

## Editor's Note

On the evening of November 1, 2018, I received a breathless note from my colleague Warren Moore. Warren is not the breathless type, so I paid attention. He wanted to know, "Have you seen Larry's latest newsletter?"

"Larry" was crime writer Lawrence Block, and no, I had not seen his latest newsletter, so I checked my email immediately. This edition of Block's newsletter was titled "November? Already?," and it was presented in its usual format, an imagined dialogue between the writer and his interested but impatient audience. The newsletter ended with the imagined audience asking, "Are we done now? Is that all you have to report?," to which Block replied:

Well, yes, I guess it is.

Except that I was thinking of floating a notion to all of y'all. Lately I've found myself ruminating wistfully on the vision of myself ensconced for a while on a college campus, serving as the institution's writer in residence. I don't know how realistic a fantasy this might be, nor am I sure to what extent the attraction is attributable to autumn leaves and football season, but it does feel like something I might want to pursue.

Now I don't even have a bachelor's degree, but I can claim six decades of street cred as a professional writer, and I've written more books on the subject than anyone should have to read.

So why am I telling y'all about it?

Well, a dozen years ago I was setting up a tour in aid of *The Burglar on the Prowl*, and it struck me that I might be able to speak at libraries for a fraction of my usual fee if I could fit them into my book tour. So I wrote something to that effect in my newsletter, and some librarians read the item and told other librarians about it, and, well, one thing led to another. And I wound up driving all over the country and presenting a program at over sixty libraries.

(I drove all over the place in a rented Chevy Blazer. I'd hoped for a Ford SUV, so that I could be the Schnorrer in the Explorer, but it didn't work. Never mind.)

So, if an idle remark in a newsletter could net me sixty speaking gigs, who's to say it won't lead me to a spell of camping out in one of the Groves of Academe?

One never knows . . .

Warren wanted to know, "You think we can make this happen?" Now I understood his breathlessness. Ever the dutiful administrator, I patiently explained to him why we could never make this happen—and then we made it happen.

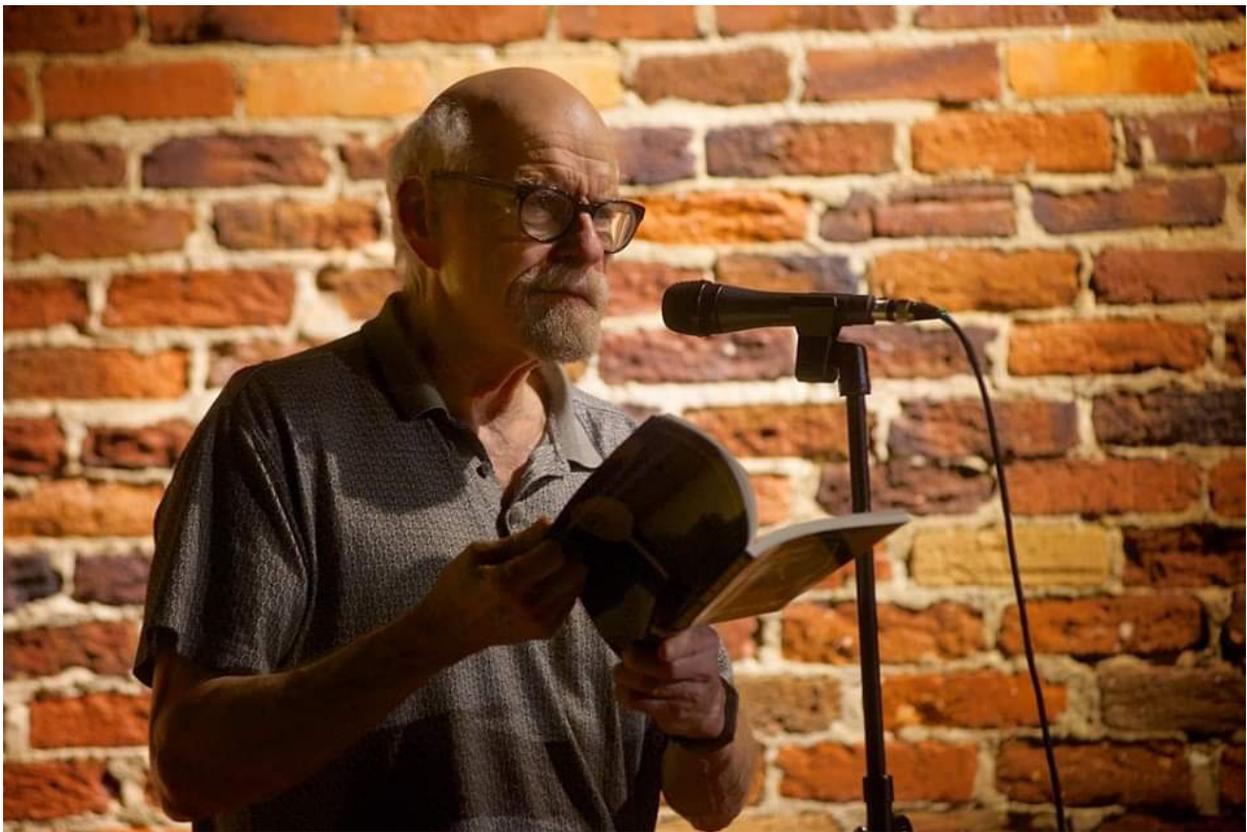
Block had come to Newberry once before, in 2010, as part of a series of author visits generously underwritten by friends of the college James and June Gerding. That spring, first-year Newberry students read Block's great Matthew Scudder novel *Eight Million Ways to Die*, and the writer visited with them and discussed the novel and his career. Things went well enough that he was inclined to return in 2019.

Lawrence Block joined the faculty of Newberry College for the Fall 2019 semester as our first Gerding Writer-in-Residence. He taught two classes, headlined Newberry's first Noir at the Bar event, and sat for an interview with Warren Moore before an audience at the Newberry Opera House. That interview is included as a special feature of the second issue of *Studies in Crime Writing*.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Brooke Berry, a Newberry student who served as my editorial assistant in preparing this issue for publication. Her patient dedication to detail has substantially improved the final product.

Thank you for reading.

*David Rachels  
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United States*



*Lawrence Block appears at Noir at the Bar in Newberry, South Carolina, on October 10, 2019.  
Photograph by Larry Cameron.*