

This short story was inspired the author's own vacation trip to San Carlos, Mexico. It is based on a policeman the author met there. This story is also available online in Mexican Spanish titled "Un Turista Desaparecido en México."

A Missing Tourist in Mexico

by Dennis Herrick



THE RIPTIDE'S strength surprised him.

It gripped his body like a powerful pair of hands dragging him seaward, pulling him underwater until the pressure knifed into his ears. He fought his way to the surface. The current continued pulling him under and toward the flat line of the water's horizon. The shore receded behind splashing waves.

* * *

Mary Dolan enjoyed the icy pineapple and coconut flavors of her piña colada.

She relaxed in a palm tree's shade on the

back deck of her vacation villa in the Mexican resort town of San Carlos. She could look over the Sea of Cortez shimmering blue. She was just starting chapter seven of her novel when she heard her doorbell chime.

She called toward the house in the mix of Spanish and English often heard in the tourist colony. "Rosa, can you get the door, por favor?" Mary sipped her piña colada and looked back to her book.

"Señora, es la policía."

Rosa must be excited, Mary thought. She usually practiced her English when talking to Mary, while Mary in turn practiced her Spanish with Rosa.

“Buenos días,” the uniformed policeman said to Mary when she met him at the door. He shuffled his feet. His oversized shirt was wrinkled and so loose at the bottom that it hung over his belt. “You are Mrs. Dolan?” he asked in English. He had a Spanish accent and spoke slowly.

“Yes.” It disturbed Mary that a police officer had appeared at her door. He was a thin, angular-faced Mexican and, like her, in his early forties. Lines at his eyes indicated he was quick to smile, but he wasn’t smiling now. He had dark skin from his Indian blood with jet-black, thick hair. Mary couldn’t take her eyes off his bushy black mustache. Like Pancho Villa, she thought. The officer’s nametag identified him as E. Verde.

“Your husband is Ron Dolan?” She nodded. “Is he home?”

“No. He left this morning to go snorkeling.”

Ron had been gone since breakfast, but Mary hadn’t been worried because Ron made his snorkeling excursions all-day affairs. After two hours in the water, he’d have lunch at Barracuda Bob’s. Then he’d spend the rest of the afternoon playing chess and drinking Negra Modelo beer with buddies he’d made there.

“We are looking for your husband. We fear he might be in trouble. We found his car parked on the beach with his wallet in the glove compartment. There were footprints in the sand from his car down to the water.”

Mary sucked in her breath. What could have happened? A sense of panic rose in her throat.

“Please wait a minute while I call Barracuda Bob’s.” She grabbed a phone, and her hand trembled when she heard the bartender say Ron never showed up today. She was not one to expect the worse, but she had to wipe tears from her eyes as she searched for a photo of Ron. The policeman wanted a picture to show around in case someone had seen him.

* * *

The next day Esteban Verde was so pressed for time that he was tempted to skip his mid-morning coffee-and-roll at Evie’s Café. Tempted, but not persuaded. He wasn’t so busy that he needed to skip a coffee break. He took his regular seat on the coffee shop’s outdoor patio, his table three feet from the street traffic. He always sat beside the hummingbird feeder. He liked the way the birds buzzed around his head like feathered thoughts.

He was checking into the disappearance of the American who had the bad luck of snorkeling yesterday in the one bay of the Sea of Cortez notorious for pulling small boats out to sea. No swimmer would have a chance. That had not been a problem because a sign there had warned swimmers at the small beach. All he’d learned so far was that someone stole the sign a couple of days ago.

Before he’d left the police station that morning his sergeant gave his opinion. “By now he is food for the fish five hundred meters underwater.”

Verde also was working several other complaints today. Major crime was rare in San Carlos. However, there were plenty of minor incidents, which took almost as much paperwork and time as a missing snorkeler. There had been three fender-benders in the past twenty-four hours. All involved collisions by speeding Mexican drivers running into

indecisive American drivers confused by the streets' round-about and parallel service lanes. There also was a shoplifting report at a candy shop, a bearded tourist had checked out a scuba tank two days ago and never returned it, an American woman had fallen on her face after tripping over a broken sidewalk outside a restaurant, and a tourist had skipped on his bar tab.

Verde had talked to the candy store owner. He'd checked that the fallen woman was okay. And the bartender had said the tab-skipper was a regular and would be back. Verde sipped his coffee. The scuba shop owner had still been mad, yelling at Verde in broken Spanish that American tourists were robbing him blind. Verde smiled and took another sip. The scuba shop owner's name was Clarence and he was from Nebraska.

Verde took a photocopy of Ron Dolan's picture from his pocket, unfolded it, and spread it on the table in front of him, studying it. When a waitress came by, he asked for a refill of coffee and borrowed a pen. He began scribbling on the photocopy. The slipstream from a passing car ruffled the paper. The driver was speeding, but Verde didn't even look up.

* * *

As she did every day, Mary paused on the front porch to read the mangled English on the cleaning company's notice: *The firm no have responsibility for security of you materials in the house.*

Her villa had been built as a tax write-off by the national chain that owned the newspaper where she was editor. It was occupied for a couple of months each year by the corporation's big shots for a week or two at a time. A hundred other million-dollar villas terraced the sides of the steep hills waiting for their occasional guests.

She turned at the sound of a car's brakes squealing on the street. She watched as Officer Verde climbed out of a ten-year-old Chevy police car. He tripped on the second step up to the house but managed to grab the railing and avoid a fall.

"Come in," Mary said, opening the door and walking in first. She gestured toward a chair. She sat on a nearby couch.

"Do you want some iced tea?" His face brightened for a second, but he said no thanks.

"What have you found out about my husband?"

Verde gave a small shake of his head. "I am very sorry, señora. His car was parked at a place very dangerous for rip tides. I cannot find anyone who has seen him since."

Her eyes widened. "So you think—" She left the thought unsaid.

"We are searching with boats. I am sorry."

She stood up and walked into the kitchen. He could hear her sobbing. But soon she came out with reddened eyes and handed him a glass of iced tea.

Mary was a natural story-teller. All Verde had to do was nod as she remembered her and Ron's vacation.

Ron had seemed depressed in recent months. Seven years ago she'd married a fun-loving guy, but he'd stopped being that. When she admitted she was Ron's third wife, Verde hid behind his glass of tea.

Ron had been worried they couldn't afford the trip at first because of child support payments he had to make each month to his two previous wives. He hated being a lawyer, but he felt he had to stay in the rat race, as he put it, to make his payments.

She'd reassured him that her company was paying for everything. Also, other editors

who'd stayed at the villa had raved about the views, weather, and friendly people of San Carlos. Hearing that, Ron had burrowed into the San Carlos tourist brochures.

She'd overheard a few phone calls, all to dive shops asking about the snorkeling and scuba diving opportunities.

"I thought you had given up on scuba diving as too expensive," she remembered saying to him.

"I have my certification. But you're right. I just want to do a lot of snorkeling."

They drove from their Texas home to Albuquerque, staying a night there, and then to Tucson for another night's stay. The next day they drove three hundred miles south of Tucson down four-lane Highway 15 through northern Mexico's Sonoran desert to San Carlos. That was a week ago.

He came to snorkel, and she came to relax with her reading.

She remembered how that morning she'd bid him goodbye as he left for another day of snorkeling. He'd kissed her. She had closed her eyes and willed their lips to linger, but it was just a peck and he was gone.

Officer Verde didn't need to know that. It looked as if he weren't listening anyway. She didn't have much confidence in such an unprofessional-looking policeman. He seemed absent-minded.

* * *

The locals called Barracuda Bob's a gringo bar because it filled every night with Americans and Canadians.

Except for the two Mexicans in shorts and T-shirts perched at the driftwood bar. Verde and his sergeant practiced their English so they wouldn't be so noticeable. But

Xavier the bartender had already warned rowdier tourist customers that they were local cops.

The sergeant, lighter-skinned and proud of his extra bloodline from Spain but not his extra waistline, looked sideways at Verde's stained shirt. "Mrs. Dolan paid me a visit today."

Verde looked at his companion.

"She wants you taken off the case of her missing husband." The sergeant swiveled on his barstool to face Verde. He seemed very serious. "She says you are not up to it. She wants me to assign the case to a different officer."

"I hope you did."

The sergeant turned back to the bar and took a drink of his Dos Equis beer. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand. "I told her you are a good policeman." He swiveled back to face the bar and looked sideways at Verde again. "You just do not look like it."

They discussed various theories about what could have happened to Ron Dolan.

The sergeant held his beer bottle to his chest and leaned against the back of the bar seat. "I think it must be suicide."

Verde shook his head. "Perhaps. But his footprints in the sand go straight into the water. He must have been carrying his swim flippers because we cannot find them anywhere. Why would he wear flippers if he had plans to drown himself?"

The sergeant used a thumbnail to begin peeling off the beer bottle's label. "You tell me."

Verde set his beer glass on the bar, leaned forward, and rubbed a forefinger back and forth on his lips under his mustache. He stared at his image in the mirror behind the bar

without seeing it.

“It could be suicide. He had a lot of problems about money. Like you, he had two ex-wives to feed.”

The sergeant rolled his eyes. “I understand now. I almost want to kill myself every payday. Or my ex-wives, which is very illegal.”

“The child support in the United States is much worse.” Verde steepled his hands and tapped them against his chin. “Is it possible he wanted it to look like suicide?”

“Not a good idea.” The sergeant emptied his bottle. “You cannot fool a rip tide.”

* * *

Clarence at the scuba shop was tall and wide. A big man in a black muscle shirt and faded jeans. His eyebrows were almost as bushy as Verde’s mustache. He looked like the Nebraska farmer his father had been. Clarence was thirty now. He’d escaped the farm.

“I stopped by again yesterday,” Verde said in English, “but you were closed.”

“It was rainin', man. No business on a rainy day. I took off for home.”

Verde smiled. “Where is home in case I need to reach you again?”

“Here and there.”

When Verde smiled again, all his teeth shone white against his dark face.

“You want a beer? It’s almost ten.” Clarence popped a can open for himself.

“Are you trying to corrupt the local police?”

“You don’t look like you’re on duty.” Clarence studied Verde. “Tuck your shirt in. Man, you need a wife to dress you.”

“I go off duty at six. You will be here?”

“It's sunny outside so I'll be here all day with customers. I'll have a cold one waitin' for you, my friend.”

While Clarence spoke, Verde took a piece of paper out of his pocket. He spread it on Clarence's counter. “Do you recognize this man?”

Clarence laughed. He snorted and laughed again. “I didn't know you was an artist, Esteban.”

“I changed this picture at Evie's to match your description. Does he look familiar now?”

Clarence looked again at the photocopy of Ron Dolan's picture with the curly, full beard Verde had drawn on the face. “Yeah. I can see it now. He was the bearded guy who checked out the scuba gear the other day and never returned it. Paid his cash deposit, but that wasn't enough to pay for all the stuff. Fake beard, huh?”

“You should insist that customers use a credit card.”

“I ain't payin' those fees.”

* * *

At Barracuda Bob's, Verde pulled out another picture of Ron Dolan, this one a copy of the original without a beard, and slapped it on the bar. It soaked up spilled beer on the countertop. Verde made a comment of disgust, shook off droplets, and handed it to Xavier the bartender.

“He has not changed much since you showed this to me yesterday,” Xavier said in Spanish. “It is little more wet now than before.”

“Un sabelotodo,” said Verde, using a sarcastic reference for a wise guy. “Have you remembered anything else since we talked the last time?”

It occurred to Verde that maybe Xavier wasn't even old enough to sell liquor. Xavier had wrapped a red handkerchief around his head, keeping his long hair somewhat in check. And he wore one of Barracuda Bob's white T-shirts that read: *We cheat the other guy and pass the savings on to you.*

Xavier leaned his elbows on the bar and continued talking in Spanish. "I did not know until his wife came in this morning to ask about him. The poor woman is very upset. Now I realize that the American woman with him the last two or three times he was here was not his wife."

* * *

Verde spotted lottery tickets on the sergeant's desk as soon as he entered the little office. "So, Cabo," he said, using Spanish slang for sergeant, "you still buy lottery tickets."

The sergeant looked up. "You sound sarcastic, Esteban," he said in Spanish. "Now I buy Mexico Melate 6/56. Also, I have a system. You should pay half my expense. Then, when I win, you will receive half. Both of us can quit our jobs and lead new and exciting lives."

"You realize that the odds are thirty-two million to one."

The sergeant scoffed at Verde's comment. Then he listened to Verde's report about what the bartender had told him.

"So he doesn't know the name of this new woman. But now we know a woman might be involved. Familiar story." The sergeant leaned back in his office chair, rocked slowly, and drummed his fingers on his desk. He sat upright again. "Listen, Esteban, we have spent enough time on this case. We should drop it."

Verde spread his arms apart. "You know, I also have been working on other cases. I

found that six-year-old boy who shoplifted the candy. He ate the evidence, but I am sure it is him.”

The sergeant couldn't help but chuckle at Verde's sincere expression. Then he became stern again. “There is no crime here. So it is not our concern anymore.”

Verde raised a finger to get the sergeant's attention. “Suicide? Accident?”

“Both regrettable, but not crimes. Plus, what you have found tells me your theory at the bar is correct. He faked his death by wearing scuba gear into the water instead of a snorkeling mask. Now we can conclude his new girlfriend picked him up in a boat.”

“If he is still alive, then insurance fraud?”

“It is not our problem. American insurance company. Let them investigate.”

“Fraud to avoid child support?”

“His kids are Americans, so it is another American crime. They can worry about it.”

“There is still the matter of the missing scuba gear from Clarence. Theft for sure.”

“Tell Clarence to contact his insurance company. It is American too.”

“And Señora Dolan. What will she think if we stop the investigation of the disappearance of her husband?”

The sergeant picked up some paperwork that he decided needed his urgent attention. He shooed Verde out of his office. “She returned to the United States this morning. I already told her to contact the authorities there.”

Verde stopped at the open door. “Is she mad at us?”

“Yes, she is upset.” The sergeant waved good-bye to Verde as he grinned. “Of course, she blames you.”

* * *

Verde had enough work to do anyway. Just that morning he had ticketed two speeders. He spent that day and the next handling complaints of petty thievery and domestic abuse. He cleared four cases. One turned into an act of assault—against him. He ended that fight by knocking the man unconscious with his left hook. People always were underestimating him, he decided, which just caused more trouble for everyone.

He was sipping coffee at Evie's when his cell phone rang.

"Is that you, Clarence? Speak louder. I can't hear you."

He heard Clarence whispering into his phone. "I said the guy who took the scuba gear is here again. He has dyed his hair from black to blond. Even had a haircut, and now he has glasses and a mustache instead of a beard. But it's him, Esteban. I know it."

"Talk to him. Keep him there. I am coming right now."

Verde jumped up from his table, spilling his coffee. He'd gone a few steps when he wheeled around and hurried back to the table. He threw down a clatter of coins and ran to his police car.

The parking lot at Clarence's dive shop was empty when Verde pulled in with his siren off. Verde bolted out of the car and opened the shop's door. When he saw Clarence's body, he leaped out of the doorway and drew his pistol, swinging it to aim at corners.

* * *

Verde and his sergeant briefed the captain of the Federal Police for an hour, going over the same points time after time. When the captain left, the two men looked at each other from their chairs in the sergeant's office.

The sergeant buttoned his sports coat as he walked to his desk, sat on it, and faced Verde. “This is big. We have had no murders in San Carlos for years. The Federals will be all over this. Very bad for the tourist business.”

Verde slumped forward, propping his arms on his knees and wringing his hands. He said something too low to make out.

The sergeant frowned. “What did you say?”

Not looking up, Verde mumbled again. A little louder this time. “This is personal now,” he said. “Clarence was my friend.”

* * *

Esteban Verde was told to stay out of the way because the Federal Police had taken over the investigation. The Federals focused on finding Ron Dolan and his mysterious lady friend, pounding on doors and checking guest records all over San Carlos.

Verde made a few telephone calls. Every night he remembered the sight of Clarence shot to death and slumped against the front of his counter. Verde made more calls.

A week later, the sergeant was not pleased when he started to read Verde’s report. He waved the pages at Verde. “I thought the Federals told you to keep your nose out of their investigation.”

Verde sat uninvited on a chair and began tying the shoelace on his left shoe. He’d been meaning to tie it all morning, but higher priorities kept coming up. “Yes. The Federal captain reminded me about my big nose this morning when I tried to talk with him.”

“He did not listen to a word you had to say. Truth?”

Verde looked up, his shoelace tied at last. He grinned.

The sergeant swore. He called Esteban Verde foul names. He called the Federals even worse names. He turned Verde's report toward the policeman and stabbed his finger at a page. "Where did you learn this?"

Verde leaned forward to see the paragraph. "Oh, that. Remember last week when you said you wanted to win the Mexican lottery so you could start a new life? That made me think. We both believe Ron Dolan is still alive, but where is he getting spending money? I called the Texas Lottery and asked if they had any recent big winners who had stayed anonymous."

The sergeant's eyes showed his surprise. "They told you?"

"No."

The sergeant slumped in his chair, shaking his head.

"But I have a cousin who is a detective with the Texas Highway Patrol. They told her, and she called me back."

The sergeant sat up straight again.

"Ron Dolan won three hundred thousand dollars after taxes in their state lottery two months ago. At his request, his name was never publicized."

The sergeant slapped his forehead. Verde knew what the sergeant had to be thinking. How could other people win the lottery, but not him? He deserves a break as much as they do. Maybe more.

"Señora Dolan says the lottery win is news to her. By the way, she is mad at you now. The State Police issued a search warrant on a Texas bank account he opened. He drew out a few thousand dollars the day he disappeared and again yesterday. Both times the money was wired to him here in Mexico."

Slamming Verde's report onto his desk, the sergeant tried to keep his voice under control. "To where was the money wired?"

Verde leaned back in his chair. Absent-mindedly, he brushed at some salsa that had stained his uniform shirt at lunch. "That is in the report. The money is wired to a bank in Caborca. There are many beaches nearby. But I asked myself, 'Where would a rich American want to go?' I decided on the Puerto Peñasco resort. It is one hundred-sixty kilometers from Caborca on Highway 37."

"Go on."

"My brother is very high in the Puerto Peñasco Police," Verde said. "He checked for new arrivals at the beach hotels for late in the day that Clarence was shot."

"And then?" The sergeant stood. He leaned toward Verde with both hands on his desk.

Verde paused to run his hand through his hair, making it even more unkempt than it was before. "It is in the report, Cabo. I wrote it just before I came in to see you."

The sergeant swept Verde's report off his desk, the pages fluttering to the floor like leaves. "Tell me, for God's sake!"

Verde dropped to his hands and knees and began sifting through the scattered pages. "Here it is." He tried to toss the page onto the desk, but the overhead fan blew it back to the floor. Both men scrambled for the errant sheet, and the sergeant rose clasping it in his hand like a winning lottery ticket. He stared at the security camera photo of a man and woman checking into the Lost Mayan Empire Hotel at Puerto Peñasco.

Verde wagged his right hand until he had the sergeant's attention. "A few minutes ago I showed that to Xavier at Barracuda Bob's. He says the man looks similar but

different. Now the man is blond, short hair, a mustache, glasses. But he thinks it might be Ron Dolan. He said if he saw him in person again that—”

“Get on with it, Esteban. The woman.”

Verde turned back to his chair and sat again. He pointed to the woman in the picture.

“Yes, the woman. Xavier is certain that is the woman who was with Ron Dolan in Barracuda Bob’s.”

He paused. “One more thing about that day. A guy at Lopez Boats says he rented a speedboat to this woman. He still had her signed credit card receipt. I put it into an evidence bag.”

The sergeant dropped back into his chair. “I don’t understand. Why did Señor Dolan show himself to the man he stole scuba gear from? Why did he not just leave town?”

“I will tell you my opinion if you want it.”

The sergeant sighed. “Yes, Esteban. I want your opinion. Now, please.”

Verde shrugged. “He stayed with his girlfriend until his wife went back to Texas. Then he went to the scuba shop with his new appearance and new name. Maybe it was a test. Maybe he thought if Clarence did not recognize him, then nobody would. His new life would be safe. Maybe he shot Clarence because Clarence recognized him. Maybe because Clarence threatened him physically. I do not know.”

Verde brushed off his pants. He studied a spot on them while the sergeant fidgeted. “Another thing. I asked my brother to get a warrant to search their room yesterday. My brother found a .32-caliber revolver hidden in the bathroom. I am sure ballistics will prove it is the same gun used to kill Clarence.”

The sergeant grabbed his desk phone. “We must tell the Federals before either Ron

Dolan or his girlfriend leave the hotel.”

“Do not worry about that, Cabo. My brother sent police to watch the hotel. They will make sure neither of them leave.”

The sergeant kept punching the buttons on his phone, getting the number wrong the first time in his haste.

“I hope you can persuade him to listen,” Esteban Verde said.

He stood and walked over to study a San Carlos beach painting on the wall. “An hour ago, the Federal captain ordered me out of his office before I could tell him what I had learned.” He glanced over his rumpled shoulder at the sergeant. “He said he does not need help from a dumb, small-town cop.”

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From the author:

I hope you enjoyed this story. If you have any questions or comments about it, you are welcome to contact me by going to my author’s website at dennisherrick.com, where you will find my current email address, biography, and other writing projects.

Discover some of my other short stories and books on that website as well, including:

SHORT STORIES (online, 99 cents)

- [The Woman with a Rain Pot](#) (5,300 words, this story is dedicated to the combat veterans of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.) An Iraq veteran who sacrificed a leg for his country returns, becomes a detective, and sets out to find the killer in a year-old cold case.
- [The Ancestor](#) (3,900 words) Inspired by an archaeological dig near Albuquerque that discovered the skeleton of a Pueblo Indian killed by a conquistador back in 1540.
- [The Bullet That Saved Me](#) (4,800 words) Short-story fiction inspired by the author’s experiences as an infantryman in the Vietnam War.
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- [The Indian Who Defied Coronado](#) (4,000 words) Nonfiction. A Pueblo Indian leader mostly forgotten in history led America’s first Indian war—the Tiguex War—against Coronado’s expedition to the Southwest in 1540.
- [Missing](#) (2,450 words, winner of the 2010 Society of Southwestern Authors Writing Contest and published in *Story Teller* magazine.) A Pueblo elder with cancer chooses to live out his final days in the mountains instead of a hospital.

- [Spirit Journey](#) (5,900 words, published in the *Wapsipinicon Almanac* literary magazine) Based in Iowa, the story deals with today's illicit trade in Indian artifacts looted from Indian and public lands.
- [Hunting Season](#) (2,500 words, winner of the 2004 Tony Hillerman Mystery Writing Contest and published in *Cowboys and Indians* magazine.) Was the Pueblo hunter's death an accident or was it murder?
- [Woman Without a Name](#) (8,000 words) The refurbishment of the B61 nuclear bomb draws spies to Los Alamos, New Mexico. When a National Security Agent is killed, a woman NSA agent is sent to find out what happened and to stop nuclear secrets from being stolen.
- [To Steal What Is Sacred](#) (3,950 words) An ancient katsina mask sacred to the Puebloan religion is stolen from a museum. An Albuquerque police detective from the Acoma tribe is assigned in this short story mystery to find the person who killed a museum guard in the robbery and took the mask.
- [Alien Visitors](#) (1,800 words) Here's one scenario on how the first encounter between humans and aliens from another planet could turn out.
- [The Final Farewell](#) (1,850 words) A small short story about a woman raised by her grandparents who keeps a final vigil at her grandfather's hospital bed.

BOOKS (forthcoming)

- ***Esteban: The African Slave Who Explored America*** (in-progress nonfiction) The true adventures of an African slave who crossed the continent in a 1528-1536 odyssey, and who guided the first Spanish exploration north into Arizona and New Mexico in 1539.

BOOKS (published)

- [Winter of the Metal People: The untold story of America's first Indian war](#) (historical novel) This book presents the first account of the Tiguex War of 1540-41 written from the Puebloan point of view. It follows a young Pueblo warrior who reluctantly takes leadership of his people in a time of crisis, overcoming self-doubt to lead Puebloans in successful guerilla warfare against Spanish conquistadors and their Aztec allies.
- [A Brother's Cold Case](#) (mystery novel) When the murder of Andy Cornell's brother is still unsolved after two and a half years, Andy enters the hidden worlds of cartel violence, street people, and Pueblo secrets to find justice. This is available as an e-book or as a paperback.
- [Farewell to the Master](#) — Reprint of the 1940 sci-fi first-contact novel by Harry Bates with my new introduction and a list of more than 200 first-contact novels, novellas, and short stories. This is available as a paperback or as an e-book.
- [War of the Planet Burners](#) (science-fiction novel) Aliens from an unknown planet have suppressed Earth's electrical ability and killed 99.96 percent of the population. Fires ravage Earth and plant growth accelerates. But humanity wouldn't give up. How can humans without electronics or nuclear capability fight back? Combat veteran Joel Birchard inspires a diminished military with his determination.
- [Guest Bedroom: Collected Stories](#) (245 pages) Perfect for putting in your guest bedroom, this book is a collection of short stories that your friends can read a little at a time. In the book they'll meet detectives, American Indians, heroes, villains, and ordinary people striving to solve life's problems.
- [Pueblo Mysteries](#) (56 pages) A collection of four short stories available as an e-book or as a paperback: Hunting Season, Missing, The Ancestor, and The Woman With a Rain Pot. This is available as an e-book or as a paperback.

- [*Successful e-Publishing for Authors*](#) (e-book only) Written by an author for other authors, this book provides numerous tips and links to help writers who are new to publishing e-books or self-publishing paperbacks.
- [*Media Management in the Age of Giants: Business Dynamics of Journalism*](#) (textbook, second edition) Okay, you're probably not going to be interested in this unless you're a college journalism student. It's a book about the takeover of local media by corporate conglomerates with tips for beginning managers on how to deal with the new face of media. Available as e-book or paperback.

—Dennis Herrick