

Jan 29, 2019



Gangster In Our Midst—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000APR004) & Barnes & Noble
www.bettybrandtpassick.com
<https://www.facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick/>

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Gangster Blog

Podcast

I met Attorney Julie Finch at a 2017 Twin Cities book event, as a session speaker who addressed legal questions for new authors. We've since stayed in touch. Recently, she invited me to be a guest on her show Legal Bits For Business to talk about my author business with tips for other business owners. The interview is scheduled for April. When the podcast becomes available, I'll post a link to my web site: www.bettybrandtpassick.com.

Sea La Vie

During a recent family vacation to Maui, Hawaii, I quickly learned that the island no longer has a brick and mortar bookstore. But I came across delightful shops full of all kinds of specialty items, including a few that sold books. I'm hoping [Sea La Vie](#) will be my first vendor to sell *Gangster in our Midst* on the Hawaiian islands.

GIOM as Movie or Stage Play?

All the while I was writing *Gangster in our Midst*, I envisioned turning it into a stage play or movie some day. In March I'll be taking a script writing class from The Loft. I don't know if a movie or stage play will get produced, but along with researching/writing Book #4, I'm now signed up to learn a new way to tell a story.

Comments (2)

"I found *Gangster in Our Midst* on Amazon, and I am going to recommend it as a purchase at our local library. We are always interested in stories about Iowa events - and your book chronicles a very interesting story!" ~ Dianne K., Dyersville, Iowa

And—a couple times a famous author has found his way to my web site and left me a word of encouragement, such as the recent one from Scott Matthews Sr. (Author of *The Assassin's List*, and others). Really cool!



"Three Fingers"

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The story behind the yellow paint

Erin Hart, editor from The Loft Literary and Learning Center in Minneapolis, gave me a “Bravo!” for creating three-dimensional characters in *Gangster in our Midst*.

Walter might be my favorite character, but it’s really hard to say.

On the surface, he represents every Iowa farmer from that era: kind, hard-working, frugal family man; religious and civic minded.

But in an early chapter the reader learns a decade earlier his life had been

turned upside down—the day he found yellow paint splayed on the doors and walls of his white-washed farm buildings.

Perhaps as a German American, he had been targeted for not answering the call to enlist to fight against Imperial Germany after President Wilson signed the declaration of war; or for being overheard making a remark against America’s involvement in the war deemed unpatriotic by his non-German neighbors; or for not reaching his assigned quota of Liberty Bonds.

Anti-German Sentiment in Iowa During World War I included incidents of vigilantism. More commonplace were whispering campaigns against Germans who held political office or who were business owners, intending to intimidate and drive them into the background—also, splashing yellow paint on the homes and barns of those born in Germany or of German descent.

I leave it to the reader’s imagination to wonder if Walter suspected some of his Catholic non-German brethren were involved in the incident, and whether this was the reason he left the Catholic Church. But something substantial happened for him to walk away from the church his grandfather helped build.

I’ve seen the same resolve in recent years, as a few of my Catholic friends have left the Catholic Church over clergy sexual abuse allegations and its coverup.

Those German-Americans who lived through the war years would never again feel quite the same about their heritage.

I chose Walter to tell this piece of our history.

His mind looped to the Great War, when the town’s young men, so full of promise, went off to fight, doing what their country asked of them. So many came home laid out in austere wooden boxes. Walter still felt the sting of death of those who’d grown to manhood alongside him whenever he drove by the quarry, the place he and the deceased had played as boys.

That alone would have endured as a painful memory.

But the yellow paint splashed on his family’s farm buildings at the height of anti-German sentiment had turned his life upside down.

Author Events

— **Fri., May 3, 10 am** — Burlington Public Library, 210 Court St., Burlington, IA (319) 753-1647

— **Sat, May 4, 11 am-3 pm** — Burlington By The Book, 301 Jefferson, Burlington, IA 52601, (319) 753-9981

— **May 5/time:** TBD — Davenport Public Library, 321 N Main St., Davenport, IA, (563) 326-7832

— **May 5/time:** TBD — Moon River Magic, 915 15th Avenue, East Moline, Illinois

— **May/time:** TBD — Wapello County Historical Society, 210 W Main St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-8676

— **May/time:** TBD — Ottumwa Public Library, 102 W 4th St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-7563

— **April,** — Sawyer Co. Historical Society & Museum, County Highway B, Hayward, WI, (715) 634-8053

— **Spring** — Cicero Public Library, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill, (708) 652-8084

St, Burlington, IA, (319) 753-9981

— **Spring (new)** — Gracie’s Hutch, Lansing, IA

— **Summer** — West Des Moines Library, 4000 Mills Civic Pkwy., West Des Moines, IA, (515) 222-3400

Pending...

— Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — James Kennedy Public Library, 320 1st Ave E, Dyersville, IA 5204, (563) 875-8912

— Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Strawberry Point Public Library, 401 Commercial, Box 340, Strawberry Point, IA 52076, 563-933-4340

— Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Maynard Library, 225 Main St W, Maynard, IA 50655, (563) 637-2330

— Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Gangster Museum of America, 510 Central Ave, Hot Springs, AR, (501) 318-1717

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Next Page Books, 1105 3rd St SE, Cedar Rapids, IA, (319) 247-2665

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Wild Carrot (gift shop and restaurant), 215 E Bremer Ave, Waverly, IA, (319) 352-2215

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Winneshiek County Historical Society, 211 Winnebago St, Decorah, IA 52101, (563) 382-4166

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Templeton Rye Distillery, 209 E 3rd Ave, Templeton, IA (712) 669-8793

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Rd, Coralville, IA, (319) 351-5738