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BY MARK SANDERSON

In February I mentioned the dubious pleasure of meeting, between the covers of a book, someone who shares your name. In Ambrose Parry's *A Corruption of Blood* (Canongate, £14.99), published this Thursday, there is a newspaperman called Sanderson: "A squirrely little character, fastidiously neat in his appearance, wearing an exquisitely tailored suit and carrying a gold-topped cane. Very much the Edinburgh paradox: neat and clean on the surface but making his living rummaging in the dirt." As I'm tall, dark and handsome, Sanderson cannot possibly have been inspired by me, but perhaps – just to be certain – I should make a trip to Stirling next month where Chris Brookmyre and Dr Marisa Haetzman – the double act behind Ambrose Parry – will be appearing in person (and online) at the Bloody Scotland International Crime Festival, which this year runs from September 17-19. Full details can be found at bloodyscotland.com from tomorrow.

Mark Sanderson

Crime Club editor

[@MrMarkSanderso1](#)

Star pick 1



★ STAR PICK

Another Kind of Eden by James Lee Burke

Orion, £20

Aaron Holland Broussard, the young protagonist of *The Jealous Kind*, is now a veteran of the Korean war and a wannabe writer.

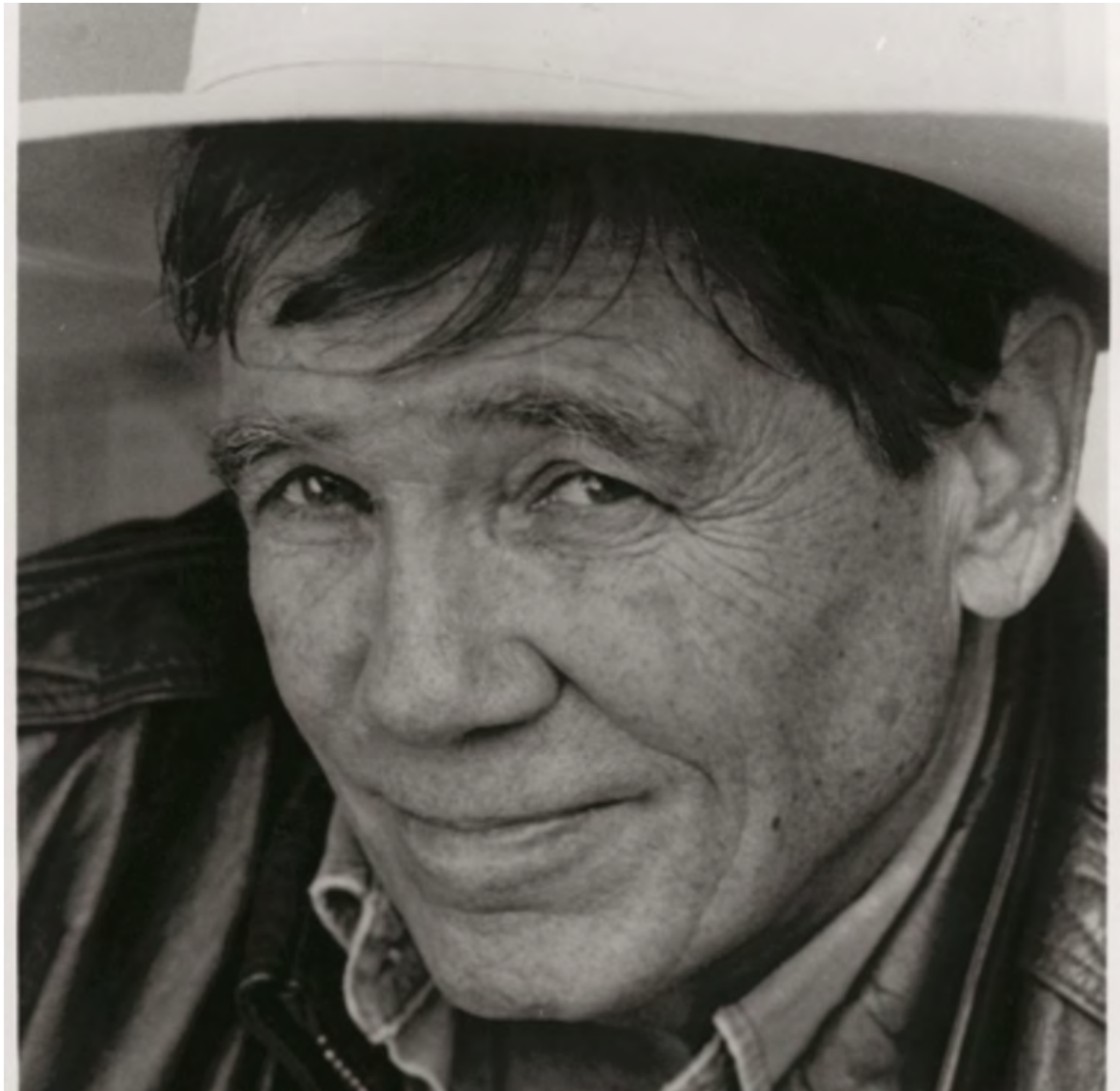
You can read James Owen's review of *Another Kind of Eden* by

clicking the link.

Meanwhile, below, James Lee Burke, in a piece specially written for Crime Club, explains the background to his latest work.

[Find out more >](#)

James Lee Burke on Another Kind of Eden



I began to write *Another Kind of Eden*, set in 1962, as a short story, then it grew into a novella and finally into a short novel, *writes James Lee Burke (pictured)*. Originally, I thought it would be a story about migrant farm workers, then realised it was a much larger account, one that leads us into the Cuban missile crisis, an event that remains arguably the most dangerous few days in history, although it is seldom mentioned today.

But the missiles of October are just part of the story. Those who remember the

1950s with fondness do so by disregarding the fact that the United States had become a neocolonial nation that was about to walk in the same sand as our French and British brethren, and in all probability undo ourselves in the same fashion. So I began to rewrite *Another Kind of Eden* and went back into the origins of American literature, namely, the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who understood well Puritan culture and its strengths and virtues as well as the social madness that caused them to slay the bravest and most Christian in their community.

The story I wrote deals with the class war, the coming of the drug culture, the echoes of the Korean War, the 1914 Ludlow Massacre of striking workers, and the rise of the corporations and their ability to destroy the family farm, poison the earth, and subsume the republic rather than struggle against it.

I do not think it is a shrill book, nor does it seek to politicise the reader. Instead, I think it is a grand story with characters who represent what is both best and worst in us. George Orwell said: "When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic." In these troubled times I have to remind myself of Orwell's faith in the indomitability of the human spirit. But I must also remind myself of our ongoing flirtation with the nativist [anti-immigration] movement. It's not an abstraction. It's out there, mean and benighted and hobnailed and cruel to the core, constantly looking for the leader who will provide permission to extinguish the lights of pity and mercy in the rest of us.

My main character in *Another Kind of Eden* is Aaron Holland Broussard, a protagonist whom we first meet in *The Jealous Kind* (2016), one of my three best books [*Hear! Hear!* Ed.]. The other two are *House of the Rising Sun* (2015) and *Wayfaring Stranger* (2014), all of which are about the Holland family.

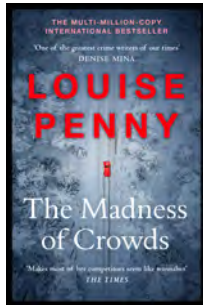
Aaron tells the reader that Hawthorne's ink runs through the words in *Another Kind of Eden*. I think he's right, but in a different way. This story is not about the past; it's about now; it's about us. All we have to do is look at the world around us. But recognition takes acuity and courage. Sometimes the image can cause a tuning fork to tremble in one's chest.

Competition 1

Five copies of *Another Kind of Eden* are up for grabs. Simply send the answer to the question below, with “Another Competition” in the subject line, to marketing@orionbooks.co.uk before 11.59pm on Monday August 23. The winners will be selected at random.

What is the title of James Lee Burke’s must-read Dave Robicheaux novel, published in 2007, set in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

Star pick 2



★ STAR PICK

The Madness of Crowds by Louise Penny

Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99

Chief Inspector Gamache investigates the attempted assassination of a controversial academic.

You can read my review of *The Madness of Crowds* by clicking the link.

Meanwhile, below, in a piece specially written for Crime Club, Louise Penny reveals how stupidity can be contagious.

[Find out more](#) >

Louise Penny on how stupidity is contagious



I've long been fascinated by examples of mass hysteria, *writes Louise Penny (pictured)*. Where it starts, how it starts. Not as a disinterested observer, but because I know I am as susceptible to idiocy as anyone. I can be persuaded to believe many things. Though there are limits, where common sense rebels and prevails. But what happens when it does not?

My interest starts at those limits, those lines. Where common sense fails, and a kind of madness takes over. How is it that friends, family, colleagues, people we'd consider rational, cross those lines? When they, in effect, lose their minds?

My title is taken from the Charles Mackay book published in 1841, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, in which Mackay documented mass follies such as the South Sea Bubble, Tulipmania, witch trials and hauntings. But there are also contemporary examples. Where people accept the inconceivable. Where they believe not just the extraordinary, but the dangerous. And then act on it, as though it was fact and not perception.

While I started out to document what happens when a respected scientist comes up with a theory that is rejected by her confreres yet slowly adopted by the population, I did not expect to also examine the pandemic. Writing about the pandemic while in the throes of it was the last thing I wanted to do. I suspected it was also the last thing anyone would want to read about.

It was only when I was halfway through the first draft that I saw the parallels. How

madness can be a virus, spreading from one person to another. Often in close quarters. It starts small, imperceptibly, and then bursts onto the scene.

The Madness of Crowds is set post-pandemic. It's over. Life has returned to "normal". The residents of Three Pines gather again in a reopened bistro. They have dinner at each other's homes. They hug.

But there are losses. And bruises. Wounds that will weep for a long time and perhaps never totally heal. There is joy. There is relief. But there is always memory.

Enter a senior statistician with a formula that will restore the economy, ensure proper health care, cover education, rebuild the infrastructure. It is a formula so radical, so abhorrent, that the government rejects it. But slowly, slowly, her theory gains acceptance with more and more citizens who are tired of being afraid and now want security. At any cost. As long as that cost is borne by others.

The novel is about choices. About the value of human life. About whether some lives are worth more than others. About the limits of scientific research. About how to stop a delusion. Something intangible. Unseen. Irrational, but very real and immensely powerful.

Chief Inspector Gamache of the Sûreté du Québec is tasked with protecting this scientist, who stands for everything he finds abhorrent. And whose theories, if adopted, threaten his own family.

The Madness of Crowds is about the courage to do what's right. But it's also about what happens when "right" is far from clear.

Image credit: Jean Francois Berube

Competition 2

Five copies of *The Madness of Crowds* by Louise Penny are up for grabs. Simply send the answer to the question below to themadnessofcrowds@hodder.co.uk before 11.59pm on Monday August 23.

What is Chief Inspector Gamache's first name?

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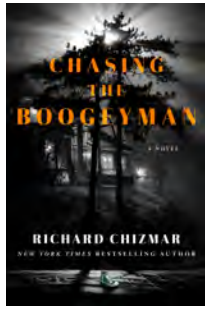
Ford Madox Ford, friend of Joseph Conrad, novelist and literary critic, said: “Open the book to page ninety-nine and read, and the quality of the whole will be revealed to you.” Arbitrary, perhaps, but surprisingly accurate. This week, a screenwriter vents his spleen in Alice Feeney’s *Rock Paper Scissors* (HQ, £8.99), which is published on Thursday.

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Actors and directors get all the glory in my business, and most of my career has been spent adapting other people’s novels, but those are *my* words that you hear when you watch a TV show or film that I worked on. *Mine*. I didn’t even read the book I was asked to adapt last year. I decided that — one way or another — the story that got made was going to belong to me. The producer on the show said she loved my version more than the novel and I was ecstatic. Briefly. But then she asked for changes because that’s what these people do. So I made them and gave in the next draft. Then the director asked for changes, because that’s what they do. Fast forward a few months and even one of the actors asked for changes, because of course *they* know the characters better than I do, even though they came from *my* head. So even though I swear my third or fourth draft was much better than their final version, I made the changes because if I hadn’t, I would have been fired, and some other schmuck would have replaced me. Because that’s how this business works.

My life feels the same as my work, with people always wanting to change me. It started with my mother. When my dad left, she worked double shifts at the hospital to raise me and keep a roof over our heads. We lived on the thirteenth floor of a block of flats on a South London council estate. We didn’t have much, but we always had enough. She used to tell me off for watching too much TV when she was working — and said my eyes would turn square — but there wasn’t much else to do that didn’t involve getting into trouble. She preferred to see me reading, so I did, and for my thirteenth birthday she gave me thirteen books. They were all special editions by authors I loved as a boy, and I still have them now, on a little shelf in the shed where I write. She wrote a note in a first edition of my favourite Stephen King novel: *Enjoy the stories of other people’s lives, but don’t forget to live your own.*

Picks of the week



Chasing the Boogeyman by Richard Chizmar

Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99

Part memoir, part gruesome true-crime investigation, this creepy yet captivating novel features college graduate Richard Chizmar, who returns to his home town in Maryland in 1988 where a serial killer is murdering teenage girls. A metafictional masterpiece.

Favourite line: “But mannequins didn’t bleed.”

[Find out more >](#)



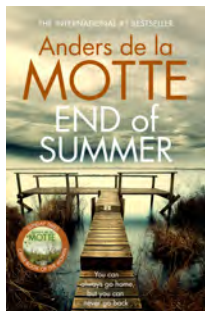
Velvet Was the Night by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

Jo Fletcher, £16.99

A secretary called Maite and a black ops agent called Elvis each search for a beautiful student who has gone missing, along with some incriminating photographs, in 1970s Mexico City. It slowly becomes apparent, as they encounter a gallery of oddball characters, that they also have something else in common.

Romantic, eccentric and violent, this is a perfect example of neo-noir. Favourite line: “He didn’t know what the words meant, but he knew what they sounded like: it was the sound of sadness.”

[Find out more >](#)



End of Summer by Anders de la Motte, translated by Marlainé Delargy

Zaffre, £8.99

A bereavement counsellor, haunted by the disappearance of her four-year-old brother in 1983, and prompted by a client’s memories of a missing boy, returns to her home town to investigate. Once again, de la Motte — Sweden’s most underrated crime writer — has created an absorbing and exciting mystery.

Favourite line: “A murderer can be a good friend.”

[Find out more >](#)

Downtime



An occasional series in which authors reveal what they like to do when not writing. This week, Megan Abbott, whose *The Turnout* (Virago, £14.99) has just been published, goes truffling for trash. You can read John Dugdale's review of *The Turnout* [here](#).

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It's my dirty secret. Well, not a secret. Anyone with access to Instagram can see it. I love taking pictures of trash. Not just any trash — interesting trash. Discarded things, lost things, things jettisoned from a passing car. On the sidewalk, an emptied bottle of Jägermeister ringleted by chicken bones from a takeout order of wings. On the subway platform, an abandoned pair of black velvet pumps. A forlorn Pink Panther stuffed toy, its legs twisted backwards. A mannequin dissembled into parts.

As I jog in the morning or walk in the evening, trying to solve plot problems, imagine new worlds for my novels, I'm on the lookout. My dad used to call these

jaunts “trash-or-treasure” hunts. Occasionally, I’ve brought one of my finds home. I have a painting on my wall — a vivid de Kooning-style abstract — salvaged from the junk heap, and a nearly full set of midcentury Russel Wright dinnerware.

But mostly I’m drawn to objects that seem to have imagined stories behind them. More than two years ago, when I was starting to write my new novel *The Turnout*, which is set in a ballet school, I came upon a tiny ballerina figurine, the kind you might see pirouetting inside a music box. She looked so forlorn, her feet snapped off, her skirt tattered. I didn’t take her with me and sometimes I wonder if I imagined her, importing her from my own childhood, staring dreamily at the one in my jewellery box.

Taking these pictures makes me look, think, dream. Sometimes it pays off, but it doesn’t really matter if it does. Trash or treasure, it’s all about the hunt, the wandering.

Paperback of the week



The Night Hawks by Elly Griffiths

Quercus, £8.99

Metal detectorists find something nasty in Norfolk. You can read my review of *The Night Hawks* by clicking the link below.

[Find out more >](#)

Competition 3

Ten copies of *The Night Hawks* by Elly Griffiths are up for grabs. Simply send the answer to the question below, with “Galloway’s Thirteenth” in the subject line, to Publicity@quercusbooks.co.uk before 11.59pm on Monday August 23.

In which play by Noël Coward does the following line appear: “Very flat, Norfolk”?

Last word