

ThrillerChat Transcript from March 15, 2010

All times are Pacific Time

- [12:25 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Just 35 minutes until [#thrillerchat](#) starts. Join us!
- [12:26 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: You decide the thriller topics we discuss tonight on an open discussion [#thrillerchat](#) @ 9PM EST. [#amwriting](#) [#writing](#) [#writechat](#) [#thriller](#)
- [12:35 am](#) **[Nostradameus](#)**: RT @[Selorian](#): Just 35 minutes until [#thrillerchat](#) starts. Join us!
- [12:50 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [#thrillerchat](#) starting in about 10 minutes. We're discussing any topic you wish to discuss tonight. [#amwriting](#) [#writing](#) [#writechat](#) [#thriller](#)
- [12:52 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Join me for a [#thrillerchat](#) using TweetChat at: <http://tweetchat.com/room/thrillerchat> [#thrillerchat](#)
- [12:53 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: As always, a .pdf transcript of tonight's chat will be posted on my site tomorrow for those unable to join us. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [12:55 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: RT @[jessrosenbooks](#): @[Selorian](#) How to handle reveal of villain in a [#thriller](#)? Doing 1st POV, isn't revealed till end. May not work for [#ThrillerChat](#). [#amwriting](#)
- [12:58 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Attention writers and readers of [#thrillers](#), join us in 4 minutes for [#thrillerchat](#).
- [1:00 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [#thrillerchat](#) starts now! [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:02 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Welcome! Tonight you get to choose the topics we discuss. Grab the opportunity to discuss any aspect of thrillers you wish to. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:03 am](#) **[thebookjournal](#)**: @[Selorian](#) oh I thought i had missed it! Isn't the chat at 8? [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:03 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I'll throw out the first. Do you plot differently for a thriller than you do other genres? [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:04 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[thebookjournal](#) Hey! Nope, I moved it to 9 in hopes of it being a more convenient time for people. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:04 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: I do, yes. My plots (which are quote mystery structured) are pretty intricate. With fantasy, less so. [#thrillerchat](#)

- [1:05 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: My thrillers are very back-story heavy, hence the need for careful plotting. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:05 am](#) **[thebookjournal](#)**: @[Selorian](#) great! I will have to cut out for 15 or so minutes (kids to bed) but will be back ASAP [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:05 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: ? High momentum marks of a good thriller. Just wondering how that pager-turner tension can be maintained. Examples? [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:06 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[willhawthorne](#) Interesting. I find I need to plot more carefully as well. Do you have a preferred method? [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:07 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: I'm pretty much a pantsner, so that makes for a lot of rewriting when I figure out what the hell is going on! [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:07 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Favourite plotting tool here is a calendar with *big* date blocks. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:08 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Good question. There needs to be lulls, but I tend to leave a question needing answered at the end of each chapter. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:09 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I also like to keep chapter lengths as short as possible when I can, to help keep up the momentum. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:10 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: Yes, end every chapter with a question or a surprise or some sort of punch. Doing that for short chs is hard but effective. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:10 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Patterson's chapters tend to be scenes, lots of white space, but it certainly does affect momentum. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:10 am](#) **[thebookjournal](#)**: @[Selorian](#) I like shorter chapters as well. Reader feels like they are progressing in the story. all psychological [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:11 am](#) **[thebookjournal](#)**: @[Selorian](#) even if the entire book only covers 1 hour. the short chapters keep the pace up [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:11 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: Short chs have become the industry standard, I think. Sometimes I wish we could luxuriate in them a bit more though. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:12 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: The passage of time, or a lack of time - a real or imagined deadline - frequently mark thrillers as well. Ticking clocks. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:14 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Good point about the ticking clocks. Helps to keep the stakes high and urgent. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:14 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Perhaps more mysteries than thrillers, but P.D. James creates page-turners still lush with decription. Much less sparse. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:16 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) James has an excellent sense of place/location. That's part of the lushness, I think. More sedate though. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:16](#) **[AllInky](#)**: With time so key, plotting really does need to be precise in

[am](#) location/time, doesn't it? [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:17 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Yes, and that's where some outlining is unavoidable (even for a pantsner like me). [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:17 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Sorry, kid emergency I had to tend to. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:18 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: I tend to "schedule" the crime first, key the protag's action from that, then bounce back and forth for their interaction. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:19 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Join me for a [#thrillerchat](#) TweetChat at: <http://tweetchat.com/room/thrillerchat> [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:20 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) How often do you get well into a draft without knowing who the villain is? I do this sometimes and it's unnerving! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:21 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Not so much for me @[willhawthorne](#). Writing the crime first tends to solidify the bad guys - though they can do odd things! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:22 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) I actually like being surprised by characters, even if it can make for a lot of editing. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:22 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: I have their side of the action figured, then introduce the protag and see how s/he messes it up. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:23 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[thebookjournal](#) Yes they do. I also use dialogue and sentence length to vary the pace and momentum. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:25 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) I For me even the villains are unscripted and I embrace the idea that bad guys think they're good. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:25 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Motivation in thrillers is hard for me. They can have massive canvases. Finding big enough reasons for heroic action is rough. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:25 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I like being surprised but find it very frustrating in rewrites. Even if it cuts down on surprise, I like having direction. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:26 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: I assume the criminal instigates action, so I need to know the who/what/why. After that, I like surprises. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:27 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I tend to like the selfish motivation. Save the wife & save the world. The main reason for action is saving the wife. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:28 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Only if the protag happens to be a straight guy. :) [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:29 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Lol. Just an example, but a valid point. :-) [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:29 am](#) **[kstjarre](#)**: Momentum is thread with reader on one end. Pace is how hard you pull. Want enuff tension, but not so much that thread breaks. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:29 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: I've always liked that Hitchcockian Ordinary-guy-strays-into-terrible-chain-of-events-and-has-to-survive model. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:30 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: that ordinary guy model is great but so overdone that it's hard to make fresh these days [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:30 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Thrillers spawn cliches, inbook or film. We shoudn't have to kill his dog to create a hero. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:30 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: RT [@kstjarre](#): Momentum is thread with reader on one end. Pace is how hard you pull. Want enuff tension, but not so much that thread breaks. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:31 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: [@egtalbot](#) True. Execution is all :) [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:32 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: RT [@AllInky](#): Thrillers spawn cliches, inbook or film. We shoudnt have to kill his dog to create a hero. < True. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:32 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@willhawthorne](#) Yep. With "ordinary guy", most interesting thing to me is ensuring he/she makes mistakes [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:33 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: As a reader, I love plots that are gray rather than black/white. Provides more possibilities for character types/motiations. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:34 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: Even a specialist (a cop, doctor etc) can be ordinary. I want a hero I can connect to and see as a person: not a skill set. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:35 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: [@egtalbot](#) So long as their mistakes don't feel designed to drive the plot. Readers get mad about that! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:36 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I've always favored the hero that isn't heroic. He's doing what is needed to get what he wants. If it helps others, so be it. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:37 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@willhawthorne](#) true, it's a balance w/mistakes. But I hate when some ordinary guy picks up a gun and actually hits a target [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:37 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: [@Selorian](#) Interesting. For me, it's almost opposite: a hero without the necessary skills but a need to pursue truth/justice [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:38 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [@egtalbot](#) Very good point. I hate that too. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:40 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: [@egtalbot](#) Agreed. But then weapon skills always get a little outlandish in fiction, don't they! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:40 am](#) **[kstjarre](#)**: I've learned hero must have want and need. Want drives story, until need revealed to hero, need ends story. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:40 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Conventions in thrillers are tricky. You need some to *be* a thriller at all, but too many of them and its a caricature. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:40 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: It's not really thriller-related, but I posted a blog on using medieval weapons over at www.magicalwords.net a month or so ago [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:41 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[willhawthorne](#) yes! weapons stuff often seem a bit much - starts to get into the diff between action-thriller and thriller [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:41 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: The point was the same. Writers need to know what you can do with a crossbow or sword (or revolver) and what you can't! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:41 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[willhawthorne](#) I like anti-hero types. True heroes are so rare, but people out for themselves are so plentiful. And they can.. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:41 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: still help others in the process, discovering it isn't that bad to do. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:42 am](#) **[kstjarre](#)**: Weapon skills are not only outlandish in fiction, even the weapons are. If I see one more AD 2010 hand grenade level a house.. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:42 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: @[kstjarre](#) I definitely get that! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:42 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[AllInky](#) excellent point re:conventions. I like to exaggerate my cliches for effect, but not have too many of them [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:42 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[kstjarre](#) Good way to put it. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:42 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[kstjarre](#) Yes, I learned a lot about the goal/need thing from studying screenplays. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:43 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[kstjarre](#) Totally agree about those near nuclear grenades. What's up with that? [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:43 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: I worked an ER, some fellow slit his wife's throat with a broken DVD. People are much more fragile than thrillers portray. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:44 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: @[AllInky](#) On purpose? Seems an odd choice of weapon. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:44 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[willhawthorne](#): re:knowing what weapons can do, it speaks to how writers often need to know lot more than they put in story

[#thrillerchat](#)

- [1:44 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I hate heroes that get hit by a car and keep chasing the bad guy. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:45 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: [@egtalbot](#) Yes. Someone should tell Clancy! [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:45 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Very deliverately. Ordinary people can find pointy sticks, DVDs, or earphone wires. Big weapons not always necessary. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:45 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I want my heroes to get feel pain and I want them to run out of bullets. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:46 am](#) **[willhawthorne](#)**: Gotta cut out now. Thanks guys. Interesting stuff. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:46 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@willhawthorne](#) LOL about Clancy -love some of his stuff, but. . .TMI sometimes [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:46 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [@willhawthorne](#) Thanks for joining in! hope to see you next time. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:47 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Join me for a [#thrillerchat](#) TweetChat at: <http://tweetchat.com/room/thrillerchat> [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:47 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@kstjarre](#) think those grenades come from too many shows like "24" [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:47 am](#) **[kstjarre](#)**: [@Selorian](#) Yup, nothing worse than a 4000-round magazine in a handgun. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:48 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I'll ask a question [@jessrosenbooks](#) brought up since she isn't here to ask. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:48 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Also on weaponry... Thrillers are often interaional, and guns/ordinance isn't as easy to find outside the USA. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:48 am](#) **[kstjarre](#)**: [@willhawthorne](#) Interesting, I learned a lot about that from novelist/playwright Mike Kimball. The cool one, from Maine. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:49 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Can you mask the villain until the end of a thriller and if so, how do you handle the reveal? [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:49 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: I need a new keyboard... worn this one out and dropping letters like crazy! Hope y'all speak typo! [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:50 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@Selorian](#) only way I know to really mask villain is to have multiple villains - otherwise it becomes mystery, not thriller [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:50 am](#) **[kstjarre](#)**: [@Selorian](#) Whew, tough one. "Mom! It was you?! All along?!"

[am](#) [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:52 am](#) [@egtalbot](#): [@egtalbot](#) only other way I can think of is a very personal thriller, like serial killer - possibly could mask identity [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:52 am](#) [Selorian](#): That;s what I was thinking. If anything, you'd end up with a mystery that has some thriller elements thrown in. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:52 am](#) [AllInky](#): It would seem easier to have a more anonymous villian when action is more prominent than character? [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:53 am](#) [jessrosenbooks](#): Thanks, [@Selorian](#). Sorry I'm late to [#Thrillerchat](#), had a little thrill here. Ha [@kstjarre](#)! Basically, where the villain isn't the suspect.

[1:53 am](#) [egtalbot](#): [@Selorian](#) exactly - action by itself is not thrilling usually, it takes characters to become thrilling [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:54 am](#) [AllInky](#): How-done-it vs. who-done-its? [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:54 am](#) [Selorian](#): [@jessrosenbooks](#) Glad you made it. Hope everything is good. I asked just in case you didn't make it. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:56 am](#) [kstjarre](#): [@AllInky](#) Right. In a mystery, who-done-it, big reveal. Or how-done-it with Columbo. But thriller is usually beat-the-clock. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:56 am](#) [egtalbot](#): thanks for the [#Thrillerchat](#) everyone! - time for bed for me.

[1:56 am](#) [Selorian](#): Thrillers to me seem to be more will they succeed in doing it than who or even how. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:57 am](#) [Selorian](#): [@egtalbot](#) Thanks for dropping in. Hope to see you again next time. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:57 am](#) [AllInky](#): I wonder how "tight" a locale/cast of characters could still be a conventional thriller? [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:59 am](#) [jessrosenbooks](#): Trying to describe my novels' genre is a challenge. Has thriller aspects but also a reveal. May drop reveal, go all thriller. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:00 am](#) [Selorian](#): Conventional is the key word. Exotic locales and at least a handful of characters seem to be the norm. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:00 am](#) [kstjarre](#): [@jessrosenbooks](#) Please don't change your novel in order to better fit a genre. Just write the best book you can. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:00 am](#) [AllInky](#): Suspense, a la Fatal Attraction, can be pretty claustrophobic. Thrillers tend to sprawl more. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:01](#) [Selorian](#): But hybrid, cross-genre stories allow a lot of flexibility outside the

[am](#) traditional thriller. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:02](#)
[am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: RT [@kstjarre](#): [@jessrosenbooks](#) Please dont change your novel in order to better fit a genre. Just write the best book you can. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:03](#)
[am](#) **[jessrosenbooks](#)**: Always great advice, [@kstjarre](#), and thank you. I'm curious if I can improve it by changing how it reveals the villain. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:03](#)
[am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Agree completely with [@kstjarre](#) . Let genre take care of itself after. The marketing folks will have their say later. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:06](#)
[am](#) **[jessrosenbooks](#)**: True, [@Selorian](#), the crossgenres allow latitude. Mine are romance/thrillers (if thriller applies!), relationship is primary. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:08](#)
[am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: That's a complex form, [@jessrosenbooks](#). Does the reveal impact the relationship? Hybrids bring even more conventions to mss. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:08](#)
[am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Speaking of motivation, watching Spiderman with my son as I'm chatting. That's a good example of motivation. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:10](#)
[am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: He helps the public, but the catalyst is guilt over his Uncle's death. The motivation is selfish, but the public benefits. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:10](#)
[am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: My favourite motivation is generally, death-if-you-don't-fix-it! Just a bit cliched also! [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:12](#)
[am](#) **[jessrosenbooks](#)**: It all impacts relationship as it builds and is refined, often threatening its stability. Romance & thrill are intertwined. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:12](#)
[am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Hmm, [@Selorian](#), would comic tales qualify as thrillers? Lots of the same elements, if a bit more fantastical. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:14](#)
[am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [@AllInky](#) Possibly. The motivation can apply in either. Just a good example of even a hero doing it for selfish reasons [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:21](#)
[am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I'm going to have to cut out. Feel free to continue chatting. I'll generate the transcript tomorrow to catch any continuation. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:22](#)
[am](#) **[jessrosenbooks](#)**: [@AllInky](#) I'm a great fan of superheroes and comics, always have been. I do think that when well done, they can be thrillers. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:22](#)
[am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Thank you all for a great chat, some very interesting discussion. Watch for the transcript link tomorrow. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:22](#)
[am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: I still have some pages to bash out, so thanks once again for the interesting chat! [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:23](#)
[am](#)

[Selorian](#): I have a tent to set up in the living room floor for an inside camp out.
[#thrillerchat](#)

[2:24](#)
[am](#)

[jessrosenbooks](#): Take care, [@Selorian](#). Thanks for hosting [#thrillerchat](#).

[2:25](#)
[am](#)

[Selorian](#): Hope to see everyone next time. Thanks again. My pleasure being able to host it! [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:26](#)
[am](#)

[Selorian](#): [@jessrosenbooks](#) You too. You're welcome. It's my pleasure to be able to do it. [#thrillerchat](#)