

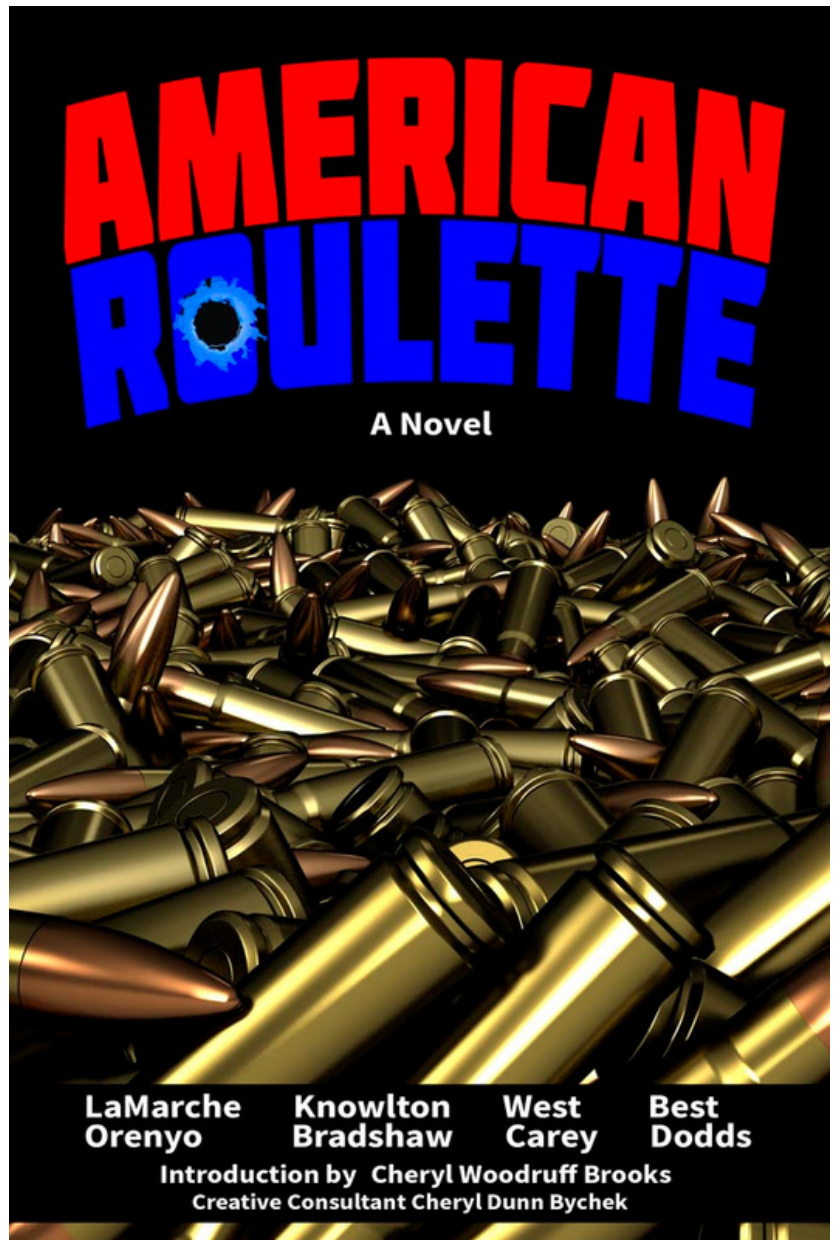
AMERICAN ROULETTE

MEDIA KIT

Available
10.24.23

"My hope is that you read this book, and work harder to be part of doing something about gun violence, before this story hits closer to home."

- **Fred Guttenburg**



AmericanRoulette.wtf

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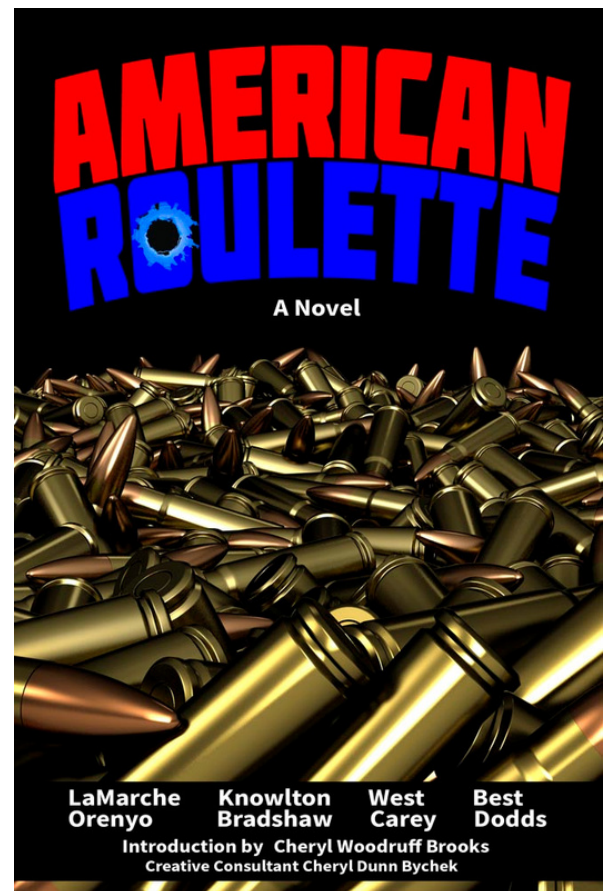
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American Roulette Synopsis

One unremarkable Friday in April, a stream of ordinary people makes its way to Liberty Mall in Anywhere, USA, to shop, work, keep appointments, or catch a movie. A typical day in an average town. American Roulette tells the story of eight of those people.

Emma Franz is a store security guard with a secret. Earl Bricker, a retired factory worker, loves his country, his wife, and his good-old-boy network. Roger Elliot, mid-twenties and miserable, has more than a few axes to grind. High school senior Caitlin Browning, having triumphed over personal challenges, hopes for a quiet evening with her boyfriend. Reverend Chris Dietrich has a special surprise for his weekly Bible study group. Leah McCall, TV personality and teacher, drops by the food court to visit with her best friend. Will Humphreys' part-time job at the mall offers him little relief from the relentless bullying that plagues his existence.

At 5:17 PM, one of these characters' actions will change the lives of all the others. Later that night, professional crisis consultant Steven Bradley arrives to help the community deal with the aftermath. An eclectic group of authors spent six months collaborating on American Roulette, a blockbuster novel full of tension, dread, and anguish. Individual authors created one of the eight key characters—complete with a supporting cast—who find themselves sharing a common destiny. Readers have but a single day to get to know each of the protagonists before time and circumstances seal their fate.



About the Authors



A concern for the increasing scourge of gun violence in America brought together ten collaborators to write *American Roulette*. Most are award winners. All are standouts in their field. They write for every genre—novels, nonfiction, kids lit, academic publications, journalism—one wrote for broadcast, and several have blogs. When this varied group isn't writing, they are teaching, leading congregations, troubleshooting, reporting the news, running businesses, traveling, and inspiring others to believe in themselves.

Together, Pat LaMarche, Sherry Knowlton, J.M. West, Matthew Best, Robert Bradshaw, Phyllis Orenyo, Andy Carey, and James Dodds (with an introduction by Cheryl Woodruff Brooks and Cheryl Dunn Bychek serving as creative consultant) agreed to create a narrative and donate their time. The author earnings from the book sales, regardless of form—electronic, audio, or paper—will be donated to nonprofit organizations that address gun violence in the United States via The Charles Bruce Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization that supports the arts and those who make them.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

American Roulette – A Gripping Novel about Gun Violence in America – Available on October 24

*Author Book Proceeds to be Donated to Gun Violence Prevention
Organizations*

Carlisle, Pa. (October 18, 2023) – In a world where fiction meets the harsh reality of our times, a group of 10 eclectic authors unveils *American Roulette*, a blockbuster thriller that takes readers on a suspenseful journey through the lives of diverse characters whose paths intersect at the site of a mass shooting at a local mall. Through meticulous storytelling and vivid character development, *American Roulette* transcends the boundaries of genre, offering readers a powerful exploration of gun violence, its aftermath, and the continuing challenge it poses to our nation. According to the Gun Violence Archive, the number of mass shootings in the United States has nearly doubled in the past five years, with the 647 mass shootings in 2022 resulting in 673 deaths and 2,700 injuries.

"I have spent the past five years of my life working to reduce gun violence in our country after my daughter was murdered at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida," said Fred Guttenberg, gun violence prevention activist and father of Jaime Guttenberg. "The approach to *American Roulette* brings a unique sense of reality and will allow readers to feel as if this could be happening in a place that they recognize. My hope is that people read this book and put themselves in the shoes of the many families already affected by gun violence and work harder to be part of the solution before this story hits closer to home."

The group of authors including Pat LaMarche, Sherry Knowlton, J.M. West, Matthew Best, Robert Bradshaw, Phyllis Orenyo, Andy Carey, and James Dodds (with an introduction by Cheryl Woodruff Brooks and Cheryl Dunn Bychek serving as creative consultant) spent six months collaborating on *American Roulette*. Individual authors each created one of the eight key characters—complete with a supporting cast—who find themselves sharing a common destiny. Readers have but a single day to get to know each of the protagonists before time and circumstances seal their fate.

- MORE -

Press Release - cntd.

Published by Milford House, an imprint of Sunbury Press, American Roulette, available in bookstores and online retailers on October 24, 2023, invites readers to embark on a powerful and thought-provoking journey. All the authors encourage readers to engage in conversations about the themes presented in the novel, fostering dialogue, and exploring solutions around the increasing impact of gun violence on individuals and communities across our nation.

Author bios and information about how to purchase American Roulette can be found [here](#).

The Charles Bruce Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization that supports the arts and artists, will handle distribution of proceeds from electronic, audio, and paper sales of the book to various non-profit organizations dedicated to gun violence prevention.

What others are saying about American Roulette:

"Welding individual psychology and the politics of gun violence with a moving story, this searing novel confronts the reality of the United States' most tragic epidemic. Readers will find a complex, thought-provoking story about humanity and about modern society's intractable failures rather than a polemic with prescribed solutions. This book embraces everyone, and as such, makes a case for people coming together against gun violence, loneliness, mental illness, and injustices of every kind."

Warren Maxwell, Independent Book Review

"American Roulette forces us to reckon with the ways that easy access to guns can erase an unsuspecting person's life in an instant, and all their hopes, dreams, and ambitions, and with that, tear apart the fabric of families, communities, and our society. My hope is that, like art so often does, American Roulette will pierce through the rhetoric and preconceived notions surrounding guns and gun violence, to speak directly to your heart and inspire change." **Kris Brown, President, Brady**

- MORE -

Press Release - cntd.

"Amazing book. I was impacted by this true-to-life story that reaffirms the reality of the dangers that we, our families, loved ones, and friends face on any given day. American Roulette is a profound, emotional, and riveting read. I found myself not wanting to turn the pages but feeling compelled to do so. For anyone concerned about gun violence in this country, the authors have provided a scenario and characters with which readers will immediately identify," said Gibb. "Having authored active shooter response plans, facilitated active shooter exercises, and assisted in the response and recovery to an active shooter event, I can attest that the authors are clearly versed in complexities of crisis response which makes American Roulette that much more realistic."

John R. Gibb, Former Director of the New York State Emergency Management Agency

About Milford House/Sunbury Press, Inc.

Milford House is the primary fiction imprint for Sunbury Press, Inc., the trade publisher in Mechanicsburg, Pa. Milford House publishes murder mystery, police-procedural, historical, espionage, western, crime, dystopian, young-adult, and sports fiction in trade paperback, hardcover, and digital formats. Milford House's books are sold through leading booksellers worldwide. Learn more at <http://www.milfordhousepress.com>.

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Product Details

Title: American Roulette

Authors: Pat LaMarche, Sherry Knowlton, J.M. West, Matthew Best, Phyllis Orenyo, Robert Bradshaw, Andrew Carey, James Dodds. Introduction by Cheryl Woodruff Brooks. Creative consultant Cheryl Dunn Bychek.

Categories: Thrillers/Political
Thrillers/Suspense
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Inquiries from distributors, vendors, and merchants should be directed to orders@sunburypress.com. All publicity inquiries should be directed to admin@charlesbrucefoundation.org or kalehmanpr@gmail.com.

Praise

“I have spent the past five years of my life working to reduce gun violence. My daughter Jaime was murdered in the Parkland school shooting. Over the course of the past five years, I have been on a mission to help people truly understand the reality of gun violence.

This book, *American Roulette*, does just that. I was not prepared for this book, and it truly impacted me. The approach to this book with multiple authors who have experience in the many areas around crime, gun violence, and its aftermath, is unique and brings a unique sense of reality. When you read this book, you will feel as if this could be happening now in a place that you recognize. My hope is that people read this book and put themselves in the shoes of the many families already affected by gun violence. My hope is that you read this book, and work harder to be part of doing something about gun violence, before this story hits closer to home.”

— **Fred Guttenberg, gun violence prevention activist**

“*American Roulette* is filled with believable characters; I loved some of them and loathed others, but they all jumped off the page. The characters’ tangible humanity is exactly what makes *American Roulette* as difficult to read as it is necessary. As the president of Brady United, an organization that works to prevent gun violence, I have seen mass shootings reduce real people, whose lives meant everything to them and their families, to casualty statistics, headlines, and hashtags, over and over again.

American Roulette doesn’t do that. *American Roulette* forces us to reckon with the ways that easy access to guns can erase an unsuspecting person’s life in an instant, and all their hopes, dreams, and ambitions, and with that, tear apart the fabric of families, communities, and our society. This book is not a light read. But it is an urgent one. I would recommend this book to so many, but for victims and survivors, I would approach it with extreme caution. With that caveat, if you want to examine the root causes of gun violence and our joint role in trying to end it, this is a book for you, especially for those of you concerned that nothing will ever change or worried that everything will. My hope is that, like art so often does, *American Roulette* will pierce through the rhetoric and preconceived notions surrounding guns and gun violence, to speak directly to your heart and inspire change.”

— **Kris Brown, President, Brady**

Praise

“American Roulette grabs you by both head and heart as it leads you through dark prickly places, then points you toward the light.”

— **Tim Tigner, best-selling author of *The Price of Time***

“Amazing book. I was impacted by this true-to-life story that reaffirms the reality of the dangers that we, our families, loved ones, and friends face on any given day. American Roulette is a profound, emotional, and riveting read. I found myself not wanting to turn the pages but feeling compelled to do so.

For anyone concerned about gun violence in this country, the authors have provided a scenario and characters with which readers will immediately identify. Having authored active shooter response plans, facilitated active shooter exercises, and assisted in the response and recovery to an active shooter event, I can attest that the authors are clearly versed in complexities of crisis response which makes American Roulette that much more realistic.”

— **John R. Gibb, Former Director, New York State Emergency Management Agency**

“Welding individual psychology and the politics of gun violence with a moving story, this searing novel confronts the reality of the United States’ most tragic epidemic. . . .

Each of the novel’s authors writes a single character, creating continuity, nuance, and an impressive diversity of voices. Combining the eclecticism of a wide-ranging short story collection with an epic sense of inevitability and dread as the day wears on, these eight authors achieve a subtle poetic harmony. Generalizing labels are undermined, and the true horror of public violence and lost innocence is placed center stage.

Politics are inseparable from this narrative, but its emphasis remains on the travesty that is lost life and the need for constructive help rather than simply placing blame on one group. Readers will find a complex, thought-provoking story about humanity and about modern society’s intractable failures rather than a polemic with prescribed solutions. This book embraces everyone, and as such, makes a case for people coming together against gun violence, loneliness, mental illness, and injustices of every kind.”

— **Warren Maxwell, Independent Book Review**

Praise

“We as a nation have done far too little to address the epidemic of gun violence that claims over 40,000 lives a year. It grieves God that we have not protected our children and in addition our communities threatened by gun violence because of their race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. Change is often precipitated by the power of stories. It is my hope and prayer that powerful stories such as this one will help us to move toward God’s desire of a peaceable kingdom.”

— **Rev. James S. Dunlop, Bishop, Lower Susquehanna Synod The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America**

“Dr. Andy Carey is a rare and compelling amalgamation of academic scholar and astute storyteller. I am so pleased American Roulette readers will be privy to his exceptional ability to give voice to the internal challenges faced by people who struggle with mental disorder. As a novelist, Dr. Carey introduces us to characters so rich and complex that readers cannot help but be empathic to their struggles, their pain, and to celebrate their triumphs.

Having worked side-by-side with Andy as counselor educators for over twenty years, I witnessed his insistence that counselors-in-training and his professional peers see each client fully: listening to all their complexity long before diagnostic codes and academic or social labels were ever considered or uttered.”

— **Dr. Kurt L. Kraus, Professor Emeritus, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania**

Praise

American Roulette is an amazingly realistic book. It made me feel like I was living this chaotic day in the life of Anytown, USA. In fact, it was so real I needed to work through some personal trauma before I wrote this review.

On September 15, 1999, a mass shooting took place at Wedgwood Baptist Church. My daughters were supposed to be there (but unknown to me ended up not going). What began as a distraught parent trying desperately to find his daughters ended up with me driving the pastor all night from the church to the hospital, to the morgue, to survey the scene, to National network news interviews, etc. Most days I think I have worked through it. But this book reminded me it's an ongoing process.

The authors have captured the lives of everyday Americans living and trying to get through their own daily challenges. We seldom think about those around us and what is going on in their lives, but the authors, by each taking the life of an individual involved, bring those issues to the forefront. As I said before, it makes it real.

Be warned, if you have suffered trauma, particularly gun trauma, this book may bring it all back. The authors hope that it does not just overwhelm people but calls them to action for gun control. I completely agree!

I would encourage every American to read this book. It could make a difference in the way you view gun violence and particularly the "right" of gun ownership which is out of control in this country.

— **Thomas Law, Retired Executive Director of Tarrant (Fort Worth, TX) Baptist Association**

Recent Statistics

- An April 2023 survey done by the Pew Research Center found 83% of Americans believe gun violence is a major (60%) or moderately big (23%) problem in the country today.
- According to the Gun Violence Archive, the number of mass shootings in the US has nearly doubled in the past five years, rising from 336 in 2018 to 690 in 2021 and 647 in 2022. From January to mid-September 2023, the country experienced 499 mass shootings. The 647 mass shootings in 2022 resulted in 673 deaths and 2,700 injuries.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that in 2019, there were 39,707 gun deaths in the US, including 24,090 suicides and 14,414 homicides.
- In 2020, the US had a firearm homicide rate of 6.1 per 100,000 people, which is significantly higher than other developed countries. (CDC)
- A survey by the Pew Research Center found that 30% of US adults personally own a gun, and another 11% live with someone who does.
- Gun ownership rates vary significantly by state, with Montana having the highest rate of gun ownership at 66.3%, and Massachusetts and Rhode Island having the lowest at 14.7%. (2023 update, Pew Foundation Survey)
- When comparing gun violence statistics by state, there are significant disparities. According to CDC, the states with the highest rates of gun-related deaths per 100,000 residents in 2018 were Alaska, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Missouri. These states also tend to have more permissive gun laws. Conversely, states with stricter gun laws, such as California, Massachusetts, and New York, tend to have lower rates of gun-related deaths.
- Certain demographics are disproportionately affected by gun violence. African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans are more likely to be victims of gun violence than white Americans. Additionally, women are often victims of domestic violence-related gun deaths. (CDC)

Recent Statistics

- Gun violence involving children in America are a deep concern. According to the Gun Violence Archive 6,152 children and teens were killed by guns in 2022.
- In 2023, there have been 23 school shootings that ended in injuries or deaths, according to an Education Week analysis. There have been 167 such shootings since 2018. There were 51 school shootings with injuries or deaths in 2022, the most in a single year since Education Week began tracking such incidents in 2018.

About the Authors

A concern for gun violence in America motivated ten authors to write American Roulette. Most are award winners. All are standouts in their field. Together they agreed to create a narrative and donate their time. The proceeds from the book will go to gun violence prevention via The Charles Bruce Foundation, a 501(c) 3 charitable organization.

Matthew Best wrote the Chris Dietrich chapters. Rev. Best serves as pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as well as the executive director of Health Ministries at Christ Lutheran, which provide free medical and dental care for the poorest of the poor in the region. Rev. Best serves in leadership positions for several community, church, and statewide organizations in Pennsylvania that advocate for those experiencing houselessness and poverty. He also has an extensive background in campaign politics and government. You can read his writings on a variety of topics related to politics and theology, as well as his sermons, book reviews, and other writings, at his blog.

Robert Bradshaw wrote the Steven Bradley chapters. Robert is Managing Partner of Contingency Management Consulting Group, a crisis and emergency management consulting firm. He has more than thirty years' experience in crisis and emergency management, including international work in such countries as Egypt, Chile, France, and the Philippines.

Robert has responded to numerous major disasters, including oil spills, severe storms, corporate business crises, and the Fukushima nuclear accident. Among the most noteworthy items in his portfolio is the September 11th attacks, when he established and managed an emergency operations center for American Airlines in response to Flight 77 after it crashed into the Pentagon. Mr. Bradshaw has written technical articles and papers on emergency management and has trained US and international teams on how to respond to crises.

Robert and his team also develop active shooter emergency procedures and provide training and administer emergency drills on active shooter/active assailant response to schools, corporations, and other high-profile clients.

About the Authors

Andrew Carey, PhD, wrote the Will Humphreys chapters. Before transitioning from university professor to mental health counseling, Andy taught coast to coast for more than thirty years at five different universities. His therapeutic experiences include university and community counseling centers, private practice, churches, and a correctional institution. Previous co-editor of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association Journal, he has published numerous academic articles, one in the American Counseling Association's flagship journal. Andy has traveled the US, presenting for various counseling conferences. He now apportions his time between his public health practice, writing novels, and traveling with his wife, Kathy.

James Dodds wrote the Roger Elliot chapters. Originally a creative writing student in college, James turned to technical writing as a more reliable career. After decades of crafting user manuals, he was finally able to return to storytelling. His first attempt resulted in an award, and his tales have since appeared in *The Avenue*, Issue VII: Freedom; *Christmas Gothic Short Stories*; *Bullshit Lit Anthology 01*; and *2100: A Health Odyssey*. He enjoys the quiet country life west of Spokane, Washington.

Sherry Knowlton wrote the Earl Bricker chapters. She is the award-winning author of the Alexa Williams suspense novels. She has also written the two-volume *Beyond the Sunset* travel memoirs.

Sherry spent much of her early career in state government policy and administration, working with social and human services programs, including services for abused children, rape crisis, domestic violence, and family planning. In the 1990s, she served as Pennsylvania's Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance. Following public service, Sherry moved to the private sector and focused on Medicaid and Medicare managed care. While running her own consulting business, she put pen to paper in pursuit of her lifelong interest in writing both fiction and nonfiction.

Sherry and her husband, Mike, started traveling in the days of peace and music. They traversed the country in a hippie van. Running out of money several months into the trip, Sherry waitressed the night shift at a cowboy hangout in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and Mike washed dishes in a bakery. Undeterred, they embraced the travel experience and continue to explore far-flung places around the globe. So much so that she's written two travel

About the Authors

volumes peppered with photos both she and Mike took on the road. Sherry lives in the mountains of south-central Pennsylvania, which doubles as the setting for her suspense novels.

Pat LaMarche wrote the Emma Franz chapters. Pat is an award-winning broadcaster, journalist, and author. She's focuses her energies writing and speaking about poverty. Following her 2004 run for vice president of the United States—a year of her life she dedicated to homelessness and its victims—Pat became a shelter director caring directly for those experiencing housing and food insecurity. Pat has a particular interest on the far ends of the homeless spectrum—elder orphans and unhoused babies.

Having authored eight books dealing with poverty and human struggles, Pat still works as a freelance journalist. Educated as a historian, Pat's written a history book, a fantasy novel filled with historic figures, and even a comic book about veterans. Pat relies on any and every method available to direct the attention of the mainstream public toward issues of great import. American Roulette is another of those attempts to focus on humanity's preventable tragedies.

Pat's most recent advocacy project, The Homeless Remembrance Blanket, covered 18,000 square feet of the US Capitol's west lawn. Type #memorialblanket into your favorite social media for more information on upcoming projects to raise awareness and help those experiencing homelessness.

Phyllis Orenyo wrote the Caitlin Browning chapters. As far back as she can remember Phyllis wanted to be a writer. As a child she created limericks, poems, and wrote for the school newspapers. Throughout her career, first as a paralegal and subsequently as a mortgage banker, her duties included a great deal of writing. Those writings reflected fact-driven situations. She felt her creativity was limited unless she could find new and interesting ways to express information.

No longer writing expository documents, Phyllis has turned her talents to children's literature. Two of her kids' books have been published. She has donated all of her proceeds to the Charles Bruce Foundation, a charity that supports writers, artists, and musicians. There are two more kids' books in the process of being illustrated for publication.

About the Authors

She currently has refocused her writing, gearing it more for adults. She's working on a short cautionary tale (novella) as well as a murder mystery. Phyllis lives in south-central Pennsylvania where she shares her home with her husband and two cats.

J.M. West wrote the Leah McCall chapters. Author of the award-winning *Madam Bessie Jones, Her Life and Times*, West also penned the fact-based *Carlisle Crime Cases* featuring Homicide Detectives Christopher Snow and Erin McCoy.

A Professor Emerita of English Studies at Harrisburg Area Community College, The Gettysburg Campus, she also taught at Messiah and Shippensburg Universities and served as Assistant Director of the Learning Center (SU). For four years, West cohosted the "Milford House Mysteries," author interviews, and writing tips on the Bookspeak Network at www.blogtalkradio.com.

She and her husband live in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. They have two sons, two grandsons, and a Border Collie mix. In her spare time, West participates in a book club and writing group, and reads voraciously.

Cheryl Woodruff Brooks wrote the introduction. Cheryl Woodruff Brooks, MBA/MA, completed her first book, *Chicken Bone Beach: A Pictorial History of Atlantic City's Missouri Avenue Beach*, in 2017, which was nominated for a 2017 Literary Award with the Schomburg Center in New York City. The book has likewise been used in classrooms, at Purdue University, referenced in *The Oxford Handbook of American Folklore and Folklife Studies*, and has been catalogued at libraries in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Cheryl's second book, *Golden Beauty Boss: The Story of Madame Sara Spencer Washington and the Apex Empire*, released three weeks after the pandemic, is the first biography written about an African American woman becoming a self-made millionaire in the 1940s. Cheryl released a children's version of both of her books and contributed writing to *After the Pandemic*. Cheryl's most recent and first independent release, *When I Look into the Sea*, is a rhyming children's book designed to encourage kids to believe in themselves and their dreams.

About the Authors

Cheryl Dunn Bychek wove the timelines of these characters into whole cloth. She also edited, proofread, and contributed ideas which helped create this compelling story. Cheryl spent the bulk of her career in professional theater as a public relations and marketing director. A voracious reader since age four, she takes great pleasure in improving the world through her proofreading and editing skills. Cheryl has also been a lifelong activist, earning her first kudos for standing up against bullying in second grade. Her passions are too numerous to mention but include decades of advocating for the LGBTQ+ community (she is the mother of a transgender woman), crusading for peace in the world, and raising awareness and funds to fight cancer, and dementia-related diseases, and AIDS. She is entering her thirtieth year as a judge for the Carbonell Awards for excellence in professional theater in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties in Florida. In her spare time, Cheryl loves to travel.