



Greetings!

So, it's back to school season, which includes me sending Brittany off to college this week in the latest Tony Valenti thriller, *A Law Unto Itself*. Coincidentally, I found myself writing that scene last Tuesday as real kids trudged back to class. Anyway, good luck to Brittany and everyone heading off to school this month. It's also time to start fretting about winter creeping ever closer on the meteorological calendar, at least for big winter babies like me.

What else do we have in this month's update? Writing news, of course, which you'll find in the *Hot off the Presses* and *Behind the Scenes* features. There's also a new feature called *Odds & Sods*, which probably doesn't need much of an introduction to understand ... especially for our UK friends. I mentioned last month that I wouldn't be spending as much time with social media, and I have scaled that back substantially, which allows more time to write *and* to add an occasional bonus for Reader's Club members. You'll find the first one of these below. Read on!



## The Latest Tony Valenti News

### Hot off the Presses

I sent an email last week telling you about a limited time offer on Amazon for *A House on Liberty Street*. Things went well in the US and Canada, as you can see

here:

**Best Sellers Rank: #1 Free in Kindle Store (See [Top 100 in Kindle Store](#))**

**#1 in [Suspense \(Kindle Store\)](#)**

**#1 in [Mystery \(Kindle Store\)](#)**

**#1 in [Legal Thrillers \(Kindle Store\)](#)**

**Best Sellers Rank: #1 Free in Kindle Store (See Top 100 in Kindle Store)**

**#1 in Mystery (Kindle Store)**

**#1 in Legal Thrillers (Kindle Store)**

The UK and Australia were much the same. Something that surprised and jazzed me was seeing the book charting pretty well in Germany, France, and several other countries where it has had limited visibility. This is the free ranking, and my books are seldom offered for free, but it's pretty cool to see one of my books holding down the number one spot for the entire Kindle store! The goal of the offer is to bring more readers into the series. I'd say mission accomplished! Thanks for your help making it happen!

## **A Peek at the Book Business**

### **Behind the Curtain**

*A House on Liberty Street* isn't the only Tony Valenti Thriller getting a little promotional love. The balance of the series is scheduled for bi-weekly 99¢



Kindle Countdown Deals this autumn. *Plane in the Lake* will be featured from September 24 - 30; *A Case of Betrayal* will follow between October 8 - 14. The other novels will be featured in October and November. I'll give you those dates as they get closer. Finally, as if *A House on Liberty Street* isn't getting enough exposure, Amazon has chosen it for their Prime Reading program. Is Tony in danger of being *overexposed*??? Read on...

From the Friday, September 8th edition of PUBLISHERS LUNCH announcements of literary industry publishing deals comes this:

#### **Audio rights**

Neil Turner's *A HOUSE ON LIBERTY STREET*, *PLANE IN THE LAKE*, *A CASE OF BETRAYAL*, *A TIME FOR RECKONING*, *SCARED SILENT*, *THE SECRETS SHE BURIED*, *NOWHERE TO HIDE*, *A LAW UNTO ITSELF*, the first eight books in his Tony Valenti Thrillers series, to [Arevik Torosyan](#) at [Tantor Media](#), in a nice deal, in a multi-book deal (world English).

### **Tony is A+**

### **Odds & Sods**

You may recall a Q & A asking which famous actor should portray Tony. We don't yet have one of those—*yet*—but I've



selected a stock character to fill the breach until Tony lands a movie or streaming deal. This is "Tony". He's now featured on the updated book page for *A House on Liberty Street*, in a section Amazon calls "A+ content". Have a peek and let me know what you think. You may also stumble across A+ Tony in ad graphics from time to time.

I smile as I write this. I may be wrong, but I expect to hear a little, or maybe a lot, of "Tony *doesn't* look like that!"

balanced by "Oh. My. God. It's *him!*" This should be fun.

### Win a FREE book!

### Reader's Q & A

Q: How long on average does it take you to write a book?

A: There are a couple of ways to answer this question. I'm going to tell you how long it takes me to write a first draft, leaving aside everything else, such as research, editing, production, marketing, etc. Producing a first draft generally takes me around three months, writing up to six hours daily, six days per week—often more when I'm in the home stretch. If I'm excited about getting to the end to see how things play out, I like to think readers will feel the same way. Wishful thinking on occasion, perhaps, but it feels good while it lasts. 😊



That's it for this month. Thanks for being a member of our Reader's Club! You'll find the bonus scene below.

Take care, be well, and happy reading,

Neil



## The Waste Basket

This is a scene I cut from *Nowhere to Hide*. I really enjoyed writing this, but it fell victim to the editing process. It's always nice to find a home for

these discarded scenes. Some end up in future stories, but some will now find their way here. This scene has Tony doing a little sleuthing that leads him to a no-tell motel. It is, to borrow a term I often hear from readers, a little cheeky. I hope you enjoy it.

"All I did was lift a can off the top shelf and next thing I knew, I was buried beneath the shelving unit. I couldn't move. It hurt so much, I thought, like literally, that I was gonna die."

I remember this moment in Kelly Whelan's deposition well as I watch her leaning close to the open window of the driver's side door of a Honda minivan, head dipped to speak with the crew-cut man behind the wheel.

I'm playing detective in a bad part of town, parked a block away on a dingy street while I surveil Kelly, who is the plaintiff in a lawsuit seeking a healthy payout from the pockets of our client, a mom-and-pop Asian corner grocer. The incident in their store took place almost six months ago; poor Kelly claims she remains incapacitated to this day.

She abruptly steps back from the minivan and angrily waves crew-cut away. Watching the action through the viewfinder of my digital camera, I can't make out the specific words she's shouting, but the timbre of her voice, her body language, and the scowl on her face suggests they aren't sweet nothings.

When another car slows to the curb beside Kelly, I lift my camera to watch the same sordid scenario play out; the only differences this time are that the vehicle is a Lexus sedan, and the driver is a middle-aged Black man. This interaction ends with Kelly hopping into the car, which zips away. I hope the guy eases up a little on the gas pedal.

Reasoning that a Porsche Panamera might attract a wee bit too much attention in any part of town, let alone an area known for car theft and chop shops, I'm behind the wheel of Mike's circa-1789 Toyota. Wrong decision? Almost 500 horsepower are tucked beneath the hood of my Porsche. As near as I can tell, Mike's jalopy is powered by a single, broken-down old nag—far fewer ponies than are powering the Lexus. Thankfully, they don't go far before pulling into the parking lot of a motel. I bounce into the lot several seconds later and am able to snap a photo of Kelly and her beau exiting his vehicle outside the door of Room 9. His hands are all over her before the door closes.

After I park in a far corner of the lot to wait, a movie scene unspools in my mind's eye in which Kelly is on a witness stand, being grilled about the results of this evening's surveillance.

*Wickedly clever attorney:* "Ms. Whelan, you say in your statement of claim that the incidental removal of a *single* twelve-ounce can of Eagle brand evaporated milk so destabilized the delicate balance of an entire shelving unit that it immediately toppled along its full length, crushing you beneath several cans, assorted bread products, three packages of Hostess Twinkies, and six rolls of paper towels. I

believe you said you were pinned beneath the weight of it all, in such agony that you thought your next breath might be your last.”

*Weepy witness:* “That’s right.” *Sniffle, sniffle.*

*Wickedly clever attorney:* “And, as I understand your claim, the spinal injuries you suffered in this calamity have prevented you from performing the normal activities of life over the past six months. To wit, you have been deprived of the enjoyment of your usual recreational activities, even the pleasure of lifting your adorable two-year-old son into your arms and frolicking in the park with him. Is that your testimony?”

*Weepy witness:* (more sniffing, capped off by a wretched sob) “Yes. That and more. It’s heartbreaking not being able to play with my little boy as we always used to. He doesn’t understand. The pleading in his eyes just breaks my heart.”

*Wickedly clever attorney:* “It sends a pang to my own heart, Ms. Whelan.” (dramatic pause to display empathy) “You’ve also been too frail to return to your call center job, correct?”

*Weepy witness:* “That’s right. It’s been so difficult to make ends meet. That’s really the only reason I was forced to file this lawsuit. My son must eat.”

*Wickedly clever attorney, now revealed to be none other than one Tony Valenti* (with cocked eyebrow indicating skepticism as he posts a series of surveillance photos on a giant courtroom audio-visual screen): Kelly swinging her son around in circles at the park, pumping iron and running on a treadmill at the gym, playing shortstop in a co-ed softball game) “Now, dear witness, these photos taken over the past few weeks suggest you’ve made a miraculous recovery. I’m so relieved to see you back from the brink of death.”

*Weepy witness:* (eyes narrowed, look of sorrow replaced by one of confusion as she calculates how to respond). “These pictures are from before the incident at the store.”

*Wickedly clever attorney* (highlighting the date and time stamp in the corner of the pictures): “Actually, they were all taken within the past ten days, although I’m quite sure the same pictures could have been taken at any time over the past several months.”

*Weepy witness:* (with an expression calculated to strike wickedly clever lawyer dead where he stands) “That’s a lie. Whoever took these pictures—invading my privacy!—must have something against me.”

*Wickedly clever attorney:* “Well, that’s not true, Ms. Whelan. I took these photos myself. My sole purpose was to ascertain the truth of your statements in order to protect the interests of my clients.”

*Weepy witness:* “You bastard!”

*Wickedly clever attorney:* “As to your claim that you need money to feed your child, isn’t it true that you’ve been receiving disability payments from your employer-paid insurance?”

*Weepy witness:* (dismissively waving the statement aside) “The insurance is only two-thirds of my usual pay. We can’t live on that!”

*Wickedly clever attorney:* (while scrolling through several photos depicting our scantily clad weepy witness climbing into vehicles with men) “I assume these gentlemen, all of whom you took to the same motel room, were able to ease the financial strain to some extent?”

*Fade to black, with stricken face of weepy witness frozen on screen.*

Kelly and her beau exit the motel room within fifteen minutes, both looking a little disheveled. Romeo’s shirt isn’t tucked in properly—in fact, a corner of the tail of his shirt pokes through the opening of his pants zipper. I hold the camera in my lap and examine the photo I’ve just taken, admiring my photographic ability. *Yeah, this one is suitable for framing ... or to post on a courtroom screen.*

Time to go home.



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