



“Bob’s Interview”

By Crime Writers of Canada Associate Bob Harris

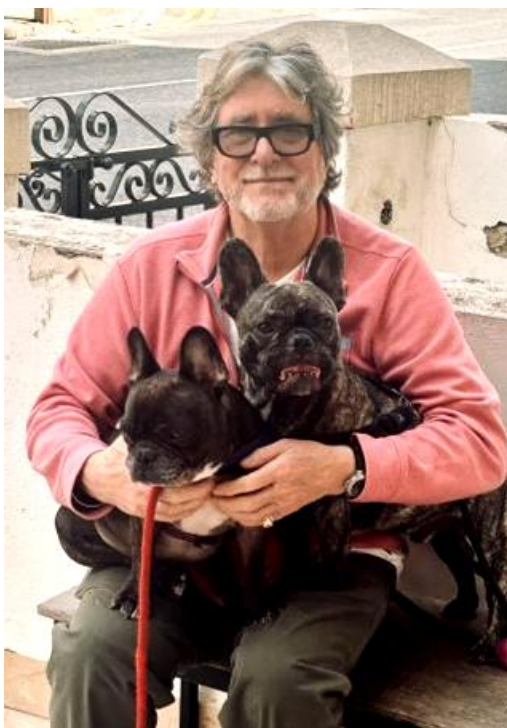
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Meet Mark Grenside

Bob Harris is a Vancouver writer, book promoter, publicist and event producer.



Mark at his villa in Malta with Clouseau and Baloo (who is looking at the camera).

Mark is a CWC International Associate and former UK award-winning film and television producer turned thriller author, drawing on insider knowledge of Hollywood to create the *Marcus Riley and Mako de Turris* series.

He is a natural storyteller and recently acquired a six novel deal with London publisher Sharpe Books. Three eBooks debuted July 21, 2026 on Amazon. Paperback releases to follow.

I had the opportunity to spend Christmas 2021 in Malta with my long-time business colleague Marc and his wife Katerina, her twins Josie and Savanna, and their grandmother Vlasta. I spent three happy and amazing months with the family.

It was a great time: touring the island by motorcycle, hiking and exploring historic sites and learning about Malta history. A highlight was attending Maltese cultural events and dinner parties hosted by Marc and Katerina and friends.

On my second night there, Mark and Kirsten Grenside hosted a dinner for us at their marvelous villa. Mark loves to cook. Later in the evening, conversation turned to writing and publishing. Mark's debut thriller *FALL OUT*, originally published in 2020 (Urbane Publications), had garnered an avalanche of accolades and praise from print and broadcast media, book reviewers and writers <https://markgrenside.com/fall-out/reviews/> but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic caused his publisher to close up shop in Spring 2021.

However, an opportunity with UK publisher Bloodhound Books arose and the book was republished later in 2021.

I was intrigued with this "publishing story" and accepted the Grensides' request to bring *FALL OUT* to Canada for readers and booksellers to discover.

*"Thanks for the chat, Bob. It's always nice to be interviewed by someone with insight into the writing process as well as having a good sense of humour. You have been a huge support in a number of areas and you can take credit for the inclusion of Vancouver in **The Bastion**." - Mark Grenside*

FALL OUT PRAISE

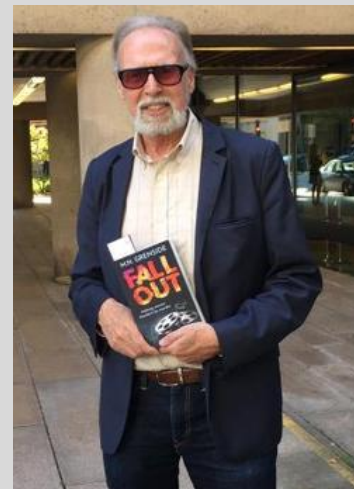


"I love this book — and I have read it six times! In 30 years in book publishing, I have seldom found a thriller that is so satisfying or this much fun. *Fall Out* is a rich (and believable) mix of history, movies, travel, and unforgettable characters. When you've read this book, you'll join me in longing for the next. Marcus and Mako are wickedly interesting people."

– Sherry Landrum, Author and Editor



"Riveting. Page-turning. A jaw-dropping rollercoaster of action and surprise. And best of all, it's based upon shocking true history. A real gem." – **Damien Lewis, International No.1 Bestselling Author**



"Mark reeled me in with his debut novel. It's a must read for fans of crime fiction, mystery and thrillers. This book is made for the screen!" – **Bob Harris, Writer, Book Promoter and Event Producer.**



Mark's villa in Malta on the Mediterranean.



A feature display at Indigo in Vancouver.



Mark gives a nod to BC author AJ Devlin.



AJ responds, selling *FALL OUT* at a book show.

Background

Mark Grenside - From London to Malta

Mark Grenside, born and raised in London, began his working career straight out of school at Lloyds of London, specializing in Kidnap, Ransom and Extortion Insurance. At 25 it was time for a career change and to dump the suit and tie, so he started his media career working for Jim Henson and The Muppets©. From that moment on he has been involved in Entertainment and nearly every aspect of it.

He went on to create and produce several television series and mini-series. At the same time, he started a music management company launching million seller artist Neneh Cherry.

In 2004, Mark arranged the US \$250 million buyout of Hallmark Channel International which was then successfully sold to NBC. He returned to producing a number of movies and mini-series.

Today, Mark is a thriller writer celebrated for his intricate, twist-filled stories that weave meticulously researched historical facts, richly detailed locations, and insider knowledge of the film industry, all of which feed directly into his crime and conspiracy-driven plots. He is also a serial entrepreneur and is a co-founder of two digital companies.

An unhealthy amount of time and money is lavished on a collection of classic cars that he has raced all over the world. In addition to his passion for cooking and history, he enjoys risk and has parachuted in New Zealand, scuba-dived in the Pacific, hang-glided in the Himalayas and even tobogganed down the Cresta Run. In nearly every case chasing after his wife Kirsten, who is utterly fearless!

He completed the follow-up to his debut thriller *Fall Out*, entitled *The Bastion*, as well as *Sunset Circus*, and recently signed a six book thriller series deal with London publishing house Sharpe Books.

Now based in Malta, Mark has travelled to more than 120 countries—an experience that informs the global scope of his writing. He also writes a humorous blog at www.andanotherthing.com with subscribers in more than 50 countries and maintains an active presence in the creative and media industries.

The Interview

Our Conversation

Hello Mark, thank you for making time to chat with me today. Let's begin by giving me a brief overview of your background in Kidnap, Ransom and Extortion Insurance at Lloyds of London. What led you there and how does that type of insurance work?

In the 1970s, during first oil crisis, President Nixon worried that companies might try to save money by not taking out all the insurance available to them. He made directors personally liable to shareholders for any losses sustained that were insurable. Kidnap and Ransom was, in those days a tiny backwater, but that law exploded the market, and the Tylenol case, where the company was effectively blackmailed into not revealing which containers had been tampered with, only accelerated it.

By the time I joined Lloyd's, there was a wave of this insurance, and I caught it.

Here's how it worked: a lead underwriter was given the full details of the insured person, and only he knew their identity. Every other underwriter on the policy saw nothing but a code; the actual name was guarded closely. The other underwriters trusted the lead underwriter completely to set the premiums correctly. If someone was taken, the policy carried a very specific loss adjuster clause, and a company called Control Risks would step in to negotiate the release. Every insured had to pay from their own funds first, before the insurance compensated them. Companies covered for product extortion, however, were named, that was a different structure entirely.

The Award-Winning Filmmaker

As a filmmaker, who and what were your influences and why? And mentors?

This splits into three parts. First, the source material, either a book or a screenplay. I had many heroes here: for books, Raymond Chandler,

Frederick Forsyth and Michael Crichton; for screenplays, William Goldman, David S. Ward and Lawrence Kasdan.

Second, directors: my heroes were John Huston, Alfred Hitchcock, Steven Spielberg, Joseph Mankiewicz and Mel Brooks.

Third, actors: Sean Connery, Annette Bening, Billy Bob Thornton, Emma Stone, Peter Sellers, Steve McQueen and Bette Davis. Why these names? Because in every case, the very good work was stellar, and even the weaker was still watchable.

What was your biggest challenge as a film and television producer? And please list some of the projects you produced?

Producing is a deeply collaborative process. There are so many cogs in making a movie.

At the start, you have to find a story, then bring on a screenwriter, a director and a director of photography. Next comes the budget, followed by the knit-one-purl-one-stitch-one work of raising the money. That involves not just a deep knowledge of and relationship with studios, cable or direct-to-TV broadcasters and distributors, but a sharp understanding of how tax incentives work. Finally, you need to know how to take all these disparate deals and commitments and turn them into cash, which means understanding banking, too. All this happens before a single frame is shot, which of course also needs to be insured with a completion bond.

Mounting a production is very similar to taking an army into battle. You need the soldiers, meaning the actors and all the other creative talent, but you have to be able to house them, feed them and get them to a location or studio. Then comes a few months of high stress. After that, it's editing, special effects, dubbing and foley work until you finally have a finished product, which you then spend a year promoting and publicizing.

I have produced everything from *Crossbow*, a three-year, 72 episode half-hour action series, to *Chillers*, an anthology series based on Patricia Highsmith stories, to miniseries like *Neverland*, the back story of Peter Pan and, *Treasure Island*, both produced for NBC and Sky.

On Writing and Research

What does the writing room environment in your Malta villa look like and how do you keep the space organized?

It's only organized when I have writer's block, so I tidy up when my mind is blank. The room is at the top of the house, with a view out over St. Paul's Bay into the Mediterranean. I fill the space with artifacts I've collected and reference books. I am very detail-oriented, though modern-day thrillers set in the film industry always include a hook of history's lesser-known facts and nuggets.

What time of day or night is your creativity at maximum flow?

There's no rhyme or reason to it. It can be anytime. I go with the Muse's flow.

How do you approach research for a book?

I start with a "MacGuffin", the hook, usually a shocking piece of history. It's like a pebble I throw into the water, and my research becomes the ripples that spread out from that initial splash.

Kindly explain your writing method and style. Are you a plotter or a pantsier?

When I write, it's a journey. Research is a driver for me. I start with one pure narrative hook and no real idea yet of the characters I'll create or the multiple storylines that eventually come together. I suppose that as I write and research, my imagination and facts meld into a storyline. Along the way, I always ask three questions:

- Is character informing the action?
- What is the least expected turn in the story?
- Is it eventually all completely believable?

Briefly describe a typical week in your writing life as a thriller novelist.

Each day is different, let alone a week. I usually write in the morning until about four in the afternoon, but it depends. Sometimes it's a gusher, sometimes just a drip.

In terms of your writing career, support, promotion and marketing, what is the role that your wife Kirsten plays, given that her previous career was television marketing and sales in domestic and foreign territories?

My wife is a vital part of the machine. Publishers, of course, promote, but to get real traction you need to cover as many bases as possible, and this interview with you is a great example of that. We both come from media backgrounds, which helps, but as they say, the harder you work and the more persistent you are, the luckier you get. She handles all of our social media, which I absolutely hate, and she's always finding new ways to promote my work and keep it in front of readers. I'd be lost without her.

The Marcus Riley and Mako de Turris Series

What inspired this six book series?

I always wanted to write thrillers, but using the movie world as a backdrop, more a frame around the actual story than the story itself. In each of my books, the real crime or mystery has nothing to do with movies, but something happens within the movie world of my producer protagonist and that sets it all off.

Give me the elevator pitch on the whole sextet to date, including the background setting of it and core theme?

That's a long elevator ride for six books. Each story starts with an event, a murder, a robbery, a theft tied to moviemaking, but leads to a story far beyond that world.

Describe the lifestyle, ethnic and personality profiles of your main characters Marcus Riley and Mako de Turris and how they met.

Marcus Riley is an English producer in his mid-forties. He rode the wave of English gangster, Guy Ritchie-type movies at the millennium and graduated to producing both US studio-funded movies and streaming series. He's quick-witted, generous and curious, with a strong moral compass. Until he met Melinda 'Mako' de Turris, he had never converted that morality into actual action. She brought that out in him.

Mako is 38, with a Chinese mother and a Swiss-American father. When she first met Marcus, she was an event organizer and booth designer for the multiple festivals in Cannes, projects often costing well into six figures yet lasting barely a week. She was self-centered, with no view of the long term, focused only on the here and now, both in her relationships and her business life. Only the immediate both in her relationships as well as business life.

They met because of a screenplay sent to her father, which eventually uncovered a murder and a crime on Marcus's first movie twenty years earlier, one that had stopped shooting halfway through in the jungles of the Philippines. It also uncovered much about her parents, and it changed Mako. On top of her fearsome logic, she came to see the benefit of coming to terms with the past and looking further into the future than just a few days. Marcus changed her, and the two bring out so much more in each other.

In terms of antagonists and their portrayal, how do you manage the "realism" balance of their every day human side (i.e. villain versus non-villain traits) while treading the thin line of reader empathy?

Character is action. Unless you can clearly draw characters who are instantly recognizable as your story progresses, you will lose your audience. Physical description isn't enough. They have to embody a personality that informs how the story unfolds.

My understanding is that you "blur the lines between fact and fiction" in your books. Explain.

I use historical facts, then extend those facts, some based on strong probability, some on possibility, but never beyond reality.

The original two producers of the James Bond franchise always said their stories were set twenty minutes into the future. That ability to mix fantasy with everyday reality is, for me, one of the drivers of a good thriller franchise. You can almost taste the reality even though you know it's wild fiction.

You have a deep passion for history and use it as an important element in your writing style. To what benefit to the reader?

It blends the known with what I create as mystery. Believability does not mean the stories have to be gritty, depressing, or have a flawed hero. It

does mean the story should wrap up the reader in both the warmth of familiarity and the cold chill of risk, surprise, and danger.

Describe your journey to landing Sharpe Books as your publisher.

That's entirely down to the doggedness of my wife. She found them and sent them the books, and they seemed to like what they read. I think having six books ready to go was a real bonus. So often with franchises, a publisher worries that if they print and promote the first one, will there be others to follow?

You have six books completed for your publisher. The first three were released. Kindly give me a very brief synopsis of each book.



FALL OUT

When LA screenwriter Sam Wood is murdered days after finishing his new script, down-on-his-luck British producer Marcus Riley is stunned to receive a copy in the mail. *FALL OUT* is more than a screenplay, it's a message from an old friend, seeded with clues to a mystery Marcus thought long buried: the disastrous production of *THE LAST COMPANY* and the disappearance of its stunt coordinator twenty years earlier. Drawn in alongside Cannes-based designer Melinda 'Mako' de Turris, Marcus follows the trail from Los Angeles

to the Cannes Film Festival, the Swiss Alps and the Philippines, uncovering a real-life mystery, Yamashita's Gold, the fortune in plundered treasure the Japanese army hid across the Philippines at the end of the Second World War, and Nu-Shu, the secret script once used only by women in Hunan province. As old alliances unravel and a ruthless fixer closes in, Marcus and Mako must solve Sam's puzzle before it gets them killed too.

THE BASTION

Elite Lloyd's of London kidnap and ransom negotiator Timo Glock has spent his career protecting the world's wealthiest people, until he decides to become the predator instead. Using a stolen list of the world's most heavily insured individuals, encoded inside the film reels of a Hollywood blockbuster shooting on remote Adak Island, Timo sets a global conspiracy in motion, one that reaches from a Los Angeles visual effects studio to a secretive data vault in Valletta. When producer Marcus Riley becomes the last link to a murdered colleague's final warning, he and his partner Mako are pulled into a web of blackmail, kidnapping and betrayal, racing through Malta's underground tunnels to stop a stolen fortune, and a stolen list, from falling into the wrong hands.

SUNSET CIRCUS

Olga Miksa rules Nevada's most feared crime family on two buried secrets: a fortune in Romanov treasure smuggled out of Russia by her father, and an act of Cold War betrayal that bought the family's immunity from East and West alike. When an old friend hands producer Marcus Riley a cryptic riddle and turns up dead outside LA's most notorious pawn shop hours later, Marcus and his partner Mako are pulled into the Miksas' world, a labyrinth of mobsters, traitors and lethal loyalties built to protect a legacy that reaches back to the lost Tobolsk urns and the Eremin Letters, and forward to Stalin's darkest secret. The deeper they dig, the higher the body count climbs, and the more Marcus and Mako become the only people standing between the Miksas and a truth that could rewrite history.

Are there more stories planned?

Yes, at least 10 in all.

How has your membership in Crime Writers of Canada benefitted you?

It's always good to interact with fellow authors, exchange views and discuss the market. Crime Writers of Canada in particular has a warm, generous community, and it's been a real pleasure connecting with writers there who are so willing to share their experience.

Do you belong to other writer organizations?

Yes I do. The Crime Writers Association, Mystery Writers of America, The Society of Authors, Historical Writers Association, Aspects of Crime, Aspects of History and The Independent Author Network.

What are you currently reading and watching?

Watching Apple TV's *Lucky* — the crime thriller mini-series created by Jonathan Tropp that premiered on July 16, 2026 — and reading my 6th book for another edit!

Thank you for this interview, Mark. It has been a pleasure knowing you and Kirsten and discovering the fascinating life the two of you lead.

To wrap up our conversation, kindly give me flash answers to:

Your favourite beverage:

Non-alcoholic – cold ginger cordial and hot espresso macchiato.

Alcoholic – cold Kirin beer or room-temperature Pomerol.

A memorable book from your childhood:

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis.

Your favorite Malta landmark:

The view of Grand Harbour.

The dinner menu you would prepare for hosting a small Vancouver film crew at your Malta villa:

Starter: Pea, pear and watercress soup, paired with a crisp Zagra Grillo.

Main: Lamb roasted in hay, with crispy parsnip fingers in maple syrup, cauliflower cheese, carrots with water chestnuts, and Dauphinoise potatoes, paired with a decent Château Clinet Pomerol.

Cheese: Reblochon, Tête de Moine, Pavé d'Affinois, Stilton and Comté, paired with Dow's 1985 Port or Darroze 20-year-old Armagnac.

Dessert: Riverside café recipe chocolate cake and homemade honey and brandy ice cream.

An unexpected and thrilling moment you experienced as a rookie insurance broker of Kidnap, Ransom and Extortion Insurance at Lloyds of London:

We lost a client in Brazil. Three giant recovery and negotiation experts from the Control Risks team came to collect the details. Each had a notebook. They slid them together, writing notes across all three in an undecipherable shorthand, then each took one notebook back. The most senior one looked at me and said, "Someone might get one of these from us. But never all three." I wouldn't have dared, even if I'd been armed with a howitzer and all they'd had to defend themselves were teaspoons.

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