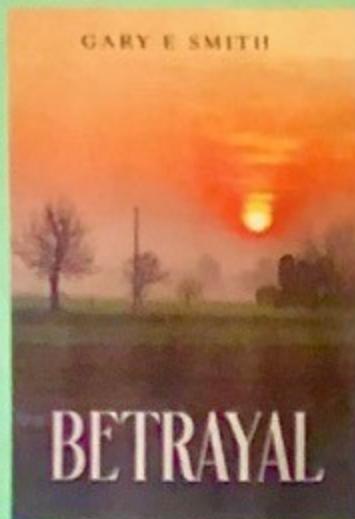


TO BE A GREAT STORYTELLER

Gary Smith

I believe, as did Ernest Hemmingway, to be a great writer of stories, you must have experienced what you write about. So, put into your stories part of yourself and your experience. If you build your characters on the personality characteristics of people you have interacted with throughout your life. Your characters will come to life for your readers. I have always been observant of people and their interactions with others, and I believe it has been to my advantage. The Warren Steelgrave series of books is a series of seven books to date, with many of the same characters. I have received emails from readers with concerns about the characters. I have received emails concerned with Warren Steelgrave and his drinking too many martinis. Concerns with Warren and Cindy's relationship, as if they were real people. The murder of a favorite character caused the most uproar. I must remind people a lot that I write fiction!



in business. The business was out of work and cash, and my wife was pregnant with twins. I lost the company and almost lost our house and health insurance. After restarting the company, it was discovered that the company's Chief Financial Officer had embezzled three hundred thousand dollars over the last three years. The betrayal was

most painful because this person was a close friend worth a lot of money. Someone I regarded as family. That was when I understood this quote from Dante Alighieri, *"The worst sinners in hell were the traitors. Those who betrayed their loved ones, their country, and their God."*

Now that I knew what I would write about, the story took off. It became a story of betrayal that, as people, we encounter in our lives every day. A tale of treachery and suspense in every chapter. The betrayal of friendships, our government, our personal commitments, and the worst, betrayal of ourselves.

Each book in the series has a compelling story and a deeper meaning for those who find it. Of course, I want my readers to enjoy the story. While reading the story, I hope they identify what Warren Steelgrave is struggling with personally. Whether it's falling in love with a married woman the first book, or Warren being confronted with his feelings around murder, the third book. My greatest joy is receiving an email or comment from a reader stating a chapter or scene caused them to pause and think about an event in their life. That the book gave them a new perspective. A chance to sit back with a glass of wine and reflect on their life. What's important. How did they get the views on life they hold?

I would love to hear from others with comments.

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I have been asked many times what I use for inspiration. Is it living in Italy half the year, or does a current event spark the idea for a story? The answer is complicated. After finishing a book in the Warren Steelgrave series, I think that is the last Warren Steelgrave book. I am tired of the series. The series is cathartic for me, and after a week, something is bothering me that I cannot put a finger on, so I start another Warren Steelgrave story. Soon the story begins to take shape. The subconscious takes over, and the issue that is bothering me surfaces from my subconscious and becomes woven into the story. This is precisely what happened with my newest book, *Betrayal*. I started another Warren Steelgrave book, unsure what I would write about.

After the second chapter, what surfaced was a betrayal by a close friend. The country entered a deep recession about thirty years ago while I was

