

Author statement about independent publishing:

*I thought I was lucky to be writing in the age of word processors and the Internet. Then I went off to sell my first novel and saw technology had tumped publishing tradition on its literal head. Brand new avenues connecting readers to authors have exploded on the scene, and I've embraced my inner pioneer. If us Indie's commit to NY quality product, and focus on connecting with our readers, we'll go far in this e-volution.*

Adrienne LaCava ~ July 20, 2013

## **The Back Flap**

*Being in the wrong place at the wrong time could cost them their lives.*

Weary of Cold War politics, CIA operative Gabriel Haines can't wait to leave the Company life for a job on his friend's isolated Texas ranch. All he needs to do is go to Dallas and seal the deal. But when President John F. Kennedy is assassinated just yards from where Haines stands, the former agent finds himself in tighter crosshairs than ever before. Keeping a low profile on the ranch couldn't come at a better time.

Motherless preteen Ivy Jean Pritchard is a worrier, but she's trying hard not to be suspicious when her father sends her to spend a weekend on a ranch with the uncle she's never met. And with her troublemaker teenaged cousin, high-society aunt, and her uncle's mistress on the scene, it promises to be more than the western adventure Ivy had anticipated.

Now, killers have tracked Haines to the ranch, getting the entire family involved in something very adult and *very* worrisome. When the weekend turns deadly, Haines and Ivy Jean become allies and they're the first to agree that secrets, especially those devised and perpetuated "for the good of us all," can breakdown a family—or a nation—in the blink of an eye.

## **About the book**

### **What is the book about?**

*No One Can Know* is a literary political thriller and poignant coming of age story, set against historical events. The families of two estranged brothers come together one weekend with all their personal baggage in tow. A deadly case of mistaken identity follows one of them, adding national political tensions, and when the mistress of one of the brothers appears unannounced, it sets off a time bomb of dysfunction.

### **When did you start writing the book?**

The first draft was completed in 2007. It was a 200 page coming-of-age tale, set in the sixties, about a kid who gets crosswise with spies during a visit to her rich uncle's ranch, and she's never the same for the encounter. Once I started researching spies, circa 1964, it took on darker metaphorical tones, but the core story is still that.

### **How long did it take you to write it?**

First draft took a year. I've had to learn not to self-edit as I create story.

### **Where did you get the idea from?**

Driving through central Texas one sunny day on my way south, I recognized landmarks where I'd spent most of the 1960's. I'd wanted to enroll in SMU's novel track program that advertised, "Bring your idea," and was thinking about that when I came upon a take-your-breath-away horse and cattle spread. It sparked my imagination and wouldn't let go. You never know where that spark comes from, so pay attention.

### **Were there any parts of the book where you struggled?**

Many. Those were the spikes that got me up the mountain. I was learning the art of narrative story telling while crafting the novel, meaning parallel, yet different, learning curves. Plus, the dilemmas of my characters grew into an ambitious plot requiring research that was easy to get lost in. Many days I had to tell myself, *Just show up and apply butt to chair.* (abc)

### **What came easily?**

When I "let go," and character occupies my head, I am consistently surprised at how well we work together. And at how much they know that I don't! It's a synergy that is addictive, but fleeting. And hardly ever present during editing.

### **Are your characters entirely fictitious or have you borrowed from real world people you know?**

My people are fictitious, with the required disclaimer about real figures like JFK

and LBJ in a fictitious circumstance. I have borrowed the names of real people; influences in my life that are deceased. For example, Ivy Jean's older brother who's in Vietnam is named for my deceased younger brother, Wade William.

**We all know how important it is for writers to read. Are there any particular authors that have influenced how you write and, if so, how have they influenced you?**

It is absolutely essential that writers read, and read a lot. Then read some more. Personally, I've always reached for mainstream and literary fiction, and I always browse debut novels on the shelf.

Early inspiration, post Nancy Drew, were the likes of Mark Twain, Harper Lee, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. They plugged me into storytelling style. Grisham, King and Evanovitch showed me following. Today, I always look at new titles by Laura Lippman, David Baldacci, Elmore Leonard, or Carl Hiassen.

Barbara Kingsolver's *Poisonwood Bible*, and Rachel Kushner's *Telex From Cuba* influenced *No One Can Know*, as they are both stories about ordinary people living the sixties who must grapple with sweeping historical events that unexpectedly impact their personal world.

**Do you have a target reader?**

If a reader is intrigued by one of the juiciest mysteries of all time, and they like a good character story, they're targets. According to test audiences, the book has broad appeal, as readers across the spectrum have given it high marks. I've had favorable response from men, women, baby-boomers, their elders and their children, regardless of race.

**About Writing**

**Do you have a writing process? If so can you please describe it?**

Characters and conflict roll around in my head awhile before I give them form. Then I assemble a cast, write their names in a circle, and draw notated lines between them, making sure everybody has a relationship with others. I like this exercise tangled and messy. Then I map the narrative arc and main character arcs broadly, and sequentially imagine scenes to keep the plot developments tied to the arc. The best part is letting my characters write their own scenes. It's a fun day of writing when I, the author, steps aside... because as my people gain flesh and voice, thematic material emerges.

**Do you outline? If so, do you do so extensively or just chapter headings and a couple of sentences?**

Loosely. It looks more like a storyboard sticky note system, which is vital to ambitious plotting.

**Do you edit as you go or wait until you've finished?**

Editing as I go is a sticky widget for me because my *self-editor* and my *creator* argue, a lot! I aspire to a first draft where character and story find their form and emotion finds the right spots. Second draft is for fleshing and texturizing with details and backstory. Later drafts are for getting the score arranged, so to speak, making sure the narrative resonates.

**Did you hire a professional editor?**

Yes I did. Two, in fact, totaling four edit passes by a seasoned pro. I will take the first editing step much earlier on future projects.

**Do you listen to music while you write? If yes, what gets the fingers tapping?**

Birdsong. And my husband plays guitar; he's always noodling. Those are the best. I do love music when I'm creating but it usually happens early morning when the household's still asleep, so ear buds are required. Drums, bagpipes, gospel, or musical theater scores are first choice. Sometimes I just savor quiet.

**About Publishing**

**Did you submit your work to Agents?**

I did. My pitch and query package worked well enough to earn some favorable feedback, but there is a certain stigma attached to the backbone topic, JFK; the subject is perceived as cultish. There's something like 1,300 nonfiction titles, and unfortunately, the scholarly research gets lumped in with poorly written rants. And even though my fiction hook is unique, and my characters deal metaphorically with the danger of "necessary secrets," it didn't get picked up.

**What made you decide to go Indie, whether self-publishing or with an indie publisher? Was it a particular event or a gradual process?**

Remarks of beta readers and faith in my project helped me take the leap. Up until November 2012 I was querying agents, but made up my mind to go Indie once I understood how it works. This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of JFK's murder and the publicity of remembrances and other books around the topic will improve my chances of discovery.

**Did you get your book cover professionally done or did it you do it yourself?**

Jennings Graphic Design in Dallas created my cover. I met graphics designer Erica Jennings at a friend's book launch party and we had some laughs before realizing there was potential for business between us. It set the tone for a healthy, creative partnership.

**Do you have a marketing plan for the book or are you just winging it?**

Since I have background in marketing and PR, I designated a good chunk of my business capital to marketing early on. Being an emerging author with an unusual story to sell, I knew I'd need expert guidance, and the DIY books and blogs I read reinforced it. I engaged Penny Sansevieri, and it's been a great experience working with her and the team at AME. She has promoted many new authors, including the Kennedy genre, and that helped tip my decision to her. I've been building my social networking presence for a few years and my website [www.adriennelacava.com](http://www.adriennelacava.com) is still a work in progress, but here's what I've learned, simplified: strategically designed visibility translates to word of mouth magic.

**Any advice that you would like to give to other newbies considering becoming Indie authors?**

If you are comfortable tackling the business side of book selling, I say *definitely* go for it. But commit to creating New York quality product. Figure out how many books you have to sell to "repay the bank," and find the money to invest in that quality. Especially editing. Far too many books are slapped out there lacking that crucial polish. It's like selling an undercooked chicken.

**About You**

**Where did you grow up?**

I am native Texan. My father was in the U.S. Border Patrol (now IMS), and in my earliest years we vacillated between the Mexican and Canadian borders. I have a few clear memories of life in upstate New York and the Rio Grande Valley of

Texas, but reliable memories begin in a small town in central Texas, Evant. I graduated high school in Abilene, Texas.

**Where do you live now?**

Dallas.

**What would you like readers to know about you?**

My goal is to write entertaining stories that inform. Hopefully readers will quickly realize I'm accessible to them, and that their heartfelt feedback counts.

**What are you working on now?**

My next book is about reconstruction of lost hope. It features conspirator villains as well, and although it's not a sequel to *No One Can Know*, Ivy Jean and family returns, and there's a matter of diaries...

It's February 1968. Wade Pritchard returns to Texas from Vietnam traumatized and embittered. He lands a reporter job assigned to follow Martin Luther King's entourage around the country and craft news out it.

Mandy Shaw is on the run from an abusive father and takes a job with a steno pool assigned to the campaign busses of Presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy. She finds nomadic living suitable, and it's always a party.

Their lives intersect amid the horror of Memphis on April 4, when the esteemed Senator pays a condolence call on Mrs. Coretta Scott King.

Two months later when RFK is gunned down in L.A., it sets off memories in Wade that brings the two assassinations sharply in focus, in his mind, as one elaborate plan.