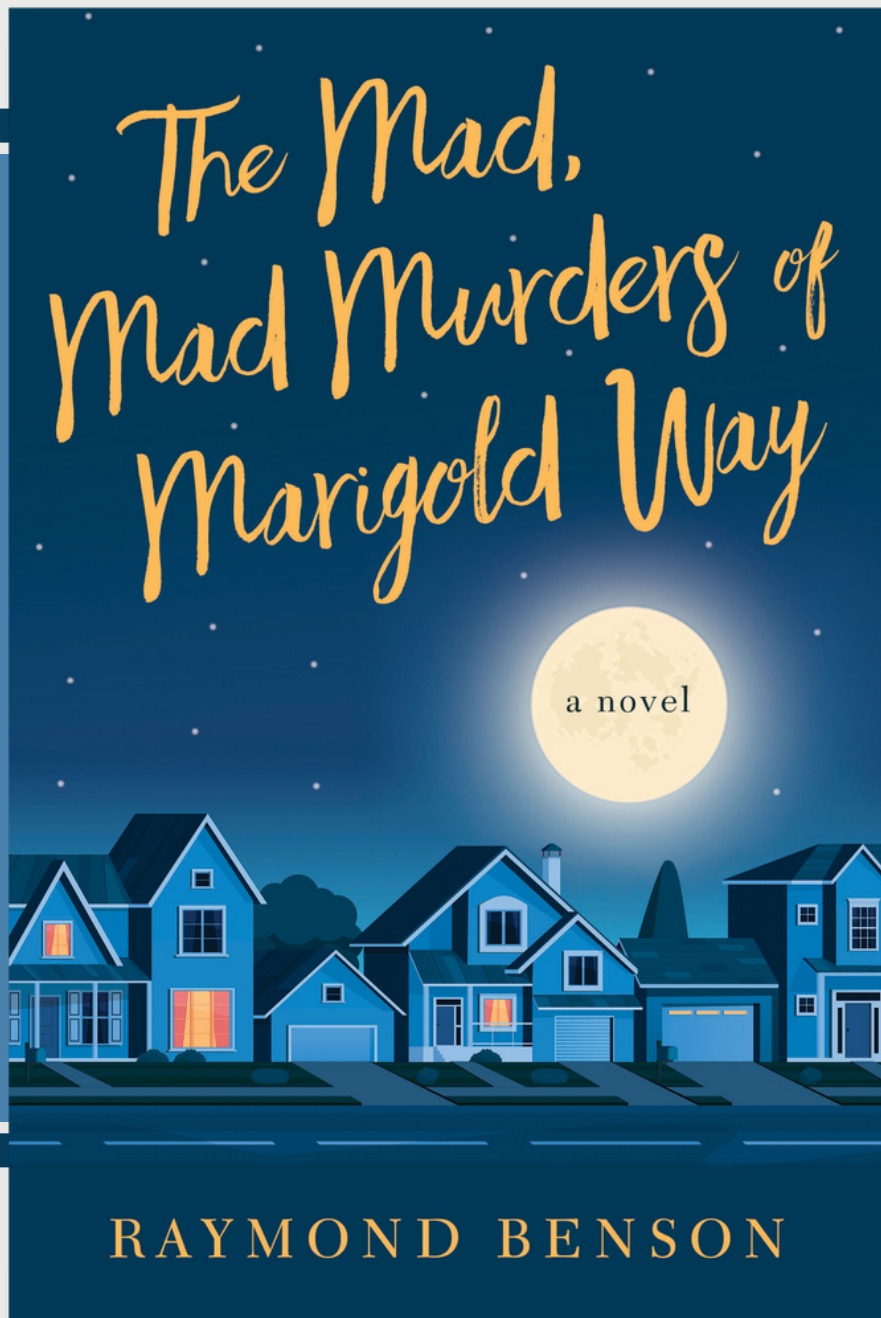


# The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way

BY RAYMOND BENSON



PRESS KIT

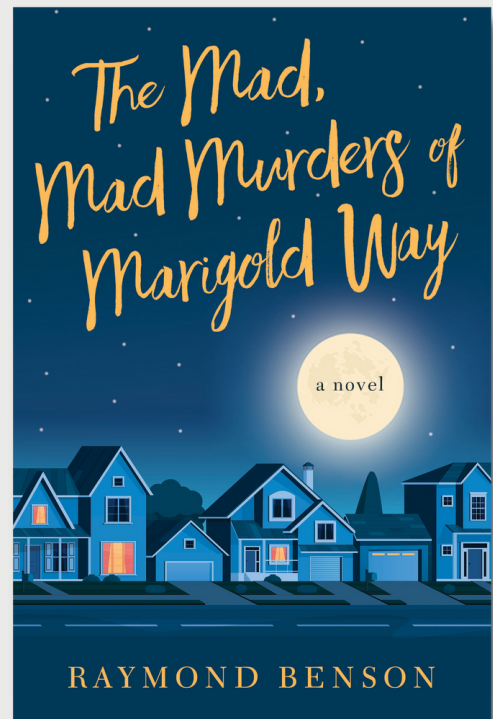
# The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way

**From internationally acclaimed and best-selling author Raymond Benson comes a wry and darkly comedic work in which a quaint suburb of Chicago finds itself rocked by more than just the uncertainties of 2020. Perfect for fans of Celeste Ng and the twisted prose of Tom Perrotta.**

For Scott Hatcher, a former television writer turned struggling novelist with a failing marriage to boot, social-distancing and mask-wearing feel like fitting additions to his already surreal life. When his wife Marie and neighbor John Bergman disappear in the middle of the raging COVID-19 pandemic, Scott is naturally mystified and disturbed, but he is also about to learn that his picturesque neighborhood hides more than just the mundane routines of suburban life.

When a fire claims the empty house for sale next door, the entire community is shocked when the charred remains of Marie and John are found inside. Stranger still, stockpiles of valuable Personal Protection Equipment, clearly stolen, were destroyed in the blaze alongside them. As the neighborhood reels from the loss, Scott and Bergman's earthy and enticing widow, Rachel, not only find themselves under investigation for the crime, but also inexorably drawn to one another. As tensions reach a fever pitch, the tale—which is at once familiar and ordinary, yet bizarre and eerie—shows that, just like life in 2020's uncertain times, dread and danger lurk below the hidden underside of everyday suburbia.

Fans of Thornton Wilder's classic **Our Town** and films by the sardonic Coen Brothers will be captivated by the warped Americana of **The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way**.



## Contact Information

For any questions or media inquiries, please use the following contact information:

**Website:** [www.beaufortbooks.com](http://www.beaufortbooks.com)

**Email:** [emma@beaufortbooks.com](mailto:emma@beaufortbooks.com)

**Social:** [@beaufortbooks](https://www.instagram.com/beaufortbooks)



"So convincing is *The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way* that we too may ask ourselves if we really know what's happening in our neighborhoods and even under our own roofs..."

– JIM FUSILLI, author of *Narrows Gate* and *The Mayor of Polk Street*

## Quick Facts



**Full Title:** The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way

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**Page Count:** 320 pages

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**Genre:** Mystery & thriller

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**Publisher:** Beaufort Books

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**Publication Date:** 10/04/2022

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**ISBN:** 9780825309915

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**Price:** \$24.95

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**Available formats:** Hardcover & ebook

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**Distributor:** Independent Publishers Group

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**Rights:** World

# Excerpt

Friends, this is a little tale about murder.

It takes place in a stereotypical American suburb, on a familiar American street, not too far northwest—but far enough—from a major American metropolitan center, Chicago, Illinois. For our purposes, we'll call our suburb Lincoln Grove, although its name, as well as the names of the characters involved, have been changed to protect... oh, I don't know. Changing names isn't going to protect anyone.

Our story is set in May of 2020. Since March of 2020, the occupants of Lincoln Grove have been hunkering down, dealing with the pandemic in their own way. They're keeping the kids home, working out of their living rooms or bedrooms via computers, toiling in their yards, taking walks or riding bicycles for exercise, and avoiding their neighbors except to speak occasionally while standing at least six feet apart and perhaps wearing masks. No one dons masks when out walking—the paths are never crowded.

I suppose the most significant thing about the neighborhood is that no one on the horseshoe has gotten sick. Most everyone has worked to keep safe and practice social distancing. Still, one can almost taste the paranoia and mistrust in the air. Fear of the virus is tangible. Jokes about toilet paper hoarding have long passed. The residents of Lincoln Grove attempt to stay chipper and keep a positive attitude, but there is no question that every person is on edge.

I'm sure you know what I'm talking about.

And this is where our little murder tale commences.

**Most everyone has worked to keep safe and practice social distancing. Still, one can almost taste the paranoia and mistrust in the air. Fear of the virus is tangible. Jokes about toilet paper hoarding have long passed. The residents of Lincoln Grove attempt to stay chipper and keep a positive attitude, but there is no question that every person is on edge.**



## AJ Hartley

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF  
BURNING SHAKESPEARE

"Imagine a chatty narrator walking you through a sunny suburban neighborhood, turning over rocks, looking under garbage cans, and revealing things the smiling residents would rather stay in the dark. Intriguing, shocking, and bleakly comic, one thing is certain; nothing is as it seems on Marigold Way."



## Reed Farrel Coleman

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING  
AUTHOR OF SLEEPLESS CITY

"Benson's *The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way* delivers bigtime. Sharp-witted and unconventional, it sneaks up on you, grabs you, and never lets go."



# Biography

RAYMOND BENSON is the author of more than forty published books. He is most well-known as the third—and first American—author of continuation James Bond novels, commissioned by the Ian Fleming copyright holders. In total, six original 007 novels, three film novelizations, and three short stories were published worldwide between 1997 and 2002. His best-selling and critically praised five-book serial, *The Black Stiletto*, is in development as a possible feature film or television series.

## Previous Works

### **Choice of Weapons**

Published by: Pegasus Books

Genre: Thriller

ISBN13: 9781605980997

### **The Black Stiletto**

Published by: Oceanview Publishing

Genre: Thriller

ISBN13: 9781608090631

### **The Secrets on Chicory Lane**

Published by: Skyhorse Publishing

Genre: Thriller

ISBN13: 9781510729941

### **Blues in the Dark**

Published by: Skyhorse Publishing


Genre: Thriller


ISBN13: 9781948924917

**Raymond Benson is the author of more than forty published books. He is most well-known as the third—and first American—author of continuation James Bond novels, commissioned by the Ian Fleming copyright holders.**

Additionally, Raymond is the author of many popular media tie-in novelizations. Raymond's extensive experience in New York City theatre as a stage director and musician/composer continues to inform his work, and as a noted film historian, he has taught college courses in film history in New York and Illinois for decades. Raymond regularly contributes articles and reviews to *Cinema Retro* magazine, and he has been presenting well-attended lectures on film in the Chicago area for over fifteen years.

 [raymondbenson.com](http://raymondbenson.com)

 [facebook.com/AuthorRaymondBenson](https://facebook.com/AuthorRaymondBenson)

 [@RaymondBenson](https://twitter.com/RaymondBenson)

# Endorsements

“Stellar mystery set in 2020. Though all the characters are painted with convincing brushstrokes, it’s the narrator, not identified until the end, who steals the show. “I’m the storyteller here, and I can tell the tale any way I choose!” he declares, and he freely editorializes and speculates about others, himself, and the troubled times following the lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This wild roller coaster of a novel is an attention-grabber from first page to last.”

— **Publisher's Weekly**, Starred Review

“The quirky structure of the novel, evoking a stage play, lulls you into a false, cozy sense of security... but don't be fooled—violence and murder are lurking in the background. Benson is a deft and assured storyteller with an amiable, warm and gentle voice reminiscent of Burl Ives or a grown-up John Boy Walton, and this may just be his masterpiece.”

— **Lee Goldberg**, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Lost Hills*

“Confirming his reputation as a master storyteller, Benson’s sly, suspenseful tale of murder and betrayal in a sleepy Chicago suburb during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic wheedles its way under our skin and into our psyche. So convincing is *The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way* that we too may ask ourselves if we really know what’s happening in our neighborhoods and even under our own roofs...”

— **Jim Fusilli**, author of *Narrows Gate* and *The Mayor of Polk Street*

# Press Release

## **Prolific author Raymond Benson to publish satirical COVID-19 thriller**

Penned at the start of the pandemic, "The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way" takes a clever and darkly comic spin on the pandemic novel

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, NY - "The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way" by Raymond Benson is set to be published on October 4, 2022 by Beaufort Books.

The wry novel is a slight departure from Benson's previous works. Having published more than 40 books, Benson is most well-known for being the third—and first American—author of continuation James Bond novels, commissioned by the Ian Fleming copyright holders. Other recent works include "Hotel Destiny—A Ghost Noir" (September 2020), "Blues in the Dark" (October 2019), "In the Hush of Night" (May 2018), and "The Secrets on Chicory Lane" (October 2017).

When asked what inspired him to write a satirical thriller set in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when fear and desperation were running rampant across the globe, Benson noted, "As with most writers, my imagination, fueled by the fever dream of the paranoia and bizarre life we were leading during the lockdown, took off... and the story grew from there."

**"Raymond Benson's "The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way" is absolutely brilliant; truly one of the most original stories I've ever read. Clever, witty, unexpected, and utterly engaging, I loved this book!"**

**—Karen Dionne, #1 internationally bestselling author of "The Marsh King's Daughter"**

Fans of Celeste Ng's "Little Fires Everywhere," Thornton Wilder's classic "Our Town," and films by the sardonic Coen Brothers will be captivated by the warped Americana of "**The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way.**" The book is available for preorder now wherever fine books are sold.

Beaufort Books is an independent publisher based in New York City. Beaufort publishes a mix of non-fiction and fiction titles, with about 15–20 new titles each year. Since 2007, Beaufort has published four New York Times bestsellers.

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For more information about "**The Mad, Mad Murders of Marigold Way**" or to arrange an interview with the author, please contact Emma St. John at [emma@beaufortbooks.com](mailto:emma@beaufortbooks.com).



# Interview Questions

## **What inspired this book?**

It was May 2020 and my wife and I were in lockdown at home with Covid-19 raging outside. At that time, no one knew what the future would hold. There was no vaccine in sight, and there was still so much that was unknown about the virus. The geographical environment in the story mirrors where we were living (fictionalized, but yes, we live on a street not unlike “Marigold Way” and in a town very much like “Lincoln Grove”!). For months prior to the pandemic, and during it, the house next door to ours was for sale. It took a long time to sell it—not sure why. As with most writers, my imagination, fueled by the fever dream of the paranoia and bizarre life we were leading during the lockdown, took off and created a strange back story for that unsold house... and the story grew from there. The book was written over the next two to three months.

## **What reservations, if any, did you have about setting the book during the pandemic?**

I had no reservations at all. History is history. Especially now, two years later, the pandemic is a part of the world’s timeline and it can’t be ignored. I, for one, will have trouble buying into any novels or movies or TV shows that supposedly take place recently or “now” that do not acknowledge in some way that we’ve been through a pandemic.

## **What is the message in the book, if any, that pertains to the pandemic?**

The book really isn’t about the pandemic. It’s merely the backdrop, the “special world” of the story that informs how the characters behave. When one is frightened, paranoid, and uncertain about the future, a person might do some crazy things. The book is about some of those crazy things.

## **How much of the book mirrors your own mental state during the first few months of Covid?**

I would say my existence was pretty close to the protagonist’s (Scott Hatcher) daily life—staying home, going for walks, social distancing, wearing masks at the grocery store and such—but I certainly am not as stupid as he is! Being happily married, I was not in the rather shattered mental state that encourages him do the irrational and impulsive things that push the story forward.

## **Why and how is this book NOT about the pandemic?**

Perhaps it’s more about the hidden underside of suburbia and the dark recesses of the human heart. There is a labyrinth of a mystery that is the backbone of the novel, but it is placed against the larger Mystery of Life itself, all with a touch of down-home humor.





# Interview Questions (cont.)

## **What is your writing process?**

There are “Plotters” and “Pantsers.” Plotters outline/plan out the novel in advance of writing, and Pantsers just sit down and write by the “seat of the pants.” I’m the former. Being trained in theatre, I was taught to prepare-prepare-prepare. I look at the process as “building” a novel, and to do that one must have the blueprints. I carefully plan out the story in a prose treatment. This is the most difficult phase of the process for me, for I work out all the red herrings and twists and turns. It doesn’t mean I’m married to it, for it can be flexible during the writing phase. But it’s a guide, a map. When I’m writing, I attempt to complete a scene a day. That scene must have a beginning and end, so it can be two pages long or it can be twenty. I don’t look back at what I’ve written until the entire first draft is finished. This constant moving-forward in the initial draft establishes a pace. Once the first draft is done, then I go back and rewrite, and that part is the most fun!

## **Besides writing, what has helped you get through the pandemic?**

I read a lot, not only new works, but I re-read some of my favorites. All of Ian Fleming’s Bond novels, Neil Gaiman’s The Sandman series... I rewatched dozens of favorite films and binged on new (for me) television series... My wife and I like to walk, so we did a lot of that when the weather was nice. And we cooked a lot... we’re both good cooks, so we made each meal, especially dinner, an “event” with candlelight—every night.

## **You have a background in theater and film history—how have these influenced your writing?**

There’s an old adage that people with degrees in theatre can do anything. That may sound facetious, but in many ways, it’s true. In theatre we’re taught to think abstractly, to collaborate with a team, and to work against a deadline and meet it (that opening night date can’t be budged!). We also learn about stagecraft, lighting, design, and dramaturgy. As a directing major, I was taught to analyze the text and break it down beat by beat long before the first rehearsal. Prepare-prepare-prepare! As a film historian—and film lover—I have embraced all kinds of filmmaking, both domestic and foreign, and have deep-dived into eclectic and non-mainstream works, as well as commercial cinema. When one is well-versed in the arts, one is well-served as an artist.

## **Your first novels were James Bond stories, but you’ve moved far away from that genre in subject matter—why are your original novels so eclectic?**

I suppose I never really wanted to be tied down to a series of my own...Perhaps I feel about my writing the way some filmmakers think of their films—they tackle different subject matter, but their style and themes might always be present. My “brand” is the style and themes and milieu of what can be called a “Raymond Benson book.”