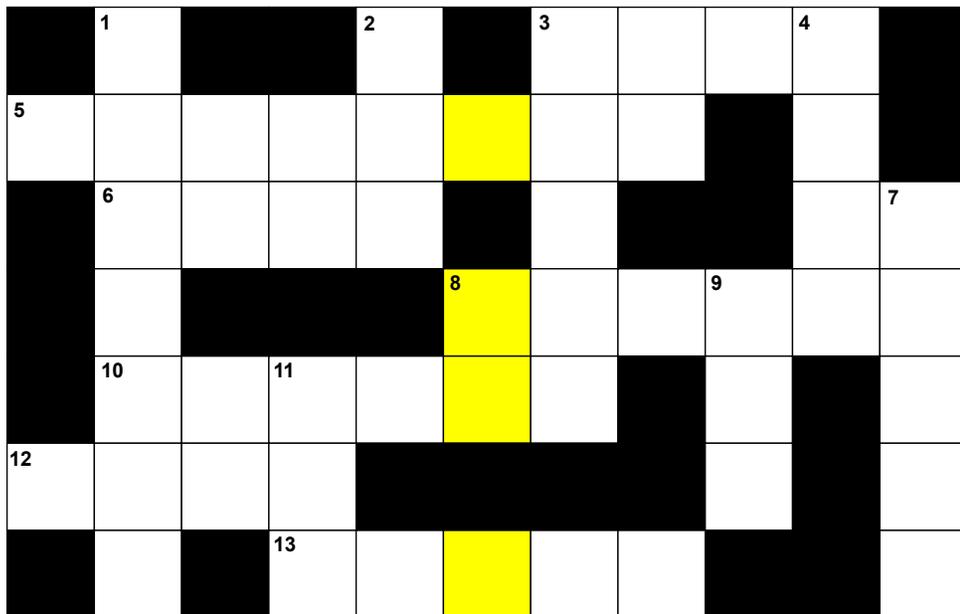
**PART III Complete the following crossword puzzle.**

**DOWN**

- 1. A person who produces fake passports and ID cards
- 2. German intelligence services
- 3. Russian leader who once served as a KGB officer in East Germany
- 4. Type of explosive
- 7. Former East Germany secret police
- 9. Pakistan's intelligence services
- 11. U.S. intelligence agency known for telephone/data espionage

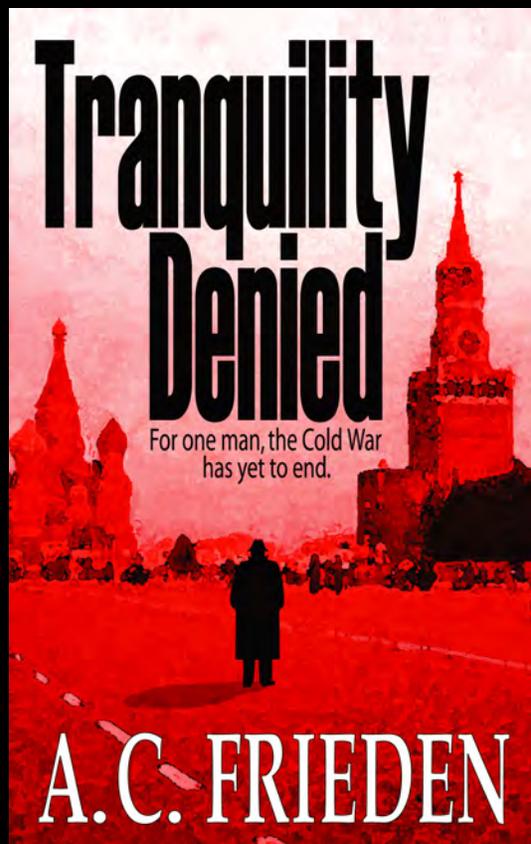
**ACROSS**

- 3. Spy term for photographer
- 5. Radiological material sometimes used as a poison
- 6. Most famous fictional spy
- 8. Abbreviation for signals intelligence
- 10. City where in 2006 a former Soviet officer was assassinated by radiological poisoning
- 12. Term for Terrorism, Espionage, Sabotage and Subversion
- 13. General name for an intelligence agent, officer or other personnel



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How far will a lawyer go  
to uncover the truth?



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**In the Eye of a  
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