



The Detective Kubu Newsletter

KUBU HAS A NEW HOME

Apologies for the long delay since the last newsletter – several of you have been asking what we've been up to over the last twelve months. Well, it's been an up and down year, but it ended very much up!



Although DEADLY HARVEST gathered critical acclaim and was a finalist for the International Thriller Writers award for best paperback original thriller of 2013, sales did not meet the benchmarks set by HarperCollins, and they decided to discontinue the series.

Of course, with so much enthusiasm from our readers, and our feeling that it was the best book in the series so far, we were bitterly disappointed. But we have a wonderful new agent – Jacques de Spoelberch – and he advised us to move on and write a new Detective Kubu mystery.

We finished DEATH IN THE FAMILY in April and, after input from Jacques and all the people who generously give us feedback on our manuscripts, we felt that we had something quite special for Jacques to show to prospective editors.

Naturally we were very nervous. Despite the loyal support of Kubu fans, we felt it was going to be a big ask for a new publisher to pick up the series against the backdrop of tight book sales worldwide.

You can imagine how thrilled we were when the first editor Jacques approached – Marcia Markland, senior editor at Thomas Dunne Books and long-time Kubu supporter – liked the manuscript and made a two-book offer for Detective Kubu's adventures.

Thomas Dunne is part St. Martin's Press, which is part of Macmillan books, and has been described by the New York Times as "the leading publisher of mysteries." Marcia's mystery authors include an all-star cast, ranging from Arnaldur Indridason and Yrsa Sigurdardottir in Iceland, to Ann Cleeves in the UK and Elizabeth Hand and Daniel Friedman in the US, with several other countries in between.



THOMAS DUNNE BOOKS

We are delighted to be joining them in working with Marcia. We've spent the last few weeks on her suggestions for improving the new book, and it's back to her now in revised form.



Click on the link below to become a Kubu fan on Facebook.

<http://www.facebook.com/MichaelStanleyBooks>

THE NEW DETECTIVE KUBU MYSTERY

DEATH IN THE FAMILY takes Kubu to a very different space from the previous books. The backstory is the powerful influence of the Chinese in Africa and their interest in development and natural resources. How much of this is altruistic and how much their need for metals and materials? We think there is very little altruism and a great deal of greed.

Much of the story takes place in a town that hasn't featured in our books before – Shoshong. Few people outside Botswana have heard of it, yet in its day, it was very important.

Founded in the mid nineteenth century, its location was chosen for two critical reasons – it is protected on the north by a horseshoe of hills that are difficult to climb because of scree from dolomitic boulders, and it had reasonably plentiful water from the Bonwapitse river that flows into the town through a gorge in the hills.

Since the Matabele to the north were pretty unfriendly neighbors at the time, the hills were a welcome shield. Sekgoma I made it his capital in 1849. His son, Khama III, consolidated and built Shoshong into a strategic center of around 30,000 people.



The hills of Shoshong (Photo: Jonathan Everitt)

Visit <http://www.detectivekubu.com>.

The town thrived because it was strategically placed on the main road north. It became an important trading center and was host to hunters and famous explorers - including David Livingstone. Even some Europeans settled there and traces of their tin-roofed rectangular houses and artifacts remain. Christianity was introduced by John Mackenzie in 1868. It seemed Shoshong was there to stay.

However, the town's very reason for existence – the river – was also its Achilles' heel. Few large settlements survived more than a handful of years in the region because of their impact on the arid environment.

A prolonged drought left Shoshong almost dry and surrounded by semi-desert. In 1889 Khama III told his people to pack up and move, which they did, leaving behind a ghost town. A brass bell is the only surviving relic of the church.

There are a number of significant mines in the area and, in DEATH IN THE FAMILY, there is sudden interest in a mine expansion from both Chinese and American interests. The Director of Mines is accused of corruption and his deputy commits suicide. Violence erupts at the town and, in the ensuing riot, people die, including the local chief.

It seems that the competition for the lease has turned nasty, but all is not as it seems, and Kubu has to unravel the tangle. That takes him not only to Shoshong, but also to New York City.

And he has to do all this while dealing with his own deep personal issues.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

One or both of us will be at the following events over the next few months. We hope you'll join us at one of them.

SEPTEMBER 13: Mystery Writers of America MWA University. A full-day course on the essentials of writing mysteries - with an all-star cast. See <https://mysterywriters.org/mwa-university/mwa-u-chicago> for more details.

OCTOBER 23: Magna Cum Murder convention in Indianapolis, Indiana. See <http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/ebball/magnacummurder> for more details.

NOVEMBER 13 - 16: Bouchercon 2014, in Long Beach, California. This is one of the biggest gatherings of mystery writers and readers. Come and hobnob with your favorite authors – Michael Connelly, Lee Child, Jeffrey Deaver, Sue Grafton, Simon Wood, J. A. Vance, Cara Black, Meg Gardiner, and many more... For details, see www.bouchercon2014.com.

Michael and Stanley will both be there. Amongst other events, they will be on a panel with fellow MurderIsEverywhere blog mates, Annamaria Alfieri, Cara Black, Caro Ramsey, and Jeff Siger.

NOVEMBER 22 – 24: Iceland Noir, in Reykjavik, Iceland. Michael and Stanley will be on various panels. For more information, go to www.icelandnoir.com.

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BIT AND PIECES

Our short story, THE LAST CASE OF INSPECTOR FOURIE, was published in Strand Magazine in its Spring 2014 edition.

Our short story, PARLOUR GAME, appeared in the Summer 2013 edition of Crimespree magazine, together with an interview of Michael and Stanley by Steven Torres.

The first four Detective Kubu mysteries have been finalists for 10 awards in the UK and the USA. DEATH OF THE MANTIS won the Barry Award.

We are working on the sixth Detective Kubu mystery that has as its backstory a remarkable Bushman who appears to be over 150 years old and the pharmaceutical company that wants to find out his secret.

Stanley has moved his South African residence from Knysna to Cape Town. Michael has bought land in Knysna. The two events are unrelated.

All our books are available as ebooks in various formats at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or other ebook outlets.

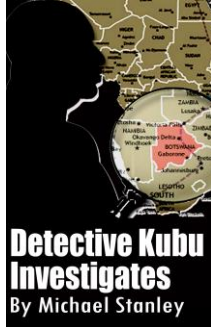
How to help your favorite authors

The most difficult thing for authors is getting known. The best referral is from readers who like their work.

There are three things you can do. One: tell your friends about books you like. Two: ask your local library to buy the author's books. And three: write a review of one of the authors' books on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, 4MA, DorothyL, or any other online forum, or send it to a local newspaper or newsletter.

FREE EBOOK *Detective Kubu Investigates*

We've put together a collection of Kubu's shorter adventures as an ebook, as well as an interview with Kubu himself.

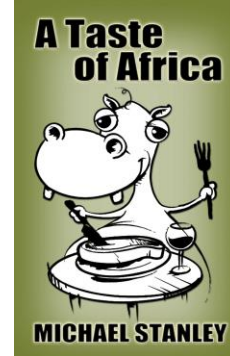


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KUKBUK

The KUKBUK of Kubu's favorite recipes has been selling nicely. Recently, we've been fortunate to attend several functions where the organizers provided snacks and drinks featured in the book. Yummy!



A TASTE OF AFRICA – A KUKBUK is available as an ebook from many normal online outlets for \$2.99.

For Amazon, click [here](#).

For Barnes & Noble, click [here](#).



Looking down on Shoshong from the hills (Photo: Jonathan Everitt)



Learning to drive in Shoshong (Photo: Jonathan Everitt)