

Title Information

Books, Crooks and Counselors

How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure

by Leslie Budewitz

Publication Date: October 2011

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Index • Bibliography

From *Bleak House* to John Grisham, in mysteries, suspense thrillers, literary novels, television scripts and screenplays, fiction writers have created great stories from the inherent drama of legal proceedings. But writers don't always know how the law really works — and a mistake in legal terms or procedure can make even the most exciting story unsalable.

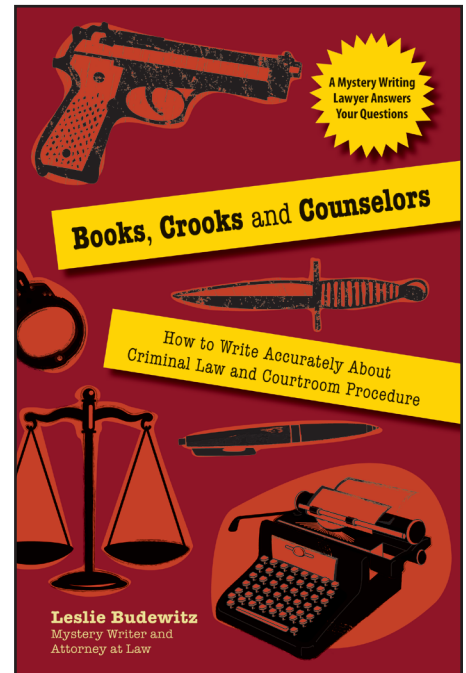
Written by a practicing lawyer of over 25 years' experience who is also a mystery writer, ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is an easy-to-use, practical and reliable writers' reference to legal terminology, procedure and concepts — and how to use credible legal situations to create fiction that is crackling with real-world tension and conflict.

Using examples from actual cases, as well as fiction, movies and television, ***Books, Crooks, and Counselors*** answers real writers' questions on over 160 separate topics, including: criminal and civil law; differences between federal, state, and Native American jurisdiction; legal aspects of police and private investigation; criminal sentencing, including the death penalty; wills and inheritances; legal terminology; and the written and unwritten codes that govern the public and private conduct of lawyers and judges.

Books, Crooks and Counselors also takes the reader inside the minds of lawyers and judges to show how real-life legal professionals think and act — giving invaluable insight to writers who want to create vivid, original and three-dimensional characters. Written with a lawyer's in-depth knowledge and a writer's intuition of human conflict, ***Books, Crooks, and Counselors*** teaches writers both the facts of the law and how to use them to create innovative plots, strong conflicts, authentic characters, gritty realism and stories that come alive.

Audience: Published and unpublished fiction writers, screenwriters, journalists and mystery readers.

About the Author: A graduate of Notre Dame Law School, **Leslie Budewitz** is a practicing attorney in western Montana. Her fiction has appeared in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*, *Thug Lit* and *The Whitefish Review*. Budewitz writes the *Law & Fiction* column for the Sisters in Crime newsletter *InSinC Quarterly* and offers more law information for writers on her website, LawandFiction.com.



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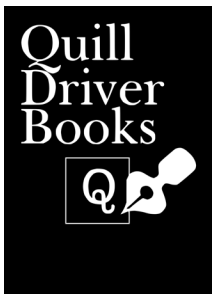
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Writers of mysteries, thrillers, cop shows and more will get expert legal information from new book for writers *Books, Crooks and Counselors*

Winner of the 2011 Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction

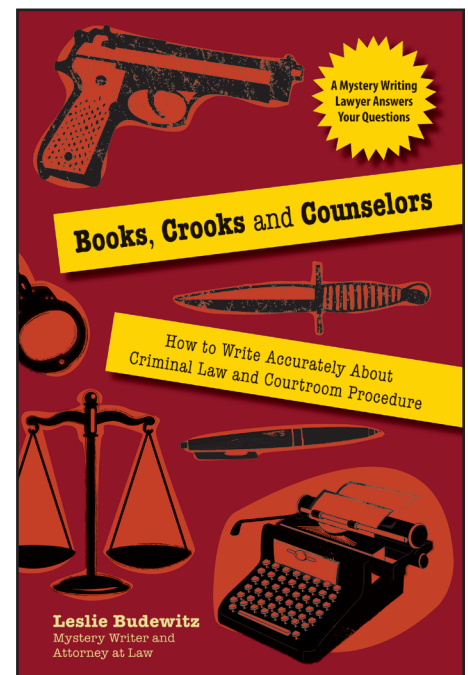
From *Bleak House* to John Grisham, in mysteries, suspense thrillers, literary novels, television scripts and screenplays, fiction writers have created great stories from the inherent drama of legal proceedings. But writers don't always know how the law really works — and a mistake in legal terms or procedure can make even the most exciting story unsalable.

But now fiction writers have their very own legal expert — without the exorbitant fees — in attorney Leslie Budewitz and her new book *Books, Crooks and Counselors: How to Write Accurately About Criminal Law and Courtroom Procedure* (Quill Driver Books, October 2011).

Budewitz, a practicing lawyer with over 25 years' experience and a published mystery writer, has created an easy-to-use, practical and reliable writers' reference to legal terminology, procedure and concepts. Using examples from actual cases, as well as fiction, movies and television, *Books, Crooks and Counselors* answers real writers' questions on over 160 separate legal topics.

Books, Crooks and Counselors teaches writers:

—**The Facts.** With fifty states plus the federal and tribal systems, the American legal system is enormous and varied. Figuring out the terminology and procedure takes time away from focusing on plot and character, language and setting. Is the prosecutor known as the district attorney or DA (New York), the county prosecutor (Washington State) or the county attorney (Montana)? Will a grand jury be called? Might a character's conviction



be appealed? How long does an appeal take, and will the process affect your story's time line? ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** shows you how to identify critical legal issues in your stories and handle them correctly, using the right terms.

—**The Thinking.** Lay people don't think about the law the way lawyers and judges do. Courtroom behavior follows its own code, largely unwritten and largely unknown to the public. ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** gives writers the insight to create more compelling characters and action.

—**The Dialogue.** Courtroom dialogue is a unique language. ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** answers writers' questions about common legal terms and phrases.

—**The Procedure.** Whether the protagonist is a professional or an amateur, crime stories often involve both an official and an unofficial investigation. ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** answers questions about legal procedure, such as when a suspect is arraigned, how bond is set and other inside details that will add veracity to your story.

—**The Setting.** ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** helps writers visualize how a law firm works, how a courthouse runs and how a lawyer navigates his or her way through the system.

Books, Crooks and Counselors also takes the reader inside the minds of lawyers and judges to show how real-life legal professionals think and act — giving invaluable insight to writers who want to create vivid, original and three-dimensional characters.

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Book Details:

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About Leslie Budewitz

Author of *Books, Crooks and Counselors*



Leslie Budewitz is a writer and a practicing lawyer. Her short stories have appeared in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine*, *Thug Lit*, *The Whitefish Review*, and other journals. Her short nonfiction has been published in the anthologies *Cup of Comfort for Cat Lovers* and *Cup of Comfort for Dog Lovers, Vol. II* and in national and regional magazines.

After graduating from Notre Dame Law School in 1984, Leslie clerked for the Washington State Court of Appeals. She is admitted in state and federal courts in Montana and Washington State and the court of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation. She has represented plaintiffs and defendants in a wide variety of civil litigation and represented both felony and misdemeanor criminal defendants. She currently represents plaintiffs and defendants in civil litigation.

She writes the *Law & Fiction* column in *InSinC Quarterly*, the Sisters in Crime quarterly, and the *Law & Fiction: Getting the Facts Right* column in *First Draft*, the bimonthly newsletter of the Sisters in Crime Guppies chapter. She enjoys working directly with writers, providing research and answering questions about using the law in fiction. Writers with questions related to law in fiction can reach Leslie through her website, **www.LawandFiction.com**.

Leslie lives in northwest Montana with her husband, a doctor of natural medicine, and their cat. When not writing, she loves to cook, garden, and hike in the mountains outside her door.



For more information on *Books, Crooks and Counselors* or to arrange an interview with author **Leslie Budewitz**, please contact Jaguar Bennett at Quill Driver Books, (800) 345-4447, Publicity@QuillDriverBooks.com.

**“A mystery writer’s bible”; “The perfect resource for any writer’s desk”;
“If you write crime fiction, you need this book!”**

Praise from reviewers, mystery writers and legal experts for *Books, Crooks and Counselors*

Winner of the 2011 Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction

“A handy and entertaining resource for mystery writers.”

—*Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine*

“Thorough, well-organized, and authoritative.”

—*Mystery Scene*

“Everything a crime writer needs to know regarding criminal law and courtroom procedure. For those who want accuracy in the writing, this is a great book to have on your shelf.”

—*Killer Nashville Featured Book of the Day*

“Straightforward and user-friendly ... will help shave off hours of research time and enable writers to focus more energy on craft, plot, and character development. Highly recommended for aspiring writers of crime fiction.”

—*Library Journal*

“A helpful introduction written in an easy-to-absorb style. Aimed at novelists, Budewitz’s book is also a great reference for freelancers who want to write about law enforcement or screenwriters who want realistic scripts.”

—*The Writer*

“A mystery writer’s bible. Clear, concise and infinitely useful ... a smart, easy-to-understand legal guide for mystery writers that will keep your mystery accurate and your story moving. The ultimate mystery writer’s handbook!”

—**Laura Childs**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Fiber & Brimstone*, *Scones & Bones*, and *The Teaberry Strangler*

“Need to know what laws your antagonist is trampling? Need a handle on how the legal system responds to his criminal activities? Need to grasp the rhythm of the courtroom? In ***Books, Crooks and Counselors***, Leslie Budewitz takes you into the legal world with the sure hand and knowledge of an insider. If you write crime fiction, you need this book.”

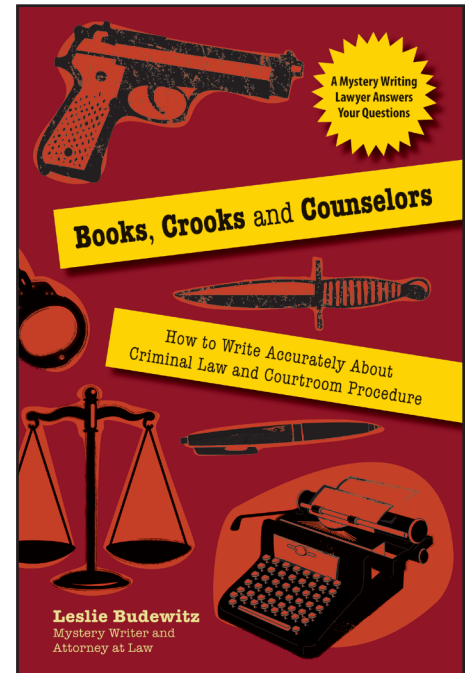
—**D. P. Lyle, MD**, Edgar-nominated and Macavity-winning author of *Forensics for Dummies*, *Murder and Mayhem* and *Forensics and Fiction*

“***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is terrific. It answers all kinds of questions that I had, and, more important, all kinds of questions that I didn’t even know I had. It’s one of those books that is going to make me look smarter. I’d want it even if it weren’t well-written, which it is. I’ve had the same fourteen reference books that stay right on my desk all the time, regardless of what particular book I’m working on. From now on there will be fifteen.”

—**Aaron Elkins**, Edgar-winning and Agatha-nominated creator of forensic anthropologist Gideon Oliver, the Skeleton Detective, and other mysteries and thrillers

“Concise, user-friendly and geared toward writers, ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** puts everything the crime writer needs to know about using the law in fiction right at hand — no more hours wasted tracking down experts or sifting through research material. If you write fiction, keep this book close by.”

—**Leann Sweeney**, author of the *Yellow Rose Mysteries* and the *Cats in Trouble* series



Books, Crooks and Counselors is a must-have resource for writers of any genre that relies on a clear understanding of the judicial system. From common terms and phrases to legal issues in criminal investigations and punishment, it's all there in a clear and concise format and easily accessible language. This book sits right next to the dictionary on my bookshelves."

—**Brenda Novak**, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of *White Heat*, *Body Heat* and *Killer Heat*

"Imagine having a private lawyer available 24/7 to answer your every question without hourly fees. Imagine you can slip that lawyer in your pocket to access at your convenience. In ***Books, Crooks and Counselors***, Leslie Budewitz has created a comprehensive, clear resource that's destined to be an essential part of every writer's library. With succinct information delivered in a warm, clear manner, Budewitz unravels our legal system and many of its complexities. ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is a must-have reference for every fiction writer."

—**Pari Noskin Taichert**, two-time Agatha Award nominee and author of the Sasha Solomon mystery series

"Leslie Budewitz's new book ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is destined to become the bible of legal research for writers. A copy of it on your desk would be like having your very own legal Dream Team at your beck and call."

—**Lee Lofland**, The Graveyard Shift blog, founder of The Writers' Police Academy, and author of *Police Procedure and Investigation*

"A lawyer who can explain our confusing legal system so even another lawyer can understand it? And who knows what writers need to know before they even ask? Priceless. I have a law degree and 25 years' experience teaching law, and I'm in awe of Leslie's ability to explain the law without losing the reader in the tangled morass. This book gives plenty of information but not too much. You'll want this close at hand as you write."

—**Cathy Pickens**, President, Sisters in Crime, and author of the Southern Fried Mysteries series

"Leslie Budewitz's meticulous research and plain-English explanations of legal and procedural matters make this a welcome reference for any fiction author whose stories involve the law. Mystery writers will find it indispensable, not only as a source of accurate information but also as inspiration for new and different plot developments."

—**Sandra Parshall**, award-winning author of the Rachel Goddard mysteries

"Attorney and author Leslie Budewitz has compiled the perfect desk-side reference for all genre writers who want to get the details just right. ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is a guide to the legal world that defines terms, explains procedures and gets into the specifics of culprits, crime and courtrooms. This thorough, yet engagingly written, legal manual for writers is an excellent addition to a reference shelf.—**Nancy Martin**, author of the Blackbird Sisters and Roxy Abruzzo mysteries

"The perfect resource for any writer's desk! Leslie Budewitz has a keen sense of just what a writer needs to know about all things legal. ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is superb!"

—**Carla Neggers**, *New York Times* bestselling romantic suspense author

"If you're not a lawyer and you're writing crime fiction, you need Leslie Budewitz's ***Books, Crooks and Counselors***. It's got everything a writer needs to write about the law — and do it accurately. I'll be consulting it with every new book I write."

—**Lorna Barrett**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Sentenced to Death* and other books in the Booktown Mysteries series

"What Leslie Budewitz has created in ***Books, Crooks and Counselors*** is an essential tool box for the crime and mystery writer, a veritable handbook of legal procedure, precedent and resource from an insider's perspective within the criminal justice system. Simply put, no serious crime or mystery writer should be without it."

—**Jeff Boxer**, forensic specialist and expert witness



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