

# The Crime Cafe with James Longmore

Presented By:



**Debbi:** [00:00:13] Hi, everyone. This is the Crime Cafe, your podcasting source of great crime, suspense, and thriller writing. I'm your host, Debbi Mack. Before I bring on my guest, I'll just remind you that the Crime Cafe has two ebooks for sale: the nine-book boxed set and the short story anthology. You can find the buy links for both on my website [debbimack.com](http://debbimack.com), under the "Crime Cafe" link. You can also get a free copy of either book if you become a Patreon supporter. You'll get that and much more if you support the podcast on Patreon, along with our eternal gratitude for doing so.

[00:01:02] It's my great pleasure today to have James Longmore as my guest. James is not only an author, but a screenwriter and a publisher. He has written and directed short films, as well, and even done standup comedy. So thanks for being here today, James.

**James:** [00:01:21] Thank you for having me. Nice to see you.

**Debbi:** [00:01:25] Sure thing. It's great to see you. You've done so many interesting things. Let's start with your writing, though. What do you write mostly? Is it mostly horror or do you do other genres, as well?

**James:** [00:01:39] A lot of it seems to be horror, because that's sort of where my mind defaults to, but mostly, you know, dark stuff. You know, if it's dark, whether it's your crime or horror or dark romance or whatever. I think if it's got a dark element to it, then that's me. A dark comedy is what I'm a big fan of already, which is something we British people do incredibly well.

**Debbi:** [00:02:08] I do love dark comedy, and that's pretty awesome. But let's see. You've written five novels, three novellas, and a bunch of short stories.

**James:** [00:02:19] Right, yeah. Apparently so. Yes. On my resume.

**Debbi:** [00:02:24] Are all of your novels standalones?

**James:** [00:02:27] They are, yeah. I envy authors who sort of plan and write a series of three, four, five. We spoke to somebody recently who's planned a series of like ten books. Maybe I just haven't had the idea yet that it would sustain any sort of series. A

couple of my novels I think would make a good sequel, but I just seem to like to move on to the next idea. I'm not one for rehashing, to be honest.

**Debbi:** [00:03:02] Interesting. Or for stretching things out.

**James:** [00:03:04] For stretching things out. Yeah, yeah, it's the same reason I tend not to commit to long TV series. A nice little 10-part series or an eight-part series, that's fine. But these that go on for like 13 seasons, it's just ... I just can't commit to that.

**Debbi:** [00:03:27] And they tend to kind of run out of gas after a while if they don't do it right.

**James:** [00:03:32] They do usually. I mean, I remember I really got hooked on *Breaking Bad* and that was just about the right length. I think it was seven, maybe eight seasons, and that was enough. But some of them, they just go on and it's like ... really should have stopped. Season Seven, you should have quit. But honestly. I mean, obviously, as long as people still watch it and advertisers still fork it out, they'll still keep churning them out.

**Debbi:** [00:03:58] Exactly, exactly right. Can you tell us a little about *Flanagan*? What's the book about?

**James:** [00:04:04] It's a sort of dark psychological sort of ... I don't like to use the word erotica, because it's not really erotica. It's about an everyday or seemingly everyday couple who have a couple of sort of weird ways of getting their kicks, and I don't want to give too much. It has a twist that I don't want to give away because it's one that people [won't see coming]. I swear you'd never see it coming in a million years. But, for me, because I like dark things, I like horror. You know, I mean for me one of the most horrific monsters, if you like, can be Mr. and Mrs. Joe Average. Because you never know. They could live next door and you know a lot of you look at them serial killers and whatnot and you know the number of times when they do catch them, the neighbors say, "Oh, you know, he was ever so nice."

**Debbi:** [00:05:05] Exactly.

**James:** [00:05:05] I mean, John Wayne Gacy. He used to do kids' parties as a clown. Ted Bundy worked on a suicide hotline. I mean, these are people who, until they're caught, you'd never suspect.

**Debbi:** [00:05:19] Exactly, yeah. Sometimes that kind of innocent demeanor can mask a really twisted soul.

**James:** [00:05:30] Oh, definitely. My first novel is about some killer giant centipedes. I always wanted to write a creature novel. I'm a big big fan of James Herbert. Actually the first grown up horror novel I ever read was James Herbert's *The Rats*, and I always wanted, all these years I wanted to write a creature novel, but couldn't really come up with a creature that hadn't been done and all that was not lame. But then I hit upon giant centipedes, which do creep me out to be honest with you. And that sort of wrote itself. My other novel, *Tenebrion*, is about a demon. But I think for me *Flanagan* is probably most horrific, because it could happen. There's nothing demonic about them. They're not anything other than average or seemingly average people.

**Debbi:** [00:06:24] Well, that's intriguing. What inspired you to write horror?

**James:** [00:06:28] You know, I think it's just the way my brain is wired to be honest. I think that's the kind of person I am. I think I'm a born pessimist by nature, anyway. It's an impossible question to answer. You can ask anybody. Ask J.K. Rowling why she writes Harry Potter. I mean anybody who writes anything. I think it's just the way the brain works to be honest. I mean you know the golden rule is write for yourself. Write what entertains you and I still to this day love horror movies, and I love reading horror books, and dark scary things. And I guess that's why I write it.

**Debbi:** [00:07:12] Just out of curiosity, are you a fan of corny, old sci-fi movies?

**James:** [00:07:17] Of what? Sorry.

**Debbi:** [00:07:19] Corny, old sci-fi movies?

**James:** [00:07:22] You know, I do like sci-fi, yes. Yeah. And funnily enough, I actually watched the remake of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* a couple weeks ago. But, yeah, I

grew up watching--they used to be on a Saturday morning. The old B-movies, sci-fi movies. Yeah. So if a good sci-fi comes on, I will always make an effort to watch it.

**Debbi:** [00:07:46] Or sometimes a bad sci-fi.

**James:** [00:07:47] Sometimes they are the ones where the sets are a bit wobbly and the effects. Some of those are brilliant.

**Debbi:** [00:07:55] Like your Ed Wood stuff.

**James:** [00:07:57] I love Ed Wood's stuff. The movie they made about Ed Wood, the one that Tim Burton made was just brilliant, but you know he just didn't care. He just, you know, when I think Bela Lugosi died halfway through filming, he just replaced him with somebody. He was even shorter and looked nothing like him and just replaced him and carried on. It was just like ...

**Debbi:** [00:08:22] You do what you have to.

**James:** [00:08:23] Fantastic. Because for him, for Ed Wood, it was about the story. All too often these days you know you see, probably in sci-fi especially, they spend that much time and effort on the effects and money on the effects that they seem to forget there's supposed to be a story as well.

**Debbi:** [00:08:43] And characters that you give a damn about.

**James:** [00:08:45] Yeah. You just get all big explosions and it's like the Transformers movies. You know, I've seen most of that with my kids, and I lose track of what's ... I don't care what's going on. And to be honest, it's just all CGI fighting CGI, and it's like I don't get it.

**Debbi:** [00:09:07] I'd like to do a whole podcast and call it Too Much CGI and talk about movies where they do this too much.

**James:** [00:09:15] I would agree. Yes, for now, I watched the remake of *The Thing*. I actually had the flu a couple weeks back, so I watched some TV. And obviously they

used CGI rather than practical effects, and it wasn't a patch on the original, which was obviously all practical. I remember seeing that when it came out in the movies. It was like, "Wow!" You know? Good idea for a podcast. Yes.

**Debbi:** [00:09:42] Maybe I should think about that.

**James:** [00:09:45] Do that.

**Debbi:** [00:09:47] You have a very interesting background. You're from Yorkshire, England, but you live in Houston, Texas, now. What was it like moving from England to Texas?

**James:** [00:09:57] It was a big move. It was just totally different. I mean, the heat took some getting used to. We've been here eight years now. The heat. Because we moved in July and it was raining when we left Manchester Airport, and we got here about eight and a half hours later. And when we got off the plane, it was like stepping into an oven.

**Debbi:** [00:10:20] My gosh. I can only imagine.

**James:** [00:10:21] That summer it got up to 104. But it was like your high 90s, early hundreds, and we're not used to that, us Brits don't get, unless you go abroad on vacation. You know, go to like Greece or Spain or whatever. I went to Cyprus one year and it got up to 101, and and that was the hottest I've ever experienced and that's just like, that's normal here. Which is scary.

**Debbi:** [00:10:46] And I can imagine culturally it's very different.

**James:** [00:10:50] You know, it is and it isn't. To be fair, it's like stepping back into 1986. England 1986. There's a lot of similarities between Yorkshire and Texas. Texas is very, they're very proud to be Texan. You know, you ask somebody from Texas, "Where are you from?" And they will say Texas, they won't say America. The same with those Yorkshire people. I'm from Yorkshire, and here nobody knows where that is. Is that near London? No. No, it's not. But, yeah, culturally there are a lot of similarities. The people, the attitude of the people.

**Debbi:** [00:11:35] A sense of identity.

**James:** [00:11:37] That's right. Yeah.

**Debbi:** [00:11:38] Very cool. I have to ask you about your screenplays, since I write screenplays, also. But you've had them produced. Big difference.

**James:** [00:11:49] I've had some success, but more not produced than I have had produced. I have commissioned ones. Obviously, I started out really just shooting my own films. They're on my website, if you want to check them out. I mean, they're not, you know, production values are not quite Hollywood standard. You know, again, as with Ed Wood, for me it was about showcasing the story and about me as a screenwriter. So some of that, some of the sound production is a little bit wobbly. But I think they're good little stories. I'm kind of proud of those.

**Debbi:** [00:12:32] I'll have to check them out.

**James:** [00:12:34] Yeah. Please do. I was commissioned to write---they're still looking for finance to buy rights---a biopic of Bob Marley. Bob Marley's early from age 4 till the assassination attempt. That was great. You know, it was nice to get paid. I'm a bit of a Bob Marley fan, anyway. But I've done the research, and it was an interesting process.

**Debbi:** [00:13:05] Did you start off in screenplay writing? How did you make your first connections in terms of getting your screenplays produced?

**James:** [00:13:13] Funny. When I got to Houston, because I'd been doing standup comedy over in England, I sort of got myself on the standup circuit here in Houston. There used to be one eight years ago. Now, I think there's one club now. I think that's all there is left now. And there was a lot of people that I've actually. I met a couple of guys who would make the short films. They got involved and you know they'd have these film race competitions, where you had to make a 10-minute film in a week and that sort of thing. And they really just developed from there. I sort of made connections and networked, and a few people I know that I did work with in the past, they're in L.A. now. So I have connections over there. It was literally just spread from there.

**Debbi:** [00:14:00] Well, that's very cool. It just goes to show, you never know where you're going to meet people who are going to help you out with this sort of stuff.

**James:** [00:14:05] That's true. Yeah. I'm a big fan of networking, you know. It can be hard work sometimes because you get people who, you get your time wasters and people who promise the earth and deliver nothing, but there's the good people there as well.

**Debbi:** [00:14:21] Yes, absolutely. That is absolutely true. And what made you decide to start a publishing company?

**James:** [00:14:27] You know, it was almost by accident to tell you the truth. I had one of my first novels, *The Erotic Odyssey of Colton Forhsay*, which is a bizarro novel, I had that picked up by a publisher. I don't think within a month of that being published the publisher went under. And I sort of was still involved. The lady that took it over, I was sort of trying to help her out and make something of the mess that had been left behind, because my baby was in there.

**Debbi:** [00:15:04] I know the feeling.

**James:** [00:15:09] Yeah. Long story short that sort of went a little bit south. But I sort of got a feel for it by then and a couple people said, well, you should think about doing it yourself. Which I did. And that was two years ago now, and HellBound Books is doing pretty well.

**Debbi:** [00:15:35] Excellent. Do you publish other authors?

**James:** [00:15:39] Oh, yeah. Most of my books are not published under HellBound. I didn't start it to publish my own books. I've got *Colton Forhsay* still there. That carried through. He's still with HellBound. My novels are with different publishers. So, no, we have over 80 titles now.

**Debbi:** [00:16:02] That's fantastic.

**James:** [00:16:04] Yeah. Barring a couple, they're all other authors. We're attracting some really good talent now.

**Debbi:** [00:16:10] That's excellent. Way to go. What's your favorite thing to do in your free time, when you have any?

**James:** [00:16:18] Free time. I don't have an awful lot of free time, to be honest. I tend to work. Yeah, I like to read. My best sort of unwinding brain in neutral time is just watching TV. Actually, the one thing. Put me in front of the TV and my brain. [Snaps fingers] Although nice it's always going, but it's just like you're kicking into neutral and just right let the TV entertain me. And I can watch anything. I have children. My youngest is just she's nearly 10, actually she's nine. So, you know, I've watched everything from Disney movies, Pixar movie, SpongeBob---big SpongeBob fan. I've sat watching SpongeBob, especially if it's a new one, and then I'll notice that my daughter, she's gone, she's wandered off to do something else. And I'm watching SpongeBob. That's, you know, good brain downtime for me. I do like to read when I can, but because I spend most my time reading. If I'm not writing, I'm either reading submissions or editing or what have you. I kind of don't seem to have the time to read for pleasure anymore. I do miss that. I do miss that, unfortunately.

**Debbi:** [00:17:40] Yes. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we finish up?

**James:** [00:17:44] Buy our books. Yeah. Check out my website, [JamesLongmore.com](http://JamesLongmore.com). [HellBoundBooksPublishing.com](http://HellBoundBooksPublishing.com) is the publisher. On my website, there's all my short films and a couple of my standup appearances are on there as well. For anybody who wants a laugh. Yeah. *Flanagan* is an awesome ride. Again, we said *Flanagan* is one that we have within HellBound again. Long story short, he was with another publisher and they didn't do right by its side. I took it back. For these two guys just for them to, you know, do nothing with it. So that is in the fold. I mean it's great. I mean if you can guess the twist, then we'll give you your money back. There's a challenge for you.

**Debbi:** [00:18:46] That is quite the statement. Quite the recommendation.

**James:** [00:18:53] We'll stand by it. If you can guess, you get your money back.

**Debbi:** [00:18:57] Wow, that's something else. Well, I want to thank you for being here James. Thanks so much.

**James:** [00:19:02] Thanks for having me.

**Debbi:** [00:19:06] Sure thing. And before we go, I'll just ask everyone out there listening to please leave a review for the podcast, wherever you're listening to it. Reviews really help keep the program going and help us stand out so others can find this. And please go to [debbimack.com](http://debbimack.com) and check out where you can subscribe to the podcast, as well as the Crime Cafe boxed set and short story anthology. And, in addition to that, we have a Patreon page. If you contribute as little as the price of a cup of coffee a month, you can get access to early drafts of work that I have coming out soon as well as short stories that are not available anywhere else, so check that out. And, just so you know, our next guest is going to be Ellen Kirschman, who had to reschedule. So we'll be back next week instead of in two weeks. And with that I'll just thank you for listening and say Happy reading.