

June 20, 2019



**Gangster In Our Midst**—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#) & [Barnes & Noble](#)  
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## Gangster Blog

### WINK, Issue 8

I am pleased to announce “**The Duck Blind**” (Ch. 19, *Gangster in our Midst*) is published in [WINK](#) magazine, Issue 8, June 2019. The national magazine focuses on Art, humor, poetry, and pleasures of the writer’s life. The forty-three contributing authors reside in sixteen states and six countries. Nadia Giordana is publisher/managing editor/ad manager. In her other life, Nadia is a community TV producer, host and co-host on several shows. Her website: [Where Women Talk](#).



WINK, Issue 8  
Writers in the Know

### IHeartRadio Interview

Thank you [Justin Roberts](#) for the live interview on IHeartRadio, AM600 WMT, Tuesday, June 18, at 10:08 am. The interview provided the opportunity to talk about my upcoming presentation, “A Ray of Hope” (Iowa’s Oakdale Sanatorium), at the **Johnson County Historical Society in Coralville, Sunday, June 23, 1 pm**. Emma Bierkoff, a fictional character in *Gangster in our Midst* (2017), spends several years at Oakdale Sanatorium, north of Iowa City, for the treatment of tuberculosis (her character duplicates the experience of individuals who underwent treatment at Oakdale from the Fairbank area in the 1920s-30s).

### Shout Out: Robin Barefield

Congratulations to Alaska Wilderness Author Robin Barefield on Kodiak Island for taking the step of starting a podcast. Listen to her most recent podcast, “An Abduction in Tanzania”, at her website: [www.robinbarefield.com/](http://www.robinbarefield.com/).



## “Three Fingers”

### Bulletin Board

#### Current Projects:

I’m writing a sequel to *Gangster in our Midst* and the screenplay.

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## What happens to a gangster after he disappears from newspaper headlines?



By 1961, Louie La Cava, Oxbow's gangster, had largely retired from gangstering. He left Manhattan in '48 and moved into a nice house in Vero Beach, Florida. Since—he, 73, and his wife, Josephine, 66, have been enjoying the 'good life'.

Two goals were the impetus in writing Ch. 27, "Grace and Redemption" (although I'm not sure how well I accomplished them by the numerous questions I've received).

I felt I needed to write about one of the Louie-Sweeney day trips to Chicago alluded to in the novel. I hoped the reader would assume this car trip began much like all the others—except in 1961, both men have grown old. Oxbow's Marshal Sweeney Delaney is eighty-two, and already asleep when Louie picks up the hitchhiker.

Goal #2: I wanted to continue the interrogation begun by Sweeney in Ch. 19, "The Duck Blind." Sweeney, while a good lawman, was also a friend to Louie, and he'd have kept his questions professional.

When I queried personal friends for ideas about how to 'put the screws to Louie' in this chapter, one suggested the hitchhiker.

Enter Gracie Failes. She's a pretty young thing, differential to Louie; also, modern and sophisticated, imprinted by the '50 women's rights issues.

She doesn't hold off very long after climbing into Louie's new Cadillac Deville before asking the first hard-hitting question (one his wife, Josephine, never even dared ask): "Lou, did you ever figure out why you became a gangster?..."

Then, just as unflinchingly, she goes for the \$64,000 question: "Whatcha gonna say to God to explain all the bad stuff you've done?..."

I interviewed Verlie (Hahn) Trower, born in 1916—one of the town kids who went to the Opera House to see movies with Louie in the '20s—and this was one of her comments about Louie (as she approached her one hundredth birthday):

(paraphrasing) *Louie always had a kind of strut when he walked. One day when I saw him walking on the sidewalk near our house—after he and Josephine had built their house on the north end of town [1968]—I noticed he had a swagger... I thought it was because he knew he'd gotten by with doing a lot of bad stuff in his life.*

Exactly what Louie sees when he stares in his rearview mirror, well, I leave up to the reader to decide.

## Author Events

— **Sun, Jun 23, 1-2:30 pm** — "A Ray of Hope" (Iowa's Oakdale Sanatorium), Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Rd, Coralville, IA, (319) 351-5738

— **Sun., July 21, 1-6 pm** — "Meet & Greet," Jackson Street Brewery, 607 5th St, Sioux City, Iowa, (712) 574-8403

— **Fri., Aug. 9th, 10-11:30 am** — "Meet & Greet," Lake Country Booksellers, 766 Washington Square, "White Bear Lake, MN, 651-426-0918

— **Tues., Sept. 24, 6:30 pm** — "Iowa's Oakdale Sanatorium—A Ray of Hope," Clear Lake Public Library, 200 N. 4th St., Clear Lake, IA 641-357-6133

— **Sun., Oct 20, 7 pm** — "Wiltse Family of Strawberry Point," Wilder Foundation, 123 W. Mission St., Strawberry Point, IA, (563) 933-4615

— Fall 2019 (new) — The Center, Corner of 8th and Kingwood Streets, Brainerd, MN, (218) 829-9345

### Book Clubs

— **Beancounters**, Burlington, IA

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

### Book Festivals-Conferences

— **Sat., Aug 10, 9 am-3 pm (new)** — Northwoods Arts & Book Festival, Hackensack, MN

— **Sat., Sept. 9, 9 am-5 pm** — WOW 10 Annual Writers Conference, Oak Knoll Luth Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka, MN

— **Oct 11-13, (new)** — St. Paul Art Crawl, 308 Prince St, Saint Paul, MN, (651) 270-0563

— **Sept 20-Oct 6**, Iowa City Book Festival, 123 S Linn St., Iowa City, IA, (319) 356-5245

— **Sat., Nov. 17, 10 am-2 pm** — Sterling Lord Writers and Readers Festival, Burlington Public Library, (319) 753-1647

### Pending...

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Jefferson Public Library, 200 W Lincoln Way, Jefferson, IA, (515) 386-2835

— Date/Time: **TBD** — "Gangsters Hid in Small Towns, too", Roseville Public Library -Shoreview, 4560 Victoria St. N., Shoreview, MN, (651) 724-6090

— Date/Time: **TBD** — "Autism at the turn of the Twentieth Century", Mary Hanson Show, TPT Twin Cities PBS

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Musser Public, 408 East 2nd St., Muscatine, IA, (563) 263-3065

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Lake Elmo Public Library, 3537 Lake Elmo Avenue N., Lake Elmo, MN, (651) 773-4926

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Sawyer Co. Historical Society & Museum, County Highway B, Hayward, WI, (715) 634-8053

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

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Harrison County Welcome Ctr, 2931 Monroe Ave., Missouri Valley, Iowa, (712) 642-2114

— Date/time: **TBD** — Big Foot Inn, 11508 N US Highway 14, Harvard, IL, (815) 943-4740

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

— Date/time: **TBD** — Landmark Commons Retirement Community, 1400 Maxhelen Blvd., Waterloo, IA, (319) 296-7100