ForeWord Reviews

AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

**Me and Murder, She Wrote**
Peter S. Fischer
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Like a good friend reminiscing, Peter S. Fischer tells stories about his days as a TV writer and his transition to a career as an author of Hollywood mysteries.

*Me and Murder, She Wrote* provides an insider view of Hollywood from the writer of popular television shows such as *Columbo*, *Ellery Queen*, and *Murder, She Wrote*. The tone is conversational—a good friend reminiscing—as Peter S. Fischer recalls more than two decades in the business. This is from a hardworking writer who never forgets to acknowledge his good fortune—or his lovely wife.

As a young man, Fischer dreamed of becoming a writer. Like many young men with a family, though, he put that dream on the back burner. The difference in Fischer's story is that at the age of thirty-five, he sat down at his kitchen table and wrote a script for a television show. He sent it to his younger brother, a casting director at Universal Studios, who encouraged him to try again. His second script was made into a television movie. The rest, as they say, is history.

Thanks to a combination of luck, a seemingly bottomless "trunk" of ideas, and the ability to knock out a solid script quickly, Fischer wrote his way from Long Island to a successful Hollywood career. Working from memory, he takes us behind the scenes of the TV programs he wrote and produced. He writes affectionately about his favorite stars—Peter Falk, Jerry Orbach, and, of course, "the first lady of murder," Angela Lansbury.

He's equally candid, but less enthusiastic, about "playing the game" with studio executives and their bean counters. The young Sean Penn has a walk-on appearance in the book: Fischer authorized a two-line part on the TV movie *Hellinger's Law* (1981), which allowed Penn to join the Screen Actors Guild. Trivia questions at the end of each chapter, with answers at the end of the book, and snapshots throughout contribute to the fun.

Upon his retirement from scriptwriting, Fischer turned in his typewriter for a computer and began writing *The Hollywood Murder Mysteries*. The series combines his love of mysteries with classic Hollywood movies and "stars" the studio publicist turned detective, Joe Bernardi.

The tenth book, *A Deadly Shoot in Texas* is anticipated in 2014.

As Fischer writes, “This, then, is my career in Tinseltown, the good days and the bad, the good guys and the not-so-good, the thrilling successes and the depressing failures, all a part of the fabric of an adventure that had no right happening….but did.” And now fans can enjoy it all over again.

*Karen Ackland*