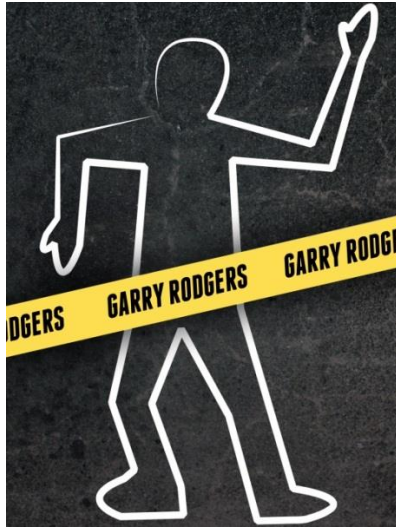


# Dead Write



*A No BS Guide To  
Writing Deadly Crime Fiction*

## **GARRY RODGERS**

Retired Homicide Detective and  
Forensic Coroner

**amazon**<sup>®</sup>

*Top 10 BestSelling Author*

## *What's in this for you?*

Writing crime fiction is like investigating murders. You deal with lies.



Everyone lies to the police. Complainants lie. Witnesses lie. Lawyers lie. Believe it or not, even the crooks lie to the cops.

Homicide investigators get extremely good at detecting lies. They're human lie detectors. And they know that to get people to co-operate in investigations, there has to be something in it for them. Just like there has to be something in this for you.

To get you to co-operate with me, I'm giving you 95 tips on how to lie to people. Because as a fiction writer, that's what you do. You lie to your reader. Your reader signs-up for a pack of lies when she buys into your story and you owe her an excellent load of excrement in return.

It's called the *suspension of disbelief*. That's what your fiction writing has to do. Your reader has to get so immersed in the story that she forgets it's all lies. The best stories string her along so well that she can't put it down and that's the best compliment you, as a writer, can ever get. So you have to be really good at telling lies.

Yes, I do want something from you and I snuck it in one of the tips. You have to read on to find out what I want.

And no, I won't bullshit you. I used to be a cop, for God's sakes. It's just that I wasn't a very good one.

Here's a *No BS Guide To Writing Deadly Crime Fiction*.

# The Science of Story

## *Tip #1 - Understand Story*

A story is about what happens (*Plot*) that affects people (*Characters*) who are trying to achieve a difficult goal (*Conflict*) and how they change as a result (*Resolution*).

## *Tip #2 - Understand Story-Telling*

Story-telling is about communicating what's happening. Humans are inherently curious creatures and, to keep your reader in the story, you have to keep her constantly wondering what's coming next.

## *Tip #3 - Understand Crime Stories*



Crime Fiction involves murders. People are fascinated about murders for the same reason they can't avoid looking at gruesome accident scenes. Like they say in the news business '*If it bleeds, it leads.*' Being killed is the worst thing that could happen and it's your reader's instinct to want to know what might happen.

## *Tip #4 - Understand Cops & Crimes*

Joseph Wambaugh, one of the best crime writers, says "The best stories aren't about how cops work on cases, but about how cases work on cops."

## *Tip #5 - Activate Your Reader's Brain*

Humans are hardwired for story. We think and learn in stories. We have a primal need to know in order to work our flight or

fight survival instinct. Stimulating your reader's desire to know what's happening subconsciously fires neurons in her brain and this releases dopamine, nature's crack, which chemically sucks her into the story. She gets immense pleasure from going along for the ride.

### ***Tip #6 - Give Your Reader What She Needs***

Stories allow your reader to simulate intense experiences without actually having to live through them. It's like being shot at - without worrying about getting hit. Stories give vital instructions on how to survive in life, allowing your reader to become the characters without ever leaving the safety of home. She needs to feel what the people in the story feel - for her entertainment - and her protection.

### ***Tip #7 - Balance Right & Left Brain***



Stories engage the left side of the brain to process words and sequence of plot. The right brain handles imagination and visualization. The best told stories balance the brain's natural ability to look for, recognize, and match patterns giving your reader those critical and so-satisfying Ah-Ha! moments.

### ***Tip #8 - Study Neuro-Linguistics***

Mind language is an amazing science that underlies story-telling. Neuro refers to what's happening in the mind. Linguistics is how communicating through words influences the mind. It's the art and science of communicating. The best form of getting a message across is by stimulating your reader's senses.

### ***Tip #9 - Apply Neuro-Linguistics***

The right words, and the right sequence of words, activate your reader's neurological system. This affects her physiology,

emotions, and behavior. When she makes sense of your story, she believes in its world. She captures and conceptualizes the experience. It's what makes her say "I couldn't put it down."

### ***Tip #10 - Give Pleasure, Avoid Pain***

Humans are pleasure-seeking, pain-avoiding animals. We go to extreme lengths to achieve this in life. It's the same for your reader. She expects a pleasurable experience from your story, even when it opens with blood & guts. If she doesn't enjoy a pleasurable state quickly into it, she's going to put-it-down and forget about it. If it becomes painful, she's going to slam-it-down and then go slam you on Goodreads.

## **Telling the Story**

### ***Tip #11 - Do Not Come Lightly To The Page***



Be honest. Be original. Be brutally in their face. Your job is to tell it like it is. To hell with offending anyone. Say what the story's message is. The best stories challenge social norms.

### ***Tip #12 - Write For One; Publish For A Million***

To be authentic, you have to quit giving a shit what anyone thinks of your work while you write. Let it come right from the depths of your bowels as if you're the only one who's ever going to read it. But when you edit and go to publish, assume that you're going to make the BestSeller list once it's shipped.

### ***Tip #13 - Don't Hesitate To Lie***

Remember - a novel is a lie that tells the truth. And if you write truthfully, your days as a member of polite society are numbered anyway. So tell the truth about society. By lying.

### *Tip #14 - Don't Be Boring*

Your reader wants to be *entertained*. She wants to escape. Plunge her into your story world - to forget that her own boring world exists. Her life is pretty much plotless, so let her get it on with James Bond. A recent Goodreads survey said that 46% of readers 'put-it-down' because it was boring.

### *Tip #15 - Understand W-5*

Who. What. When. Where. Why. These are the basic principles of all investigations. And they're the basics of story-telling. Tell the W-5. It's no more complicated than that.

### *Tip #16 - Think Of Story As A Map*



It's what the reader's going to see; where she's going to go. It's the skin.

### *Tip #17 - Think Of Plot As The Course*

Plot is the sequence of events. It's the means to the end. And it's best that it's not mentioned - just silently hidden inside supporting the story. It's the skeleton.

### *Tip #18 - Think Of Theme As The Destination*

Theme is the point of the story. It's the emotional message that your reader connects with at the end. It's the universal truth

that your lies are telling. And remember that it's the story telling the theme, not the theme telling the story. Theme is the take-away from the story. It's the heart.

### *Tip #19 - Ask The Central Story Question*

Every riveting story has a main question that begs to be answered in the end. To hook your reader, you must quickly and clearly ask it - preferably in the prelude - or at least in the opening paragraphs. And periodically re-ask while telling the story.

## Story Is About People

### *Tip #20 - Know Why You Want To Tell It*



Take a good look at your motive for telling the story. Why are you passionate about it? *Passionate*. You have to be *passionate*. If you're not, your reader's not. And then your writing is dead.

### *Tip #21 - Think Of Your Ideal Reader.*

Tell your story like writing a letter to your ideal reader. Who is she? Who's that perfect demographic who's buying into your BS? Think about her. Then write as if it's a long, passionate letter to her... about what happened.

### *Tip #22 - Let Your Reader Give-A-Shit*



She's not thinking about story science. Chances are she doesn't even know it exists. It's the characters that make her care. Who the *People* are and what's happening to them is what matters. People make the story. So make shit happen to the people and she'll give a shit about them.

### *Tip #23 - Jerk Her Emotions*

All stories are emotion based. If we're not feeling, we're not reading. Everything we experience is coated in emotions asked in a simple question *Will it hurt me or will it help me?* Neutrality bores the reader. Make your words hurt and make 'em hurt bad. Make her grovel on broken glass.

### *Tip #24 - Use Flawed Protagonists*

The very nature of crime fiction is good guys and bad guys. No one's perfect and don't make your good guy all that good. But avoid clichés like the hard-drinking, thrice-divorced, doddling detective. Get creative. Make her a fat, little cat-hoarder with Schizoaffective Disorder and a bone-blushing browser history.

### *Tip #25 - Don't Judge Your People*



Your job is to lay out what happens as clearly and impartially as possible, then get the hell out of the way. Make your reader feel and she'll judge who's right and who's wrong. This is where you show, not tell.

### *Tip #26 - Understand Show vs Tell*

Show vs. Tell is the most misunderstood advice in fiction writing. You *tell* a story, not *show* it. But don't just tell your reader that someone is an asshole. Show the guy pawning his



decrepit, old mother's wedding rings and she'll get it. Trust her.

### *Tip #27 - Just Tell The Goddamn Story*

This is the best piece of writing advice ever and it comes from Stephen King. Nuff said.

## Story Has Structure

### *Tip #28 - Sharpen Your Hook*

The right way to hook your reader is to get her right into the action; right away. Get her right into the brawl. Open with a body, a gunfight, a drug deal, or a drunken, axe-wielding, ride-on lawnmower chase. Something. As long as it hooks her emotions.

### *Tip #29 - Never, Ever Open With The Weather*



Good God! Please don't do this. That's like smashing your genitals with a club.

### *Tip #30 - Be Careful With Prologues*

There's nothing wrong with prologues. Probably half of the most successful crime stories open with prologues. It's an effective way of asking the central story question, but it has to be entirely relevant to the first action scene. Keep it short. And don't mention the goddamn weather.

### *Tip #31 - Use Chapter Headers*

Setting out chapter numbers or names, the date, time, and location are practical, effective, and accepted opening dynamics. It gets the When and Where out of the way, letting the scene carry on with the Who, What, and Why.

### *Tip #32 - Understand Paragraphs*

Paragraphs are the basic units of writing; not words or sentences. They're like sound bites. Short paragraphs speed things up. Long ones slow the pace down. Watch the # of sentences in each paragraph, the # of words in each sentence, and the # of syllables in each word. And anything more than 12 lines in each paragraph will bog down your reader.

### *Tip #33 - Don't Shy Away From Backstory*

Everyone has backstory. Something led up to who the people are and how they got into their mess. Just get it in fairly quick and not too much at one time or then it becomes an info-dump.

### *Tip #34 - Use Read-On Prompts*



At the end of every chapter you must give your reader a reason to read on - to turn the page and not put it down for the night. To polish your prompts, go through your BestSelling author's books and see how they've done it. There's no crime in stealing techniques.

### *Tip #35 - R.U.E. Resist Urge To Explain*

Trust your reader's ability to figure it out. You never explain the punch line in a joke, so be careful about being too clear at times. If you insult your reader's intelligence, you'll piss her off and she'll shut you down.

### ***Tip #36 - Careful With Clichés***

This is another piss-off for most readers. If it at all sounds like a tired old cliché, don't use it. Get creative and make up your own. That, your reader will love.

### ***Tip #37 - Think Theatre-Of-The-Mind***

This might qualify as a cliché, but it's exactly what's going on in your reader's head. Sight is her most powerful sense and she has to be seeing the story play out in her mind.

### ***Tip #38 - Use Metaphors and Similes***

A metaphor *is* something, whereas a simile is *like* something. All similes are metaphors but not all metaphors are similies. How's that for confusing? Here's examples from Stephen King, a guy who knows what he's doing. 'It is as dark as a carload of assholes.' and 'He lit a smoke that tasted like a plumber's handkerchief.' Metaphors are vital devices in storytelling because they activate the senses.

### ***Tip #39 - Don't Lecture***



I remember telling a guy that he was wrong to have knifed his landlord to death. He looked at me like I was the stupidest sonofabitch to ever pin-on a badge, replying "I know I fucked-up, but you don't have to lecture me, man." Good advice. Never forgot it.

### ***Tip #40 - Use Her Senses***

This is crucial. You can only engage your reader's emotions through her five senses. Everything you describe must be anchored to her sight, sound, smell, taste, and feel. And all five must appeal to her sixth sense - *Common Sense*. I feel so strongly about triggering senses that I keep a small Post-It note on the lower corner of my screen with this list.

### *Tip #41 - Never Send Her For A Dictionary*

Don't use orphic, sibylline, esoteric, and abstruse words that require your reader to grab a dictionary. Most readers function about a Grade 8-9 level, so adjust accordingly. Fancy words won't win any friends.

### *Tip #42 - Buy Yourself A Thesaurus*

A Thesaurus is a writer's best friend. Use it often, especially when you realize you're repeating pet words. But use it wisely and don't let it puke on your slippers.

### *Tip #43 - Appeal To Women*



Women make up 75% of the Crime Fiction readers and 95% of the book reviewers. I'm resisting the urge to explain why I keep using 'she' and 'her'.

### *Tip #44 - Watch For Point-Of-View*

Head-hopping is easy to write and hard to detect. It's when two or more characters are in a scene and the point-of-view (POV) is bouncing between them. Don't go all anal on this, because it's easy to fix with \* \* \* as a scene break when the POV switches.

### *Tip #45 - Give False Clues & Red Herrings*

This is the oldest trick in the book and a must in crime writing. Nothing is ever as it seems. Your reader is longing to solve the crime, so make it like a real homicide case - make it tricky and make it hard. Just remember that at the end of the story, everything has to add up and that she has no other explanation for what happened.

### ***Tip #46 - Give 'Ah-Ha' Moments***

Give your reader the pleasure of making connections. Her brain is programmed to look for patterns and it's so satisfying for her to put things together. These should be the major turning points in the story. Reward her 'investigator inside'.

### ***Tip #47 - Ride-Alongs.***

Letting civilians ride along with the cops is a super PR tool. They're fascinated by what they see and become huge police supporters. Do the same for your reader. Think of her riding along in the Patrol Car, enroute to the crime scene. Think of her attending the autopsy. Think of her as that juror in court. It's all about her experience. Make it a good one and she'll be your biggest supporter.

### ***Tip #48 - Foreshadowing is Good***



Hinting is a time-tested technique of keeping your reader's face in the pages. But keep it subtle and don't over-do it.

### ***Tip #49 - Create the Stockholm Syndrome***

This is a psychological phenomenon known as traumatic bonding that was first identified during a 1973 bank-robbery/hostage incident in Stockholm, Sweden. It's now clinically recognized as a victim's subconscious survival mechanism when faced with life-

threatening danger and they go on-side with the aggressor. Your reader will have the same experience if the people in your book take her hostage.

## Characters Are People

### *Tip #50 - Characters Are People*

From now on, think of characters as *People*. Characters are caricatures and have no soul. People have souls and your reader will only bond with creatures that have souls.

### *Tip #51 - People-Driven, Not Plot-Driven*

All this Plot vs People driven discussion is bullshit. It's for the elbow-patched, tweed-jacket, literary book-dorks. It's nonsense. Poppycock and horsepiddle. Stories are about people. Period. Make your reader care what the people are doing and you've got a story.

### *Tip #52 - Make People Larger Than Life*



Plain-Jane characters bore your reader and she doesn't want to read boring shit. Not every person has to be Indiana Jones; just make sure they're unique and *always doing something*.

### ***Tip #53 - Motive, Means, And Opportunity***

This isn't some kind of corny old police line. Let your reader know what your people are about - their depth. People have to have a reason, a method, and a chance or opportunity where they feel they can get away with it. If you're writing a murder mystery, remember that your perpetrator needs the exclusive opportunity. Agatha Christie was a master of this. But don't let your reader figure it out who the peep was till the end.

### ***Tip #54 - Make Names Memorable***

Names have to suit people, but don't conjure up something too weird or unpronounceable. There are gobs of sources for names. I go from my experience, flip through the phone book, or you can just Google around. My all-time favorite is Nurse Ratched from One Flew Over The Cucko's Nest. Perfect.

### ***Tip #55 - Have Them Lie, Cheat & Steal***



Don't make any goodie-twoshoes. People will do the most unpredictable shit if it suits their purpose. As long as a person can justify it in his mind, he'll do it. The trick is to understand what's going on in his mind. It's the raw principle of interrogation. Get creative and get him conniving. It's cause and effect. Have him cause something and suffer the effect.

### ***Tip #56 - Profile You People***

Physical. Psychological. Sociological. Outline your people all the way down to their birthdate, their description, their residence, family status, education, financial state, their hobbies, likes, dislikes, friends and foes... This will get you to know your people intimately, making it automatic for their



actions to come alive on the pages. Use a Word Doc, Excel, or just a hand-written index card to sketch them.

### *Tip #57 - What Would Dick Head Do?*

To bring your antagonist, Dick Head, to life you have to know what he'd do in every situation. Ask yourself 'Just what would Dick really do in this predicament?' You have to know Dick so well that he comes across subliminally to your reader. She'll pick up pretty quick if Dick does something out-of-line. By your knowing all about Dick, instead of dick-all, he'll ooze out and she won't let Dick go.

### *Tip #58 - Make A Matrix For People*

You must know how each person connects with the others and the best way to do this is a simple matrix on graph paper or Excel spreadsheet, listing each person along the top and again along the left margin. By X-ing the crossing points you'll have a clear picture of who's connected to whom. It's vital, absolutely vital, not to screw up people's connections.

## People Talk To Each Other

### *Tip #59 - Dialogue Is The Key Device*



Nothing holds your reader's attention like dialogue. She wants to be the fly-on-the-wall. Hear the dirt. Listen to what's goin'

down. If you could tell your entire story through dialogue, that'd be perfect. But nothing's perfect so if you can get at least half of the story out in dialogue, you've succeeded.

### ***Tip #60 - Dialogue Is Edited Speech***

I've been complimented on my dialogue writing and it's because I've spent hundreds of hours proofing transcripts of police interviews and wiretap intercepts. Now that's pure dialogue. But it's full of 'Ahs' 'Umms' 'Okays' and overriding or cutting each speaker off. The trick is to write how the people would speak in real life then edit out the crap.

### ***Tip #61 - Know Your People***



Everyone has unique speech. Crooks & cops. Teachers and Terrorists. Priests and Pundits. It's our word choice. Our mannerisms. Our tone. Accent. Education and background. Pet phrases. In wiretaps, you can pick out the speaker right away from the first few words and it's no different for your readers. If you first develop people to be real entities in your mind, their speech will jump out in print. Let the people be themselves and reader will know them.

### ***Tip #62 - Speech Attributes / Dialogue Tags***

The golden rule is 'He said. She said.' and it's frikkin gospel. The shorter the tags - and the fewer the tags - the better. Use only as many speech attributes as necessary to keep your reader from getting confused as to who's talking. No more. But I think it's fine to occasionally mix your person's name in place of 'he/she' and let them refer to each other as they naturally would.

### ***Tip #63 - Kill Adjectives and Adverbs***

Go with strong verbs and nouns. Let them do the work. And never invent cutesy crap like "She moaned cunnilingusly" or "He suddenly knew, laxatively."

### *Tip #64 - Pay Attention To Movies & TV Shows*



Story in film is carried by dialogue. I'll never be a screenwriter, but I appreciate that there's some brilliant talk-masters out there writing script. Watch *The Big Bang Theory*. It's out-of-this-world good.

### *Tip #65 - Beats*

Beats are separations between dialogue blocks. They give a sense of place, point of view, further the story and set the pace, as well as giving zip to the conversation. Beats can replace tags. Spend as much time tweaking beats as scripting dialogue.

### *Tip #66 - Foul Language*

Swearing is a fact of life, especially in crime life. It goes that a NYU PhD would talk different than a Hell's Angel and it's crucial - *absolutely vital* - to be true to your person. If you can't handle obscenities, you have no business reading crime fiction - let alone writing it. A friend recently recommended a Harlan Coban novel. Partway into it, I sensed something was wrong. Coban's protagonist had to use the F-word - no way around it - and Coban wrote 'F@#!' I'm serious! He didn't have the balls to print it. He lost me, so I put the book down and went the fuck to sleep.

### *Tip #67 - Regional Accents*

Careful on this. It's a balance between giving the person an identity and pissing-off your reader. A little goes a long way

in using 'Y'all' or 'Eh'. Mark Twain got away with it, but we mortals best be careful.

## Self-Mutilation (Editing)

### *Tip #68 - Read It. Out Loud.*

The most important editing movement you can make. *Read it*. Out loud. Or get a friend to read it. *Out loud*. Use voice memo on your smart phone to listen to yourself. *Read it out loud*. Listen to the words. It has to sound real. Real for your people.

### *Tip #69 - Leave Out The Boring Parts.*



This comes from Elmore Leonard when asked how he makes his writing so riveting. Nuff said again.

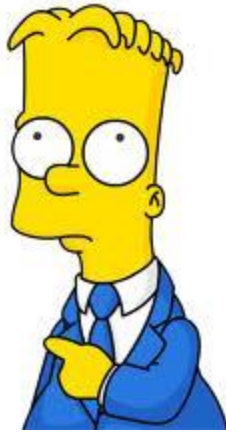
### *Tip #70 - Leave Out Everything Irrelevant*

If it doesn't further the story, it doesn't go in. No matter how much you want to tell about it. Kill your darlings, they call it.

### *Tip #71 - Don't Let Your Editor Steal Your Book*

It's your story. Your voice. An editor is a resource. A subcontractor. She's an ally who can catch a lot of things and really improve your craft, but she still works for you. It has to stay your story - what you want it to be. Not what some editor thinks it should be. Sorry for the cliché, but the tail cannot wag the dog.

### *Tip #72 - Grammar Don't Wear No Coat 'n Tie*



Proper grammar is for literary fiction. It's dilusional to expect Joe Crimewriter to win a Pullitzer Prize so don't fret none. Use 'ain't'. Go with 1 & 2 word sentences. Ramble. Skip. Twist 'n shorten. Make words up. Invent stuff. Think Mark Twain ever worried 'bout grammer? He uz jes tellinna goddamn story.

### *Tip #73 - Write A Shitty First Draft*

This comes from Anne Lamott. It's OK to be rough. It's far more important to get the bowels moving. Just shit it out. There's lots of time to wipe-up after.

### *Tip #74 - Writing And Rewriting*

Writing is making up the words. Editing is taking out the trash. Rewriting is not bad. Rewriting is good and you should love every minute of it. Spend twice as much time rewriting as writing.

### *Tip #75 - Read More Than You Write*

Successful authors agree that you must write every day to improve and they're right. What they don't often say - You learn more about writing by reading other works than by just numbly pecking away. To get good, shoot for writing 1,500 - 2,000 words per day. But also shoot for reading 8 - 10,000.

### *Tip #76 - Kill Adjective & Adverbs*

I mean this. Kill 'em. Slash the cocksuckers' throats. Go with strong verbs and nouns.



### *Tip #77 - Exclamation Marks*

Use them sparingly! Maybe 3 or 4 in the whole story and then only in dialogue!! Never in narrative!!! Let your nouns and verbs exclaim.

### *Tip #78 - Commas*

Don't get your shit in a knot over commas. Just apply common sense and see commas as a natural pause, just like you would in speaking and breathing; same with semi-colons.

## Writers Are Organized

### *Tip #79 - Bomb Your TV And Nuke Facebook*

Or at least shut them off while writing. Discipline yourself. Focus on your work and don't get distracted by these time vultures. Your productivity will scream up if you simply put

your attention solely on your reading and writing. There is no excuse for lack of discipline. None.

### *Tip #80 - Pantsers vs Plotsters*

Some writers outline their story. Some fly by the seat of their pants. I can't imagine writing an entire novel without knowing where it's going, although you must allow leeway to change as the words flow along. I think it's a flex of both but you've got to have a plan.



### *Tip #81 - The 'Tip' System*

Most homicide investigations are organized on a Tip system where each lead is assigned its own file and given a priority by the case manager. Do this with your novel. You can tip each chapter, each person, each location - whatever works for you. Just be organized.

### *Tip #82 - Timelines*

Homicide investigations are also time-lined. A lineal chart is developed with every piece of information laid out in chronological order. This is invaluable for your novel. Do it on long paper, a whiteboard, in Excel, or use PostIt notes. You'll be amazed at how clearly you can blend backstory this way.

### *Tip #83 - Scrivner*



I don't use Scrivener although I've heard nothing but good things about it. Apparently not only does it let you organize and write with the program, it allows easy conversion to eBook formats.

### ***Tip #84 Think Reliability***

*ThinkReliability* is a root-cause analysis consulting company that trains accident investigation professionals. They have a free Excel template which you can download and use to lay out your story. Check out their root-cause analysis demonstration on the Titanic sinking. You'll never blame the iceberg again.

Here's the link: <http://www.thinkreliability.com/Excel-Tools.aspx>

### ***Tip #85 - Cause Mapping / Link Analysis***



This is another standard procedure in homicide investigations, especially where a conspiracy is involved. The points of evidence are laid out in a flow chart which links them and identifies their relevance. This is a connect-the-box approach which the *ThinkReliability* freebie will do for you and it works great for viewing the plot. Remember, plot is the skeleton which supports the story skin and contains the theme, or the heart.

### ***Tip #86 - Person List***

Prosecution briefs contain a witness list summarizing who the players are and how they fit into the crime. This is a great tool, along with a person matrix to keep you focused on their place in the story. I've even seen Frederick Forsyth use one as part of his published story. Worked great.

### ***Tip #87 - Overcoming Writer's Block***

There's only one laxative in my opinion. Sit down and start writing. Who cares if it's shit? At least you get the words flowing and that's what it's all about. Actually writing something. There's lots of time to fix it later, but no time like the present to start it.

### *Tip #88 - Practice Coopetition*

See, I told you I wanted something. This is one of the best things writers can do - cross-promote our work. It's called coopetition. By giving you these 95 tips on *Writing Deadly Crime Fiction* I'm betting that you'll appreciate it and will refer it to others. Then you'll take a look at my books and tell others about my writing too. In return, I'll do the same for you. What goes around, comes around.

### *Tip #89 - Networking*



Nobody writes alone. You might think you can lock yourself away in a mountain cabin like in *Misery*, but sooner or later you've got to drive down the hill. Spend time on the net. Keep up your blog. Read other blogs. Twitter away - best tool out there. Get connected, comment, write guest posts, and promote other's work. It's social karma and it pays back huge.

### *Tip #90 - Close Enough Is Good Enough*

At some point you've got to ship it. Do everything you reasonably can to produce a first class product, but don't kill yourself over perfection. A phenomenal thing about digital writing is that you can easily go back and change it.

### *Tip #91 - Keep On Writin'*

There's nothin', absolutely nothin' that will polish your writin' like writin'. I think a blog is a must for all writers, as it forces you to continually create something short which has to be shipped. Don't tell me that you can't think of a topic.

### ***Tip #92 - Crime Fiction Resources***

Here's five of the best resources any writer can tap, regardless of genre.

[On Writing](#) - Stephen King

[Elements Of Style](#) - Strunk & White

[Wired For Story](#) - Lisa Cron

[Think And Grow Rich](#) - Napoleon Hill

[The Creative Penn Website](#) - Joanna Penn

### ***Tip #93 - Research The Shit Out Of It***



They say 'Write What You Know.' I call bullshit. It's not reasonable for writers to know all about crimes and virtually all the successful crime writers have never smelled a dead body, let alone arrested a murderer. I believe it's 'Check What You Write.' You can get away with all the bullshit in the world as long as you don't get caught. Nothing will trap you like not getting your facts straight. Don't say 'The corpse was prone on its back.' And don't call a 9mm pistol a 'revolver'. Your reader will see right through your BS and your credibility will

be shot. There is so much information available. If nothing else, Google it and start with Wikipedia.

### *Tip #94 - Enjoy The Ride*

Crime Fiction writing has to be fun. You have to love making up lies about liars. The bigger, the better. And the reward really comes when your ideal reader says 'I couldn't put it down'.

### *Tip #95 - Contact Me*

Let me know what you think of these tips. Please sign-up for my newsletter, tell your friends, Tweet, or drop me an email because I'm dying to hear your words. You might say it's my D'Ohpamine.

[garry@dyingwords.net](mailto:garry@dyingwords.net)

[www.dyingwords.net](http://www.dyingwords.net)

[@GarryRodgers1](https://twitter.com/GarryRodgers1)

