

May 1, 2025



**Gangster Series**—available through: [Amazon](#),  
[Indie Book Stores](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Walmart](#)

**Customer Reviews:** [Amazon Author](#), [Goodreads](#)

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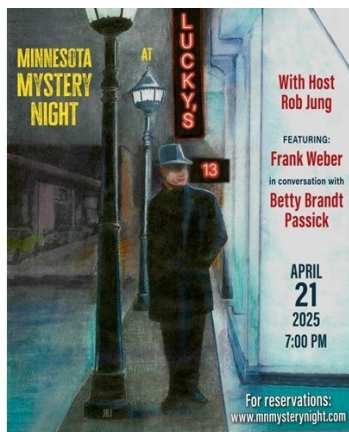
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## Gangster Blog

### MN Mystery Night—Apr. 21st (8 radio stations)



Frank Weber is a forensic psychologist specializing in homicide, sexual assault and domestic abuse cases. He uses his unique understanding of how predators think, knowledge of victim trauma, and expert testimony in writing his true crime thrillers. Frank has been interviewed on investigative shows and profiled in cold case homicides. His novels have earned numerous awards. Frank is the 2024 recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Minnesota Psychological Association and a past recipient of the President's Award from the MN Conventional Association for his forensic work. His last two books, *Scandal of Vandals* and *The Sun* were based on the T. Eugene Thompson case back in the 1960's. *Scandal of Vandals* was about the murder up to the conviction. *The Sun* is about the appeal.



Betty Brandt Passick is married, a grandmother, retired from a Fortune 500 company and writes *The Gangster Series*, a historical mystery series set in Iowa in the early 1930s. Her first book, *Gangster in our Midst*, recounts the story of a mysterious stranger who shows up in a small Iowa town in the 1920s, rumored to be part of Al Capone's gang. Her second book, *The Black Bag of Dr. Wiltze*, is an earlier piece of Iowa gangster history. Both books have been awarded the Indie Book Award by the book review magazine, *Shelf Unbound*. In February, her books received the Editor's Choice Award of Literary Excellence from *Reader's House* magazine.

A BIG SHOUT OUT to the Twin Sisters in Crime members who attended [MN Mystery Night](#) at Lucky's 13 in Mendota Hts. on April 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Thanks, sisters, for your support!**

[Frank Weber](#) and I headlined the program. He is a forensic psychologist, who writes thrillers specializing in homicide, sexual assault and domestic abuse cases. His last two books, *Scandal of Vandals* and *The Sun*, were based on the notorious T. Eugene

Thompson case from the 1960s. His novels have earned numerous awards, and in 2024 he won the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Minnesota Psychological Association.

I write a historical crime **gangster series** set in Northeastern Iowa. My premier novel, *Gangster in our Midst* (2017), chronicles the story of the Chicago mobster, Louie La Cava, who showed up in a small Midwestern town (my hometown, Fairbank, IA) in the 1920s. He was rumored to be part of Al Capone's gang. The series received the Editor's Choice Award of Literary Excellence from *Reader's House* magazine in February 2025.

Our 60-minute conversation took place in front of a sold-out crowd. The program was taped for future broadcast on **eight Minnesota radio stations**. Visit [www.MNMysteryNight-MMRadioHour](http://www.MNMysteryNight-MMRadioHour) for dates and times.



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### Gangster Series



**Book #3: mid-2025!**

## Interview with Mary Ellen Youngblut

In 2016, I interviewed Mary Ellen Youngblut, then age 93 (her age was about average for the dozen locals I interviewed as part of my research to write *Gangster in our Midst*).

At the time, she resided at Parkview Assisted Living in Fairbank, IA, my hometown.



(1923-2025)

We talked about being raised in the Catholic faith. For many years, she attended I. C. Church—where the town's gangster, Louie La Cava (and his wife, Josephine) also attended. The La Cavas always sat in the rear pew. She heard rumors about him over the years. A criminal element became part of his persona. While he spent considerable time in Fairbank, he also liked to hang out with fellow Italians in nearby Oelwein. Largely, that was the extent she knew them personally.

After the initial interview, I visited her in her small apartment a few times to provide her with manuscript pages (for her review) alluding to her contributions. **She was pleased a part of her legacy had been captured in a novel about Fairbank.** *Gangster in Our Midst: Bookkeeper, Lieutenant, and Sometimes Hitman for Al Capone* was published in August 2017.

Mary Ellen passed away Friday, March 21, just 10 days before her 102<sup>nd</sup> birthday. This lovely lady is sorely missed by her family and countless friends.

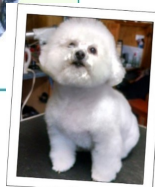
## Meet the Author: Robert Trail Library—May 15



### Meet the Author: Betty Passick

Join us as author Betty Passick discusses her historical novel "Gangsters in our Midst", the tale of Louie La Cava, Al Capone's bookkeeper, lieutenant, and sometimes hit man. Presented in partnership with the Rosemount Area Arts Council. For adults.

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025  
Time: 6:30pm - 7:30pm  
Location: Robert Trail Large Meeting Room  
Library: Robert Trail Library  
Audience: Adults  
Categories: Books and Reading



14395 S. Robert Trail • Robert Trail Library  
Rosemount, MN

**Come and learn more about my story** on May 15th at the [Robert Trail Library](#) in Rosemount, MN, at 6:30 pm.

My 10-year writing journey has been arduous—which I liken to rescuing Bichon

Frise dogs—something else I do since retiring from a Fortune 500 Company.

## Author Events

**2025**

**(May-June-July)**

- **Sat., May 10, 5:30 pm**, International Talk Show: Briggs on Books w/ Mike Briggs, "Gangster(s) in Our Midst, The Untold Story"
- **Thurs, May 15, 6:30 pm** (Author talk), "Meet The Author: Betty Brandt Passick," [RAAC / Rosemount Trail Library](#), 14395 S. Robert Tr., Rosemount, MN
- **Thurs-Sat, June 26-28, Historical Novel Society of North America**, Las Vegas, NV
- **Sat, July 19, 1 pm** (author talk), "Gangster in Our Midst: The Untold Story," [Historic Mulberry Church Center](#), 220 Ohio St, Webster City, IA
- **Sat, July 19, 1 pm** (author talk), "Gangster in Our Midst: The Untold Story," [Historic Mulberry Church Center](#), 220 Ohio St, Webster City, IA
- **(pending) Sun., July 27, 11 am-3 pm** booksigning, "Book Fair for Grown-ups," Rustic Roots Winery, 20168 St. Croix Trail N, Scandia, MN

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