

# THRILLERFEST XXI - 2026

## CRAFTFEST 2026

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

New York Hilton Midtown | www.thrillerfest.com

**REGISTRATION** | 7:00 am - 4:00pm, 2nd Floor Promenade  
**THE MYSTERIOUS BOOKSHOP ONSITE AT THRILLERFEST** | 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm, Nassau East & West, 2nd Floor

**MORNING COFFEE** | 7:30 am - 9:30 am, Hosted by ITW | 2nd Floor East Corridor, 2nd Floor

7:30 am - 7:50 am

**WELCOME MEETING** | Hosted by ITW with JON LAND, TOSCA LEE, & HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN  
 Sutton North & Sutton Center, 2nd Floor

### CRAFTFEST CLASSES

Sutton North & Center (2nd Floor)

Beekman (2nd Floor)

Sutton South (2nd Floor)

Regent (2nd Floor)

8:00 am - 8:50 am

MARK SULLIVAN

SAMANTHA SKAL

ANDE PLIEGO

JOSHILYN JACKSON

**THE SECRETS TO A SUSTAINABLE WRITING CAREER**

**INTERIORITY, POV, AND ASSUMPTIONS: THE TWIST SET-UP**

**TRICKING THE READER: HOW TO PLOT AND PLANT RED HERRINGS**

**THE PANTSER/PLOTTER PROCESS SWAP**

9:00 am - 9:50 am

LUIS ALBERTO URREA  
 INTERVIEWED BY CHARLAINE HARRIS

NEIL NYREN  
 & JAMES L'ETOILE

TESSA WEGERT

ALLISON BRENNAN

**CRAFT SECRETS FROM A PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST**

**FIRST PAGE CRITIQUES**

**CROSSING SUBGENRE LINES IN THRILLERS AND MYSTERIES**

**SECONDARY CHARACTERS AND SIDEKICKS**

10:00 am - 10:50 am

DONALD MAASS

YASMIN ANGOE

JAIME LEVINE

CHRIS PAVONE

**DEEP STAKES & NON-PLOT PACE**

**MOTIVES FOR MURDER**

**DIG DEEP: TOP TIPS FOR REVISING**

**SO MUCH DEPENDS UPON A SINGLE PAGE**

11:00 am - 11:50 am

LISA ERBACH VANCE  
 INTERVIEWED BY GREGG HURWITZ

WANDA MORRIS

TOSCA LEE

ELISE HART KIPNESS

**AGENT AND THRILLER WRITER SPILL ALL**

**HOW DO YOU STAY INSPIRED WHEN THE MUSE IS MISSING IN ACTION?**

**OUTSIDE THE ALGORITHM: POWER YOUR CAREER WITH COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT**

**BUILDING SUSPENSE: TOOLS THAT KEEP READERS TURNING PAGES**

12:00 pm - 12:50 pm

**CRAFTFEST LUNCH: THE INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEY FROM BOOK-TO-FILM**  
 with KARIN SLAUGHTER & LISA UNGER  
 Rhinelander South, 2nd Floor

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

C.J. BOX,  
 NEIL NYREN,  
 & JOHN SANDFORD

KATE WHITE

KAREN DIONNE

ELENA HARTWELL TAYLOR

**ASK ME ANYTHING**

**HOW TO SEDUCE A READER IN 25 PAGES OR LESS**

**EDIT YOUR MANUSCRIPT: THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER, A CASE STUDY**

**VOICE OF THE AUTHOR, VOICE OF THE BOOK, VOICE OF THE CHARACTER**

2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

DOUGLAS PRESTON  
 INTERVIEWED BY ALETHEIA PRESTON

BOYD MORRISON

CARTER WILSON

HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN

**MY WORST MISTAKES**

**THE ART OF PACING: WRITING A BOOK READERS CAN'T PUT DOWN**

**THE VISIBLE WRITER**

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO WRITE YOUR THRILLER —IN FIFTY MINUTES**

3:00 pm - 3:50 pm

RACHEL HOWZELL HALL  
 INTERVIEWED BY HEATHER GRAHAM

MARK TAVANI

LYNNE CONSTANTINE

CANDICE FOX

**HOW DO YOU CHOOSE YOUR GENRE?**

**CREATIVE COMMERCE**

**THE ART OF THE UNRELIABLE NARRATOR**

**STARTING YOUR NOVEL: THE 'HARD' START IN THE ERA OF DIVIDED ATTENTION**

4:00 pm - 4:50 pm

R.L. STINE

RAPHAEL MONTES

SUZANNE ELISE FREEMAN  
 & SCOTT BRICK

JENNA BLUM

**MY 20 SECRETS FOR WRITING THRILLERS FOR YOUNG AND OLD**

**LESSONS FROM A NOVELIST TURNED SCREENWRITER**

**AUDIOBOOKS NARRATORS: YOUR PARTNERS IN STORYTELLING**

**CAREER AUTHOR, THRILLER NEWBIE: THE PIVOT**

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm

**Authors from all Wednesday CraftFest classes will sign** | Murray Hill West & East, 2nd Floor, next to the bookstore

5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

**CRAFTFEST COCKTAIL PARTY** | Hosted by ITW | Trianon Ballroom, 3rd Floor (CraftFest registration required)

# THRILLERFEST XXI - 2026

## CRAFTFEST 2026

Thursday, May 7, 2026

New York Hilton Midtown | www.thrillerfest.com

**REGISTRATION** | 7:30 am - 2:15pm, 2nd Floor Promenade  
**THE MYSTERIOUS BOOKSHOP ONSITE AT THRILLERFEST** | 9:00 am - 6:30 pm, Nassau East & West, 2nd Floor

**MORNING COFFEE: 7:30 am - 9:30 am** | Hosted by ITW | 2nd Floor East Corridor, 2nd Floor

### CRAFTFEST CLASSES

Sutton North & Center (2nd Floor)

Beekman (2nd Floor)

Sutton South (2nd Floor)

Regent (2nd Floor)

8:00 am - 8:50 am	ROBERT DUGONI  <b>PLAYING GOD OR CREATING MEMORABLE CHARACTERS</b>	KATHERINE RAMSLAND  <b>MORE THAN MURDER IN MIND: INSIDE KILLERS' HEADS</b>	JASON ALLISON & CARLA HOCH  <b>SILENT BUT DEADLY: A LIVE-ACTION FIGHT DEMONSTRATION</b>	DARBY KANE  <b>WHY DOMESTIC THRILLERS ARE SO COMPELLING AND HOW TO WRITE THEM</b>
9:00 am - 9:50 am	LISA UNGER INTERVIEWED BY K.J. HOWE  <b>CRAFT, CREATIVITY, &amp; FINDING THE MUSE</b>	HANNAH MORRISSEY & DOJ SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE  <b>HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER</b>	STEVEN JAMES  <b>ORGANIC WRITING: HOW TO ABANDON YOUR OUTLINE AND ELEVATE YOUR STORY</b>	LISA SCOTTOLINE  <b>EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT WRITING THRILLERS</b>
10:00 am - 10:50 am	JORDAN MOBLO INTERVIEWED BY MARK GREANEY  <b>BOOKSTAGRAMMERS, BESTSELLERS, &amp; BOOK-TO-FILM</b>	AARON PHILIP CLARK  <b>EXPLORING NARRATIVE STRUCTURE</b>	DAVID ELLIS & ALEX FINLAY  <b>10 THINGS BESTSELLING AUTHORS DO TO MAKE THEIR MANUSCRIPTS SING</b>	ISABELLA MALDONADO  <b>WRITING DYNAMIC ACTION SCENES</b>

11:00 am - 11:20 am

**Authors from all Thursday CraftFest classes will sign** | Murray Hill West & East, 2nd Floor, next to the bookstore

11:30 am - 12:20 pm

**PITCH PERFECT: CRAFTING AN EFFECTIVE PITCH** | Sutton North & Sutton Center, 2nd Floor  
 PitchFest Director SUSAN LEE with CLAUDIA CROSS, Folio Literary Agency; JAMES FARNER, JABberwocky Literary Agency; ARIELE FREDMAN, United Talent Agency (UTA); ELIZABETH KRACHT, Kimberley Cameron & Associates, LLP; and KRISHAN TROTMAN, Legacy Lit/Hachette Book Group

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**PITCHFEST 2026** (PitchFest registration required)  
 Gramercy East & West, Murray Hill East & West, Regent, Sutton South | 2nd Floor

**PITCHFEST BEVERAGE SERVICE - 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm**  
 Hosted by ITW for PitchFest Attendees

6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

**THRILLERFEST OPENING RECEPTION** | Co-Hosted by **St. Martin's Press, Minotaur Books, Tor Publishing Group, Forge**  
 Trianon Ballroom, 3rd Floor  
 (Registration for ThrillerFest required)