

SECOND PRISON WRITER'S WORKSHOP

I finished writing my first story of the prison writer's workshop with twenty-two hundred words. It's not how long you make it, it's how you make it long. As Penny C. Sansevieri wrote in [The Huffington Post](http://www.thehuffingtonpost.com), "Short is the new long."

Josh pulled the romance genre for the next short story. We limited our stories to fifteen pages max.

My writing and editing process isn't much different than other writers, such as: [Chris Bohjalian](http://www.amazon.com), [John Sanford \(John Roswell Camp\)](http://www.amazon.com), [Laura Drake](http://www.amazon.com), and [Lisa Scottoline](http://www.amazon.com). I gleaned this information from reading articles in the [Novel & Short Story Writer's Market 2016](http://www.writersmarket.com).

When I read the interview by Adrienne Crezo of Sandford, I had to question the man's intelligence and veracity once he said, "Most awful crimes are committed by really stupid people, and really stupid people are not much of a challenge for your character. So you've got to have a smart person who is committing really ugly crimes. You have to depart from the reality that I experienced as a reporter." (I guess Sandford never read [Of Mice and Men](http://www.amazon.com) by John

Steinbeck.)

Sandford also said, "I talked to all these killers who were smart enough to learn programming, and it really gave me a lot of information about how their brains worked. I had long, intimate conversations with these guys--and not about their crimes, but about the way they thought about things. And virtually none of them took any responsibility for the murders whatsoever, even when they admitted doing it. That was enormously useful."

Crezo then asked Sandford, "do other imprisoned killers ever reach out to you, unsolicited, to talk about their crimes?" He answered, "It's happened three or four times. And every once in awhile my website will get a letter from a guy in prison who's killed somebody, and he'll say he really enjoyed my books. What do you say about that?"

Ugly crimes are committed by intelligent people: [Jack the Ripper](http://en.wikipedia.org), [Ted Bundy](http://en.wikipedia.org), [Adolf Hitler](http://en.wikipedia.org), [Bernie Makdof](http://en.wikipendia.org), [Bill and Hillary Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org), and countless others. Someone's intelligence isn't a predictor of whether he or she will commit an ugly crime, or any crime for that matter, his or her psychological state is.

Perhaps Sandford should have encouraged these killers to work on their rehabilitation, to build up their self-esteem by setting and accomplishing goals, to forgive themselves and stop blaming others for the poor choices they've made, and to take responsibility for their crimes and everyday decisions, instead of exposing his own ignorance of criminology with his preconceived notions.