



Greetings!

BRRRRRR! ☐ I think that about covers this month's weather commentary. Oh, plus ☐ + ☐ + ☐ + more ☐ ☹

In other news, the release of *Swamp Justice* was obviously big news around here. We'll discuss that a little more below, but let me pause to say a big *THANK YOU* to everyone who helped Tony's latest adventure enter the world with a bit of momentum. While it's still early days, seeing an average Amazon rating of 4.7 stars is very gratifying. Congratulations to the winner of last month's TEN draw, Illeana B., who sent her entry all the way from Argentina! We're going to follow up with a Valentine's Day-themed offer of another Amazon gift card this month—we're just a day or two late. Simply hit reply and type LATE to enter. On the deal front, our audiobook publisher *finally* decided to give Tony and friends a decent push! Chirp (the audiobook offshoot of BookBub) is running a sale of Books 1-5 for \$2.99 each. Get them [here](#). Please share the word!

I'd like to add a note about the Georgian Red Beet Salad that Harper serves up in *Swamp Justice*. Reader Georgia M. sent that recipe in as an entry in a Reader's Club "Food Fight!" contest way back in 2023. I included it in a manuscript I eventually discarded, so the poor dish has waited a long time to *finally* find its way into a published book. Judging by the reaction of Tony, the wait was worth it! Thanks again, Georgia.

So, with *Swamp Justice* out in the world, what comes next? That's a very good question! I like the idea of returning to Cedar Heights with a story that brings back characters, locations, and themes from the earlier books in the series—the trick is finding a story that ticks all the thriller boxes without repeating what has gone before. This isn't the story I thought I'd be writing—both Plans A & B are in the discard pile—but it's shaping up nicely. We'll revisit Cedar Heights later with a little photo tour in our Where in the Book? feature later in this month's issue. Drawing on lessons learned following back

surgery and a little ticker trouble while writing *A Law Unto Itself* and *The Usual Suspect*, I'm affording myself some scheduling leeway to accommodate upcoming hip replacement surgery. While I like to think it will be nothing more than a minor speed bump, that wasn't the case during my last two medical odysseys. I'm hoping to usher the new book into the world somewhere around mid-September. ☐☐

Speaking of new books, we'll talk a little about how I launch a new book into the world in this month's Behind the Curtain feature. Finally, as always, we'll wrap up with a chance to win a free book in our monthly Q & A. Read on!

The Latest Tony Valenti News

Hot Off the Presses

The nice people at Written Word Media included *Swamp Justice* in their New-in-Books promotion between February 10th-15th. The feature includes a Q & A with me about the novel's origins, and some behind-the-scenes trivia about the writing of the story. You can read it [here](#). If you haven't yet ordered your copy of *Swamp Justice*, you can do so [here](#). A quick note about this type of link, as I receive questions about them from time to time. This is known as a Universal Link, which steers readers to the Amazon Kindle or book store in their country, rather than only a link to Amazon in the USA, which then necessitates navigating to a different Amazon store. U-Links also allow you to select the edition you prefer (eBook, trade paperback, large print edition) rather than shopping around Amazon once you get there. When using it, you'll notice that you can make your selection the default for future visits. So, it's convenient for all, and the extra one or two clicks will give your index finger a little exercise! This is especially helpful for readers looking for the large print editions of my books, as Amazon doesn't place them on the regular book page. So, the time and click savings for our large print readers are substantial.

I feel compelled to add a word about the pricing of the Large Print Edition of *Swamp Justice*. I'm as shocked as you are, but rest assured I'm not trying to gouge anyone with eyesight similar to mine. Part of the issue is the length of the novel, but the lion's share of the purchase price goes to Amazon and its print partners. I've priced these books barely above cost; I make about a dollar/euro/pound per book, assuming the production nickel and



diming doesn't get out of hand, in which case I'll be lucky to break even.



A Peek Behind the Scenes

Behind the Curtain

In addition to folks who are curious about me, the characters, and other craft-related writing questions, I often hear from aspiring writers or

authors who are fairly new to the game and are curious about how I market my books. I generally refer them to authors who are more successful marketers than I am, but I do offer a few tips here and there. I thought it might be interesting to offer a brief overview of a Tony Valenti Thriller book launch, which begins long before publication date. While I'm editing the manuscript, I'm also piecing together what I grandly refer to as a "launch plan". The initial step is deciding on a promotional strategy, then booking space and time on whatever platforms I'll be using. New-in-Books (as mentioned in the Hot Off the Presses feature) is a staple, as is a Goodreads Giveaway. For this release, I booked a mid-January feature for *The Usual Suspect*, angling for read-through to the next book in the series, which just happens to be *Swamp Justice*. New release announcements were placed in *The Big Thrill* newsletter of the International Thriller Writers, and Crime Writers of Canada got the word out via email and social media. I also booked a handful of dates on select email promotional sites. For *Swamp Justice*, I used the Fussy Librarian (a favorite of mine), KU Addicts, which specializes in Kindle Unlimited titles, and finally, AXP Fresh Fridays, which promotes newly published books the first Friday of each month (and all through the month). You can have a look at all the books AXP featured in February [here](#). I also tease the release on my social media channels in the final few weeks prior to release and for several weeks following. Finally, I advertise the release on Amazon, Facebook, and BookBub. It's a busy time! If any of you ever wonder about the glazed look in my eyes, my slack-jawed look of exhaustion, or my general skittishness a month or so either side of a release date, now you know why.

Where in the Book?



Village Hall

In both size and place, Cedar Heights is similar to Alsip, and the Alsip village hall is a reasonable facsimile of the village hall I created for Cedar Heights. Heck, I may have even driven past the Alsip building and subconsciously recalled it when I initially described its sibling in Cedar Heights. (photo credit to LonelyBeacon).



Liberty Street

Here's a picture of how I envisioned Liberty Street from the very beginning of the series; in fact, this is what Tony and Brittany were looking at on page one of *A House on Liberty Street*, albeit this picture was taken during daylight hours and there isn't a bevy of emergency vehicles clogging the street, but you get the idea.



Independence park

I believe I used this photo some time ago in a Reader's Club Update, but here it is again. An awful lot has happened here over the course of the series, not to mention in the years when Tony and Pat were growing up.



Downtown Cedar Heights

The Law Offices of Brooks, Valenti & Williams are located in a block very much like this one. Pretty fancy, huh? I was thinking of airbrushing a four-story building in there to fully capture the breathtaking skyline, but that would be cheating (and I can't draw, anyway).

Win a FREE Book!



Reader's Club Q & A

What's on your mind? Ask away! I'll answer one reader question in every Reader's Club Update. If I choose yours, I'll send you a free eBook copy of one of my novels! Please send your

questions via the *Contact* page on my [website](#) or send an email to info@neilturnerbooks.com. If you send an email, please type *Reader's Club Q & A* in the subject line. Thank you!

Here's this month's question and answer. Our question is from an aspiring novelist who is curious about AI, and wins a free eBook merely for being curious!

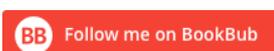
Q: How do you utilize AI in your books? I've found an awesome website (name redacted) that will write an entire novel for me using AI, all I have to do is complete a brief questionnaire to select genre and sub-genre. I'm very excited about becoming a published author! I'd like tips for marketing my new book.

A: I don't utilize AI. Period. I don't use it for writing or editing my manuscripts, for covers and other graphics I utilize for marketing and promotion, for advertising imagery or copy, or for any other purpose. I don't allow my editors or cover artists to use AI. My apologies for being blunt, but feeding instructions into the input form of a machine-learning program doesn't make you any more a legitimate author than paint-by-numbers makes me the next Pablo Picasso. For what it's worth, see the Behind the Scenes feature above for some book launch ideas.

And that's it for this month, folks. Thanks for being a member of our Reader's Club!

Take care, be well, and happy reading (or listening!),

Neil



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