

The Crime Cafe with Crime Writer K'Anne Meinel



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\[dot\]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.

[00:01:03] It's my pleasure today to have on an author with more than 100 published works including short stories, novels, and novellas. She works in a variety of genres, including crime fiction of course, and she's a USA TODAY bestselling author. She is also owner of Shadoe Publishing, amongst her other accomplishments. So it's my great pleasure to introduce K'Anne Meinel. Thanks for being here today, K'Anne.

K'Anne: [00:01:38] Thank you for having me.

Debbi: [00:01:41] It's my pleasure to have you on. Glad you're able to be here. So you've written an impressive number of works. How long have you written and published fiction?

K'Anne: [00:01:55] I've written all my life but I've actually only published about eight years. But I had books waiting. I wrote my very first complete novel in 2003 and I did it in two weeks.

Debbi: [00:02:12] Wow.

K'Anne: [00:02:13] Yeah.

Debbi: [00:02:13] That's impressive. Was that your completed draft or did you have to amend?

K'Anne: [00:02:21] I played with it for eight years before I actually sought out publishers. Got 20 rejection letters, and something told me to go with self-publishing which has worked for me.

Debbi: [00:02:34] That's excellent. Yeah.

K'Anne: [00:02:35] Once I published it, I did get approached by a publisher, and I should have read more of the reviews because they turned out to be con artists. I've never received any residuals.

Debbi: [00:02:49] Oh my gosh.

K'Anne: [00:02:49] They stole it, and then I got my rights back. Using my lawyers. And they've never stopped publishing it. They keep stealing.

Debbi: [00:03:03] Oh, my gosh. That's awful.

K'Anne: [00:03:05] Yeah, it was a horrible experience. That's why you know I caution people. Yeah. Anybody can call themselves a publisher but watch what they do.

Debbi: [00:03:15] Right. Absolutely. And self-publishing ... you have your own imprint. I also have my own imprint and I think that's very important.

K'Anne: [00:03:23] Yeah. Because a lot of self-published authors, if they don't have a so-called publisher behind them, some stores won't even consider them.

Debbi: [00:03:34] Yes, exactly. Exactly right. It gives you a more professional image.

K'Anne: [00:03:41] It does. It does. And I've compared my paperback books to some of the so-called professional books. Some people that I may compete with or whatever, and I'm very pleased with what we've produced. And it was a learning curve. You know I didn't walk into this knowing anything, but I really enjoy learning. It's a challenge. I absolutely love formatting my books. Once the story is written, then tweaking all the little fine details like putting in a doodad here that most people wouldn't notice. But when you're looking at a paperback and it feels different, accordingly, and you don't know why, it's because of those details.

Debbi: [00:04:29] Yes. Yeah I really like self-publishing and the flexibility that it gives you.

K'Anne: [00:04:40] Well, they're trying to make it a little harder. I notice with CreateSpace going away, because Amazon is bringing it back under their umbrella and it's no longer going to be a separate company. I had my first experience with Amazon's print and---wow---did they make me jump through hoops that were unnecessary. Well, you can't do this. You can't do that. And I'm like, funny, you published it already and I've done that. Now you say I can't do that. I had found an error that I wanted corrected, because I'm real particular about that, and it took about five or six tries to get it published again.

Debbi: [00:05:28] That's bizarre. I've had no trouble with IngramSpark myself.

K'Anne: [00:05:32] Yeah. Yeah. There, too, there's a learning curve and, in fact, that was one of my goals this year: to switch not only all of my books, but my authors' books over to IngramSpark, just because of the broader range that'll give us.

Debbi: [00:05:50] Absolutely. I myself would recommend IngramSpark any day over any other publishing platform in terms of print. That's just my feeling about it. I've been with IngramSpark since before there was an IngramSpark. Back when there was Lightning Source.

K'Anne: [00:06:10] Yes, yes.

Debbi: [00:06:11] When I decided to go completely self-published, I used Lightning Source and never looked back. So, as far as I'm concerned, I'm covered.

K'Anne: [00:06:24] Well, you also get into a creative, comfortable feeling. I was used to CreateSpace. And, yes, I balked at using Kindle's platform. But Kindle is the biggest dog in the yard. So you gotta deal with that.

Debbi: [00:06:45] Oh, I'm not arguing with that.

K'Anne: [00:06:46] Yeah no. But as a result because they already owned CreateSpace and now they're bringing it back in, all their little hiccups are costing some of us time, effort, etc.

Debbi: [00:07:03] Well, it's interesting because one of the arguments I've always heard for using CreateSpace is that you'll get your print books up on Amazon faster?

K'Anne: [00:07:10] Theoretically.

Debbi: [00:07:12] Theoretically. Well, that may be true, because right now my print book which I just came out with is only available through Barnes & Noble and Indiebound online.

K'Anne: [00:07:27] You can't discount Barnes & Noble. They're still out, they're still hustling, they're still fighting, and I hope they win. Because, you know, Amazon has killed the stores and I mean I've seen strip malls that are absolutely empty because you can't have Mom-and-Pops anymore when you have an Amazon. I mean, I know myself my first thought is, "Well, let's go see what it is on Amazon."

Debbi: [00:07:55] I know. Well, it's the go-to place for a lot of people. And one of the things I like about Kobo is that it reaches certain international markets that Amazon does not. Oddly enough.

K'Anne: [00:08:11] Yes, yes. I have my books out on 18 different distributors, because there are countries that don't allow Amazon.

Debbi: [00:08:21] Interesting.

K'Anne: [00:08:24] And I like the fact that my books are available. We still can't get into South Africa. South Africa blocks a lot of books.

Debbi: [00:08:35] Fascinating.

K'Anne: [00:08:38] It's interesting when you find out that from a fan they're like I can't get your book but I really want it. And, fortunately, I made it so that all my books are available on my website and that makes a big difference in what they can download, because I have another fan who only orders from my website, because she's having trouble getting it in Australia, of all places.

Debbi: [00:09:02] Wow. I had no idea.

K'Anne: [00:09:05] Amazon. Yeah. Amazon isn't capitalizing in Australia like I personally believe they should.

Debbi: [00:09:14] And Kobo certainly does.

K'Anne: [00:09:19] Yeah.

Debbi: [00:09:19] Yeah, well. Well, let's talk about your series, the Malice series. You have a long string of novellas in this series. What inspired you to write about a lesbian serial killer?

K'Anne: [00:09:37] Ninety to 95 percent of all serial killers are male and from all the research I've done the remaining five or 10 percent that are female either ... I don't want to say women are smarter, but they're less likely to be perceived as a killer. They're able to fake it better. I think women can be more devious. If you look in some of the different cultures, women were always nastier. For instance, in the American Indian culture if somebody had to run the gauntlet, the women were always the ones that were more bloodthirsty, more willing to kill. And nastier. That's just one example. I mean that's throughout history. But when I came up with this series, I loved *Dexter* and I didn't want to copy him at all, because I don't do that. But I thought, "Gosh can I write a murder mystery?" Well, it was an experiment. It was only supposed to be five books. Number 25 should be out in the Spring. But this fascinating character resulted. And what I have Alice in my head and what she's like and what my fans perceive her is absolutely fascinating to me, because she's this petite little blonde and yet I get this gamut of descriptions of her that I just kind of go ... That's not what I wrote.

[00:11:23] Okay. That's how you want to see her. Go for it, but she's highly complex and it doesn't come out in one book. And as you read her, you're thinking okay, well, most serial killers are loners. And because I cater to a lesbian market, it always surprises me how many straight hetero male followers I have to that series. In fact, one of my followers, I killed him off in the third book cause he was being a smart aleck on social media. I said, well, guess what? You're going to die. And he loved it. He absolutely

loved it. He has bragging rights, but you don't think about women being serial killers and the beauty of it is I've already thought up at least three or four sequels that will veer off from Malice about her daughter.

Debbi: [00:12:38] Fascinating.

K'Anne: [00:12:42] So, yeah, it could be genetic, you know, could run in the family. Because I've introduced so many elements of, first of all, how her children were conceived. Because there is the technology out there and I've read up on it that you don't need a man. And we've used that. And things that could happen as a result, and we've delved into the sex trade, we've delved into the Russian Mafia. Alice just, she won't go away. I kind of wish sometimes she would. I did take 18 months off and just released two more of hers, and I had people weekly asking me when you can come out with another Malice? So, I mean it's great to hear that, but you know I write other things too, you know?

Debbi: [00:13:45] Oh my gosh. Well, what do you think is the story engine if you will that keeps this thing going for so long?

K'Anne: [00:13:55] She's a kick-ass woman who doesn't take any guff. Revenge can be a motivating factor. But she she tempers that by thinking it through and she thinks the things you don't think of and those little twists. I leave a lot of the books, the novellas, on cliffhangers.

Debbi: [00:14:16] I was going to say. Yeah.

K'Anne: [00:14:20] Yeah. It annoys and yet it intrigues people. I've gotten some some nasty letters saying, "Would you please? Come out with another one, because I got to know what's gonna happen."

Debbi: [00:14:33] Reach closure at some point, would ya?

K'Anne: [00:14:37] You would think. I thought I had her gone about book 13 and then her wife came. Her wife became more of a prominent figure. I found it interesting, because then you have the different viewpoints. And I wrote the different viewpoints and

a lot of times you don't have the luxury to do that when you write. And I did because these are novellas. I mean these books are only 40,000 words max. Some of them are even less than that, and they're priced accordingly. But none of these books are more than three or four bucks. So, you know, for two or three hours pleasure, you've got a story that just keeps giving. And I've I've got outlines for at least three more books now.

Debbi: [00:15:33] Wow.

K'Anne: [00:15:33] In my spare time.

Debbi: [00:15:35] Of course. Yes. That sounds like it would be perfect for a series.

K'Anne: [00:15:43] Yes. I've thought about the adaptation. But my fear is that people will be like, oh, this is just like *Dexter*, but she's not like Dexter at all. That thrilled me, that I've been told no, it's not like *Dexter* because I worried, because of course it influenced me. I've read the books, I've watched the series, but I'm very careful to stay away from that storyline or, you know, how that wonderful author created their story, because I'm not about plagiarism, even unintentionally. Because everything influences you.

Debbi: [00:16:23] Of course.

K'Anne: [00:16:23] A book I read [when] I was probably about eight or nine years old. I found myself influenced by that when I was writing one of my stories, and it was like, why does this sound familiar? And then I figured it out. But, you know, that was 40 years ago.

Debbi: [00:16:43] Well, everything does influence you, even if you're not copying. And there are only so many ideas. So, take some comfort from that. Let's see. Oh, I wanted to ask you what do most books, movies, and/or TV shows get right or get wrong about LGBT issues and characters?

K'Anne: [00:17:06] That we're not just like everybody else. I mean we have we have the same arguments. We have the same feelings, emotions, problems, you know. What saddens me especially ... about 20 years ago, it was worse, way worse, where if they

had an LGBT character, they had to kill them off. They could never have their happily ever after. And fortunately especially in LGBT fiction now, you've got so many people who want that happily ever after and they write it. Not all the happily ever afters are what the fans want and they've got to realize that's reality then. You know, that's more real fiction. And you have your highs and lows. I mean, just because a lesbian sleeps with another woman doesn't mean that they don't fight over money, over trips, or who's going to do the dishes. That happens in a hetero couple, too.

Debbi: [00:18:18] Mm hmm.

K'Anne: [00:18:19] And it amazes me, the ignorance that is still out there about that. I just happen to write wonderful stories with lesbian characters, and I do write good stories and I'm not saying that because I'm conceited. But I mean the amount of five star reviews I get tell me that I've got something going right here. I'm doing something right. The fans like what I'm doing and the amount of fan mail I get that tells me they want to see a sequel or they want to see more of the Malice series tells me I've hit something that they love and I'm tentatively thinking of another series, calling it Bloodthirsty Lesbians, because some of the things that Alice does ... it is appealing to the blood thirsty lesbians. I joke about that, but it's really quite true, because she's really a violent character but you love her. She's an anti-hero.

Debbi: [00:19:34] I love those.

K'Anne: [00:19:34] Yeah. But people don't expect that especially you know you've got a petite blonde and, you know, she doesn't appear to be what a serial killer would be. You think of those serial killers in history, and there was a famous lesbian one who they put to death in Florida. She had been abused. She became a hooker and she started killing people. And that movie with Charlize Theron freaked me out major. Every time I see her, the makeup from that movie, and how that story developed, it freaks me out. And if I'm freaked out and I can write something like that and freak other people out and they love it? Hey, great.

Debbi: [00:20:24] Well, that's excellent. And it sounds like you're keeping very busy. So you write other stuff in addition to your Malice series?

K'Anne: [00:20:38] Yes, I write a lot of drama romance. I don't do as much romance as I would like. That was what I pretty much started with. But even my romance stories have a lot of drama in them to get to the happily ever after and even then it's not always a happily ever after. I just like a good story, something you can sink your teeth in and relate to.

Debbi: [00:21:06] That's good. That's awesome. It's awesome that you have such devoted fans, too. Let's see. I'm very impressed that you started the Lesfic Bard Awards, starting a whole series of awards. It sounds like that must have been successful, since you're starting another. The Gay Scribe Awards this year?

K'Anne: [00:21:28] Yes. Yes. We started the Lesfic Bard Awards a year ago in December. And anybody who published a book in 2018 can enter and that goes until December 31 at 12:00 midnight Central Standard Time. And, at first, there was resistance because I wanted to remain anonymous. That was my mistake. I can't enter my own awards. That's the ironic thing. But I had heard for years complaints from other authors who said, oh, it's unfair, the same people win all the time. It's rigged. And I'd seen some things that said, yeah, some of that is rigged or some of it is biased towards this or biased towards that. And I was like why don't they do it anonymously? You don't know who the author is, you don't know who the publisher is, you don't know the book name. And it fell on deaf ears. Nobody was listening. And I got fed up and so I started researching it. I did six months of pretty intense research and drove my editor nuts. I drove my girlfriend nuts and my friends who were helping me with it and who were going to run it for me. And when I had everything set up to where I literally got the website up within a matter of two days, and you know we've tweaked it since. But, like I said, I want to stay anonymous. Well, that didn't go over well. And I understand why. You know, you're sending money to somebody who is anonymous? And due diligence. The Lesfic community really ripped into it. Unfortunately, the people I had posting got the brunt of it. They were like exposed as fakes and they they weren't. They were just doing the job I had hired them for: to post about it. And so I came out within the same day. I did a blog. On several platforms, explained who I was, what I was doing. I mean, I'm pretty well known in that community, anyway, so it was kind of like, oh okay. And I explained why I had wanted to stay anonymous. And I also explained, "I can't enjoy my own awards." My lawyers took a look at all of the paperwork, and they said, no, you can't enter. And that kind of sucks. But the point is to get more people aware of these

books. These books deserve recognition. And that was the goal. We've got this beautiful crystal award, and I bought a sample and it's on the website and everything. And then I had a lot of people saying, you know, well, not a lot, but quite a few people saying, "Well, what about guys writing lesbian fiction? Are you going to allow them, too?" And I'm like, if it's lesbian fiction, that's the point. I don't care who writes it. You can't exclude somebody because of their sex. That's like saying I can't write straight fiction because I'm a lesbian.

Debbi: [00:24:43] Right. Or I can't write about men because I'm a woman.

K'Anne: [00:24:46] Right. I mean, really, I was surprised to find how many women write gay fiction and enjoy it. They enjoy reading it. They enjoy writing. And I was like, well, those are our brothers in arms, as it were. Why not give them more of ... I mean I'm not the only awards site out there. I understand that, and I'm not arrogant enough to think that, you know, we're going to beat them all. No, it's about getting the word out there that these books deserve the recognition, these authors can enter and get a fair judging process.

Debbi: [00:25:29] I think that's wonderful.

K'Anne: [00:25:31] I'm hoping it really does well. We did well for our first year. So I'm hoping next year will be even better, because the premise is really good.

Debbi: [00:25:45] Well, I just want to congratulate you on that. And I think that's absolutely fantastic that you did that and that you keep doing that and promoting literature. Is there anything else you'd like to add before we wrap up?

K'Anne: [00:26:03] Just that I do have a publishing house, too. What had happened was, when I started, people kept asking me how I did things, and rather than give away free advice, I started, well, an author actually convinced me to take him on as a Lesfic author, and it started from there. You know, we [discovered] several dozen authors and we publish for them.

Debbi: [00:26:32] That's fantastic, that you're publishing others as well. Congrats.

K'Anne: [00:26:36] In my spare time.

Debbi: [00:26:36] All that spare time you have. Yes. Okay. Well, I want to thank you so much K'Anne for being here today. Thanks for being on. It was a pleasure meeting you.

K'Anne: [00:26:51] Well, thank you for having me.

Debbi: [00:26:52] Oh, it was my pleasure. And I will just say, don't forget everyone that the Crime Cafe boxed set and anthology are both on sale through most retailers and you can find it on my website under "Crime Cafe". That's debbimack[dot]com and click on "Crime Cafe" where you'll also find our Patreon page. You can get a free copy of both of the Crime Cafe ebooks if you support us through Patreon. And if you enjoyed the podcast, please do leave us a review on iTunes or stitcher, because it helps us a lot. And, so with that, I'll just say happy reading until next time and I'll see you in two weeks.

[00:27:45] On our next episode, we'll have crime author and police psychologist Ellen Kirschman. See you next time.