

“CLUED IN...”

July Author

Mary Jane Maffini



We read:

Closet Confidential

4th in the Charlotte Adams series

* If you enjoyed Charlotte Adams you may also want to investigate Mary Jane's other two series starring Ottawa sleuth Camilla MacPhee and failed romance writer Fiona Silk. She will also be collaborating with her daughter under the pen name Victoria Abbott for a new series coming soon!

Some interesting points we discussed:

- Writers get emotionally attached to characters, so like to see them 'settled' when thinking about the end of a series.
- The secondary characters in the Charlotte Adams series are very well developed.
- There are pros & cons to having an amateur sleuth, who needs to have a reason to be involved in the crime. Charlotte has an emotional connection to people, and therefore wants to save them.
- Question: How do you decide how many characters to include?
Answer: Every character has to have a 'job'---otherwise you do not need them.
- Pets add dimension to characters; help to round them out.

Jack: Charlotte is pretty dense when it comes to him.
She often takes jack for granted.

Diet: Her poor diet makes her more human.
Food rings you into the story (writer's use of the 5 senses).
For Charlotte is food a crutch from a lack of mothering?

Organizing: Charlotte can control the organizing issues.
People have secrets, and closets can hold them!





Our very own

Who killed Elizabeth? Was her husband Robert also murdered? Is Librarian Kathryn *really* Elizabeth's friend? Why is Dr. Chelsea Barren spending so much time with farmhand Enrique? Is sister Vicky sincere about wanting to re-establish a family bond?

Or is it all Sour Grapes of Wrath?

Our murder picnic at Stewart Park was a huge success! Over half a dozen Killer Coffee Club members were joined by Mary Jane Maffini for murder accompanied by unstoppable laughter!

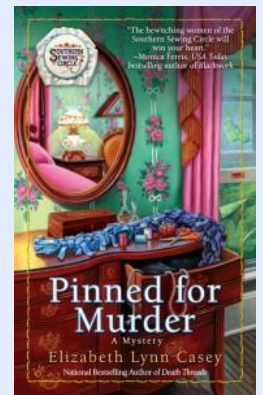
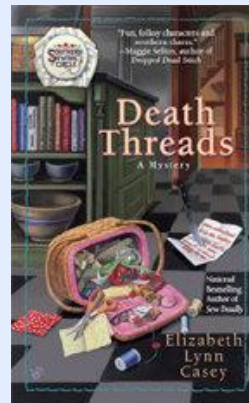


New in Books:

Elizabeth Lynn Casey

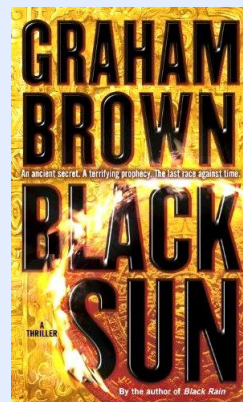
Now available ~ **Death Threads** ~
2nd in series

Coming in October 2010 ~ **Pinned for Murder**



Graham Brown

Coming August 31st ~ **Black Sun**



Meet Rachel Brady



Your current 'day job' is at NASA! When and how did you become interested in space and all that goes along with that line of work?

NASA is an awesome work environment and the research I do is a lot of fun. Many people say it is their lifelong dream to work for the space program, and they get pretty edgy when I confess I ended up here by accident. I actually moved to Houston for a different job (accident reconstruction), and my husband was the first to come on board with a NASA contractor. The owner of my company suddenly sold it to another outfit clear across town, which in Houston means over an hour away. I had to accept a huge commute or find another job. It seemed logical to look for work near where my husband was working, although I wasn't limiting my search to the space industry. As it turned out though, I landed a job right across the street from him, working for a NASA life sciences contractor. Lucky break. This is my twelfth year.

Do your co-workers offer ways they think you should kill someone?

I like this question and it makes me smile. My co-workers don't offer advice for my novels, but they are immensely supportive of my moonlighting side job. Many have read *Final Approach* or given copies as gifts. They often ask how it's doing and inquire about the status of the next one, *Dead Lift*, or the one I'm currently writing, *Thin Ice*. It's neat to have my two worlds (real world and hobby world) "blending" this way.

A little side story. One of my friends at work, Laura, used to tell all kinds of stories about a friend of hers named Big Red. I never met the guy, but I really liked that nickname, so I used it in *Final Approach*. Who knew the book would ever be published? Who knew she'd read it? I made a point to tell her, before she read it, that I ripped off her friend's name. She laughed.

When did you decide to first attempt writing a mystery?

January, 2004, right after I ran my first marathon. It was my year of trying huge new things. The book was published in October, 2009.

How long did your first manuscript take to finish?

This sordid story is posted at my [blog](#). Laughing is not allowed.

In your first book, FINAL APPROACH, there is a lot of action centered around skydiving. How did you get drawn into that world?

I'm a former skydiver. It seemed a unique and extreme environment in which to set a mystery. All the books on writing said to "write what you know," and I knew about NASA, parenting, and skydiving. I thought that writing a mystery about first might get me fired, the second seemed unoriginal, and that left skydiving.

You have a job, a family, and other interests too. Do you have scheduled writing time or is it always different? How do you fit it all in?!

It's usually a crap shoot. I've tried a lot of different schedules and techniques and decided that I must remain dynamic and willing to go with the flow. Anything else, for me, seems a recipe for distress.

I can only fit in what I've prioritized. I'm much better about scheduling writing time when I'm in the revisions process with my editor. She asks for things back by a certain date, and I'm compelled to deliver promptly. By contrast, when I'm writing a first draft, I'm not held to any particular deadline, so I tend to struggle more with fitting it in.

Where is one of your favorite places that you have visited? And one that you would like to visit?

This is a fun question too. I'm fortunate to have visited several memorable places. Choosing one is tough, but Maui is in the top five.

A place I'd really like to go is Italy. I don't even care which city!

Is there a writer that you feel has been (or is) a role model for you?

Timothy Hallinan. I'm reading his new book, *The Queen of Patpong*, right now, and every page reminds me how gifted he is. If folks on your mailing list are writers, I hope they'll check out his [Finish Your Novel](#) webpage, a series of articles which were (and still are) enormously helpful to me. Any readers on your list who like an edgy thriller with international flair and darker themes will enjoy his Poke Rafferty series.

*Your second book due out later this year, *Dead Lift*, is set in a gym. What spurred your ideas for this one?*

[An overactive imagination and a long, tedious drive from Dallas.](#) (click on link)
<http://writeitanyway.blogspot.com/2009/10/where-do-you-get-your-ideas.html>

Is there anything that you've learned since your first book was published that has surprised you in the writing/publishing world?

Authors are normal people who go to the store/vet/PTA/etc., same as me.

Almost all of us have day jobs because it's extremely difficult to earn a living writing novels.

It's a very friendly peer industry. We genuinely celebrate each other's successes.

Publishing a book is a team effort.

Writing and editing are different skills.

*Do you have more books planned in the *Emily Locke* series? Or a stand alone?*

This may change later, but the current plan is for five Emily Locke novels, and I'm currently writing the third. I'd like to write a stand alone when the series closes, but right now it's hard for me to think that far ahead. I'm so entrenched in Emily's voice that it will be a re-learning experience for me to head jump into a new narrator.

Final Approach was actually written as a stand alone. I didn't expect to ever publish it and certainly never dreamed it would evolve into a series. Just goes to show that life is full of surprises.

****Rachel also has three awesome children who say the funniest things! Check it out:*
<http://thestilettoegang.blogspot.com/2010/06/greatest-hits-my-kids-best-one-liners.html>



www.killercoffeeclub.com

Where inquiring minds explore

deadly intentions...

The Killer Coffee Club



DID YOU KNOW that
Cornell
has a
POISON Garden?



Next Up

Maggie Barbieri

Quick Study

August 11, 2010