



jcannonbooks

Because everybody
needs an editor . . .

and a newsletter

Resolution solution

New year, new approach.

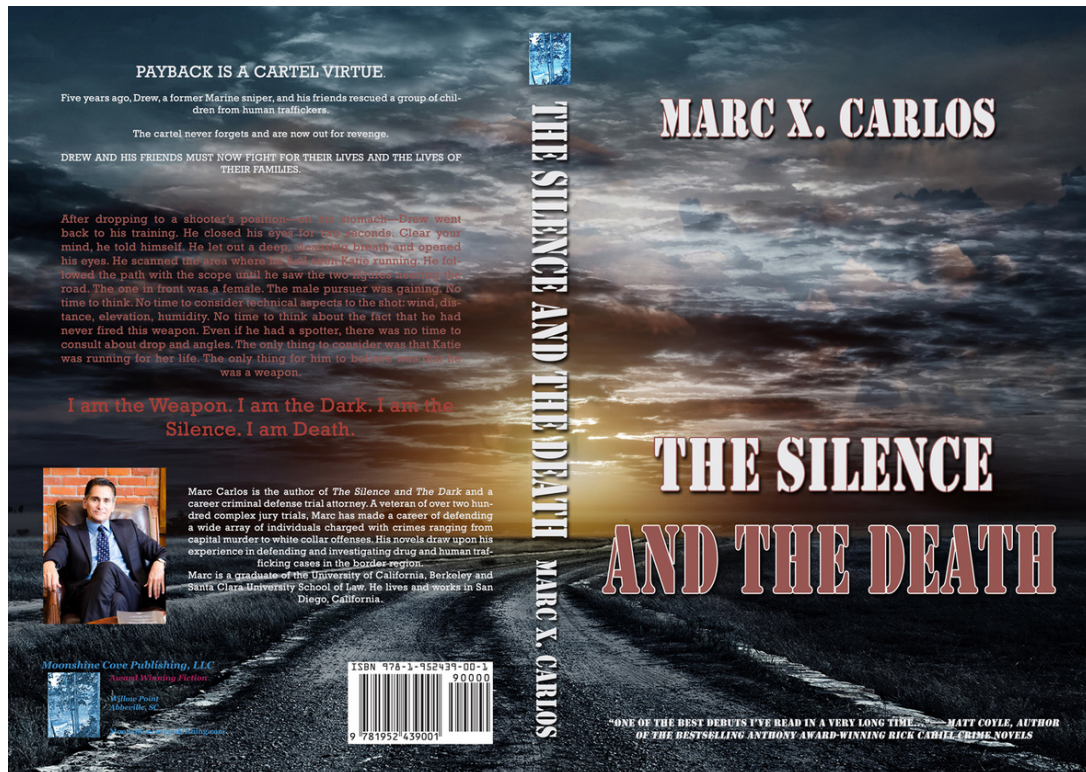
I have concluded with little evidence that some subscribers to this newsletter have declined, avoided, or ignored my persistent and even pathetic invitations to click on the included link that will bring them to [my monthly blog post](#). This has occurred despite assurances that no computer pests await, that the material in the blog is entertaining and rewarding, that it is free, and that the whole reason I started publishing this newsletter was to get people to read the blog. If truth be told, a practice that I support, the blog thing is the big kahuna among jcannonbooks communications. It is the place where thoughts about books, reading, writing, and even editing gush out in a torrent of value. The newsletter is the appetizer intended to draw you to the main course served up hot in the blog that I have amusingly titled Take My Word for It.

To remedy this unfortunate situation and end the deprivation some of you may suffer unknowingly, I have made an experimental change this month. I have included the guts of the blog post at the end of this newsletter, although without photos. Now, you need not click on a highlighted bit of text—experts tell me it is known as a link—and go to another place to read more, even though I wish you would. My opinion is that the blog is best read *in situ*, to use some of the only Latin words I know other than those I learned as an altar boy.

I offer this alternative despite my fear that it could be unhealthy. I may be

checking with the medical professionals who are subscribers to this newsletter to see what sort of damage people may do to their health if they no longer click. As you know, a person should get about 150 minutes of moderate exercise in a week. I don't want to be held responsible for removing one or possibly two seconds of that exercise from your total. You're going to have to make that up.

He saw. He wrote. He conquered.



When you read *The Silence and the Death*, the new novel from Marc Carlos, you will notice Marc's command of scene, dialogue, and the darker reaches of the U.S.-Mexico border. But you may wonder why he knows so much about what it's like to be in jail. I'm here to tell you not to worry because his experience is job-related. Marc is a defense attorney in San Diego, and his work with people accused of murder, drug trafficking, and other crimes takes him inside lockups. He channeled those visits into jail scenes that are authentic and convincing. Suspend disbelief, all ye who enter here. *The Silence and the Death* from Moonshine Cove Publishing and initially edited by jcannonbooks is [available on Amazon](#). It is the follow-up to Marc's 2019 book, *The Silence and the Dark*.

Bravo, Marc.

Travels with Johnny

We regret to inform you that this occasional feature has been suspended because Johnny has not traveled anywhere since March and has exhausted his supply of previously photographed literary sites. We expect to revive this segment when Covid-19 is controlled and Johnny is inoculated. Meanwhile, we admit that the title is a brazen Steinbeck rip-off.

In a tenuously related note, we reveal that we are pals with the world's friendliest dog, Charlie. She's a Lab, so you can imagine the amount of friendliness required to overcome competing dogs in her breed alone. We realize Steinbeck's dog was a male poodle whose name was spelled Charley, but we can't let the facts stand in the way of an online photo of our neighbor's cute dog.



A blog item for the click-averse

([You can click here to read this on the jcannonbooks website](#)).

In normal years, most of your new year's resolutions already would have evaporated. Great Caesar's ghost (to borrow an expression from an old newsroom), it's mid-January already. How long is anyone expected to adhere to this more exercise, less coffee nonsense? But 2021 so far has much of 2020's stink about it. As you wait for normal to show up, why not begin today with a new set of resolutions? Shake off the tyranny of the calendar. You can resolve to do much more important things this year, and I encourage you to do that, but while you work through the procrastination that precedes Big Life Changes, why not commit to do these easy things and experience the euphoria of accomplishment? You can do some of them while eating chocolate or lying on a couch. Are you with me?

I resolve to (choose one, several, or all):

Use libraries more. Why not? You're paying for them. For a double feature, read [The Library Book by Susan Orlean](#). Many libraries have curbside pickup.

Buy a book online from an independent bookstore (but see the item below involving cats).

Use determiners correctly. A few days ago, I read a sentence in a newspaper story that described something as the "most unique." Blackboards seemed to materialize on every wall of the room, and dozens of people raked their fingernails over the surfaces until I ran screaming into the street. Unique is binary. Something is unique or it is not. It's on or off. It's like Yoda and try. A correct usage there is.

In other grammar news, an obituary I noticed earlier this month contained an example of something that has been bugging me lately, so I feel obliged to add it to this harangue. The obituary writer described NBA player and coach Paul Westphal who died January 2 at age seventy as an "outstanding shooter with both hands." He shot two-handed? How is this possible when he did not play in the 1940s? He was the reincarnation of [Red Klotz](#)? I suggest that a better choice of words would have been an outstanding shooter with either hand. I may make suspect usage of both my new mission, nearly as great in importance as ridding the world of overuse and misuse of the words icon and iconic. Yes, both of them. Speaking of which:

Stop using the word iconic to describe something that only six people recognize. If you are a newspaper reporter or editor and have used the word

already in 2021, you've bagged your limit. If you use the phrase iconic landmark, authorities have been instructed to move you to the end of the Covid-19 vaccine line.

Recommend a good book to friends. And tell them why it was so good.

Learn how to use quotation marks and apostrophes, make subject and verb agree, and pay attention to the little odds and ends in your professional emails and writing. Their's no time like the presently. Otherwise you look likes one of those email scam telling you that your's Amazon Prime "payments" is declined and just click here will be fixing everything.

Read reputable news sources and, as Messrs. Simon and Garfunkel said, disregard the rest. (Worry not, I feel like I've worked the mid-twentieth century references out of my system).

Haunt used bookstores once they reopen. Even those that encourage cats to lounge about the stacks, a practice that automatically turns the bookstore into a cliché, which is a sad commentary and we expect better from booksellers, but they've had a hard decade.

I toyed with the idea of suggesting a resolution here that writers limit their use of emojis and exclamation points, but people I know, respect, and love are fans of the colorful little blobs and vertical punctuation, so I have decided that is a rant too far. This concession does not extend to the next item.

Commit to never using the vomitous abbreviation LOL (or its quieter sibling, lol), no trial separation period necessary. United, we can beat this thing.

When you finish writing something, self-edit before you send it. Oh, a flub or two in a quick email or text to a friend is understandable, and we all do it. But otherwise, take care. For self-editing tips, [go to this earlier blog post](#).

Freak out your kids by writing them a note in cursive.

Tell me about a good book.

Try to decide whether it is better to read a mystery series chronologically or skip around. Then advise me.

For authors: [Show, don't tell](#).

If this is the year you write a book, well, come on, two weeks are gone already.

Kind regards,
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