

LitWorks Digest | Abbreviated | dep kirkland

BOOK / Non-Fiction / True Crime / Memoir

LAWYER GAMES: After Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil

The true story of the Savannah murder case that spawned the international best-seller and Clint Eastwood movie, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, which also unmask the tactics of a certain species of criminal defense lawyer unfettered by the bounds of ethics. Told by one who was there, while the body was still on the floor, who made the decision to arrest the defendant, and who tried the first of four murder trials alongside the District Attorney. Published: October, 2015.

Multi-Part Mini-Series candidate. Under consideration for feature on coming season of True Crime With Aphrodite Jones and featured on 09/01/2016 episode of Nancy Grace on CNN/HLN.

FEATURES [Completed Scripts]

MsTRIAL [Adapted from the stage play produced in New York and Los Angeles]

“A Potent Salvo In Détente Between The Sexes” —*Los Angeles Times*

An internationally famous trial lawyer is accused of raping his beautiful young associate after a raucous celebration of victory in a major case. With a verdict delivered only by the audience, MsTRIAL confirms the Los Angeles Times conclusion that “A society in cultural flux that looks to its legal system to supply an ethical foundation inevitably falls short in the gray areas of human conduct.”

BREATHING RECOMMENDED

You can be alive at 75 or dead at 30. It’s not about age; it’s about attitude. A classic three-hander in the tradition of Fried Green Tomatoes, The Bucket List, or even Cocoon.

Dorothy (75) and Grace (30) are as good as dead or, as their new friend Jean calls them, “two wild ponies, all fenced in, not a fence in sight.” Dorothy was once the outrageous young wife of the crown prince of one of America’s wealthiest families. The prince died. Now she’s a bitter woman living in a Boca Raton duplex, surrounded by her antiques, tolerating life until it’s mercifully over.

Grace is a townie. A true beauty and smart as a whip, she lost her mother early and her father to a bar fight, was raised by her uncle Harry, couldn’t afford to go to college, and manages Harry’s Market, a gourmet market catering to the snow-birds. Grace is lost and confused, about everything. As Grace puts it, “I’m allergic to my life, it can’t possibly be mine, nothing fits.” Dorothy shops at Harry’s though it’s miles from her home.

When Dorothy is mugged in the parking lot, these two wild ponies’ lives collide in ways they never expected. The catalyst: Jean turns the lives of Dorothy and Grace inside out and, in the process of her own assisted suicide, tears down some fences and forces to the surface the secret of Dorothy’s trips to Harry’s Market and her obsession with the path of young Grace’s life.

NOC NOC

A supposedly naïve young female systems analyst takes off for Pakistan to find her lawyer fiancé who's gone missing after traveling to Peshawar to meet with the family of his new clients, a pair of accused terrorists, and while performing her real life duties as a deep cover N.O.C. (NOC = No Organizational Cover), is caught in a triangulated crossfire of loyalties involving a terror cell, Pakistani intelligence, the CIA, and shadowy elements of the U.S. military. A female Jason Bourne or Jack Ryan.

LUCIFER'S GAME

A security expert son seeks retribution against his hated ex-FBI dad by faking a complex cyber-heist from the Reno casino where his father is the head of security, using his father's "virtual" fingerprint. It's supposed to be unsuccessful but those with whom he joins to pull it off have other ideas. In the end, among the bloodshed and mayhem, a son finds an inconvenient truth about the father he's always hated, along with a measure of redemption. The real-life version of *Oceans 11*—set in Reno, not Vegas.

CIRCLE DANCE [Adapted from the stage play produced in New York and Los Angeles]

An All-American family: Pro Football Hall of Fame dad; homecoming queen, master chef mom; brilliant, quirky, beautiful daughter; and the all-everything son, Notre Dame quarterback, following in dad's footsteps. It's a smiling family portrait that belies the emotional fault lines barely under its surface.

With a title borrowed from a Bonnie Raitt song about heartbreak, CIRCLE DANCE aims, classically, at a portrait of a disintegrating family and a flawed individual who learns his lessons too late." —*LA Weekly*

"Whether or not this dance is similar to one in your own family, some aspect of it will resonate with you, as every family has some steps it unconsciously repeats, every family steps on each other's toes, and every family has a time when the members must hold hands and sway to each other's rhythm." —*SoCal.com*

They say a broken bone heals stronger than the original. The same might be true of some families.

THE LAST PLANTATION

The patriarch of an undiscovered plantation—dismantled in the 1860's, smuggled out of Louisiana just ahead of the approaching swarm of carpetbaggers, and reassembled in a forgotten plot of land in a corner of New Jersey—fights to save the plantation from discovery, and to shelter his sheltered grandchildren and the (supposed) slave family from the outside world, only to discover, in the end... the only slave in sight is himself. Rambunctious, irreverent, and provocative: *Blazing Saddles* meets *South Park* and *Family Guy*.

PERFECT

Raised in a family of super-achievers, the mother of a special-needs boy—the first male grandchild born into this family dynasty—becomes obsessed with "fixing" him, her single-minded obsession threatening to destroy her marriage and taking a psychological toll on her neglected, brilliant daughter, only to discover the truth about perfection from among the wreckage.

THE TOAST

A socially-phobic, brilliant young lawyer, who is transformed into a romantic raconteur and raw, erotic, lyrical poet when his frightened self is drowned in a sea of vodka or vaporized by a handful of magic

pills, becomes involved in a seemingly illogical, mutually destructive, dance of decadence with one of the world's most desirable super-models, and, in the end—holed up in a roadside motel with a high-school vixen and copious supplies of his favorite self-altering friends—faces the question: What do you do when you seek peace in the ether and the ether doesn't work? Dark, disturbing, and poetic.

UNGODLY

What would happen if the second-coming actually happened? Do those who preach about the event really believe that it could happen—today? When a prominent, wealthy, Manhattan attorney, on the eve of his installation as President of the Bar of the City of New York, finds himself suddenly allergic to his life and the wealth and fame that he has accumulated and tries to take a different path, he is judged as either insane or divine and lost between the two, providing a lesson for others in the end while finding what is left of himself. We are also left with a surprising question: What if God had a daughter?

ABSENCE OF COLOR

Absence of Color is inspired by the life of Beatrice Pastorius Turner, a 19th century young woman with a 20th century mind. Beatrice was born in 1889 into a family of Philadelphia bluebloods who lived both in Philadelphia and in their residence in Newport, Rhode Island. Beatrice was a precocious painter and observer of the world, even while kept cloistered from it by a fastidious, quirky, oddly attentive, and obsessively protective father. Yanked from her studies at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Beatrice still painted thousands of canvases throughout her life, but led a personal life of mystery.

Following the death of Beatrice's dotting father, Beatrice and her mother had the house painted black, and it remained black until Beatrice's own death some 40 years later. Continuing to wear Victorian clothing until her death, Beatrice, wrote of world events with remarkable insight in her diary, but remained a recluse, largely shunned by the residents of Gilded Age Newport. Given little weight as an artist by the locals, most of her paintings were taken to a local dump and burned as rubbish after her death. So, too, were all but a few pages of her lifelong diary.

As an artist who continued to create despite being locked away by her father, Beatrice might also have been ahead of her time in other ways. She may have been sexually liberated a half-century before the phrase was invented. The question is, by whom. One answer may lie in a place as dark as the black house, high on the bluffs of Newport.

TELEVISION [Completed Pilots]**THE ADVOCATE**

To atone for a life-shattering mistake, former superstar District Attorney JACK KELLEHER fights to reform the corrupt establishment that created him.

THE ADVOCATE combines the Machiavellian power struggles of *The Sopranos* with the alabaster-columned courtliness of *The West Wing*, set in the Savannah of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

Haunted by the discovery that he sent an innocent man to the electric chair, first-term District Attorney Jack Kelleher decides to atone by doing his job the way it should have always been done—with the scales of justice truly balanced and truly blind. He sets out to reform Savannah’s criminal justice system from within, to cut out the cancer of privilege and prejudice that—while it anointed him the city’s crown prince—also executed MASON BRADLEY for a crime he didn’t commit, an execution promised by Jack in the campaign that led to his election.

SKIN

Sex makes the world go around: real sex, fantasized sex, forbidden sex, or simply a beautiful woman taking off her clothes. The world of exotic dancers is enticing, intoxicating, addictive. It’s a culture all its own, inhabited by the buyers and the sellers, the unspoken partners in the SKIN business.

Maybe Americans are prudes to the rest of the world, but it doesn’t mean they aren’t turned on by the same age-old drug that has been clouding men’s minds, bending their judgment, and burning their money since time began. It’s only more expensive in America. Sex is bad and so, it’s not cheap. We legislate our morals and make a lot of money for a lot of people.

So behind the veneer, away from the wives, the girlfriends, the families and responsibilities, led by the intoxicating scent of sex and bare skin, are: doctors, lawyers, clergymen, bankers, politicians, sports stars, rock stars, stock brokers, teachers, businessmen, cops, all leaving the light of day, diving into the night. They represent every color and stripe. They are occasional, regular, obsessive, harmless, dangerous, troubled, fun, old, young, cute, rude and obnoxious, shy and sweet, edgy, famous, anonymous. And, each once has a story. Each one is a story.

The girls are SEX OBJECTS. They know it, and get paid very well for it. But there is one important thing to remember: they are still PEOPLE. They have real hopes, dreams, demons, insecurities and longings, along with laundry, doctor bills, heartbreak and joy. They go to movies and eat pizza and want to have a life and love, just like everybody else. But, unlike the rest of us, they live life at a much higher speed and, when they hit a bump in the road, the effect is much more extreme and dramatic.

THE CLUB — “SKIN” — doesn’t advertise and has no sign outside. Discreet, expensive, and filled with beauties. The bouncers wear tuxedos. There’s a back door for VIP’s with direct access to the VIP rooms, stocked with champagne and a different set of rules. SKIN is the hottest men’s club in America..

ESQ.

John T. (“Johnny”) Giles, a lifelong foster-home kid wrongly convicted and sentenced to prison at 18, earns his college and law degrees online while incarcerated and, after obtaining the reversal of his

conviction and release from prison seven years later, confronts the prestigious Beverly Hills law firm whose image-enhancing Pro Bono Project botched his case in the first place. Offered a substantial settlement to disappear, he informs the firm that he is not interested in money. Instead, he wants a job. As a lawyer, with the firm. The firm that was responsible for his wrongful imprisonment and one of the highest-profile law firms in California. A firm where he doesn't fit, isn't wanted, and isn't welcome.

A bold move. A confident move. A smart move? That remains to be seen. Mort Segal, firm partner, tells Johnny, "You should have taken the cash." Ironically, though wrongfully convicted and never a real criminal, Johnny discovers that the only edge he has in his fight for survival, both inside and outside of the firm, are his knowledge of the criminal world, and the connections he had sworn to disavow. *Breaking Bad* for lawyers.

LEGAL GRIND

A group of friends from their law school days, disillusioned with the practice of law and jolted into action by the shocking suicide of one member of their unofficial club of coffee-lover lawyers, collectively walk out, and form their own new-age firm: LEGAL GRIND, LLC—a coffee shoppe where filling your customer punch card entitles you to a free consultation with the legal side of the business, located through the always-open French doors in the coffee shoppe wall. Determined to practice law without the stress, the suits, and the bullshit, this group of friends find that it's far from simple as their personal lives and the unavoidable quest for the "win" drag them closer and closer to the world they left.

GROWNUPS

An upside down relationship between an uncle and the nephew who's been living with him since his sister dropped the kid off for a few minutes five years ago, a relationship in which the nephew, Andrew, now fifteen, is the sophisticated, responsible, meticulous grownup and uncle Larry, forty, unemployed, and living off of his royalties as a comedy writer, is the head-in-the-clouds jokester who explains the tub toys as "entertaining flotation devices," is disrupted when Larry decides to rent out Andrew's room to the stunning twenty-year old Kelli, unleashing a hilarious conflict between mid-life angst and raging puberty. Loosely inspired by the stage play and film, *A Thousand Clowns*.

TELEVISION [Non-Scripted / Professional Process / e.g. Next Top Model, Project Runway]

DISCOVERED

The male and female lead roles in a selected motion picture ("The Film") will be cast through nationwide, open submissions followed by a grueling multi-week training and acting competition ("The Show") judged by major Casting Directors, the Director of The Film and a weekly Celebrity Guest who personifies the thrill of "discovery" that has driven motion pictures since their inception.

Full creative treatment and sizzle reel available upon request.