

# THRILLERFEST XXI - 2026

Thursday, May 7, 2026

Registration open 12:00 pm - 2:15 pm, 2nd Floor Promenade | The Mysterious Bookshop open 9:00 am - 6:30 pm, Nassau West & East, 2nd Floor

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

# THRILLERFEST XXI - 2026

Friday, May 8, 2026

Registration open 7:30 am - 6:30pm, 2nd Floor Promenade | Morning Coffee, sponsored by ITW, 7:30 am - 9:30 am 2nd Floor East Corridor  
The Mysterious Bookshop open 9:00 am - 6:30 pm, Nassau West & East  
All events are on the 2nd floor of the New York Hilton Midtown unless otherwise indicated.

	Sutton North & Center	Beekman	Sutton South	Regent
8:00 am - 8:50 am	<b>HOOK, CAPTIVATE OR SHOCK?</b> <b>Crafting First Pages That Wow</b> Moderator: Jon Land Karen Dionne Mailan Doquang David Ellis Jennifer Fawcett John Sandford	<b>FIRST, THIRD OR OMNISCIENT?</b> <b>The Power of POV</b> Moderator: J. Luke Bennecke Jaime Fixsen Joanne Leedom-Ackerman Deborah Levison Michael Rigg Teddy Wayne	<b>FLAY, SLAY OR NAY?</b> <b>When To Ditch Your Darlings</b> Moderator: Cherrisa "C.I." Jerez Meredith Anthony Daniella Bernett Diana Hansen-Young Jonathan Santiofer Manju Soni Kathryn Stamoulis	<b>TWISTS, TENSION OR TRIUMPHS?</b> <b>Planning Your Novel</b> Moderator: Gayle Brown Dave Bartell Marco Carocari R. John Dingle Sharon Doering Ralph Hardy B.C. Lienesch
8:55 am - 9:45 am	<b>ADVOCATE, TEAMMATE OR COACH?</b> <b>Authors, Agents &amp; Editors</b> Moderator: Roland Gulliver Dan Conaway Charlaime Harris Kelley Ragland Ann Rittenberg Jeneva Rose Kate White	<b>MIND, MOTIVE OR MADNESS?</b> <b>Psychological Thrillers</b> Moderator: Samantha Skal Andrea Bartz Alex Finlay Sarah Pekkanen Wendy Walker Stacy Willingham	<b>BLOOD, SWEAT OR TEARS?</b> <b>Fight Scenes</b> Moderator: Ruth Church Stephen Mann Tee O'Fallon Gregg Podolski Gary Quesenberry Jack Stewart	<b>ICEBERG, ANCHOR OR ATMOSPHERE?</b> <b>Building Authentic Settings</b> Moderator: Todd Gerber Graham Elder Gary Gerlachner Lane Stone Nina Wachsmann
9:45 am - 10:05 am	All authors from morning sessions will be signing books in Murray Hill West & East			
10:10 am - 11:00 am	ThrillerMaster LISA SCOTTLINE, interviewed by LISA UNGER   Sutton North & Sutton Center			
11:05 am - 11:55 am	<b>SUBTEXT, SUBTLE OR SUBCONSCIOUS?</b> <b>Masterful Writing</b> Moderator: Neil Nyrén Megan Abbott Gregg Hurwitz Eriq La Salle Mark Tavani Luis Alberto Urrea	<b>MISDIRECT, ESCALATE OR EXPLODE?</b> <b>Manipulating Your Plot</b> Moderator: Marcia Markland John DeDakis Jessie Garcia Joanna Margaret Bill Schweigart Yvonne Ventresca	<b>FIRST WORDS, FIRST SHOCKS OR FIRST BLOOD?</b> <b>Compelling Beginnings</b> Moderator: Roland Gulliver Christine Carbo Christina Dotson Jon Land Vanessa Lillie Audrey Wilson	<b>CLUES, RED HERRINGS OR REVELATIONS?</b> <b>Crafting the Perfect Mystery</b> Moderator: Tessa Wegert Robin Acton Amy Bloom Christopher Chambers Aaron Philip Clark Celeste Connolly Brian Tracey
11:55 am - 12:15 pm	All authors from morning sessions, including ThrillerMaster LISA SCOTTLINE, will be signing books in Murray Hill West & East			
12:20 pm - 12:55 pm	Connect, Collaborate or Succeed? The Power of ITW Membership K.J. Howe in conversation with Robert Dugoni, Charlaime Harris, Gregg Hurwitz, Tosca Lee, Sarah Pekkanen, Hank Phillippi Ryan, Mark Sullivan, Lisa Unger, and Tessa Wegert ITW Membership Meeting (all are welcome, members or aspiring members, prizes)   Sutton North & Sutton Center			
1:00 pm - 1:50 pm	Spotlight Guest LUIS ALBERTO URREA, interviewed by GREGG HURWITZ   Sutton North & Sutton Center			
1:55 pm - 2:45 pm	<b>AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FOUNDER OF THE POISONED PEN BOOKSTORE</b> <b>Supporting New Authors</b> Barbara Peters Interviewed by Douglas Preston & Lisa Scottline	<b>MOOD, MYSTERY OR MAGIC?</b> <b>Building Atmosphere</b> Moderator: Luisa Cruz Smith Reed Bunzel Maia Chance Jaime Lynn Hendricks Kate (K.B.) Jackson A.G. Mock Deborah Goodrich Royce	<b>ENGAGE, POST OR PERISH?</b> <b>Navigating Social Media</b> Moderator: Abby Dunn Tim Ehrenberg, @tmtalksbooks Jamise Harper, @spinesvines Brian Larson, @Brian.Reads Dennis Michel, @scaredstraightreads Magen Mintchev, @bonechillingbooks Nnenna Odeluga, @notesbynnenna	<b>ENTICE, HINT OR TEASE?</b> <b>Engaging The Reader</b> Moderator: Clare Mackintosh Sorboni Banerjee Bill Brodsky Karen Brodsky Joe Clifford Amy Meyerson
2:45 pm - 3:05 pm	All authors from midday sessions, including Spotlight Guest LUIS ALBERTO URREA, will be signing in Murray Hill West & East			
3:10 pm - 4:00 pm	Spotlight Guest RACHEL HOWZELL HALL, interviewed by KARIN SLAUGHTER   Sutton North & Sutton Center			
4:05 pm - 4:55 pm	<b>TROPES, TENSION OR TONE?</b> <b>Thriller Awards Nominees</b> Moderator: Tosca Lee S.A. Cosby Sarah Pekkanen Christopher Reich Ruth Knaflo Setton Jessica Van Dessel Diana Rodriguez Wallach	<b>SECRETS, LIES OR DIVORCE?</b> <b>Building Suspense</b> Moderator: Elise Hart Kipness Katy Hays Darby Kane Donald Maass D.J. Palmer Tom Ryan	<b>DEADLY, SPINE-TINGLING OR SUCCINCT?</b> <b>Mastering Suspense</b> Moderator: Kyle Steele Mark Alpert Deborah J. Ledford Matthew Quinn Martin Jennifer Moorhead Mark Stevens	<b>HOOK, BUILD OR BREAK?</b> <b>Whiplash Pacing</b> Moderator: Hank Phillippi Ryan Julia DeVillers Alex Gerlis Yosha Gunasekera Karina Kilmore J.B. Manas James Stejskal
5:00 pm - 5:50 pm	<b>STORY, STARDOM OR STYLE?</b> <b>Thrillers That Sell</b> Moderator: Karen Dionne Heather Graham Rachel Howzell Hall Isabella Maldonado Hank Phillippi Ryan Riley Sager Mark Tavani	<b>REAL, RAW OR REMARKABLE?</b> <b>Ripped from the Headlines</b> Moderator: Linda Hurtado Bond David Bushman Mark Ellis Charles Graeber Joe LeValley Rick Mofina Katherine Ramsland	<b>CLIFFHANGER, HEA OR SATISFYING?</b> <b>The Last Chapter</b> Moderator: Allison Brennan Allison Buccola Johanna Copeland Danielle Girard Cate Holahan Ashley Winstead Tony Wirt	<b>BOLD, RELATABLE OR UNHINGED?</b> <b>Character Motivations</b> Moderator: Zoe Quinton J.M. Adams Darby Bozeman Chris McGinley Sonya Sargent A.M. Strong
5:50 pm - 6:10 pm	Authors from late afternoon sessions will be signing in Murray Hill West & East, including Spotlight Guest RACHEL HOWZELL HALL			
6:15 pm - 7:45 pm	FRIDAY NIGHT COCKTAIL PARTY sponsored by Kevin Anderson & Associates   Trianon Ballroom, 3rd Floor			

# THRILLERFEST XXI - 2026

Saturday, May 9, 2026

Registration open 7:30 am - 2:15 pm 2nd Floor Promenade, Awards Banquet Check-In 5:30 pm - 7:15 pm, 3rd Floor West Promenade  
The Mysterious Bookshop open 9:00 am - 5:00 pm, Nassau West & East  
All events are on the 2nd floor of the New York Hilton Midtown unless otherwise indicated

	Sutton North & Center	Beekman	Sutton South	Regent
8:00 am - 8:50 am	<b>BOWLINE, HITCH OR FIGURE EIGHT?</b> <b>Weaving Knotty Plot Lines</b> Moderator: Boyd Morrison Allison Brennan J.T. Ellison Keir Graff Carinn Jade Leslie Klinger Jonathan Payne	<b>FEAR, FURY OR LOVE?</b> <b>Emotion in Suspense</b> Moderator: Susan Lee Laura Leffler Gerri Lewis Marcy McCreary Joe Moldover Ava Roberts Jen Marie Wiggins	<b>REDUCE, REUSE OR RECYCLE?</b> <b>The Revision Process</b> Moderator: Heather Lazare Kat Caputo Sharon Dukett Brooke French Tim (T.R.) Hendricks Shawn Reilly Simmons Julia Vee	<b>WORDS, LIES OR SILENCE?</b> <b>Elevate your Dialogue</b> Moderator: Sonica Mizerski Matthew Becker John Dobbyn Matthew Lavoie Amjed McDonnell
9:00 am - 10:00 am	<b>ITW PRESENTS THE 2026 DEBUT AUTHOR CLASS BREAKFAST</b> Jennifer K. Breedlove, Dan Buzzetta, Laura Cody, Kelsey Cox, Michelle L. Cullen, Veronika Dapunt, Kristine Delano, Lacey N. Dunham, Amran Gowani, Tiffany Hanssen, Morgan Hatch, Allison LaMothe, Alissa Lee, Élan Les Vies, Michelle Maryk, Michele Montgomery, Aletheia Preston, Courtney Psak, Tanya Scott, Victor Suthammanont, Lynn Tavernier, Tamika Thompson, Jennifer van der Kleut, Marisa Walz, Charlene Wang, Penny Zang Introductions by Robert Dugoni   Trianon Ballroom, 3rd Floor <i>ThrillerFest registration required for entrance / Guest tickets may be purchased separately</i>			
10:00 am - 10:25 am	Authors from early morning sessions will be signing in Murray Hill West & East, including the 2026 DEBUT AUTHORS			
10:30 am - 11:20 am	<b>TRUTH, SECRETS OR SHADOWS?</b> <b>Characters That Drive Plot</b> Moderator: James L'Étoile Robert Dugoni Joseph Finder Mark Greaney Tosca Lee Mark Sullivan	<b>SCENE, SHOT OR SEQUENCE?</b> <b>Pacing in Scripts</b> Moderator: Elena Hartwell Taylor Lee Matthew Goldberg Jon Lindstrom Raphael Montes Susan Walter Matt Witten	<b>ANXIETY, DREAD OR ADRENALINE?</b> <b>Thriller Awards Nominees</b> Moderator: Todd Gerber James Byrne Mark Edwards Sophie Stava Olivia Worley Liann Zhang	<b>THE BUTLER, FINAL GIRL OR IN TOO DEEP?</b> <b>The Truth About Tropes</b> Moderator: Jaime Levine Peter Malone Elliott Jamie Mason Melissa Pace Ande Pliego Saratoga Schaefer
11:30 am - 12:20 pm	Silver Bullet Award Winner DOUGLAS PRESTON, interviewed by HEATHER GRAHAM   Sutton North & Sutton Center			
12:20 pm - 12:45 pm	Authors from the late morning sessions will sign in Murray Hill West & East, including Silver Bullet Award Winner DOUGLAS PRESTON			
12:50 pm - 1:40 pm	<b>PAGE, SCREEN OR STREAM?</b> <b>Turning Thrillers Into Film</b> Moderator: K.J. Howe May Cobb Harlan Coben S.A. Cosby Mark Greaney Jordan Mobio Karin Slaughter	<b>VISUALIZE, EXPERIENCE OR IMMERSE?</b> <b>Ways To Get Your Audiobook Published</b> Moderator: Suzanne Elise Freeman Scott Brick Hillary Huber Jessica Kaye Karissa Vacker	<b>LOST, FOUND OR ON THE EDGE?</b> <b>YA Stories That Push the Limit</b> Moderator: Alexa Wejko Clay McLeod Chapman Rebekah Faubion Carlyn Greenwald Liz Lawson R. L. Stine Ron Wolf	<b>COMPLEX, INSIGHTFUL OR LAYERED?</b> <b>Deep Characterization</b> Moderator: Gary Grossman Jenn Bregman Puja Guha Greta Kelly Larry Light Priscilla Paton
1:50 pm - 2:40 pm	ThrillerMaster HARLAN COBEN, interviewed by MEGAN ABBOTT   Sutton North & Sutton Center			
2:40 pm - 3:05 pm	Authors from the early afternoon sessions will sign in Murray Hill West & East, including ThrillerMaster HARLAN COBEN			
3:10 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>COMPELLING, CUNNING OR CONNING?</b> <b>Unforgettable Villains</b> Moderator: Samuel Octavius David Baldacci Candice Fox Meg Gardiner Chris Pavone L.J. Ross Lisa Unger	<b>VILLAINOUS, VICTIM OR VISIONARY?</b> <b>Antagonists with Depth</b> Moderator: Carter Wilson Jenna Blum Linda Joffe Hull Joshilyn Jackson Laurie R. King Melinda Leigh Jern Williams	<b>UNIQUE, MEMORABLE OR AUTHENTIC?</b> <b>Powerful Secondary Characters</b> Moderator: Dan Vidra Raymond Benson Will Dean Anne-Sophie Jouhanneau James L'Étoile Hannah Morrissey	<b>TRADITIONAL, INDIE OR SMALL PRESS?</b> <b>My Publishing Journey</b> Moderator: Heather Graham Nicole Blades Kit Conway Rosanne Limoncelli V.A. Vazquez
4:10 pm - 5:00 pm	<b>ENGAGE, SHOCK OR DELIGHT?</b> <b>Twists and Reveals</b> Moderator: Jeff Ayers Lynne Constantine Jennifer Hillier Clare Mackintosh R. L. Stine Tessa Wegert	<b>PRESSURE, PANIC OR PAYOFF?</b> <b>Turning Up the Heat</b> Moderator: Traci Abramson Jamie Freveletti Ward Larsen Connor Martin Boyd Morrison Chris Mullen	<b>VICTIM, HERO OR MARTYR?</b> <b>Psychological Suspense</b> Moderator: K. T. Nguyen Tullan Holmqvist Bonnie Kistler Melissa Larsen Jennifer Pashley Miranda Smith	<b>CALM, CONFIDENT OR COMPELLING?</b> <b>Audiobook Narration</b> Moderator: Steve Feldberg Michael Crouch C.N. Mabry Ruffin Prentiss Machele Williams Landon Woodson
5:00 pm - 5:25 pm	Authors from the late afternoon sessions will sign in Murray Hill West & East			
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	<b>PRE-BANQUET COCKTAIL PARTY, hosted by ITW   3rd Floor West Promenade &amp; Grand Ballroom Foyer (3rd Floor)</b> <i>Banquet registration required</i>			
7:00 PM	ITW Presents the 21st ANNUAL THRILLER AWARDS BANQUET, hosted by Emcee MARK GREANEY   Grand Ballroom (3rd Floor) 2026 ThrillerMaster LISA SCOTTLINE, Award Presented by 2016 ThrillerMaster HEATHER GRAHAM 2026 ThrillerMaster HARLAN COBEN, Award Presented by 2023 ThrillerMaster CHARLAINE HARRIS 2026 Silver Bullet Award Recipient DOUGLAS PRESTON, Award Presented by 2019 ThrillerMaster JOHN SANDFORD 2026 Thriller Legend Award Recipient BARBARA PETERS, Award Presented by #1 New York Times bestseller JACK CARR 2026 Thriller Fan Award Recipient JORDAN MOBLO, 2026 Thriller Volunteer of the Year Recipient JAMES L'ÉTOILE, 2026 Trailblazer Award Recipients ANDREA BARTZ, CHARLES GRAEBER, & KIRK JOHNSON Presentation of the THRILLER AWARDS with ITW VP of Awards, New York Times bestseller Tosca Lee			
	<b>THRILLERMASTER AFTER PARTY honoring 2026 ThrillerMasters LISA SCOTTLINE and HARLAN COBEN, hosted by ITW   3rd Floor West Promenade and Grand Ballroom Foyer (3rd Floor)</b> <i>Banquet registration required</i>			