

The Stringer

Joshua Talley

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“What the hell kind of reporter are you?”¹

“Stringer, they call it. Paid by the story.”²

Jack McMorrow suffers. He suffers insults and beatings. And he suffers the truth. *The New York Times* metro reporter cum backwoods Carl Bernstein—as in the Pulitzer-winning Watergate reporter—can’t leave well enough alone.³ McMorrow’s driven. Driven to drink. And driven by the ethical journalist’s inability to abide a story that stinks.

Part working-class hero, part working-class stiff, the protagonist of Gerry Boyle’s eight-novel Jack McMorrow Mystery series embodies the archetypal ethical reporter, as defined by the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ). For all his foibles and occasional ethical lapses, McMorrow seeks truth and reports it, minimizes harm, acts independently, and embraces accountability.⁴

McMorrow also stomps a few corrupt toes in the process, as he notes.

Over the years, I’d gotten the late-night phone calls, the notes nailed to the door of the apartment. Bad grammar. Atrocious spelling. Threats of violence and a sad commentary on the state of public education. But even then, I’d had the protection of being one of millions. I could disappear into the crowd, hide behind the big security guards who stood in *The Times* lobby. In Androscoggin, [Maine,] there was no place to hide.⁵

Not for McMorrow nor for his fellow newsmen at the weekly *Review*, where the mysterious death of a third-rate photojournalist marks the beginning of *Deadline*, the first book in the series.

Readers meet McMorrow freshly humbled by his fall from grace. Or, at least, the journalistic good graces of a promising career that delivered him to “the newspaper of record.”⁶ And then to the brink of journalistic oblivion. “*Patriot Ledger* in Massachusetts. *The Providence Journal*. *The Hartford Courant*. *The [New York] Times*.

The Androscoggin Review. Not what you would call your typical career path,” McMorrow says.⁷

“Like going from the Yankees to Little League,” an ex-colleague observes.⁸

Or from *The Times* and all its implied journalistic clout to, “My name is McMorrow. Jack McMorrow. *Androscoggin Review*. Yeah, it’s a newspaper.”⁹

But the rawness of backwoods journalism oddly suits McMorrow, who cut his teeth at *The Times* as a dogged, dependable newsman with a taste for journalistic gristle. “I never had been very good at nice stories,” he says. “Not at *The Times*. Not at any of the other papers where I’d worked over the years. I’d been drawn to the stories that had a serrated edge, stories that tore away pretensions and comfortable misconceptions.”¹⁰

McMorrow not only puts Maine on the journalistic map, he does so with an eye for detail that accurately captures the essence of the northeastern frontier. A penchant that could have been culled directly from the SPJ code of ethics, which says, “Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so.”¹¹

Or as McMorrow explains to an up-and-coming journalist at *The Kennebec Observer*, “A good reporter doesn’t take anything at face value, especially the official word on anything. Your guiding principle should be that people often aren’t what they seem. When you try to tie them up in a neat little package, it’s usually not true. Life isn’t neat.”¹² Guided by this principle, McMorrow proved himself a stalwart metro reporter at *The Times*, “steady,” “reliable” and fair.¹³

But whenever he sought a plum international assignment, *The Times* overlooked McMorrow in favor of slicker, more sophisticated Columbia Graduate School of

Journalism alumni. As he confides to the reader, “Jack McMorrow asked for an assignment to London or Dublin or any place foreign and was turned down.”¹⁴

But foreign is a state of mind.

“Kathmandu,” ponders McMorrow. “Or... Maine.”¹⁵

So he struck out for Androscoggin and traded the relative anonymity of life at a journalistic juggernaut for an opportunity to edit the local rag of a paper mill town.

Or did he just strike out? “Was I kidding myself when I found this rewarding?” McMorrow asks. “Was I on some long downward slide? Was I some kind of washed up loser at thirty-five? Jack McMorrow. The small-town reporter, laboring away in the ragged nameless mountains of western Maine, typing in the night. Alone.”¹⁶

Now his own boss, McMorrow answers to nobody. Hell, he hardly even answers the phone at the *Review*, where the high school football team dominates the news. But when the prosperous local mill pleads poverty and threatens to move out of state if the town doesn't agree to lower its taxes, McMorrow smells a rat. And when a fellow photojournalist winds up floating in a river by the mill, the cliché about old habits proves true.

“If you don't know something, you have to find out,” a police officer tells McMorrow in *Borderline*. “You're just one of those curious types. Some people are and some people aren't. Probably what made you get into being a reporter.”¹⁷

McMorrow brings to Maine both his trademark curiosity and a nose for news honed on the streets of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. And the nagging conscience of a man who embodies the SPJ creed, which states, “Journalists should be honest, fair and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.”¹⁸ And

in McMorrow's case, unflappable. "I couldn't back off on this story or any other," he says. "The editorial on Arthur wasn't going to win me many friends, either, but it was true. I couldn't start telling lies, even if they were lies of omission."¹⁹

So Jack McMorrow starts doing what he does best, the only thing he really knows how to do, work a story. And what he lacks in panache, he more than compensates for with persistence and singularity of purpose. McMorrow later explains in *Potshot*, in which he investigates the unexplained disappearance of an advocate for decriminalizing marijuana, "I write stories in the newspaper.... it's what I do."²⁰ This no-frills, no-nonsense approach made him a steady and true Manhattan metro reporter.

It also makes him a true journalistic oddity in backwoods Maine, where McMorrow proves himself part journalistic underdog, part corporate and governmental watchdog—and one hundred percent tenacious son of a bitch, when he's tailing a good story. "I'd spent weeks poring over people's expense vouchers and canceled checks to find payoffs and kickbacks," he says.²¹

When McMorrow's not sweating the details of an elaborate story, he sweats sources. From Androscoggin to Augusta, from Bangor to Boston, McMorrow refuses to let a little pavement, or millions of acres of virgin wilderness, stand between him and a lead. "I can see you're part bulldog," socialite David Connelly says in *Pretty Dead*.²² Or as McMorrow says of himself in *Borderline*, "If a story called for pursuit, leaping from lead to lead, I was a relentless hound."²³ With a rough-and-tumble, dyed-in-the-wool newsman's taste for truth and justice.

So McMorrow's journalistic hackles bristle at the outset of *Deadline*, when the Androscoggin daily, *The Sun*, devotes cursory coverage to his colleague's untimely

death. “It was boilerplate,” he says. “What *The Times* did when somebody without notoriety or celebrity was killed.... In New York, you couldn’t keep up. You couldn’t keep track. After a while you barely could care,²⁴ but in Androscoggin, we didn’t have that excuse.”²⁵ Regardless, McMorrow doesn’t make excuses.

He makes the news. “I could leave it alone, too,” McMorrow says. “A couple of routine stories from official sources and the case would disappear from the news pages and end up in a file in our morgue.... Or maybe we’d keep pushing for a little while. Maybe something would break. Arthur deserved that much.”²⁶ Not because he was a good journalist. McMorrow professionally rates Arthur Bertin mediocre, at best. But Bertin was a man, and professional journalists “treat sources, subjects and colleagues as human beings deserving of respect.”²⁷

In pursuit of the truth, outsider McMorrow takes on the big fish in the small pond that is Androscoggin. The ensuing investigation of Arthur’s death marks the beginning of McMorrow’s fictional existence and his and the reader’s introduction to the trials of backwoods investigative journalism. With McMorrow their prime advocate, truth and justice prevail.

As a reporter and as an occasional editor, McMorrow proves himself a “Renaissance man of Maine newspapers,” a working-class cog in a relentless machine every bit as demanding as its urban counterparts.²⁸ He says, “*The Review* was like a train that always left on time and we were the crew, stoking its fire, taking the tickets, cleaning the bathrooms and trying to keep it on schedule and on the track. The same was true for any newspaper, but sometimes this one seemed even more demanding, maybe because

there was no other crew to take over.”²⁹ But McMorrow doesn’t just fancy himself a laborer. He gets his hands dirty, proving himself adept at all aspects of news production.

We hunched over the pages with razor knives and moved columns of copy around the pages, slicing stories into blocks and sticking borders on with narrow black tape.... There were a million and one mistakes that could be made, and we’d made most of them.... But that day, it went pretty smoothly.... We slammed the thing home in near record time.³⁰

A true devotee of journalism, McMorrow does anything and everything necessary to deliver the news.

McMorrow also illuminates the relationship between the journalist and his journal. “Like a lot of people,... [the medical examiner] probably thought bigger was better when it came to newspapers,” he says. “Sometimes that was true. Sometimes it wasn’t.”³¹ Throughout the McMorrow Mystery series, characters judge journalists by the paper they serve, bigger being better. McMorrow addresses circulation envy in *Lifeline*, the third book in the series.

“What’s your circulation?” [McMorrow asked].

“About nine thousand. Stays pretty steady. Six days a week, except for Christmas.”

Nine thousand. I could just hear what my former [*Times*] colleagues would say about that. “You shouldn’t deliver those papers. You should number them and sell them as a limited edition.”³²

Fresh from *The Times*, McMorrow confronts the folly of the bigger-is-better mindset in *Bloodline*, the second novel in the series.

There was a funny thing about small-town reporting. It was hard. In the city, you had hundreds and thousands of people to pick from.... They might tell you to drop dead, or some raunchier equivalent, but at least that was the beginning of a dialogue. In the closed world of small-town Maine, a stranger was an event, an aberration from routine, something inherently suspect. A stranger asking questions was more suspicious still.³³

Reluctant sources and subjects loom over McMorrow’s reporting from Staten Island to Scanesett, often more so the farther he gets from civilization.

[McMorrow tells a potential source,] “I’m not a cop.”
 “What are you, then?”
 “A reporter.”
 “Christ,” the woman said, and slammed the door shut.³⁴

From Manhattan to Maine, McMorrow demonstrates that great reporting requires diligence and, well, balls. “All those years in New York City, I never got a scratch. One day on the job in Kennebec, and some drunken, coked-out redneck said he was going to kill me.... You could cover the drug trade for *The Miami Herald* and sleep better.”³⁵ Big-city rag cache and impressive circulation numbers may make the job easier, but they’re no substitute for courage, especially in the backwoods. And McMorrow displays as much moxie in dealing with faint-hearted editors as he does in dealing with reluctant sources.

Conventional wisdom relegated McMorrow to the journalistic ash heap when he refused to subjugate his reporter’s instinct and commitment to justice to the interests of *The Times*. His run-in with his ex-editor lives on in *Times* lore. “What was it you called him?” an old colleague remembers. “A sycophant to celebrities? A Ken doll of a journalist? If I’d been suicidal, I would have applauded.”³⁶ He didn’t. And despite the defenses of another devoted editor, McMorrow’s scorched earth approach proved temporarily insurmountable.

But McMorrow defies conventional wisdom. And ash becomes him. From one freelance story to the next, McMorrow proves a journalistic phoenix ripe for rising.

And time vindicates McMorrow. He later learns in *Cover Story*, the sixth novel in the series, that his *Times* “nemesis had retired to devote himself to writing an editorial-page column and going to parties with rich people.”³⁷ So it’s only a matter of time,

measured in novels, before *The Gray Lady* comes calling, looking to reconcile with her prodigal son of sorts.

Whether reporting from outside the journalistic fold or from above the front-page fold of *The New York Times*, Jack McMorrow transcends his ethical reporter status. As the protagonist of a series of mystery novels, he leads a dual existence. Author and onetime reporter Gerry Boyle says, “I’ve always thought of journalists as the ultimate detectives.” And, he adds, “McMorrow as the quintessential reporter/investigator.”³⁸ At times he seems so much an old-school detective that one wonders if McMorrow doesn’t long to be one. “I’d known reporters who were real wimps who were fascinated by the cop beat,” he says, “sports writers who were uncoordinated kids. We all live vicariously, some more than others.”³⁹

“Playing cop or what?” asks Lieutenant Vigue in *Deadline*.

“Somebody’s got to do it,” says McMorrow.⁴⁰

So McMorrow proves as much a private detective as a journalist. With one clear distinction. As McMorrow says, “I keep it [the story] in the public eye.... I keep asking questions because somebody wants me to stop.”⁴¹ Despite his journalistic bent, McMorrow seems right at home in the mystery aisle, the rare public eye in a genre crawling with private eyes. The glasses fit.

Boyle draws on old-school images of the hard-boiled private investigator to create his first-person protagonist. “I read all the Marlowe novels,” Boyle says, “and liked them for their sparseness.”⁴² And mystery aficionados will immediately recognize Raymond Chandler’s influence in Boyle’s often staccato prose. “The computer whirred, the tape hissed and Roxanne told me she loved me. Life was good. Almost.”⁴³ McMorrow’s

hard-boiled, throwaway wisdom also betrays Chandler's influence. "There was no such thing as an ex-Marine," McMorrow says.⁴⁴ He even exudes Philip Marlowe's independence and cool ability to take a beating in pursuit of the truth, as a conversation from *Bloodline* demonstrates.

[Mariel Putnam asks,] "Are you a detective? Did you get beat up arresting some criminal?..."

"Nope."

"So what are you?"

"I'm a reporter."

"For what paper?"

"No paper. For myself."⁴⁵

McMorrow doesn't just take beatings in pursuit of truth.

"I just hit him,..." [McMorrow said].

[Officer] Bell looked at me.

"I didn't know reporters did that," she said.

"It's the exception, not the rule."⁴⁶

The hard-boiled fictional influences don't end with Marlowe.

"I am more fond of Travis McGee," Boyle says, referring to the protagonist of twenty-one John D. McDonald mysteries.⁴⁷

But who is McGee?

Renowned noir crime novelist George Pelecanos offers a description of Travis

McGee that reads like a blueprint for McMorrow.

Commercially speaking, there has never been a smarter creation than Travis McGee. He is the embodiment of male wish-fulfillment. No nine-to-five job, lives by his own set of rules, resides on a houseboat, drinks but is not a drunk, tall, handsome, good with his fists but not a bully, etc.... So McGee is the man we—okay, most of us—would like to see when we look in the mirror.⁴⁸

Substitute the backwoods for the houseboat, and Pelecanos could be describing

McMorrow.

Beyond the shared Irish heritage of the two protagonists, Boyle also sees McGee as a direct inspiration for McMorrow “because [of John D.] McDonald’s use of him for social commentary.”⁴⁹ In *Deadline*, Boyle pays direct homage to McDonald when McMorrow narrates his idyllic fantasy of backwoods life. “I’d run on country roads in the fall, ski alone for days in the White Mountains. Get home and have a fire in the fireplace. Read John D. McDonald and listen to Django Reinhardt. Drink good beer before, during and after all of the above.”⁵⁰

But Boyle pays greater homage to McGee through McMorrow’s criticism of the journalism industry in *Home Body*, the eighth book in the series.

[McMorrow says,] “I’ve always hated that trailer-trash label.” It implies some sort of phony class superiority.... You always have to wonder about people who feel a need to draw class lines like that. I’ve always figured it comes from raging insecurity or fear.... I think some people need to constantly prop themselves up. Inside they’re afraid that they’re losers, so they reassure themselves by making somebody else inferior.⁵¹

Not McMorrow. He often takes inventory of his professional descent and questions his own worth, but he never judges others based on the circumstances of their lives.

McMorrow also acknowledges the common perceptions of the reporter as, at best, a voyeur and, at worst, as a self-serving parasite feeding on the misfortunes of the innocent.

They weren’t interested in people.... The other reporters, I mean. They used them like puzzle pieces.... like these people’s lives were some sort of fill-in-the-blanks test.... It was... cold.... Calloused. They seemed to care. They could act like they cared. But they’d knock off that story about the six-year-old boy who got shot in the drive-by, and it would be a great story, and they’d file it, and a minute later they’d be joking around.⁵²

But McMorrow rises above the scrum, elevating the image of the journalist with each and every story he painstakingly investigates and reports. As Maddie Connelly, the *Pretty Dead* socialite with a history of being hounded by the press, says, “When you look

at your stories as a body of work, you're not like other reporters.... [You're] uncompromising.... And unrelenting."⁵³

In McMorrow, Boyle creates a Clark Kent not only for the working class but for every class, a journalist that common men can relate to and common women can fantasize about. Unlike Clark Kent's high-flying alter ego, Jack McMorrow flies by the seat of his pants, exposing injustice and untruths through sheer journalistic mettle and integrity. As one of his old friends from *The Times* says, "Jack always goes the extra mile."⁵⁴

And Boyle endows his hero with interests that transcend discernible social classes. McMorrow's a graduate of New York University and the mean streets of Manhattan. He listens to Dave Brubeck and Bill Evans. He reads F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and John D. McDonald. He cooks brown rice and stir-fried vegetables. He enjoys birdwatching and Sam Smith's Nut Ale. His *New York Times* credentials imply big-city sophistication, but he lives in a dilapidated cabin overrun by bats. He calls on criminals and cops in his old, beat-up Toyota pickup—with a gun rack in the cab and bullet holes in the bed. And McMorrow deftly transcends social strata in pursuit of a story, comfortably socializing with street kids in *Home Body* and with New England's elite in *Pretty Dead*.

But Boyle goes out of his way to mold McMorrow as an advocate of working-class values with workaday concerns. "Every day that I spent on this story reduced my take," McMorrow says. "A thousand dollars for fifteen hundred words was sixty-seven cents a word. But about now, it was also sixty-seven cents an hour. And dwindling."⁵⁵

McMorrow's name and actions mark him as a hardscrabble Irishman. He holds his own in fights with thugs and lives from one modest paycheck to the next. His income flows from hand to mouth, usually in the form of Ballantine beer. And as long as he can work, he doesn't let his humble existence get him down.

Why worry about the path that had taken me, at the age of thirty-eight, from a job as a reporter at the best newspaper in the country—kiss my ass, *Washington Post*—to a home-built bat-trap of a house on a dirt road in the backwoods of Maine?... And why get involved in a free-lance deal with Dave Slocum?... “Because he called,” I said aloud, shrugging to myself. “And three thousand bucks is a lot of beer.”⁵⁶

When McMorrow compares his day-to-day life in the backwoods with his previous big-city existence, his affinity for the slow-lane shines through.

I had my good friend Clair and a new chain saw. I had a hideaway in the hills of Waldo County, Maine. I had built my own house, sort of, and could shoot a rifle straighter than most. I could write the same stories but in small towns instead of big housing projects. I knew the woods and the birds. I read my books, listened to my music.... On top of all that, I had Roxanne.⁵⁷

What McMorrow lacks in material wealth, he more than compensates for with integrity and masculinity. He collects a paycheck, but he's not paid enough to be owned by his employers. McMorrow works for himself and exudes independence. Aside from brief stints at a couple of Maine newspapers, he freelances. “I bowed to no one,” McMorrow says, “played nobody's game.”⁵⁸ Not even Roxanne's.

McMorrow makes his love for Roxanne Masterson well known throughout the series, but he refuses to let his feelings and affection for her come between him and his calling as a journalist. And she notices. “You're thinking of yourself or your paper or something, but you're not thinking of me,” she tells him in *Deadline*.⁵⁹ Despite her

repeated protests and occasional bewilderment with McMorrow's dedication to journalism, Roxanne accepts him. She even loves him more for his devotion to truth and justice, perhaps because she's just as dedicated to her equally important, unglamorous job with Maine's child protective services.

Roxanne's character proves as uncompromising as McMorrow's. "She didn't pattern herself after some abstraction of the ideal woman," McMorrow says. "Roxanne was the way she was. If you didn't like it that was tough."⁶⁰ Her reverence of integrity explains why Roxanne can't quite let go of McMorrow despite the upheaval and drama that seems to follow him wherever he goes. Designed to be a harsher critic than the average reader, Roxanne serves as a touchstone for judging McMorrow's character and actions. As long as she never finds him wanting enough to give up on him or on their relationship, the reader knows it's safe to continue believing in McMorrow, no matter how far he pushes the boundaries of ethical journalism in pursuit of truth and justice.

Roxanne represents a mother archetype. She has no children of her own, but she clearly wants them and even spends most of *Pretty Dead* and *Home Body* pregnant with McMorrow's child. Her job also adds to her maternal status. Being a professional protector, Roxanne constantly questions McMorrow's willingness to place himself in harm's way in pursuit of stories that she judges unworthy of the risks they entail. When stories get too messy, she usually retreats. But she always comes back. As long as she does, she vindicates McMorrow's journalistic instincts and actions.

"Roxanne's touch was like absolution," he says.⁶¹

When McMorrow's not working a story, drinking beer or romancing Roxanne, he undertakes masculine pursuits with his friend and neighbor Clair Varney, an ex-Marine

and Vietnam vet. Varney takes McMorrow under his wing and educates him about life in the woods. He even teaches city-slicker McMorrow to chop wood and shoot a gun, both invaluable backwoods skills. “Wednesdays and Fridays were my days to work out,” McMorrow says. “The rifle went in the gun rack, the cartridges in the glove box.... Clair and I called it hardwood aerobics.”⁶²

In contrast to Roxanne, Clair Varney provides a benevolent father archetype and another measure of McMorrow’s character. As McMorrow’s *ex-New York Times* editor tells him, “Clair helps define you for the reader.”⁶³ And Varney can always be counted on to tell it straight. When McMorrow drinks too much, Varney tells him. Varney also keeps McMorrow from becoming overly idealistic. A backwoods neophyte, McMorrow occasionally misses the forest for the trees. And Varney can always be relied on to remind him of the natural, often primitive laws that govern small-town Maine. “Jack, I’ve done things in my life I never wanted to do, but ‘none of the above’ wasn’t an option at the time. You consider the options you have and you choose the best one. That’s what you’ve done.”⁶⁴ Like Roxanne, Varney absolves McMorrow when he ventures into morally and ethically ambiguous territory. Further, Varney’s masculine influence balances the softer, more tender aspects of McMorrow’s character evoked by his intimate relationship with Roxanne.

These associations humanize McMorrow, who otherwise might fail to transcend his status as a reporter. But Boyle constructs a thin veil. Aside from his past at *The Times*, Boyle largely ignores McMorrow’s pre-journalism existence, except when it plays an integral role in a story he’s working.

For example, McMorrow's association with ex-NYPD detective Butch Casey doesn't arise until *Cover Story*, the sixth novel in the series. As Boyle discloses the details of the lifelong friendship the two characters share, it further illuminates McMorrow's character. Boyle describes Butch Casey, another Irishman, as McMorrow's kindred spirit. "Jack was Tom; Butch was Huck."⁶⁵ McMorrow became a journalist. Casey became a detective. But they share a common interest in advocating truth and justice. "It was our common ground, all those years," McMorrow says. "I listened to people and wrote their stories. Butch studied their aberrations and put them in jail. We compared notes, swapped tales. Butch envied my ability to put life into words; I envied his opportunity to see so much firsthand. Neither of us lost our sense of wonder at what people did and why."⁶⁶

It also comes out in *Cover Story* that McMorrow left *The Times* in part over a conflict with an editor about McMorrow's coverage of Casey's wife's murder. Unconvinced by police reports that attributed the crime to random street violence, McMorrow pushed his coverage beyond the pale. He recalls:

My nemesis editor at *The Times* said my pursuit of that story was overzealous, that I was a talented reporter and a good writer, but I had turned the Butch Casey story into a cause.

"*The Times* does not tolerate that," he said. "No credible paper does."

"Screw you, you pompous ass," I said.⁶⁷

Asked to lay off or else, McMorrow refused and quit his job. Rather than besmirch his character as a journalist, this revelation enhances his integrity. Not only did he refuse to sacrifice his journalistic pursuit of truth and justice, he did so in defiance of the demands of the newspaper of record and at the cost of his career with *The Times*. Even better, he did so out of loyalty to a friend with a similar commitment to truth and

justice. And when McMorrow revisits the case in *Cover Story*, he vindicates himself and incriminates a beloved but corrupt New York City mayor on the front page of *The Times*. Even then, McMorrow doesn't write the story. That would be unethical, he says, since he plays a major role in it. Besides, he has served truth and justice regardless of who gets the byline. And when the truth comes out, Casey pays McMorrow the ultimate compliment, from one investigator to another. "I didn't know anybody else who could do the reporting part," Casey says. "I knew they couldn't just blow you off."⁶⁸ Not the mayor's office. Not *The Times*. Not thugs. When it comes to truth and justice, nothing stands between McMorrow and his pursuit of the truth.

An investigative reporter first and foremost, McMorrow lives for the story. And his arrival at the truth trumps all his personal flaws as well as any ethical lapses he commits in pursuit of truth and justice. Roxanne and Varney embody authenticity, honor and good intentions. As long as they continue to believe in Jack, the reader knows that McMorrow hasn't strayed too far from the core integrity readers expect good men, and good journalists, to display.

In fact, McMorrow reads like Boyle's fantasy alter ego, a small-town journalist who works sensational stories, leads a life of adventure and gets laid, both as a result of and in spite of his job. "McMorrow is the reporter I'd like to be, [that] most reporters would like to be," Boyle says. "[He] gives no quarter in his pursuit of the truth."⁶⁹

Eight novels and eleven years after his 1993 introduction, Jack McMorrow has become a franchise, with a movie version of *Potshot* on the way. Not bad for a down-and-out reporter who lives in a humble cabin on Dump Road in ironically named

Prosperity, Maine, and has little to offer readers but the stories he sniffs out with his bloodhound's nose for news.

For all the travails he endures in pursuit of the truth, Jack McMorrow offers readers a hopeful, enthusiastic endorsement of his career choice.

“Damn,... I loved journalism,” he says.⁷⁰

And mystery aficionados will be hard-pressed not to fall for Jack McMorrow.

A note on journalism in the Jack McMorrow Mystery series

In 1993, Gerry Boyle penned *Deadline*. And Jack McMorrow was born. Boyle has since written *Bloodline*, *Lifeline*, *Potshot*, *Borderline*, *Cover Story*, *Pretty Dead* and *Home Body*, in that order. And Boyle is currently writing the screenplay for *Potshot*, which will be filmed on location in Maine. From beginning to end, journalism pervades every novel in the Jack McMorrow Mystery series. A collection of passages referring to journalism follows. It contains references to the industry itself as well as to Jack McMorrow's character, both as a man and as a journalist. The list also contains insight into other characters in the series, whose relationships with McMorrow shed further light on his character. This list is by no means complete. But it's a beginning.

Deadline Berkley Prime Crime edition. March 1995

- Pg. 13. Vern: *Androscoggin Review*. "None of this *New York Times* shit. You big boys were sending people to El Salvador, I was hitching a ride on the JV bus."
- Pg. 16. It was boilerplate. What *The Times* did when somebody without notoriety or celebrity was killed. The drug runner from the Dominican Republic. The kid from the project in Brooklyn. The Russian from Brighton Beach. In New York, you couldn't keep up. You couldn't keep track. After a while you barely could care but in *Androscoggin*, we didn't have that excuse.
- Pg. 18. Martin Wiggins, the retired editor, probably wishing he was back at the big desk, feeling the adrenaline run, that pumped-up, surging feeling you get when you have a big breaking story.
- Pg. 21. "My name is McMorrow. Jack McMorrow. *Androscoggin Review*. Yeah, it's a newspaper."
- Pg. 22. I was used to working in terms of hours, not days. Forty lines by 8:00 P.M., make the upcountry editions. Make some more calls, update it for suburban, make the 1:00 A.M. deadline for metro. That was the routine at *The Times*. *The Quincy Patriot Ledger* in Massachusetts. *The Providence Journal*. *The Hartford Courant*. *The Times*. *The Androscoggin Review*.
- Not what you would call your typical career path. And part of me still wondered if I'd done the right thing, stepping out by the side of the tracks and letting the express roar off on its way.
- Pg. 29. How did I know that somebody almost broke into Arthur's? Because I more or less broke in myself. When I got back to the paper, I felt myself almost slink through the door. For somebody who prided himself on his basic honesty, it wasn't a comfortable feeling.
- Pg. 31. In years past, *The Review* would have come out with some boot-licking editorial about the company's contribution to the community, about the need to cooperate with the town's biggest employer. Instead, I made a few phone calls.
- Pg. 33. "Jack, you are one cynical newsman," Curry said.
- Pg. 34. "Damn," I thought. "I loved journalism."

- Pg. 35. I was something called a metro reporter there, I told them. I covered police stuff, which there was a lot of in New York. After that, I wrote about borough politics.
- Pg. 37. I left because I wasn't the best. I could tell him that. I could tell him about the younger reporters getting the choice stuff, the investigative stuff, the foreign stuff, the bureau chief jobs. But I didn't.
- "No, I'm not married. Never have been."
- Pg. 38. Re: Roxanne: "I could still see that look she gave me as we met, a look that went right through me, warm and open, as if she'd known me for years, as if she knew everything about me."
- Pg. 39. Like a lot of people, Ritano probably thought bigger was better when it came to newspapers. Sometimes that was true. Sometimes it wasn't.
- Pg. 42. I could leave it alone, too. A couple of routine stories from official sources and the case would disappear from the news pages and end up in a file in our morgue. We'd get on to more pressing issues, like the cost of the town's new backhoe or the building of the new animal shelter. Maybe a nice photo of the town council at the ground-breaking...
- Or maybe we'd keep pushing for a little while. Maybe something would break. Arthur deserved that much. For us to give his death a little bit of a whirl.
- Pg. 49. The night started to take shape a couple of blocks from the house. I'd cook brown rice and stir-fry some vegetables, watch the national news, Peter Jennings, and listen to Dave Brubeck or Bill Evans. And I'd drink a couple of beers. Maybe I'd drink all the beers.
- Pg. 57. Over the years, I'd gotten the late-night phone calls, the notes nailed to the door of the apartment. Bad grammar. Atrocious spelling. Threats of violence and a sad commentary on the state of public education. But even then, I'd had the protection of being one of millions. I could disappear into the crowd, hide behind the big security guards who stood in *The Times* lobby. In Androscoggin, there was no place to hide.
- Pg. 64. "Playing cop or what?"
"Somebody's got to do it."
- Pg. 66. I'd known reporters who were real wimps who were fascinated by the cop beat, sports writers who were uncoordinated kids. We all live vicariously, some more than others..
- Pg. 66-67. Never look a gift fantasy in the mouth.
So what was mine? To be a great reporter and win a Pulitzer? From Androscoggin, Maine, even I couldn't keep that dream going. To go back to New York and save somebody from a mugging in the subway or someplace? Write a book that would put me on the cover of *The New York Times* Book Review? Marry Roxanne, build a log cabin in the woods and live happily ever after, still having great sex at seventy?
Roxanne could be part of it but not all of it. I'd run on country roads in the fall, ski alone for days in the White Mountains. Get home and have a fire in the fireplace. Read John D. McDonald and listen to Django Reinhardt. Drink good beer before, during and after all of the above.
- Pg. 71. Vigue: "Listen, Sam friggin' Spade. This is what I'm gonna tell you. This is for the record."

- Pg. 80. Oh, how I hated this feeling. I hated the questions that I couldn't drive away when I felt like this. Was this it? Was I kidding myself when I found this rewarding? Was I on some long downward slide? Was I some kind of washed up loser at thirty-five? Jack McMorrow. The small-town reporter, laboring away in the ragged nameless mountains of western Maine, typing in the night. Alone.
- Pg. 83. It took all day. We stood over light tables, the wooden benches with slanted opaque plastic tops over fluorescent bulbs. Our computer discs were popped into a terminal like the one in the *Review* office and for nearly an hour, the pieces of the newspaper—news, sports, ad copy, classified ads—spewed from the typesetter in the next room. We hunched over the pages with razor knives and moved columns of copy around the pages, slicing stories into blocks and sticking borders on with narrow black tape. It was a funny process, primitive and painstaking all at once. There were a million and one mistakes that could be made and we'd made most of them, hacks at a craft that people honed over decades. But that day, it went pretty smoothly.... We slammed the thing home in near record time.
- Pg. 85. I tried to grasp something from it all, something I could take as fact, true irrefutable fact, and build on.
- I'd won awards for investigative reporting. I'd spent weeks poring over people's expense vouchers and canceled checks to find payoffs and kickbacks. How complicated could this be?
- Pg. 99. Roxanne: "You're not a cop. You forget that sometimes, I think."
 "No, I don't."
 "Yes, you do. Sometimes."
 No, I don't, I said to myself.
 "Sometimes," Roxanne said. She dried her hands on a dish towel and came back to the table. I pushed my chair back and she leaned on my lap and put her arms around me.
- She knows him so well that she knows his thoughts.
- Pg. 111. I stood and looked, leaning on the window sill, my face near the cold glass, and wondered what the hell I was doing here. It was a feeling I had gotten only once or twice before, on bad days when I was lonely. I knew more people now. I had taken a lover, taken her just that morning. But I still felt alone. And worse than that, deep down, when everything stopped and I wasn't working or talking or drinking, I felt afraid. Staring, I tried to shake it off. It had been a lousy week. The apartment. The fight. Arthur. Only a numb fool could be unconcerned, right? But then the feeling crept back, the one that was worse than the fear itself. It was the realization that it was the same feeling I'd had in the city. The feeling I got when I saw the younger reporters passing me on their way to the far reaches of East Brooklyn and the Bronx. The same fear that had brought me to this town, where I talked to school kids and told them that I had just needed a change. The fear that I'd made some giant, irreversible mistake.
- Pg. 112-113 Vigue on being a cop, but could be on Jack: "'What do you do?' 'I chase shitheads around and every once in awhile, one of them tries to take my head off.' 'Oh, how nice....'
 "And these guys," he said. "Only two words you need to know. No and comment. Don't turn your back. They'll whack you good."
- Pg. 117. Any reporter knows that sometimes you filled the gaps in a conversation and sometimes you just waited while the person squirmed, searching for an out.

- Pg. 122. Re: Sulzbergers: Vern refers to "Saltzbergers."
- Pg. 126. That left me, the Renaissance man of Maine newspapers.
- Pg. 160. I did have work to do, which said something about the relentlessness of this little paper. It didn't stop for my problems.... The review was like a train that always left on time and we were the crew, stoking its fire, taking the tickets, cleaning the bathrooms and trying to keep it on schedule and on the track. The same was true for any newspaper, but sometimes this one seemed even more demanding, maybe because there was no other crew to take over.... Jack McMorrow, the great rationalizer. The man of a million excuses, the answer to every ethical question. Like most news people, I did not apply the same standards to my coverage and to myself.
- Pg. 162. Androscoggin was different. The numbness that comes from anonymity had not found its way here.... It wasn't right and the newspaper was the only institution in this town that would do anything about it. And the newspaper was me.... I was the paper. I was the whole thing. The entire paper was my opinion column and this column was not going to be well-received.
- Pg. 167. I told him all the facts should be brought out, then the town could decide whatever the hell they wanted to decide.
- Pg. 177. I couldn't leave. It was that simple. I couldn't back off on this story or any other. The editorial on Arthur wasn't going to win me many friends, either, but it was true. I couldn't start telling lies, even if they were lies of omission.
- Pg. 217-218. Vigue: "You just have to write your stories. Must be nice."
No, it wasn't nice, not when you had to take all this insane stuff and then you had to come back and write some news stories. Not when you spent half the day being kicked around and screamed at and beaten up and then you had to come back and fill the paper. Then it was not nice at all. Then it was so far from nice that I didn't want to think about it.
- Pg. 231. Roxanne: "Well, I hope you're having fun playing detective but I'm not. I feel like I'm in danger. I do, Jack. I feel like I'm in danger and you don't care. You're thinking of yourself or your paper or something but you're not thinking of me."
- Pg. 262. "You're such a tough old big-city newsman, you wouldn't take any of the outs I gave you."

Bloodline Berkley Prime Crime edition. March 1996.

- Pg. 1. Bats in his bedroom.
- Pg. 3. Dave Slocum: "The same old Jack McMorrow. I gotta tell you, buddy. When you left *The Times* it created a terrible void.... A black hole right over the metro desk. They still talk about you."

"Leaving for a weekly in some hick town in Maine? I mean, that was like going from the Yankees to Little League."
"It wasn't that much different," I said. "Just smaller."

- Pg. 5. Why worry about the path that had taken me, at the age of thirty-eight, from a job as a reporter at the best newspaper in the country—kiss my ass, *Washington Post*—to a home-built bat-trap of a house on a dirt road in the backwoods of Maine?... And why get involved in a free-lance deal with Dave Slocum?... “Because he called,” I said aloud, shrugging to myself. “And three thousand bucks is a lot of beer.”
- Pg. 25. There was a funny thing about small-town reporting. It was hard. In the city, you had hundreds and thousands of people to pick from. They stood in bunches on street corners, in subway lines, gathered by fountains in shopping malls. City people were accustomed to strangers, so they didn’t spook easily. They might tell you to drop dead, or some raunchier equivalent, but at least that was the beginning of a dialogue. In the closed world of small-town Maine, a stranger was an event, an aberration from routine, something inherently suspect. A stranger asking questions was more suspicious still.
- Pg. 56-58. Kenny: “I think you smell like a cop,” he said....
“I don’t know what to tell you. I’m not a cop. I’m just a newspaper reporter. Come over some time and I’ll show you my clippings.”
- Pg. 98. Why he left *The Review*: “Well, first of all, things went to hell in Androscoggin. The scum-sucking bottom-feeder who bought the paper wanted a shopper kind of thing. You know. All ads. Some canned feature crap. It wasn’t for me, and besides, working there was pretty tough after everything that happened.... Hard to report the news when you are the news. So I had a friend in New York who knew the woman looking for somebody to live here and I needed a place to live. And some peace and quiet.”
- Pg. 99. “I am what I seem. Really, I am. A newspaper guy who took a detour. The only drugs I do come in sixteen-ounce cans.”
- Pg. 101. “It really wasn’t any different. It was just that I didn’t have *The Times* and all its assumptions to fall back on. When you were there or anyplace like it, you were part of a bigger picture, a massive machine. You didn’t doubt yourself because, after all, you worked for the best newspaper in the world.... *The Times* was the longest-running show in the world.”
- Pg. 127 “What are you? A private detective?”
“No,” I said. “Not exactly.”
- Pg. 131. “For a reporter, you lead sort of an exciting life, don’t you think?”
- Pg. 190. “We ain’t detectives. Or what is it—investigative reporters?”
- Pg. 194. “Hi,” I said. “This is Scott Fitzgerald with the Providence Home Improvement company.”
[When McMorrow does lie about identity, he does so in a way that’s so blatant, you forgive him for it.]
- Pg. 213. If the crew on the metro desk could only see me now. But then everybody has said freelancing was a rough business.
- Pg. 220. In Prosperity, Maine, this hideaway in a forgotten county, I lived under my own name with an assumed life. It was a retreat in more ways than one, a sabbatical that found me either in the woods, prowling the ridges and bogs alone, or plunked in a chair with a good book on my lap and a beer in my hand. And a pile of empties beside me.

- Pg. 233. “Are you a detective? Did you get beat up arresting some criminal?”
 “Nope.”
 “So what are you.?”
 “I’m a reporter.”
 “For what paper?”
 “No paper. For myself.”
- Pg. 240. Returning to Boston:
 I’d been away from the city for less than two years and already I felt like an alien. Jack McMorrow of New York City or Jack McMorrow of Prosperity, Maine? Would the real Jack McMorrow please stand up? I was pretty sure I knew which one he was. More sure by the minute.
- Pg. 262. “I’m just a mild-mannered reporter,” I said.
 “Mild-mannered reporters don’t get beat up.”
 “Sure they do. They just don’t hit back.”
- Pg. 274. “They weren’t interested in people,” I began. “Not really. The other reporters, I mean. They used them like puzzle pieces. You know. I’ve got the grieving mother of the shooting victim. Now I need a couple of the dead kid’s friends. It was like these people’s lives were some sort of fill-in-the-blanks test. A crossword puzzle or something. It was just, I don’t know, cold or something. Calloused. They seemed to care. They could act like they cared. But they’d knock off that story about the six-year-old boy who got shot in the drive-by and it would be a great story and they’d file it and a minute later they’d be joking around.”
 “Social workers are like that, though,” Roxanne said.
 “The longer I was in the business, the harder it got for me to just walk away. I guess I felt like every time I did, it was a failure. A defeat or something. I wanted to put my arm around that mother. I wanted to come back the next day and shore her up. I really wanted to make things right.”
 “But that wasn’t your job.”
 “But it wasn’t a job to me.”
- Pg. 322. The police stopped coming after three days. The reporters stopped calling and the television crews went on to the next tragedy.
 We spent the days very quietly. Both of us read books and neither of us went near a newspaper. We read all of my Hemingway and Fitzgerald. Roxanne tried a John D. McDonald novel but it had a murder in it, of course, and she had to put it down. I picked it up and read five pages and did the same.

Lifeline Berkley Prime Crime mass-market edition. March 1997.

- Pg. 8. “What’s your circulation?” I asked.
 “About nine thousand. Stays pretty steady. Six days a week, except for Christmas.”
 Nine thousand. I could just hear what my former colleagues would say about that. “You shouldn’t deliver those papers. You should number them and sell them as a limited edition.”

- Pg. 39. For ten years this had been my world. A weekly in Rhode Island, right out of college. Right on to a medium-size daily and then up the ladder, allowing myself a maximum of two years at each paper. Most places, I stayed a little over one. I was good and I was ambitious. And in the tournament that is the news business, I made the finals. *The New York Times*. Jack McMorrow, rising star. Jack McMorrow trying out for an "About New York" metro column and getting passed over for the simple reason that the reporter who got it was better. Jack McMorrow asked for an assignment to London or Dublin or any place foreign and was turned down. "You know the city," he was told. "You're steady. You're reliable." The words that end the climb. The words that tell you to get out of the way because the stars are coming through. And they did: tough, young, smart as hell, confident beyond their years. So I got away, all right, I went to Maine and there was no looking back.
- Pg. 57. All those years in New York City, I never got a scratch. One day on the job in Kennebec and some drunken, coked-out redneck said he was going to kill me.... You could cover the drug trade for *The Miami Herald* and sleep better.
- Pg. 59. "Hey writer man. Come on out," one of them was saying. "Come on out, you little writer pussy.... Reporter pussy. Come on out."
- Pg. 63. Roxanne: "I don't want it to change you."
"Don't worry," I said. "It's all an act. Inside I really was scared to death. Really."
- Pg. 70. Wednesdays and Fridays were my days to work out.... The rifle went in the gun rack, the cartridges in the glove box.... Clair and I called it hardwood aerobics.
- Pg. 78. "That's what they taught you at *The New York Times*, huh?"
"They taught me that a good newspaper doesn't kiss anybody's ass."
- Pg. 102. Reporting advice.
- Pg. 140. "You're not like the reporters we get here," Lenny said between sips.
"That good or bad?"
"I don't know. That was a good article on the plea bargains over there. I'm surprised they printed it in that chickenshit rag."
- Pg. 161. "I got to know her a little and I like her and I felt like I sort of owed her...."
"For talking to me for the first story. It was sort of hard, even though I didn't use her name."
- Pg. 167. "Off the record, she's not a rug rat," I said. "She's a little girl. and it isn't 'pretty traumatic' to lose your mother like this. It's devastating and tragic. A woman dying like this is sad and tragic, too. And Donna wasn't a girl, she was a woman. And it is a good story, but I don't want to be a part of it. Any more than I already am."
- Pg. 169. I wiped my unshaven face and with my hand and rubbed my eyes, where tears had dried and left salt. That left one, and only one, next step, which was to go back and finish what I'd started.
- Pg. 171. "You have to let it be, Jack. You have to."
"Can't do it...."
"Then how did we come out so different?"
"We're not different," she said. "You just don't know when to quit."

- Pg. 199. "I'm not a cop."
"What are you, then?"
"A reporter."
"Christ," the woman said, and slammed the door shut.
- Pg. 199. Breaking and entering: Finally, I turned the knob slowly and eased the door open.
- Pg. 235. It added up to a portrait of a woman who was sleazy, lazy, a drunk, and a lousy mother.... The story was supercilious and disapproving. It said Donna Marchant deserved what she got. And that wasn't true....
"I'm not filing today because I'm quitting," I said.
"I didn't think it'd work out," Albert said. "You're just too much of a loose cannon, McMorrow."
"I'm not a loose cannon. The problem is that your paper is muzzled. The place has sold out, if it ever had anything to sell."
- Pg. 237. I now had only one assignment, and it wasn't to cover the courts. It was to do Donna Marchant justice. Of some sort.
- Pg. 256. Roxanne equates her job with Jack's.
- Pg. 276. To Archambault: "A good reporter doesn't take anything at face value, especially the official word on anything. Your guiding principle should be that people often aren't what they seem. When you try to tie them up in a neat little package, it's usually not true. Life isn't neat."
- Pg. 325. When they burn down his house: "You know, things like this don't happen too often around here," she said, turning back to me. "It's not like it's New York or Florida or something."
- Pg. 344. If it got out, her life would be changed. She'd know she'd accidentally killed her mother. The world would know that she'd killed her mother. She would have a social worker. She might have a foster home. The story would come out in the paper. For the rest of her life, she would carry this enormous, crushing burden. So he doesn't report the story, and lets the scumbag take the fall for the child's mistake.
- Pg. 348. Clair: re: Jack's choice: "Jack, I've done things in my life I never wanted to do, but 'none of the above' wasn't an option at the time. You consider the options you have and you choose the best one. That's what you've done."

Potshot Berkley Prime Crime mass-market edition. July 1998.

- Pg. 27. I stepped out of the truck but stood behind the open door. The gun appeared to be a shotgun, and if it was loaded with bird shot, the door would protect my vital organs. One of the things they don't teach in Journalism 101.
- I grabbed a notebook off of the seat of the truck, and holding it in front of me like a white flag, followed.

- Pg. 29. “You can tell you’re a reporter,” she said.
 “Oh, yeah? How’s that?”
 “Everything you ask has a reason. Some piece of information you want. Are you a good reporter?”
 I hesitated.
 “Pretty good.”
 “Bobby told me you worked for *The New York Times*.”
 “Among others.”
 “So you must be pretty good.”
 “It’s all relative,” I said.
- Pg. 37. “You know a twenty-two will kill you just as dead as a fifty-caliber machine gun. It takes just a little more precision, that’s all.”
- When I got home, the house was cold but so was the ale. It was after three o’clock, which was close to five, which was the time I felt morally and ethically justified in having a drink, so I opened a can of Ballantine and went and stood by the back window and took a long swallow.... I hit the button on the computer and the answering machine, in that order. The computer whirred, the tape hissed and Roxanne told me she loved me. Life was good. Almost.
- Pg. 39. I still could have been working for *The Times*. I still could have been living on the West Side, or moved down to Soho. I could have been writing about kids killing each other, covering the gang funerals, listening to the politicians preach about peace in a city that, for so many, meant anything but. I could have been living for the daily fix that was my byline, the indescribable rush I’d felt every time I’d said, “Hi. I’m Jack McMorrow from *The Times*.” ...Instead of all that, I had my good friend Clair and a new chain saw. I had a hideaway in the hills of Waldo County, Maine. I had built my own house, sort of, and could shoot a rifle straighter than most. I could write the same stories but in small towns instead of big housing projects. I knew the woods and the birds. I read my books, listened to my music, and I bowed to no one, played nobody’s game. On top of all that, I had Roxanne.
- Pg. 43. “Eight, nine hundred words. Two hundred fifty bucks.”
- Pg. 54. “You for us or agin’ us, man?”
 “To do the story, it shouldn’t matter,” I said.
- Pg. 55. “So I want to show you something. But it’s gotta be off the record. Can you promise me that?”
 “Depends on what it is. If it’s a couple of dead bodies, I might feel an obligation to tell somebody.”
- Pg. 59. I asked him how off-the-record our outing was supposed to be and he said no names, no location, just somewhere in the county. I said that was fine and stuck my notebook in my pocket and shook his hand. It was very strong and hard.”
- Pg. 61 I watched. I listened. My Marine friend, Clair, had once told me that kids could be turned into tough soldiers and they even could be turned into brave soldiers but patient soldiers were rare indeed. It was an exceptional man who could sit in the dark in the jungle for three hours with the bugs and the snakes, and not move a muscle.
- Pg. 73. I didn’t need a lot, just enough to fill the holes. For three hundred bucks, they weren’t going to be filled to the brim. After all, I may have been a freelancer, but I was a professional. And I had my pride, even if all else failed.

- Pg. 77. If I kept my nose to the grindstone, I could knock this story off by two o'clock, zap it into *The Globe's* computer and spend the rest of the beautiful autumn afternoon tromping around the woods with my binoculars, finishing with cocktails at the Varneys', or at least a beer with Clair in the barn.
- Pg. 78. I'd have to corroborate the incident with the school people. And last but not least, I'd have to clear it with Stephen.
But only if I wanted to sleep at night.... It had been the same at *The Times*, at *The Providence Journal*, *The Hartford Courant*. Some of my best work had been lost to the red pen of my nagging conscience.
- Pg. 85. "I'll pay you a thousand dollars just to go and check. I mean, what am I supposed to do? I can't call the—"
"Police," I said.
- Pg. 86. "I'm not a detective. You could hire somebody who finds people for a living."
"Isn't that what reporters do?"
"Sort of, I guess. Sometimes."
- Pg. 87. "I don't know. It's going to be hard for me to be there, as a reporter I mean."
"What about as a friend?"
"That's when things get dangerous," I said. "A press pass is kind of a shield. Without that.... How's this for a deal?" I said. "You keep your money. I write the story. But the whole story."
- Pg. 89. Not once—well, maybe once—did I wonder what the hell I had gotten into.
- Pg. 92. Breaking and entering
- Pg. 100. "Just a freelancer," I said. "I live in Waldo County."
I tried to look harmless. The younger cop was not reassured.
- Pg. 101. "Look around you, McMorrow. This is one of those places where you can do just about anything and nobody's gonna notice."
- Pg. 108. "Because it's real. And I need to get back into it once in a while. I don't cover wars. I don't cover gangs. I don't ride around Manhattan with a photographer and a police radio anymore. I want to write a good story. Make 'em sit up at *The Globe*. A good, real raw story. I'm sorry but that's the way I feel. It's what I do and if I can't keep pushing toward something then... what am I doing?"
- Pg. 112. I didn't know that I'd learn anything knocking on doors in Lewiston, but I'd be out there. I'd be in the midst of the tumult, the whirling, twirling, wheeling, dealing that was life on this particular edge. I would be in the thick of it. Again.
- Pg. 113. "You're just gonna walk up and knock on some crazy druggie's door?" Clair said, as I came down the loft stairs, changed into jeans and a dark blue chamois shirt but not shaved."
"Right," I said.
"Just show him your reporter's card?"
"You've been talking to Roxanne."
"You ought to start listening to one of us."
- Pg. 132. "Tell your buddies, next time they should just say, 'No comment.'"

- Pg. 140. "I write stories in the newspaper."
 "Why do you do that?" she said....
 "Because it's what I do," I said.... I looked down at my notes and I knew the complete, unexpurgated answer to her question. I was clinging hard and fast to my reporter's role. I was the observer, back from the war, the poverty, the starving children and bloated infants. As long as I had this notebook, I was detached, safe from the clinging tentacles of real emotion. File my story and go home. At various times during my determined climb to *The Times*, and the top, it had struck me that I was dodging life, evading something.
- Pg. 151. I called as Jack Mullaney, looking for his missing brother.
- Pg. 157. "Just get 'em all worried," Clair said. "Hell, a man shouldn't have to check with the old lady every time he blows his nose."
- Pg. 184. "Too bad about this soliciting thing," he said.
 I shrugged.
 "No big deal. If I write this first-person, like for *The Globe* magazine, it'll add to the spice."
- Pg. 220. "Is this on the record?"
 "Well yeah. Is that all right?"
 I thought for a moment. Felt myself slip into his cub reporter's shoes.
 "Yeah, I guess. But you shouldn't ask if it's all right. You should ask why I wouldn't want it to be. Sound a little surprised that it would even be a question."
 "I think you're evading the question," Joe Mendoza said.
 "You might be right."
- Pg. 222. "You worked for newspapers? I mean, full time.... Like where?"
 I hesitated.
 "*New York Times*."
 "No shit?"
 "Nope," I said.
 "And then you went to a weekly?"
 "Yup."
 "You got a drinking problem or something?"
 "No more than most people."
- Pg. 223. "I wouldn't assume anything, if I were you," I said.
 "Why not?"
 "Because good reporters don't."
- Pg. 227. Was it cruel, what I had just done? Was I preying on this poor woman, exploiting her for a news story and a week's pay, playing a sadistic game in which her hopes were stretched farther and farther until they were near the breaking point and she screamed?
 No.
 No, I wasn't.
- Pg. 237. I didn't give him much. I had my own story to write, my own living to make.

- Pg. 240. I felt for Melanie, even for Stephen, but their tragedy was my story. And my story still had holes. I had to fill them. It was what I did.
- “You took the question right out of my mouth.”
“I asked first.”
“I’m a cop.”
“I’m a reporter.”
- Pg. 264. She asked me if I was from *The Bangor Daily* or *The Morning Sentinel* and I said, no, *The Boston Globe*. She gave me a closer look.
- Pg. 267. “Coming off the presses shortly. Confirms the identity. Gives some background. You’re mentioned briefly.”
“Very briefly, I hope.”
“You scratch my back or I’ll put you in the lead,” Mendoza said.
- Pg. 284. All the way up the interstate, I pictured the story, composed headlines in my mind. Who killed Bobby Mullaney? Or did they? The short happy life of Bobby Mullaney. Is it over? Bobby Mullaney: A life gone to pot. It wasn’t the story I’d set out to write, but they never were.
- Pg. 303. “You say what you think, don’t you?”
“I wouldn’t insult you by lying to you. That’s the story. That’s what this is about. That’s why I’m here.”

Borderline Berkley Prime Crime mass-market edition. February 2000.

- Pg. 8. I’d always looked down on it [travel writing]. When you’re a metro reporter at *The New York Times*, you don’t get too revved up about describing menus and scenery. In those days, the travel stuff had always seemed so decadent and presumptuous. Eat well, dicker hard, and don’t look the beggars in the eye. But those days were long gone, and money was money.
- Pg. 9. It had been three weeks since I’d accepted my assignment. I hadn’t written a word.
- Pg. 14-15. “Friggin’ A,” Nevins said. “That ain’t news. Guy latches on to some barfly and decides to bag his trip. They don’t want to read about that in the goddamn *Boston Globe*.” He gave me a dismissive wave and started backing toward the door. “Oh, I don’t know,” I said, moving with him. “I thought it was sort of interesting. Guy gets off a tour bus for lunch and disappears.”
- Pg. 15. “The less I see of the goddamn media the better. Nine times out of ten, it’s nothing but trouble.”
- Pg. 31. “*New York Times*? I didn’t know we had a celebrity coming through Scanesett.”

- Pg. 50. “Whatever you say, McMorrow. Maybe we ought to deputize you and give you a badge.”
 “Nah, then I’d have to have a warrant or probable cause or something. A reporter can go more places.”
 “I thought you were writing about Benedict Arnold,” Bell said.
 “I write about anything that seems halfway interesting. I did Arnold stuff this morning.”
 “And now you’re working your second job?”
 “There’s a story here,” I said.
- Pg. 52. “You didn’t hear it from me, or from ‘one police officer’ or anything like that. A reporter tried pulling that one on me and I got reamed out like you wouldn’t believe. ‘One police officer.’ That day there was only one police officer. So no games?”
 “I don’t play games,” I said. “Not that kind.”
- Pg. 63. Every day that I spent on this story reduced my take. A thousand dollars for fifteen hundred words was sixty-seven cents a word. But about now, it was also sixty-seven cents an hour. And dwindling.
- Pg. 68. He reached out and grasped my notebook. I pulled it back. He pulled, too, then started to shove me with his other hand. I put my foot against the wall and shoved back. He smelled.
- Pg. 72. “You are pushy, aren’t you? Is that what it takes to make it as a big-city reporter?”
 “That times a hundred. I’ve mellowed.”
- Pg. 75. “Yeah, right. The chief is really gonna like that one. I’ll tell him it was the reporter’s idea.”
- Pg. 86. “I’m a reporter. I write stories. I don’t put people in jail.”
- Pg. 92. “I knew your name sounded familiar. You were the goddamn reporter hooked up with those goddamn pot growers. I told Bell who you were. Warned her in case you came around asking questions.”
- Pg. 93. “Go play reporter someplace else.”
 “So you can play policeman?”
- Pg. 104-105. When my father had died, when I was twenty-five, I had numbed myself for a long time after, escaping to packed pubs, all-night parties, a succession of women. When my mother had gone, when I was twenty-nine, I’d thrown myself into my job like a dervish. I’d tackled every story with ferocity. If a story called for empathy, I would be ferociously empathetic. If a story called for toughness, I’d walk through doors. If a story demanded good writing, I would slave over my copy like some possessed composer. If a story called for persuasion, I could convince Adam and Eve to chomp that apple. If a story called for pursuit, leaping from lead to lead, I was a relentless hound. In a way, my denial of death had propelled me to the top of my profession. Hand over hand, I’d climbed journalism’s ladder, with the Grim Reaper one rung behind.... What was I afraid of? Why was I so compelled to chase down the bus man? Because if I couldn’t face the answer to the big mystery—after this, what?—I could at least distract myself with little ones.... I thought about my father, a big, gentle man who I had come to appreciate too late. About my mother, who, when I was at *The Times*, put my clips on her refrigerator with magnets, like papers brought home from first grade.
- Pg. 118. I dug in my camera bag for my tape recorder. Fished out the little suction cup microphone from Radio Shack. As I talked, I stuck the suction cup on the receiver, the

- plug into the jack. I hit record.
- Pg. 128. “I just hit him,…” I said.
Bell looked at me.
“I didn’t know reporters did that,” she said.
“It’s the exception, not the rule.”
- Pg. 135. “I’m so glad I spotted you. It was your truck. I said, ‘That’s Jack’s truck.’ I knew it because you have that piece of metal on the side. You’d never know you were a big-time reporter driving that truck.”
- Pg. 173. “You kidding, McMorrow? As soon as we hang up, you’ll be on the phone to Winslow. You’ll be on your way over there to knock on doors. You’ve got the bug.”
“What bug’s that?” I asked.
“If you don’t know something, you have to find out. You’re just one of those curious types. Some people are and some people aren’t. Probably what made you get into being a reporter.”
- Pg. 175. I felt a twinge of remorse and regret, but just a twinge, like a passing wave of nausea. Roxanne hadn’t been on my list at all, not even the bureau drawers. I couldn’t be there, not until my story was done. She couldn’t help me with what I had to do, so the best thing to do was to plunge in and get it done as quickly as possible. Clear the decks for her return. Write the Marvin K. Maurice story, and sell it and use the money to take both of us away for a day and a night.
- Pg. 190. “McMorrow,” I said. “Jack McMorrow.”
“And what paper are you with?”
“I’m not,” I said. “I’m on my own.”
- Pg. 215. Officer Bell: “Jeez, McMorrow. You are one ballsy reporter. Excuse my French.”
- Pg. 222. Officer Bell: “I don’t know, McMorrow. You tell me. You’re the primary investigator on this case.”
- Pg. 235. “If he comes back to town again, I think we gotta get rid of him. I don’t know. I mean, you take a shot at a guy and he keeps coming back, that’s no newspaper writer.”
- Pg. 245. I’d been operating in the dark for days. I was trailing people I didn’t know, who thought I was somebody else. The man I was pursuing was pretending to be somebody else, too. It was a crazy game we were playing, and a dangerous one. And the odd thing was, I couldn’t wait to get back to it.
- Pg. 245. So this was what I did when I was left alone. Look for a missing man, on the chance that he might not want to be missing. Haunt his acquaintances, on the chance that they might be his captors. Duck, on the chance that they shoot high. Press a can opener into somebody’s back, on the chance that he might not call my bluff.
- Pg. 286. Impersonating CIA agent.
- Pg. 301. “Tell Robie to take his bike and hit the road,” he told the kid. “You, too. I’ll deal with Clark Kent here.”
- Pg. 345. “They [the CIA] used… they used journalists, you know. As covers. I read that.”
- Pg. 347. “The CIA has agents pose as reporters.”

Cover Story Berkley Prime Crime mass-market edition. January 2001.

- Pg. 7. "Well," the first [*New York Times*] guard said, "you always was a little antisocial."
- Pg. 8. I never had been very good at nice stories, I thought, as the elevator moved upward. Not at *The Times*. Not at any of the other papers where I'd worked over the years. I'd been drawn to the stories that had a serrated edge, stories that tore away pretensions and comfortable misconceptions.
- Pg. 9. By Jack McMorrow. My byline in *The Times*. Thrilled to be there, pinching myself to make sure it wasn't a dream. Working nights and weekends for the metro desk. And soon finding my stories edited back, their volume turned down. Hints here and there. A metro backfield editor who reminded me that *The Times* wasn't *The Post*. A night metro editor who objected to the "breathless quality" in my prose. And then my story proposals seemed to get knocked down more and more. The veracity and motives of my sources were questioned more closely. And then the first glimmer of death: a memo from on high in which the editor had underlined phrases in one of my stories that he said betrayed bias. And then I was called before my inquisitors, I was accused of worse. For my future at *The Times*, it was a kiss of death, square on the mouth.
- Pg. 11. Was I Jack McMorrow, *Times* metro reporter, or Jack McMorrow, freelancer from the Maine woods? Had I run from my life at *The Times* or had I walked away?"
- . Ellen, my former *Times* editor and stalwart supporter, had told me the newsroom atmosphere had changed, that my nemesis had retired to devote himself to writing an editorial-page column and going to parties with rich people.
- Pg. 13. He attempted a smile, but came up short. D. Robert's smiles were reserved for professional purposes. Relaxing a reluctant source. Easing his way into a gathering closed to the press. Back in the newsroom, he was all business, a passable writer but a tireless reporter, unfailingly accurate. The joke in the newsroom had been that before D. Robert made love with his dour currency-trader wife, he asked if she would spell her name for the record.
- Pg. 15. "The center of our world is the general store."
 "That's it?"
 "And farms. And woods. Mostly woods."
 "Does the store have *The Times*?"
 It was her instant gauge of civilization.
 "Uh-uh."
 "Not even on Sunday? Do you get *The Times*?"
 "You can get it in Belfast. That's twenty miles away. Or you can get it in the mail, but it's two or three days late."
- Pg. 18. "I know. Not your style, McMorrow, letting things ride. Or keeping your mouth shut.... What was it you called him? A sycophant to celebrities? A Ken doll of a journalist? If I'd been suicidal, I would have applauded."

- Pg. 20-21. “His wife’s murder was ten years ago last week.”
 “So that’s the hook. And don’t you think there’s a story there? The long-term consequences of a random street crime. It ended a detective’s career, and—”
 Ellen paused.
 “And mine?” I said.
 I smiled.
 “I wasn’t going to say that.”
 “But you were thinking it.”
 “Yes,” Ellen said. “I was.”
- Pg. 30. “Oh, yeah,” Butch said. “Jack always goes the extra mile.”
- Pg. 34. It was our common ground, all those years. I listened to people and wrote their stories. Butch studied their aberrations and put them in jail. We compared notes, swapped tales. Butch envied my ability to put life into words; it was our common ground, all those years. I listened to people and wrote their stories. Butch studied their aberrations and put them in jail. We compared notes, swapped tales. Butch envied my ability to put life into words: I envied his opportunity to see so much firsthand. Neither of us lost our sense of wonder at what people did and why.
- Pg. 37. “Now, what are you gonna do? Cover the boonies for *The Times*?”
 “Stringer, they call it. Paid by the story.”
- Pg. 47. I went to the window and looked out at the lights. Why the hell did they think I’d left? I wasn’t a New Yorker, I was a Mainer.
- Pg. 54. “Jack, this is the biggest story in New York City history.”
 I thought for a moment. She was right. It was.
- Pg. 55. Re: Butch Casey: “I mean, there’s his cop buddies, but they’ll clam up and he’s been out for a while. There’s no parents, no siblings, from what we can find out.”
- Pg. 68. Find out where this guy is from and go there. I don’t care if it’s in Kathmandu. Or Prosperity, Maine.
- Pg. 70. Four TV reporters, three from radio in New York. A guy from CNN’s New York bureau, a producer from CNN in Atlanta. A reporter from *Newsweek*, who sounded very kind and soft-spoken. Whatever works.
- Pg. 90. “They protect their own.”
 “And you’re one of their own?”
 “I guess so.”
- Pg. 91. Question by question, sitting in a conference room on the third floor of The Times Building. It was a replay of the police interview, with fewer interruptions and some sandwiches.
- Pg. 95. “That’s what I like about my part of Maine. It’s real.”
- Pg. 106. He had a way with words, Butch did. And he knew a story when he saw one. I did, too, and this one was waiting, just out of reach.
- Pg. 121. Ellen: “Clair helps to define you for the reader.”
- Pg. 127. “I went to NYU. English literature.”

- Pg. 135. "Hey, McMorrow, who's in charge here?" [Det.] Donatelli said.
- Pg. 146. "No, he'll stick around," Conroy said. "The man's a loose cannon. Not a typical reporter. He's... he takes things too far. That was his problem before. He gets tangled up in things."
- Pg. 152. I took out my reporter's notebook, my Red Cross flag of neutrality. Opened it and scribbled.
- Pg. 162. "What the hell kind of reporter are you?" she said.
"It's called a stringer," I said.
- Pg. 207-208. She pressed against me, all of her, and she felt bigger than Roxanne.... Her hand reached over me, ran down my chest.... I could feel myself start to harden, felt her fingers slide under the shorts and touch me. Take hold of me. I reached down, felt her hand, took it in mine—
And gently pulled it away.
- Pg. 223. "You can check me out. I'm not some kook. I'm a reporter, for God's sake. Reporters don't make things up."
- Pg. 225. But in the lower right was another, smaller headline: "Casey and McMorrow: Partners in Crime," it said, and then below it, "Detective and Reporter Worked NYC Mean Streets in 80s."
- Pg. 234. My nemesis editor at *The Times* said my pursuit of that story was overzealous, that I was a talented reporter and a good writer, but I had turned the Butch Casey story into a cause. "*The Times* does not tolerate that," he said. "No credible paper does."
"Screw you, you pompous ass," I said.
- Pg. 259. "Who the fuck do you think you are? You're running with the big dogs now, you fucking newspaper wimp asshole."
- Pg. 265. "So the question," she said, "is how well do they know Jack McMorrow? Because if they know you, Jack, if they know what you're like, they know you won't be able to walk away."
- Pg. 271. Confidentiality dangled in front of her like a carrot.... I took out my notebook and pen. I'd prevailed, but at a price. Always at a price.
- Pg. 293. "It could be an unbelievable story."
"You could write it?"
"No. I couldn't. I'm in it."
- Pg. 293. "That's why I want you to go stay with Clair and Mary.... You'll be safe there."
"Jack, I can't. I've got a three-year-old in temporary care, an eleven-year-old in a shelter for teenagers. I'm responsible for these kids. I can't just disappear."
- Pg. 353. "This'll come out.... Right there in *The Times*, the newspaper of record. Forever and ever."
- Pg. 362. Roxanne's touch was like absolution.

Pg. 363. “I didn’t know anybody else who could do the reporting part. I knew they couldn’t just blow you off.”

Pretty Dead Berkley Prime Crime mass-market edition. August 2004.

Pg. 19. “So what do you do when you’re not cutting wood?”
Crunch time. I considered how to answer. I could say I was a writer, seem less threatening.
“I’m a reporter. A stringer for *The New York Times*.”
Connelly looked at me and tried not to show anything but couldn’t do it.
“Jesus,” he said....
“But I’m not working.”
“Reporters are always working, aren’t they?”

Pg. 29. “When he’s not cutting wood, Jack’s a newspaper reporter, honey. He writes for *The Times*.”
Maddie Connelly’s face went gray.

Pg. 34. “Who have you interviewed who’s famous?”
“Jimmy Carter. Rudy Giuliani, but he wasn’t famous then. David Dinkins and Ed Koch.”
“Never heard of the last two.”
“New York mayors. How ’bout Bruce Springsteen?” I said.

Pg. 36. “And another thing,” Angel said, her voice husky. “That’s all off the record.”
“I’m not working,” I said.
“Jack,” she said, touching her fingers to the top of my hand. “Come off it.”

Pg. 42. Re: Jack and Roxanne’s relationship. “Raises some interesting confidentiality questions, doesn’t it?”
“On occasion,” I said.
“Which prevails? Protecting children or the public’s right to know?”
“It’s her job. I don’t get involved.”

Pg. 54. “Now, Jack, do you write about coastal issues?”
I said I’d write about anything that affected people’s lives in Maine.

Pg. 55. I wondered why these Connellys never made the papers, why they were so different from the stereotypes I’d expected.

Pg. 59. Jack transcending social classes: “You know five miles from here is a different world. Where I live is a different world.”
“What is it? You and all the poor people?”
“Some of them are poor. Some are just regular people. They support themselves, love their families, live good lives.”

Pg. 72. “I’m a reporter,” I said, and I handed him my *New York Times* ID. He peered at it and then at me. The jeans and boots. The cut on my face. I took out my pad and pen and smiled.

Pg. 73. “McMorrow,” he said. “You the only reporter in Maine or what?”
“Seems that way sometimes,” I said.

- Pg. 80. She [Myra, his editor at *The Globe*] sounded harried, and when I told her about them finding a body in the woods, she said, “Three inches.”
I told her they’d ID’d it as a woman from Boston and she said, “Okay, give me six.”
And then I told her the name, Angel Moretti. I said she’d worked for the Connellys at their foundation. I told Myra I’d met Angel at the Connellys’ house in Blue Harbor earlier in the week. Myra said, “Oh, baby.”
- Pg. 81. “Is it the fact that a beautiful young woman is dead in the woods up here?” Clair said.
“Or is it the celebrity angle?”
“All of the above,” I said.
- Pg. 87. Jack is old school: The second-floor offices were modern and new, everything a newsroom shouldn’t be, but Myra had done her best to litter her office with coffee cups and takeout cartons. She would have smoked if they’d let her.
- Pg. 101. Knocking on the door of a grieving family was nothing to breeze into. You had one shot. If you broke through, they poured their hearts out. If you didn’t, the door slammed in your face.
- Pg. 103. It was the only thing about my profession I disliked: the subtle manipulation, the carefully tailored half-truths. But all for a good cause, I believed.
Most of the time.
- Pg. 103. Next to him [Rocco Moretti] was Georgie, another brother, who looked at me like I was a child molester.
- Pg. 113. “But I have to ask you these things....” I left the notebook on my lap, like a camera in a bird blind.
- Pg. 118. “Mr. McMorrow, I think it’s time for you to go. I don’t see the point of all these questions. I don’t think Monica’s father would like this.”
“Why?” I said.
“Because you’re upsetting her, sir.”
“Well, murder is upsetting, Mrs. Vitale,” I said. “There’s no way around it.”
- Pg. 131. David Connelly: “I can see you’re part bulldog. Just be careful, will you?”
- Pg. 151. “It’s not up to them.”
“What?”
“Whether I write a story.”
- Pg. 153. “I could just break your fucking wrists.”
“Then we put two reporters on the story.”
“I could send somebody around, burn down your house.”
“Three reporters,” I said. “And I’d find you.”
- Pg. 156. “I’ll write whatever I want to write,” I said.
- Pg. 168-169. “It’s a theme,” she said.
“What is?” I said.
“In your stories. I did a search in *The Times* archive. You write about injustice and sometimes you write about people who right wrongs.... When you look at your stories as a body of work, you’re not like other reporters.”
“That’s what my editors said. I was a thorn in their side.”
“Uncompromising,” Maddie said. “And unrelenting.”

- Pg. 175-176 The Connelly link was apparently out, because there were three TV crews and at least two newspaper teams waiting outside the church as we walked around the corner with the other family and friends. You could pick out the family because they were the ones who told the press to go to hell. Georgie, Angel's brother, came out of the church and shoved a TV cameraman in the back.
As the cameraman stumbled, still shooting, the reporter with him spotted Maddie and David and the knot of reporters and cameras converged. I moved off to the side and out of range. Roxanne was with Maddie and David as the TV cameras rolled and the newspaper guys barked questions. One TV reporter, a made-up young woman with lacquered black hair, squirmed her way up to David and said, "Mr. Connelly, why are you here today?"
"We have no comment," Maddie said....
"Who was that woman?" the TV woman said to her cameraman. "Is she a Connelly? Did you get her?"
- Pg. 186. "I keep it in the public eye," I said. "I keep asking questions because somebody wants me to stop. I keep sweeping things out from under the rug. And you swoop in and get all the glory."
"You are the real deal, aren't you?"
- Pg. 202. "Listen, can I tell you something off the record? Between us?"
I didn't answer and he took it for agreement.
- Pg. 221-222. Roxanne: "They don't want you to write this story," she said, still panting. "You're going to write the best story you've ever written, those dirty bastards.... You're going to write that story, you're going to write it, Jack McMorrow. You're going to write it, write it, write it."
- Pg. 235. I settled in and wrote for two solid hours, the words pouring out of me, or as fast as they could pour with my finger broken and the background of the story a tangle of secrets.
- Pg. 260. A Lexus/Nexus [sic] search.
- Pg. 261. Nexus [sic] search.
- Pg. 280. "Then you can write it, Jack," David said. "We'll sit down with you. But to have this journal get into the hands of some of the awful TV people. Jack, I haven't read it, but—"
- Pg. 323. The whole story came out but I didn't write any of it.
Instead, with Myra's blessing, I gave three interviews, to reporters from *The Times*, *The Globe*, and *The Portland Press Herald*.... The above-the-fold headline in *The Globe* said, HOODS, GRIFTERS AND A TERRIBLE SECRET: SHADOWY FIGURES FROM PAST AND PRESENT HAUNT CONNELLY CAMELOT. In *The Times*, the headline was low on page one, all editions: CONNELLY SECRET TAKES FOUR LIVES, HAUNTS A FAMILY. *The Press Herald's* choice: WEALTH AND POWER NO MATCH FOR FAMILY SKELETON.

Home Body Berkley Publishing Group. 2004

- Pg. 23. Their grandmother, our fearless leader, made only occasional editorial dictates to *The Clarion* from her Victorian mansion overlooking downtown Bangor.
The staff plodded along with impunity.

- Pg. 29. "The great equivocator," Roxanne said.
"We don't use words like that here at *The Clarion*. Randall says the average subscriber reads at a fourth-grade level."
- Pg. 108-109. I culled the cop jargon from the story, then made sure the incriminating statements were attributed to police. Souza wasn't a bad reporter, but he tended to get caught up in the semi-hysteria that surrounded an event like this. It was my job to keep that emotion from making it into print, and I was pretty good at it.
- Pg. 157. Re: having a child. Another witness to my life, another person looking to me for answers. Funny, I was much better at questions. Maybe my kid would be a questioner, too.
- Pg. 267. "Newsppeople stick together, huh?" Cobb said.
"Like cops," I said.
- Pg. 298. And then there was some garble, and that was it. No mention of me. No mention of Tammy's connection with Tippy, no doubt per Randall's instructions. When it came to the principles of good journalism, he never forgot who signed his paycheck.
- Pg. 301. Randall's office was a glass-walled cube he'd erected after he saw *All the President's Men*. I left the door open and sat down and crossed my legs. Randall got up from his desk and walked over and closed the door. I perused the shelf of framed certificates from newspaper seminars, which Randall never missed.
- Pg. 302. Randall: "And they're asking about you, McMorrow."
"They have to do that, too."
"What was his connection with this girl? How long has he worked for you? What do you know about him?"
I nodded.
"Those sound like the right questions to me."
"They're not the right questions. They're the wrong questions when they're being asked about a *Clarion* employee. I'm going to presume you had nothing to do with this girl's death, but a *Clarion* staff member shouldn't be associating with some urchin, some trailer trash off the street."
"You know, I've always hated that trailer-trash label. It implies some sort of phony class superiority, don't you think?" Tammy was a really nice kid, and for people to assign her to some lower caste just isn't right.... You always have to wonder about people who feel a need to draw class lines like that. I've always figured it comes from raging insecurity or fear.... Or maybe it's both. I think some people need to constantly prop themselves up. Inside they're afraid that they're losers, so they reassure themselves by making somebody else inferior.... This place is the kiss of death."

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