



## Creating Characters Using Profiling and Stereotypes with Win Shields

As a staff writer for television for 37 years and Executive Producer of Win Shields Productions, Win Shields has worked with some of the most well-known names in Hollywood. Speaking at the Writers Guild of Texas meeting in January, Mr. Shields addressed ways to create characters using profiling and stereotypes.

Taking the four components of any story (exposition, development, climax, denouement or conclusion), he stressed when building characters there is always a class system – warrior class or working class. From that, the writer creates the hero, heroine, the foil (who contrasts with another character), the villain (the most important person in the story), the senex or sage, and the authority figure.

Keeping in mind the four aspects to behavior (spiritual, mental, emotional and physical), Mr. Shields presented a list of negative and positive emotions. Once a writer determines what traits his character will have, not only does the writer know how the character will act and react, the reader also then has expectations that the writer must take into consideration.

To create successful characters, it's important to find a legitimate personality that fits. It's equally important to understand what's behind each trait. For instance, jealousy can be a fear of being replaced; envy of not being content with what someone has. Anger is often the result of a feeling of entitlement.

For a copy of the presentation, email [win@winshieldsproducts.com](mailto:win@winshieldsproducts.com) or visit his website at [www.winshieldsproductions.com](http://www.winshieldsproductions.com).



## REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2016 WGT SPRING WRITERS' WORKSHOP

Saturday, March 19      9 am – 12 Noon      The Heights Room – Richardson Civic Center



### Dr. Katherine "Kat" Smith, DHS will speak on "Interviewing Authority"

The focus of this workshop to help authors understand the importance of media interviewing skills and to polish and perfect their overall delivery and appearance to ensure the final product highlights them as an interesting and professional television/radio show guest or publication interview subject. Learn the dos and don'ts of engaging in a media interview and how to deliver an interesting conversation about your book. Dr. Smith is the author of several books and formerly co-host of a four-year syndicated morning show. **Cost: \$25 WGT members / \$35 non-members**

## The Bruised Banana

By David Douglas

2<sup>nd</sup> Place, WGT Flash Fiction Contest

### "How'd you do?" Trevor asked.

"The same way I feel... terrible!" I complained.

"You sick?"

"Am now. Why does a math major have to take a computer programming class anyway?"

"No idea." Trevor pushed open the door and held it for me.

I forced my wheelchair over the protruding threshold and freed myself from the confines of red brick asylum — named accordingly, because I often thought a person would have to be *crazy* to want to be a computer programmer.

I turned toward Trevor. "Well, I guess I'll see ya next week. I just wanna go home and forget about this day."

"I hear ya. Take it easy."

Trevor and I parted ways, and I began my hustle to the library parking lot. I turned left onto the wide downhill sidewalk between the *asylum* and the library. I let go of the hand rims and began coasting. Immediately, I noticed an oncoming *surfer dude* staring at me. I slowed down, because I could tell something was on his mind.

"You're lucky," he said.

I squinted at him and asked, "How so?"

"You get to cruise down this big hill, while everyone else has to walk. You're lucky."

Oh, there were so many things I wanted to tell him. *"You should've seen me an hour ago, when I was out of breath, my upper arms were burning, and I still had 30 feet of incline left to climb."* Or maybe, *"Yeah, I was real lucky last week, when I had to roll up and down this hill in the rain. On my way up, my hand slipped on the wet rims and my thumb collided with the brake — nearly removing my thumbnail. Fortunately, it was raining or someone may have been concerned by blood trail leading into the Computer Science building."*

And in my general aggravation, I wanted to say, *"Lucky, huh? Lucky that I'll never again run, skate, or slow dance with a girl. And of course, I'm lucky with girls too, right? Lucky that when a girl looks at me, she never sees a potential mate. She sees someone to pity, to avoid, or doesn't see me at all — because, to some people, I'm not even a person."*

*"Yeah, you nailed it, surfer dude. I'm real lucky! I'm as lucky as the lone, bruised banana in the grocery store. Someone removed it from the others in the bunch and left it*

*behind. It is ignored, pushed aside, and abused until the produce employee tosses it into the trash."*

I took a deep breath to calm my heart and clear my mind. Knowing it'd be a waste of time to say anything I was thinking, I simply agreed, "Yeah, I guess so."

The surfer dude grinned and traipsed away, while I carried on down the hill. Quickly, my path was blocked by a couple who were holding hands and walking at a snail's pace. As I detoured left to bypass them, I was startled when a bicycle wheel suddenly appeared in my peripheral vision. I looked over my shoulder and noticed an angry bicyclist attempting to slow his speeding contraption.

"Watch it!" He yelled.

"You watch it!" I protested and swerved in front of him. I pushed past the slow couple and looked back at the bicyclist. His sour face matched my mood. So I stayed in the middle of the sidewalk and pushed my wheelchair to its limit. Soon, I was barreling past people at speeds I thought impossible. The wheelchair ferociously vibrated from every dimple, crack, and bump in the sidewalk, but come what may, I refused to slow.

Upon nearing the end of the hill, I looked back at the bicyclist. Pedaling with force, he would soon overtake me, but I did it. I had beaten him to the bottom. Gripping the right wheel's rim, I stopped it's motion. Instead of turning right, the speed churned me in two full, dizzying circles. Never had I been so grateful for my inclined wheels and seatbelt.

I closed my eyes and shook my head to clear the dizzy spell. Suddenly, the back of my head started throbbing. When I opened my eyes and saw the bicyclist pedaling away, I realized he had slapped me.

"Better luck next time, Quickie!" He yelled, mocking the brand of my wheelchair.

A passing girl, who witnessed the incident, ran toward me. "That was repulsive! Do you want me to chase him down and push him over?"

"No," I replied, holding the back of my head.

"Are you okay?"

"I'll be fine," I assured. "It's just one of those days." I looked past her dark-rimmed glasses and what I saw wasn't pity. I saw genuine concern in her eyes. I desperately needed something else to say. I couldn't lose this moment. That's when I noticed the banana in her hand. Pointing to it, I asked, "Is that your dinner?"

She opened her hand. "Oh... it's just a snack."

(continued next page)



I studied the many black marks on the peel. "It looks quite bruised. You might need to throw it out."

"No way! The bruises give it character."

"Really?"

"Of course! What does a bruise really do to a ripe banana?"

I shrugged.

"It makes it softer... gentler," she explained. "You're right, I could throw it out, go to the supermarket, and buy a new one in perfect condition, but why? I don't want an unripe, tough, sour banana. I want one that's been on a journey through life. One that's ripened, softened, and sweetened. I bet if you share it with me, you'll understand."

"I'd be delighted to share it with you. Do bananas heal headaches, by any chance?"

Two years later, I married that girl. She works as a physical therapist. And me, I'm a computer programmer. Turns out I didn't do so terrible on that test after all. In fact, I aced it, and soon after, I switched majors. And one other thing... I finally realized the surfer dude was right. I am lucky. (1,000 words)

## Upcoming Writing Conferences / Events

**\*April 22-23 Northeast Texas Writers Organization (NETWO)** "From Cowboys to Aliens, Writing in the New Millennium Conference." Short Story deadline contest March 2016. Titus County Civic Center, Mt. Pleasant, TX. <http://www.netwo.org/>

**\*April 22-23 North Texas Teen Book Festival**, Irving Convention Center, 500 W. Colinas Blvd., Irving TX. <http://www.northtexasteenbookfestival.com/>

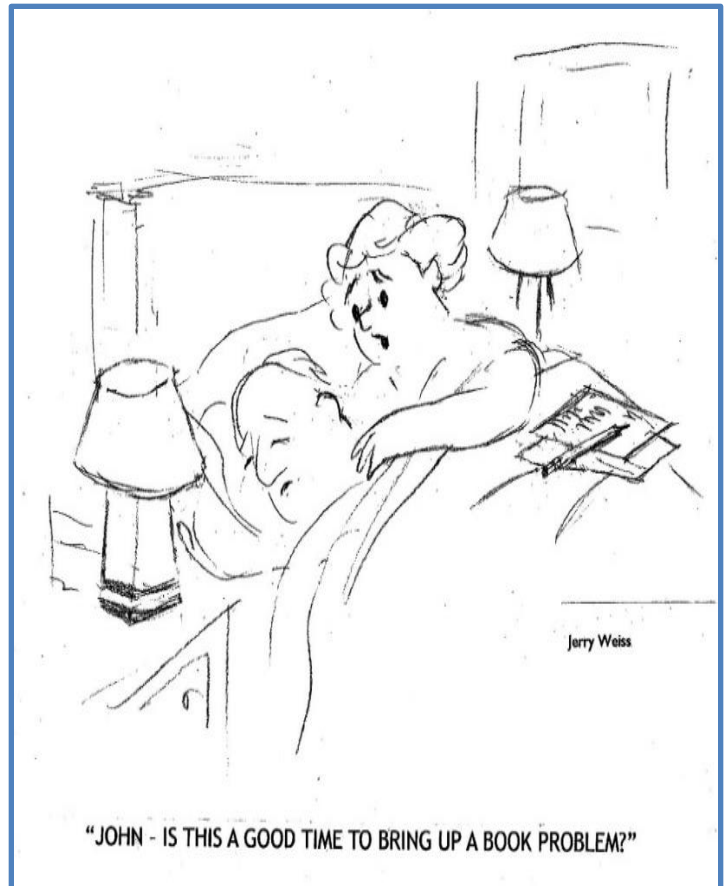
**\*April 23-24 DFW Writers Conference**, Ft. Worth Convention Center. <https://dfwcon.org/>

**\*Dallas Mystery Writers of America, Southwest. Meets the first Saturday of the month at the The Olive Garden on Belt Line at Midway in Addison (4240 Belt Line).** Meeting time is 10:00 AM – Noon, followed by lunch. There is a \$10 fee (cash only – please bring fives or ones) for the program and drinks-only attendees. The fee is reduced to \$5.00 (cash only) for those staying for lunch. All who attend are encouraged to remain and break bread(sticks) with your fellow writers. Contact info: [james@gaskin.com](mailto:james@gaskin.com)

**\*Sisters in Crime North Texas.** Meets the fourth Sunday of the month (no meeting in March) at the Frisco Library, McCallum Room, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. For more information, <http://sistersincrimenorthdallas.com/>

## "Weiss-Cracking"

by Jerry Weiss



### The Board of the Writers Guild of Texas

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## UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE WRITERS GUILD OF TEXAS

### Monday – March 21



#### **In the Trenches – Techniques for Plotting** **Author/Speaker** **C.L. Stegall**

Once you have your basic outline and want to begin detailing your plot, there are a myriad of techniques one can use. WGT member and author C.L. Stegall will discuss a few of those techniques and also provide examples and a template to get started.

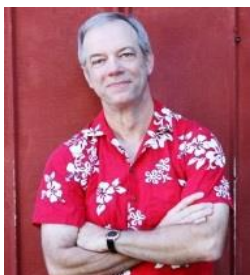
### Monday – April 17



#### **Syntax, Style and Making Meaning with Prosodic Elements** **Writer, Editor, Educator and Designer** **Joe Milazzo**

Word choice matters. But so too does word order. In this interactive program, Joe Milazzo will lead participants through an overview of what prosody is and share techniques on how writers in all genres can add suppleness and variety to their sentences.

### Monday – May 16



#### **Idea Organization and ways to Collaborate** **Author, Consultant/Speaker** **James Gaskin**

Technology for Writers: Learn better ways to write your book and get it noticed, including how to leverage Google Search, three different ways to power your Instagrams and Tweets, and use other social media tools to stand out from the crowd. A handout and links to all products and tools discussed will be provided.